

Code of Positive Behaviour

Contents:

- [1. Introductory Statement](#)
- [2. Aims of the Code](#)
- [3. Standards and Expectations of Behaviours](#)
- [4. Implementing and Communicating the Code](#)
- [5. Rights and Responsibilities of Pupils, Teachers, Staff and Parents](#)
- [6. Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour](#)
 - [6.1 School strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour](#)
 - [6.2 Classroom strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour](#)
- [7. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour](#)
 - [7.1 Restorative Practice](#)
 - [7.2 Strategies for de-escalation](#)
 - [7.3 Positive Handling](#)
 - [7.4 Ladder of intervention](#)
- [8. Pupils with Special Needs](#)
- [9. Recording Inappropriate Behaviour](#)
- [10. Suspension and Expulsion](#)

Appendices

- [Appendix 1: Proactive Strategies for Positive Behaviour Management](#)
- [Appendix 2: Ladder of intervention](#)
- [Appendix 2: Behaviour Contract Template](#)
- [Appendix 3: Positive Behaviour Note](#)
- [Appendix 4: Behaviour Plan Template](#)
- [Appendix 5: Pupil Passport Template](#)
- [Appendix 6: Restorative Practice Template](#)

1. Introductory Statement

The Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together School Community is one where pupils, staff and parents strive to coexist in an atmosphere of mutual respect and safety. The aim of the Code of Positive Behaviour is to promote positive behaviour using a whole school approach. This code is underpinned by the four principles of Educate Together: equality based; child centred; democratically run and co-educational. The Code of Positive Behaviour takes account of all current Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together policies such as the Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy and School Attendance Strategy.

2. Aims of the Code

- To create a happy atmosphere and positive school environment where all partners in the school community feel safe, respected and valued.
- To promote mutually respectful relationships which balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.
- To enable pupils to mature into responsible participating citizens, by promoting self-discipline, affirming that everyone's behaviour matters and focusing on expected behaviours and personal responsibility.
- To help pupils to acquire and develop moral and ethical values and a respect for the beliefs and values of others.
- To create an environment where all pupils and staff can reach their creative and intellectual potential in a stimulating and safe environment.
- To have a framework in place to ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- To promote equality for all members of the school community and to prevent discrimination

3. Standards and Expectations of Behaviour

The school's expected standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviours and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. Central to this is the expectation that all members of the school community behave in ways that show respect for others and that they have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the Code of Positive Behaviour as outlined in Section 4.

Standards of behaviour in the school will reflect positive values including:

- Respect for self and others
- Honesty
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy
- Thoughtfulness
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict

- Forgiveness
- Punctuality
- Behaving in a safe way
- Cooperating with staff and peers
- Responsibility for their actions

4. Implementing and Communicating the Code

Parents are provided with access to the Code of Positive Behaviour prior to registering their child. As part of the enrolment process parents sign that they have read and understand the Code.

The code will be communicated to the school community in a variety of ways including:

- school Welcome Booklet and Information Pack for new parents.
- school website.
- Information Meetings for parents.
- emails
- at staff meetings.

The Code of Positive Behaviour will be communicated to the children by means of:

- explicit teaching of the Code including the Golden Rules and the Responsibilities of the children
- regular reflection, revision and discussion of the Golden Rules and safety standards.
- the school ethos and the Learn Together programme.
- regular and informal encouragement and reinforcement.
- modelling by the teachers and staff.
- assemblies

