Code of Discipline
Donard National School

Introductory Statement: Donard National School is a rural primary school in West Wicklow. We currently have five mainstream classroom teachers and two SNAs. We are an inclusive school which promotes respect and positive behaviour. Our vision is that each and every child will be enabled to reach their full potential and will have access to a well-rounded curriculum. Our staff and teachers model positive behaviour. We promote a culture of mutual respect between students and staff. This code was drawn up by the teachers in consultation with the Parents Association and School council of the school and with the approval of the Board of Management.

Rationale: To have a coherent approach to positive behaviour and discipline throughout the school which staff, parents, children and B.O.M will be aware of.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School: That the children of Donard N.S. would actualise the vision of the school which is: It is hoped that a child leaving Donard National School would be a confident well-rounded individual achieving his/her potential academically, socially, morally, with respect for diversity in others and a sense of their own worth.

Aims: To ensure a stable environment throughout the school which will facilitate learning for all. To ensure that teachers, staff and children will find the school a safe and secure place to be.

Guidelines :

Our school works from the principles of respect and positive behaviour. We have high standards for behaviour in our school and recognise that strategies must be put in place to encourage positive behaviour. The strategies that we use to do this are as follows:

- **positive everyday interactions between teachers and students**
- **good school and class routines**
- **helping students to recognise and show kindness towards others**
- **clear boundaries and rules for students**
- **helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour**
- **exploring with students how people should treat each other**
- **involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules.**

Rewards: The staff have developed a positive form of discipline throughout the school. Current good practise is as follows:

- We promote positive behaviour throughout our school. The staff acknowledge all students for their achievements within their own classroom and during assemblies and school gatherings.

- Teachers acknowledge achievements (ie, courtesy, friendliness, teamwork academic efforts) by sending positive notes home to parents.

- Our staff use positive language and work collaboratively with all the students in the school.

- In the infant classes, children will be rewarded for positive behaviour with stars, stickers etc.
- From 1st – 6th classes, they will be rewarded for positive behaviour with stickers and a stamp/tick system. Where rewards are earned individually they may be in the form of lucky dips and/or homework passes. These rewards are based on positive not always academic achievements and are achievable by all children.

- At Donard National School we use a range of positive strategies to promote positive behaviour. These include class dojo, student of the week, whole class rewards and individual rewards.

- Our school corridor has a good news board. One item from each class is placed on this board each month. These range from extra-curricular activities, inside and outside school competitions social achievements and academic achievements.

- Whole school assemblies take place monthly whereby whole school positive behaviour is acknowledged and promoted.

Positive Relationships at our school

Donard national school and all its stakeholders recognise the importance of positive relationships between students and teachers . It is our belief that the quality of relationships between teachers and students is one of the most powerful influences on student behaviour. For many students, their teachers are a major source of support, adult empathy and pastoral care, and are hugely significant figures in their lives.

Mutually respect is valued at our school. We recognise that relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency. Teachers provide students with time for discussion about class routines and rules. All opinions are valued at our school.

Sanctions:

If a student's behaviour impacts negatively on the wellbeing or the teaching and learning of themselves or others, sanctions that will be used to assist in changing the behaviours. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Sanctions are used to signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to: • prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning • keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

Reasoning with pupil: We promote a problem solving approach to change behaviours that impact negatively. Sanctions that teachers use to help children learn that certain behaviours are unacceptable are as follows:

Reprimand by teacher

a) Sanctions within the classroom (in no particular order)

- Withdrawal of privileges (e.g. school trips & extra-curricular activities)
- Extra work
- Note in journal to be signed by the parents
- Detention during breaks under supervision of teacher
- Removal from the classroom
- Appropriate and relevant responses to presenting behaviours

b) Sanctions within school:

- Note in journal to parents, written by teacher, signed by Principal.
- Teachers will keep notes of individual adverse behaviour incidences within the classroom as deemed necessary.
- Principal will keep notes of individual adverse behavioural incidences which have come to her attention.
- Parents may be phoned and/or written to by the Principal note to be signed and returned to school immediately. If note is not returned, Parents will be contacted by phone and /or letter will go in the post. A copy of these letters or note of phone call will be retained and kept on file in school.
- Parents will be asked to meet class teacher. This meeting will be arranged by appointment only.