5. The Rights and Responsibilities of pupils, staff and parents

Rights of Pupils	Responsibilities of Pupils
<p>Pupils have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be educated in a safe, happy and secure environment • grow intellectually, emotionally, morally, spiritually and physically with an understanding of special needs and difference • be treated as individuals with due respect and regard for others within the school community • be listened to • express their emotions, doubts and beliefs • be free from all forms of abuse, whether physical, emotional, mental or sexual 	<p>Pupils are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing and complying with school and class rules. • their behaviour in class and on the school premises. • asking for help when they need it. • their class work and homework. • their belongings. • school property. • playing safely. • not excluding others from their games. • helping and caring for others, in particular the younger pupils in the school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive information about topics and concerns affecting their lives including information on the Code of Positive Behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaving in accordance with the Code of Positive Behaviour at all times including when representing the school and on school outings.
Rights of Staff	Responsibilities of Staff
<p>Staff have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be respected and held in proper esteem • educate in a safe environment. • to full and open communication with parents • expect backup, support and co-operation from members of staff and parents • information on the pupil, their family background and access to parents when necessary • voice concerns about the pupil's safety, behaviour and academic progress • confidentiality • be listened to • appeal to a higher authority, e.g. Board of Management, Department of Education & Skills, union. 	<p>Staff are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the pupils in their care • creating and contributing to a positive atmosphere/environment for learning. • promoting a culture and practice of equality • being prepared for work. • giving attention to all pupils in their care • communicating with parents on about all aspects concerning their child's learning and behaviour (teachers) • minimising opportunities for disruption • assigning, checking and correcting homework in accordance with the Homework Policy (teachers) • educating pupils in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ standards and expectation of behaviour ○ pupils' responsibilities (see above) ○ Golden Rules ○ the school's Code of Positive Behaviour • their own selfcare: i.e. being able to identify when they are heightened and asking for help from another member of staff to manage the situation at hand. • confidentiality in relation to pupil and family information.
Rights of Parents	Responsibilities of Parents
<p>Parents have the right to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect, understanding and confidentiality. • informative communication with and access to the relevant staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ updates on the progress of the pupil/pupils. ○ be listened to. ○ be consulted about disciplinary action at an early stage 	<p>Parents are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treating all members of the school community with respect, understanding and confidentiality. • be aware of and support the implementation Code of Positive Behaviour • providing guidance and positive role models to pupils • promoting positive behaviour in school. • ensuring maximum attendance and punctuality of their child

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appeal to a higher authority, e.g. Board of Management, Department of Education & Skills • have access to the Code of Positive Behaviour of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring pupils come to school with relevant materials, adequate rest and nourishment. • communicating to school/teacher any problems which might affect pupil's learning. • making an appointment when wishing to meet with a staff member • respecting school property and encouraging their children to do the same. • ensuring pupils comply with all school policies and protocols
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6. Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

6.1 whole school strategies

We use the following whole school strategies to promote positive behaviour:

a) Explicit teaching of school Golden Rules

The Golden Rules are taught explicitly in every class, highlighting expected behaviours in our school. These are displayed in corridors, play areas and all rooms in the school.

The Golden Rules are:

- Kind words, kind hands, kind feet
- Respect myself and others
- Do your best and let others do the same
- Be honest, tell the truth
- Be fair, be friendly
- Make sure your teacher always knows where you are
- Look after our school and everything in it
- Listen
- Be polite and kind to each other, to all staff, parents and visitors to our school
- Behave in a safe way
- Check in and ask for help when you need it

b) Explicit teaching of school Core Values

Core Values that promote positive interactions and contribute to a meaningful learning environment for all have been identified as part of our Learn Together Whole School Plan. Explicit teaching of these enables all children to understand and demonstrate values in line with the school's culture, vision and ethos.

- Respect
- Honesty
- Cooperation
- Freedom
- Happiness
- Love and Kindness

- Peace
- Responsibility
- Understanding
- Unity

d) Explicit teaching of Four Point Scale

This is the whole school strategy to help children recognise their emotions and feelings. We devised a colour scheme, so all children from Junior Infants can use the scale effectively. Each colour on the scale represents how a child is coping with a situation

Green – Everything is OK.

Blue – Something is bothering me. I might need some help.

Yellow – I'm losing control. I need help.

Red – I've lost control.

This scale should help children not only recognise their emotions in different situations, but with teacher's guidance we would hope that they will learn how to regulate their emotions too. These colours may also be linked with symbols (see examples in Appendix 7).

f) Explicit teaching of expected behaviours in the playground

Playground rules:

- Chasing is to be "tip" only, no grabbing.
- Designated equipment may be used.
- "Play-fighting" games are not allowed.
- Children are encouraged to play together, ensuring that no-one is excluded.
- Stars/verbal praise are given to children to acknowledge positive choices in the playground.
- When the bell is rung the children freeze, when the second bell is rung they tidy the equipment and line up quickly and in an orderly fashion.

c) Morning Circle/Emotional Check-ins

Each day classes will have a morning circle which includes;

- greeting
- values of school/class
- expectations of the day
- announcements i.e birthday/special days
- positive primer
- emotional check-in (using 4 point scale). If any child expresses that they are in blue or yellow, the staff will employ suitable strategies to help the child regulate themselves.

Check-ins can happen as needed throughout the day.

e) Nurture Group

Nurture group is used to help children who may need extra support with their social and emotional regulation. Children will be identified by the class teacher and parents spoken to. A Boxall profile is completed with the current class teacher, or if needs be the previous class teacher and the Nurture Teacher to establish what areas of support are needed for the child. Results are shared with parents. Targets are identified from the Boxall and a Student Support File is drawn up. Time is allocated depending on the level of support required. Boxall profiles are then repeated at intervals throughout the year to see the progression.

g) Additional Whole School Strategies

- Celebrate friendship fortnight and anti-bullying on a yearly basis
- Involve pupils in the consultative process in the development of the Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Use the curriculum, in particular the Learn Together Programme and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), to enable the pupils to understand why the code is important, their part in making it work and to see that the code works in a fair way.
- Positive communication of achievements to families.
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from pupils.
- Maintain equitable school and class routines.
- Limiting choices to minimise decision fatigue especially for children with SEN or who are heightened
- Affirm good learning behaviours
- Recognise and give positive feedback about behaviour.
 - Praise
 - Encouragement
 - 'Happy visits' to the Principal
 - Golden Time (Activity of the children's own choosing on Fridays)
 - Reward stickers, stars and stamps
 - Special time with a staff member
 - Praise by Principal
 - Giving pupils responsibility in daily activities in the school.
 - Using displays throughout the school to visually reinforce good behaviour.
 - Positive behaviour notes to parents

6.2 Classroom Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together will employ a variety of age appropriate strategies within the classroom setting that take into account the needs of all pupils eg:

- Explicit teaching and reinforcement of golden rules, expected behaviours and responsibilities e.g. Involving pupils in the preparation of classroom rules/class charters at the beginning of each school year.
- Whole class star reward systems (blue stars for curriculum work, red stars for behaviour)
- Creating time to listen and discuss issues with pupils
- Class routines

- Morning check-ins
- Individual Reward systems
- Home/School Behaviour Contract
- Individual Behaviour Plan

Additional suggestions for proactive classroom strategies are found in Appendix 1.

Strategies that draw attention to a child who is not behaving well are not promoted in the school e.g. Traffic lights, Sun and clouds.

7. Responding to inappropriate behaviour

At Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together, a whole school approach is used in response to inappropriate behaviour. Elements of this approach include the use of a restorative practice approach when dealing with inappropriate behaviour, a ladder of intervention and agreed arrangements for recording behaviour.

7.1. Agreed arrangements for recording behaviour.

Inappropriate behaviour by a pupil or pupils will be recorded on the school's computer-based administration system, Aladdin. Incidents of serious misbehaviour during break times will be recorded by the supervising teacher in the Incident Book (which is regularly inputted into Aladdin). Depending on the nature of the misbehaviour these records may include a description of the behaviour, the context of the behaviour, action taken and sanctions incurred, interventions tried if any and how the pupil has responded to them, and copies of any correspondence with parents. These records will be stored on the Aladdin system which will be reviewed by the Principal regularly.

7.2. Restorative Practice Approach

This is an approach used by the teacher and/or the school to respond to unwanted behaviour using some or all of the following steps, not necessarily in the order outlined below.

- Children are given an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and what they could do next time.
- **What? Why?** Staff gather information, to understand the context and the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
- **What next time?**
 - Generate ideas about possible solutions that take account of the reasons why it may be happening.
 - Decide and agree on specific strategies.
- **Implement** the agreed strategy consistently.
- **Review** progress: evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the intervention.
- Throughout, keep the relationship with the pupil as positive as possible; involve the pupil and parent where appropriate.

Strategies for De-escalation

At Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together NS, we use trauma informed practices to help de-escalate situations that may arise in school. We understand that all behaviour is a form of communication and we aim to pre-empt any potential triggers. Teachers use the Continuum of Support checklists with the aim of uncovering and addressing any environmental, social, basic needs factors etc.