- Parents will be asked to meet class teacher with Principal at a time convenient to all.
- In the event of a very serious misdemeanour parents/guardians will be notified immediately by phone or letter at the discretion of the Principal. If the child's behaviour has not improved the principal has an option of suspending the pupil from school for a period not exceeding 3 school days. – Procedures for Suspension will be noted in part 2 of this code

Donard National School promotes a culture of respect towards all the school community individuals and our school building. We envisage that the staff and children take pride in our school property. It is expected that the children in Donard National School Will:

- Be punctual for school in the morning
- Be punctual when returning from breaks
- A) that all homework as per agreed homework policy will be completed daily
  B) parents/guardians should check and sign set homework daily
- Instructions from all teachers and staff must be respectfully and promptly obeyed ar all times, both inside and outside the classroom and in the vicinity of the school.
- Children must keep to the footpaths at the front of the school and should not walk along the wall.
- Children must stay within the school grounds during school hours.
- Children are encouraged to eat their lunch within the classroom. Remaining lunch may be taken outside without the wrapping. Re – usable plastic containers are encouraged. Children are encouraged to bring a healthy lunch without chewing gum, crisps, popcorn or sweets.
- Children should stay where they can be seen and should not play in recesses, at doors or at the back of the shed.
- Must respect the school garden.
- Should stay on the ground (no climbing).
- Must stay out at break. Children must ask to use the yard toilet when on yard at break time. They should also tell teacher when they return to the yard.
- Must respect sports equipment and use it properly.
- Must try to include all children in their games and play.
- When representing the school, children are expected to be on their best behaviour. In the event of misbehaviour e.g. aggressive behaviour or attitude or the use of bad language or defiance of a teacher or member of staff, the child will not be asked to represent the school again on the next occasion. In the event of a reoccurrence of such

behaviour at a subsequent outing, the child will not be asked to represent the school again. Their parents will contacted to explain this.

- Children are expected to behave well in school. If they are involved in a serious incident of misbehaviour e.g. giving defiance of a teacher or member of staff or persistent breaking of the above rules, they will not be asked to represent the school elsewhere until it is judged by the teacher in conjunction with the Principal, that they can be trusted to behave.
- Mobile phones are prohibited in school in exceptional cases. In such cases, parents must where they are deem it necessary make a written request, outlining reasons for the necessity of the phone. If the written request is granted, the mobile phone must switched off during school hours. The school accepts no responsibility for care of the phone.
- Retaliation by a pupil will not be accepted. If a pupil is 'hit' or 'punched' by another pupil and retaliates back with any kind of physicality both pupils will be treated with similar consequences when the incident is investigated by their teachers. The school does not condone retaliation in any instance.

School Uniform:

The school uniform consists of the following:

- **Informal navy tracksuit** with a blue polo shirt, t-shirt or shirt. Navy shorts may be worn during warm weather.
- **Optional:** Tie, trousers, pinafore or skirt.
- **Footwear:** Runners or shoes.

Additionally:

- The only jewellery permitted is a **watch** (no smart watches) and **stud earrings**.
- No facial piercings are allowed.
- **Make-up** is not allowed.

Any violations will be addressed as follows:

1. **First Violation:** A verbal warning will be given to the child.
2. **Second Violation:** A note will be sent home for parents to sign.
3. **Third Violation:** A phone call will be made to parents.
4. **Fourth Violation:** The child will be given the school uniform to wear.

Bullying

Definition:

Bullying is a repeated inappropriate behaviour direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others. A one off incident of a serious nature is also considered to be bullying. It will not be tolerated in our school.
Parents will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying Policy. All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with according to the procedures set out in our Anti Bullying

Policy and Sanctions in the Code of Discipline.