Communication with children

If and when an incident situation may arise, staff are aware of the following:

- **Non-verbal:** Staff to use non-verbal elements including being conscious of zones of personal space (social, personal, intimate), body language and listening with empathy.
Staff to maintain supportive stance (facing off to the side in a non-confrontational stance) when communicating with children, keeping position, posture and proximity in mind;
 - **Position:** Staff to approach children from the side rather than directly from the front or the rear.
 - **Posture:** Staff to remain non-threatening, balanced and relaxed. Hand, arm and head movements, eye contact and facial expressions are all part of posture.
 - **Proximity:** Staff to manage the distance between themselves and children. They will respect individuals' personal space, especially in conflict situations or when responding to someone who is distressed.
- Staff to ask children for permission before communication via touch (this includes if/when required to assist children to change their clothes).
- **Verbal:** Communication is to be kept short, simple, clear and positively phrased.
- **Tone, volume and rhythm of speech:** staff to use caring supportive tones, keeping the volume appropriate to the situation and delivering the message at a rate that the child can process.

Red Card/Green Card System:

- If an incident occurs and a staff member requires immediate adult assistance, a child is asked to take the red card in the classroom and give it to the first adult they find in the building.
- If an incident occurs and a staff member requires support, but it is not immediate, a green card is sent as above.
- A staff member may also use the staff messaging group to seek assistance.

If an incident occurs and a staff member needs support

- Staff member to put a message on the staff messaging group, indicating number of adults needed
- If staff member needs time to regulate they request 2/3 adults to help:
 - 1 adult takes staff member A to staff room or empty SET room and stays with them for as long as necessary, remembering to inform a member of management about situation

- 1 teacher takes class
- If needed, 1 adult stays with escalated child

If a child requires removal from the class group

- Staff member to put a message on the staff messaging group requesting 2 adults to help:
 - Either
 - The class is evacuated and 2 adults stay with the child until they are calmer. The child will be given space and staff will remain non-verbal. Both adults stay with the child until they are regulated enough to move to another location and stay with 1 adult.
 - or
 - 2 adults bring the child to another location and stay with them until they are regulated enough to stay with 1 adult.
 - 1 adult (class teacher, SET teacher, SNA, Principal) stays with the child in a 1:1 setting (outside of the classroom)
 - The staff member will use the restorative practice approach (see 5.4 below) when the child shows signs of tension reduction (signs may be: crying, guilt, relaxed posture, apologising, reduced muscle tension, embarrassment, decrease in breathing rate) to re-establish the relationship and reflect on what happened.
 - The adult completes a check in with child, finishing with question, 'Are you ready to join the class/learn/go to the playground?'

Reflection

A crisis situation can be a traumatic experience for the person in distress as well as for staff. The long-term effects of the crisis, positive or negative, depend largely on what happens after the crisis occurs.

a) Addressing the needs of the child:

The staff of Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together NS will use a restorative approach to help children to reflect on crisis situations in order to try to prevent them in the future. A restorative conversation or sheet may be used. Restorative practice focuses on the incident and allows the person to reflect on their actions and consider the impact those actions had on others.

1. Calm: The child will be given time to return to a calm, controlled state. The amount of time needed may vary from child to child. This may include a break from the classroom.

2. Gather basic facts. The child will be asked about what was seen or heard. The goal is to uncover what happened. Questions asked may be;

- What happened:
- When did it happen?

- Who else has been affected?
- Why did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- What were you thinking at the time of the incident?

3. What next? Future approaches and expectations of behaviour will be discussed. Staff will reinforce what's working well. Staff will help the child to develop and agree to any new strategies. Questions asked may be;

- What could you do differently next time?
- What should we do to put things right?
- What can we do to help you when you feel distressed?
- Is there anything you don't want during these moments?

Staff will be conscious that the child may not realise that something is a trigger and may not be able to explain what triggered them.

Staff will record these conversations on Aladdin including any decisions made. Having done the above steps, the child may rejoin the class. If at any stage during the above steps, the teacher feels the child is not regulated, the steps are paused and the focus goes back to helping the child regulate. The restorative approach will then resume.

Parents, Deputy and/or Principal will be informed of the incident.

b) Addressing the needs of the adult:

The management of Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together NS will use restorative practice to help staff to reflect on crisis situations in order to try to prevent them in the future.

1. Staff will be given time to return to a calm, controlled state. The amount of time needed may vary from person to person. This may include a break from the classroom.
2. When the staff member is ready and able, a discussion will occur with a member of the management team. The purpose of the discussion is to:
 - a) gather basic facts-talk about what was seen or heard.
 - b) look for patterns in the responses to the behaviour and the events preceding the crisis. Reflect on if staff knew what to do at the time.
 - c) explore ways to prevent similar situations happening in the future.
 - d) agree to changes that will improve future interventions.
3. Management will give support and encouragement to staff to strengthen the team.

4. Decisions made at the debriefing session will be noted on Aladdin. Triggers/strategies identified may be noted on a child's sensory diet and/or student support/behaviour support plan if they have one.

7.3 Positive Handling

There are many times when physical contact is used in our school, such as patting a child in affirmation, administering first aid and meeting intimate care needs. Our duty of care to others means that it may on occasion also be necessary to use physical contact to restrain a child who is putting themselves or another person at risk. The following examples, which are not exhaustive, outline the circumstances where physical contact may be used in the school:

- physically interposing between pupils
- blocking a pupil's path
- holding or pushing another child
- leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of their back
- in extreme cases using more restrictive holds.

The following principles are followed by staff who find themselves in a situation where they feel a restrictive physical intervention is necessary:

Action by staff will:

- be in best interests of the child
- use maximum care, minimum force
- be reasonable, proportionate and necessary
- be for reasons of safety

Positive handling may be part of an agreed plan with parents and the pupil where appropriate. If this is the case plans will be viewed regularly with a view to reducing the need for intervention.

7.4 Ladder of Intervention

As part of the whole-school approach, there is an agreed ladder of intervention which the staff use in response to inappropriate behaviour (See Appendix 2). In general pupils start on level 1 and progress through the levels if necessary.. Depending on the presenting behaviours there may be occasions when the intervention may start at a higher level and/or may skip levels. This will be decided in consultation with the Deputy Principal/Principal.

Parents/guardians of pupils from level 3 will be kept informed of their child's behaviour and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the pupil to improve his/her behaviour. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

The staff at Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together have an appreciation and awareness of the complex and individual needs some children have. Where a pupil with special needs behaves inappropriately, the teachers, in consultation with the Deputy Principal/Principal, will use their professional judgment in relation to the implementation of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

In order to determine if a behaviour contract is the correct tool to assist in altering inappropriate behaviours of children with SEN, staff will reflect on and consider the following:

- What message is the child trying to communicate?
- Is a behaviour contract the correct tool to help the child learn more appropriate ways to communicate?
- Does the child have the capability to adhere to a behaviour contract?

A behaviour contract can be useful for students who have the skills, but *do not always* have the internal motivation to comply with the task at hand.

If a child with SEN has behaviour targets, these targets take precedence within their student support plan, rather than being in a separate behaviour plan document.

8. Suspension and Expulsion (ref: NEWB Guidelines for Schools: Developing a Code of Behaviour)

8.1 Suspension

Suspension is defined as "requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days." During the period of a suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school.

a) Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together, in consultation with the Principal, has the authority to suspend a pupil.

b) Grounds for Suspension

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

Factors to consider before suspending a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

A single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

Where the purpose of a proposed suspension is clearly identified, and that purpose cannot be achieved in any other way, suspension can have value. Suspension can be counter-productive if used without a clear rationale or without measuring its impact and value. School management should consider the risk of any unwanted outcomes from suspension,

such the child repeating inappropriate behaviours in order to spend more time at home or increasing a sense of alienation from school that could lead to a cycle of behavioural and academic problems.

c) Procedures for Suspension

In the event of serious misbehaviour, the school will conduct a preliminary assessment of the facts based on discussions with teachers and staff and previous school behaviour records. If this assessment confirms that the behaviour could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- The pupil and their parents are informed about the complaint, that it will be investigated and that it may result in suspension. Parents are informed in writing and where practical by phone.
- The parents and pupil are given an opportunity to meet with the Principal to discuss the incident and respond before any sanction is imposed.
- If a pupil and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will inform them in writing advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour.
- Any decision to suspend is given in writing to the parents.

d) Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, will be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the pupil. In no circumstances will a pupil be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

e) The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal/Board of Management consider that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student.

f) Implementing the suspension Written notification

The Principal should notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any work to be covered
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, section 29)

e) Appealing a Suspension

Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and parents will be made aware of this appeal process and option.