Yard Behaviour:

- Children must walk to and from the yard.
- Children must not retrieve balls outside the yard area without supervision.
- Children who behaviour will be reported to their class teacher and/or the Principal.
- Children who persistently misbehave may be asked to accompany the teacher or to stay in one place to contemplate their behaviour.
- Children should play properly i.e. no piggybacks, red rover, climbing trees, swinging on goal posts, horseplay or (rugby) dangerous ball play.
- If unwell, or injured child may ask permission and go with another child to the office in accordance with children First Guidelines.
- Children should stay where they can been seen and should not play in recesses, at doors or at the back of the shed.
- Children must respect the school garden.
- Children must stay on the ground (no climbing).
- Children must stay out at break. Children must ask to use the yard toilet when on yard at break time. They should also tell teacher when they return to the yard.
- Children must respect sports equipment and use it properly.
- Children must try to include all children in their games and play.

Children will be reminded of school rules at assembly.

PART 2 – PROCEDURES ON SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

The school will follow procedure as per the NEWB guidelines (2008)

8. Notes on Suspension

Procedures for suspension

8.1 SUSPENSION

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil and may do so for up to 10 consecutive days at one time or for 20 days in a school year (pg 75/76 section 11.6). The authority to suspend a pupil for up to 3 consecutive school days (pg 75 section 11.6 first and second paragraph) has been delegated by the Board of Management in writing to the Principal on 11th March 2025.(pg 70). A single incident of misbehaviour may be grounds for automatic suspension.

8.2 PROCEDURE FOR SUPENSION OTHER THANFOR AN AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the principal will:

- Inform the student and his/her parents about the complaint either by phone or in writing,
- Give the pupil and the parents an opportunity to respond.
- Place the pupil detention until a determination is made about suspension.

Parents will be given an opportunity to respond (pg75), to make their case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with the parents how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal recommends to the Board of Management that a period of suspension longer than 3 days is needed to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management considers the following circumstances are the ones where the principal would consider recommending 5 days rather than 3 as an appropriate suspension. Any one of the following on its own may be considered appropriate to warrant a recommendation of 5 days suspension:

- When a pupil fails to respond or acknowledge the seriousness of the events leading to a proposed suspension.
- Where injury has been inflicted on another person to such a degree of severity as to warrant medical attention and/or a visit to a doctor.
- Where the pupil continues to display belligerence, hostility or aggression.

If a suspension longer than 3 days is being recommended by the principal the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and with excepted outcomes. The Board of Management has authorised the principal in writing, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in the circumstances where a meeting of the Board of

Management cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance already provided to the principal concerning such suspension.(pg75)
The Board of Management will not impose a suspension of more than 10 days consecutive school days on a pupil at any one time.
The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a principal's decision to suspend a pupil for 3 day before the suspension takes effect or within 21 days after the suspension has finished. (pg 76 Section 11.7). If an appeal is to be entertained before a suspension is to take place, then the pupil will automatically be placed in detention until the appeal is complete and the appeal decision is relayed to parents. If the appeal against the decision to suspend is not upheld or if the period of suspension is altered but not set aside, then the suspension will begin as soon as practicable after the decision on the appeal is relayed to parents, normally starting the next school day. This applies to suspensions up to 20 days in total for one or more separate periods of suspension in any given school year. The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more, (pg76 section 11.6).

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal to suspension under section 29 of the ***Education Act 1998*** as amended by the ***Education (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2007(pg 76, Section 29 appeal in Section 11.7).***

The principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend their child and letter to confirm pg76)

- The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reason for suspension.
- Any arrangements for returning to school including any commitment to be entered into by the pupil and the parents.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management and
- The right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science.(pg77)

8.3 PROCEDURES FOR AUTOMATIC SUSPENSIONS

The principal has been authorised in writing on 11th March 2025 to impose an automatic suspension where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person or for one of the named behaviours (bottom of page 73 listed below:

- In the circumstances of an automatic suspension.
- The use of a knife or fake or gun or fake or glass or any other offensive weapon or fake weapon or instrument or piece of equipment to inflict injury or harm on another person.
- The defiant refusal to carry out the instruction of a teacher.

- To protect the safety of the pupil or staff the (deliberate) destruction by fire or any other method of school property.

In the circumstances of an automatic suspension, the parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. No pupil will be sent home alone.

In the circumstances where an automatic suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for one or more of the named behaviours, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of an automatic suspension during which the suspended pupil will be invited to the school to be interviewed by arrangement in the school either in the presence of his/her parents or not.