10.2 Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

a) Authority to Expel

The authority to expel a student is reserved to the Board of Management.

b) Grounds for Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

Factors to consider before expelling a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, the Board of Management will have tried a

series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

c) Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence.

d) Procedures for expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Steps 1 to 6 as outlined above and detailed in "Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools", issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) Pages 83 – 86 will be followed. In the event of an appeal the appeals process under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be followed.

e) Appealing a Suspension

Any expulsion is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and parents will be made aware of this appeal process and option.

f) Review of use of Expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

10.3 Responding to bullying behaviour

Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together has in place an Anti-Bullying Policy. In the event of an allegation of bullying taking place the procedures outlined in the Anti-Bullying Policy will be adhered to.

10.4 Responding to Substance Related Incidents

The school has in place a Substance Use Policy. In the event of an allegation related to this policy procedures outlined in the policy will be adhered to.

This Code of Positive Behaviour was ratified without any changes by the Board of Management of Malahide/ Portmarnock Educate Together NS in May 2024. It will be reviewed again in the academic year 2027/28.

The Code of Positive Behaviour was submitted to and approved by the Patron

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Appendix 1: Proactive Strategies for Positive Behaviour Management

1.1 Strategies for children with communication needs

- Give clear instructions: rephrase if necessary.

- Realise that whole-class instructions may not be noticed – the child may not realise they apply to them.
- Use child's name and allow take-up time before giving an instruction.
- Use clear and concise language, avoid humour and irony and check for understanding.
- Have clear rules and use them positively. Reinforce them regularly, remembering to make expectations clear.
- Minimise disruption of routines. Warn of forthcoming disruptions and rehearse if appropriate. Try to conform to daily routine as much as possible, explaining any last-minute changes to the child.
- Personal Timetable.
- A personal workspace.
- Focus on the things that a child can do rather than things that they find difficult. For example, if there is a difficulty with empathy, avoid questions such as 'why did you do that' or 'why do you think x feels that way'.
- Use the child's interests when designing reward programmes or incentives.
- Know that generalisation may not occur. Just because a child can multiply three-digit numbers doesn't mean that they can complete simple multiplication word problems.
- Explicitly teach social skills.
- Clearly communicate and model positive behaviours, linking praise to the desired behaviour.
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

1.2 Strategies for children with attention needs

- Have a very predictable routine and provide individual timetables, pocket timetables and prompt cards as appropriate.
- Seat the child close to an adult in the room.
- Surround the child with good role models.
- Make a workstation available with reduced stimuli.
- Give clear and concise directions and instructions. Write these down so the child doesn't have to remember them.
- Ask for instructions to be repeated back to you to ensure there is an understanding before the task starts.
- Give tasks one at a time rather than in a list.
- When assessing a child's skill level, make sure that it is the skill that is being assessed rather than a child's attention span.
- Use errands to give children a short break.
- Avoid using the child's name constantly in front of the class. Develop a covert signal instead.
- Use tactical ignoring for low-level behaviours. Focus on the positives and give plenty of specific praise.
- Within elastic boundaries, don't be afraid to challenge negative behaviours, keep options open and give the child a get-out.
- Discuss negative behaviours without an audience.
- Actively encourage the development of self-esteem and tolerance within the class as a whole.
- Strip of Velcro under the table.
- Elastics on a chair.
- Stress ball.

- Stickers.
- Proximal Praise.
- BLURT/Behaviour cubes.
- Volcano Chart
- Use of books, social stories.
- Surround the child with model peers.
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

1.3 Strategies for defiant children

- Make expectations clear and reward when expectations are met
- Remind the child of what they are working towards and try to encourage them to keep on track.
- Ensure fair warning of transitions – use a visual timetable/sand time if it helps.
- Use empathetic statements which help the child to know that you understand how they feel.
- Give direct instructions to reduce ambiguity and redirect if possible. Give a clear instruction as to what you want the child to do.
- Make your praise specific.
- Give choices wherever possible e.g. ‘which of these two activities are you going to start with?’.
- Have clear routines and structures and try not to deviate from them where possible.
- See the strategies above for children with attention needs; some of them may be useful.
- Allow take-up time.
- Use indirect language: ‘let’s see if we can ...’
- Utilise the child’s interests.
- Give choices or present the same activity in more than one way.
- Use humour.
- Use distraction.
- Be flexible in your approach.
- Depersonalise ‘demands’ by using a puppet or a toy.
- Use a feelings board and emotions cards.
- Ensure the child has an exit strategy.
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

1.4 Strategies for children with sensory needs

- Seat away from distracting sources of noise, in an area of low traffic.
- Build in breaks.
- Allow physical activity.
- Use noise-cancelling earphones to reduce stimulation.
- Seat on an appropriate chair and encourage the child to put their feet flat on the floor and rest their elbows on the table.
- Be aware that changes in routine may be difficult.
- Actively teach turn-taking and social skills.
- Practice the appropriate language to be used in social situations.
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

1.5 Strategies for children with social and emotional needs

- Be aware that the behaviours that you see are quite often the tip of the iceberg and that children need your support.
- Ensure your school and classroom systems are clear and fair.
- Realise that these children need flexible teaching arrangements.
- Actively teach and encourage positive interaction with peers and adults.
- Take a 'least to most intrusive' approach.
- Specifically teach rules and routines.
- Give many, many more rewards than sanctions.
- Provide a safe and supportive environment.
- Build relationships.
- Anticipate incidents and avoid them. Don't persist in putting the child in situations where they are likely to fail.
- Be aware that, in supporting these children, you may need to change your own behaviour and challenge your own beliefs.
- Encourage peer support and help to build friendship groups. be aware that these children can often become isolated.
- Provide them with the opportunity for regular classroom breaks.
- Develop an awareness of their emotions.
- Discussion/reflection on behaviour when calm.
- Calm Pass to access the Calm Corner
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

1.6 Strategies for forgetful children

- Materials given by school recorded on a chart. Child who keeps the item for the longest wins a prize.
- Colour coordinated with groups (e.g. red sticker for red group).
- Names on pencils.
- Sticker prompt for individual on desk.
- Nurture Group
- Positive behaviour note

Appendix 2: Ladder of Intervention

Level 1

- **Verbal Reminder:** Verbal reminder of expected behaviour, acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviours
- **Verbal Reprimand:** Verbal reprimand and repeated reminder of expected behaviours

Level 2

- **Individual Supports to be put in place:** See Appendix 1 for suggestions
- **Move to Another Location within the same Space:** Child is given the opportunity to complete work in another area of the classroom or yard.
- **Verbal Apology:** Child apologises for misbehaviour verbally.

Level 3

- **Move to another location in the school:** Child will be moved to another classroom, or if on yard, to the reception area. Child is to complete work and a restorative practice sheet.
- **Withdrawal of Privileges**
- **Restorative Practice Sheet:** Child will complete an age-appropriate restorative practice sheet with a teacher.
- **Communication with Parents:**
 - Parents to sign restorative practice sheet
 - Class teacher communicates details of misbehaviour to parents either verbally at pick-up time, over the phone or *via email*.
- **Deputy Principal informed and teacher notes communication with parents on Aladdin**

Note: In infant classes restorative practice sheet to be completed with child during eating time, after the child has had a chance to eat something.

Level 4

- **Restorative Practice Sheet :** Child completes a restorative practice sheet, facilitated either by class teacher or support teacher. Parents to sign restorative practice session sheet.
- **Behaviour Contract to be drawn up by the class teacher and saved on Aladdin, co-signed by parents (see Appendix 2)**
- Breach of Behaviour Contract to be communicated to parents via a Behaviour Note (see Appendix 3)
- **Involving other staff including Deputy Principal/Principal**
- **Communication with parents:** Teacher holds a meeting with parents. Teacher will note communication on Aladdin.
- **Written Apology:** Child provides a written apology, co-signed by parents
- **Deputy Principal Informed and teacher will note on Aladdin**

Level 5

- **Individual Behaviour Plan to be drawn up and saved on Aladdin:** Class teacher will devise an individual behaviour plan in consultation with the pupil and parent(s), with the support of the Deputy Principal. The individual behaviour plan will state strengths, needs, reasons for concern, targets and strategies as to how the child will be supported to behave in an appropriate way. Class teacher will discuss and review behaviour plan at regular intervals with the child, providing feedback on improvements the child has made and addressing further areas for improvement. See Appendix 4 for sample behaviour plan.
- **Communication with Parents:** Formal Meeting with parent(s), principal and class teacher. Class teacher to record on Aladdin.