(In a serious case the offending pupil will need to come back to school during the investigation so that he/she will be able to hear the allegations being made and to respond to the allegations and to ask questions of the other party or witness if there is a dispute about the facts and to be heard by the decision making body.pg 67 section10.3)

8.4 REINTEGRATING THE PUPIL AND STARTING WITH A CLEAN SLATE

The principal will arrange for a member of staff to provide support for the pupil during the reintegration process. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

8.5 RECORDING AND REPORTING

A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be kept which will include:

- The investigation including notes of all interviews held
- The decision making process
- The decision and rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The school will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.
The principal. If acting on the written delegated authority to suspend, will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension (pg78).

The principal will report all suspensions to the national Education welfare Board in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines (Education Welfare) Act 2000, section 32(4) (a) (pg 78).

9. PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION

9.1 General

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. The authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the Principal(pg80).

- Before expelling a pupil, the school will have 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, if appropriate.

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds such that:
The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

9.2 PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION OTHER THAN FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

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

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and holding of a hearing.
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer of the National Educational Welfare Board.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.
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9.3 EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel pupils for a first offence for the following behaviours (pg81)

1. A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
2. Actual violence or physical assault.
3. The supply of illegal drugs to other students in the school.
4. Sexual Assault.

10. ABSENCES OF PUPILS

10.1 The Education (Welfare) Act, 200, Section 18, requires parents to notify the Principal of a school of the reasons for a child's absence. Section 23 of the same Act requires the Code of Behaviour of a school to outline the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school. In compliance with these sections, the following procedures apply.

10.2 for absences of pupils from school for a period of up to 3 days, parents will send a letter or fill up a form for the class teacher upon the return of the child to school outlining the reason(s) for absence.
10.3 For periods of absence in excess of 3 school days, parents will phone the school on the third day to indicate that the child will be absent for a period of longer than 3 days and indicating the approximate length of absence. Upon return from absence, parents will send a letter or fill up a form for the class teacher outlining the reason(s) for absence.
10.4 *The Education (Welfare) act 2000, Section 21(4)* requires a School Principal to inform an educational welfare officer in writing if the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more. Additionally, Section 21(4) authorises the school Principal to notify an Educational Welfare Officer if, in the opinion of the Principal, a child "is not attending school regularly".
10.5 It is necessary on occasions, for a variety of reasons, for pupils to leave school early. Written notification of , outlining the reason(s), must be given to the teacher in advance. Parents or others acting on behalf of parents, who call to collect children early will call to reception/the school office for this purpose. Under no circumstances are pupils allowed leave the school building unaccompanied to meet parents or others off-site.

Rules

Success Criteria

Children, parents, staff and Board of management will be aware of all rules. Children will be reminded of school rules at assembly. Assessment in the form of staff feedback will take place at regular staff meetings. Classes will discuss the need for rules, rewards and sanctions on a regular basis. Policy will be brought to parents on a regular basis for review. Parents will have access to the policy at all times. The Inspector, through the Plean Scoile will be made aware of the discipline policy in the school.

Roles and Responsibility:

The policy will be supported, developed and implemented by the staff in conjunction with the children, parents/guardians and Board of Management. Staff will review the effectiveness of the policy. Parents and children will be updated on any change to improve effectiveness.

Timeframe for Implementation:

Please note this policy is an upgrade of the existing discipline policy to take into consideration the new Guidelines from N.E.W.B. The policy has been in place since September 2009. Any changes to the policy upon review will be implemented immediately.

Timeframe for Review:

Rules of school to be reviewed at regular assemblies and staff meeting and changed as deemed necessary.

Responsibility for Review:
Staff, pupils, parents and B.O.M.

Ratification:
Policy reviewed by Staff on 17th September 2013.
Policy reviewed by Parents Association 24th September 24th 2013.
Policy reviewed by Board of Management 24th September 2013.
Policy reviewed by Board of Management 31st May 2017.
Policy reviewed by Board of Management 12th March 2020.
Policy reviewed by Board of Management on 11th March 2025.

Signed: Seanie Kelly Date: 11 March 2025

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: Peter Kelly Date: 11/03/2025

Principal