Level 6

- **Referral to the Board of Management**
- **Suspension (see 7.1 for details)**

Level 7

- **Referral to the Board of Management**
- **Expulsion (See Section 7.2 for details)**

Appendix 3: Sample Behaviour Contract Template

My Behaviour Contract

INSERT PICTURE OF PUPIL HERE

How I want to feel at the end of the day (*Teacher discusses with child what emotions they want to feel at the end of the school day. Discussion about positive interactions and fun times in school versus arguments and negative attitude etc*)

Example: I want to feel proud and happy at the end of the day. When I come out of school I want to say to myself that today was a good day at school and that I enjoyed it! I want my relationships with my friends and teachers to be good and happy.

I'll know I am doing a good job if I feel like this!

What I need to do to achieve this (*This is how they are going to get to that end goal every day using child friendly language*)

Example:

- ✓ Showing respect to everyone in the school
- ✓ Waiting for my turn to speak
- ✓ Speaking nicely to everyone and not shouting over people
- ✓ If I need a break or time to think, telling my teacher

Pupil's signature _____ Teacher's signature _____

Parent's signature _____

Appendix 3: Behaviour Note

Behaviour Note

Date: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you are aware _____ has an agreed behaviour contract. Today elements of this contract were broken.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Following instructions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for other pupils | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour in class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application to work | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour in yard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for other pupils' property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for school property | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality |

To ensure that _____ really thinks about his/her behaviour and tries his/her best to make a better choice next time, he/she is to write about what happened and describe how he/she will try to prevent it recurring again.

Kind regards,

=====

I/We acknowledge receipt of this Behaviour Note:

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/PRINCIPAL BY _____

Appendix 4: Positive Behaviour Note Sample

Good News!

Just a note to say _____ had an
outstanding day!



Behaviour:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Listened attentively | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tried their best | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worked extra hard | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used some Gaeilge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Helped others | <input type="checkbox"/> | Was mannerly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Followed directions | <input type="checkbox"/> | Was a good friend | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Improved in class | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neat work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Positive attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> | Solved a problem | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Showed respect | <input type="checkbox"/> | Was a team player | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Was very kind | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Appendix 5: Behaviour Plan Template



**M A L A H I D E
P O R T M A R N O C K**
Educate Together
National School

Behaviour Support Plan	
Name of Student	
Date of Birth	
School	
Date File Opened	
Date File Closed	

Behaviour Support File, Log of Actions

Date	Actions

Behaviour Support Plan *Month Year*

Initials:	Class:	Commencement date of supplementary teaching:	
Date of Birth:	Lead teacher:		
Start date of plan:	Review dates of plan:	Names of those present at review:	

Summary of Reports

Assessment carried out by	Date	Result/Recommendations

Targets for Priority Learning Needs and Strategies

Target 1:			
Achievement Criterion (What?)	Strategies to help the student achieve the targets (How?)	When?	Staff involved (Who?) and resources needed

	•		
Staff Comments			
Any comments from the student?			

Target 2:			
Achievement Criterion (What?)	Strategies to help the student achieve the targets (How?)	When?	Staff involved (Who?) and resources needed
	•		
Staff Comments			
Any comments from the student?			

Signature of:

Date:

Date:

Date:

Class Teacher

Support Teacher(s)

SNA

Parent(s)

School Principal

Appendix 6: Restorative Practice Sample Template

1. What happened? Write or draw what happened

2. What were you thinking about at the time? Write your thoughts in the thinking bubble.

3. What have your thoughts been since the incident? Write them in the thinking bubble.

How did it make you feel? Draw your facial expression

4. Who do you think has been affected by your actions? In what way have they been affected? Write down who was affected in the body outline and label how they were affected. You can also draw their facial expression.

5. What do you need to do now to make things right? Write in the speech bubble.

Restorative Practice

