



# RAHEEN NATIONAL SCHOOL

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## Code of Discipline Policy

### Restorative Practice in Raheen NS

At Raheen NS, we are committed to promoting a positive school environment where respect, empathy, and responsibility are at the core of how we respond to conflict or poor behaviour. As a starting point, we use Restorative Practice with all students when addressing behavioural concerns.

#### **What is Restorative Practice?**

Restorative Practice is an approach that encourages pupils to reflect on their actions, consider the impact of their behaviour on others, and take steps to repair relationships. It focuses on building understanding and empathy rather than assigning blame.

We aim to use restorative language across the school day to help children develop emotional awareness and an appreciation of different perspectives. Teachers and staff use age-appropriate language to support this understanding, and where suitable, children may be supported with restorative reflection sheets to explore how situations made them or others feel. These materials are available from the Principal or SET team.

#### **Restorative Questions:**

When engaging with pupils, staff use the following six core restorative questions:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected and in what way?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?

#### **Restorative Strategies Used in Our School**

- **Restorative Conversations**: Informal one-to-one or small group conversations guided by the questions above.
- **Restorative Circles**: A classroom-based strategy where pupils come together in a respectful space to discuss an issue and hear each other's perspectives. These are often used proactively to build a sense of community as well as in response to conflict.

## **Further Disciplinary Action**

While restorative practice is our preferred first response, if a student repeatedly breaches school rules or refuses to engage in reflection with due regard for others, the school will proceed with the appropriate steps as outlined in our Code of Behaviour. Sanctions will be applied in line with the severity and frequency of the behaviour.

## **Rewards and Sanctions**

### **Rewards**

- Positive behaviour is reinforced through the following strategies:
- The verbal acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour
- Written acknowledgement of good behaviour (communication book- where appropriate)
- Use of an award system agreed on an individual or class basis i.e. Do Jo points/ Homework passes
- Individual rewards which can include extra computer time, favourite game,( e.g. Lego Club) favourite books, favourite chores, outdoor activity,
- The acknowledgement of success in a variety of areas- art, sport, handwriting, photography etc.
- The provision of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate skills in music, sport, art etc

### **Sanctions**

The following strategies may be included as ways of showing disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- ✓ Individual discussion with the pupil who has exhibited unacceptable behaviour (Level 1 /2 – See table below) The discussion may include:
  - Reasoning with the pupil
  - Advice on how to behave
  - Reprimand
- ✓ Communication with parents. Parents will be informed of serious misdemeanours at an early stage.
- ✓ Temporary separation from peers.
- ✓ Loss of individual rewards.
- ✓ Detention during break. (length of detention will depend on individual circumstances).
- ✓ Referral to the Principal.
- ✓ The Principal may in some circumstances deem it necessary to request parents to collect the pupil from school.

- ✓ A formal verbal communication may be given by The Principal to the child's parents to warn them of impending suspension if the misconduct ( Level 1 or 2) is repeated or becomes more serious (See misbehaviour levels detailed before "Suspension procedure")
- ✓ Detention at home: An agreement may be drawn up with parents as part of an overall behaviour management plan whereby the parents agree to keep a pupil out of school for a short period following serious challenging behaviour.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

In cases of a single incident of very serious misbehaviour or a series of less serious but still significant incidents, the Principal and/or Board of Management may commence the suspension or expulsion procedures.

### **Suspension**

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between his/her action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The purpose of suspension is one of corrective support rather than punishing pupils for misbehaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety of the pupil himself or herself, staff or other members of the school community.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

### **RAHEEN NS- Graded Levels of Misconduct**

<b>Level 1- Minor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being generally un-cooperative, ignoring or back answering the teacher</li> <li>• Using bad, sexual or inappropriate language in the classroom or on the yard, directed at the teacher, SNA, pupils, The Principal or any other staff member.</li> <li>• Screeching or making noises that interrupt the class.</li> <li>• Chewing gum</li> <li>• Bringing a phone/ electronic device to school without permission</li> <li>• Leaving your place without permission</li> <li>• Leaving litter around the school</li> <li>• Not completing Homework without good reason.</li> </ul> <p><i>For a more in-depth list of infractions considered minor infractions please see the Code of Behaviour, included here and displayed throughout the school.</i></p>
<b>Level 2 (serious)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refusal to follow instructions given by teacher or SNA.</li> <li>• Using threatening, intimidating or sexual language or using physically/sexually threatening gestures in the classroom or on the yard.</li> <li>• Spitting</li> <li>• Leaving the school without permission</li> <li>• Bringing dangerous items to school</li> <li>• Repeated inappropriate responses to teacher correction.</li> <li>• Bullying other pupils</li> <li>• Repeated and continuous incidences of minor misbehaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 (gross)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifting objects/furniture with the intention to cause harm to teachers, SNAs or other pupils.</li> <li>• Being physically or sexually aggressive to teachers, SNAs or other pupils with the intent to cause harm.</li> <li>• Causing wilful damage to school property / furniture/ educational resources.</li> <li>• serious theft</li> <li>• Spitting at someone</li> <li>• Serious bullying</li> <li>• Carrying cigarettes, alcohol or drugs on the school premises.</li> </ul>

**Any misconduct from Level 3 will result in an immediate 3-day suspension from school.**

**3 serious (level 2) incidents of misconduct will be considered the same as a single level 3 incident.**

\*The class teacher, along with the educational support team, will consider any additional needs of the child and how this might impact their behaviour. Tailored support can be given to children with additional needs.

## **Procedures for Suspension**

The Board of Management and Staff of Raheen National School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the NEWB Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board 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 on the school premises.

The power to suspend a pupil for up to three days has been formally delegated to the School Principal by the Board of Management of Raheen National School and that delegation is hereby confirmed.

The Principal, or in cases where a longer period of suspension is contemplated, the Board of Management, will among other things, take account of the following factors in determining the duration of a suspension. These factors are not exhaustive, and the Principal or Board may also have regard to other matters that the Principal or Board, in their absolute discretion think may be appropriate.

- ✓ The age, comprehension and needs of the pupil.
- ✓ The pupil's previous record of behaviour at the school.
- ✓ Any mitigating circumstances.
- ✓ The degree to which parental, peer, or other pressure might have contributed to the behaviour.
- ✓ The severity of the behaviour, its frequency, and the likelihood of recurrence.
- ✓ The extent to which the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the pupil and others in the school community.
- ✓ The degree to which the pupil recognises and accepts that his/her behaviour was unacceptable and is prepared to exhibit genuine contrition.

## **Suspension Procedure**

*(this procedure does not apply where the Principal is of the view that immediate suspension is warranted)*

- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.
- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted.
- Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians.
- A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective.

**The letter will confirm:**

- ✓ the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end,
- ✓ the reasons for the suspension
- ✓ any study programme to be followed during the suspension
- ✓ the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- ✓ the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- ✓ where applicable the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).

The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB ‘Student Absence Report Form’ (when applicable).

- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the school by the principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. In certain cases, re-admission will be conditional on the pupil and the pupil’s parents agreeing to a contract of behaviour or a behaviour plan.
- Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be readmitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- If a pupil continues to misbehave on return to the school s/he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil’s parents/guardians to address the issues.

- As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a pupil has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.

Suspension may also be invoked in order to direct a pupil to absent themselves from school premises for a particular period for reasons including but not limited to health and safety concerns for the pupil themselves or for other members of the school community or for administrative reasons pending the investigation of particular issue.

A meeting of the Board of Management may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days.

Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

#### **Removal of suspension** (reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.

In the event that the Principal is not satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupil's or staff, the parents(s) application to have the pupil reinstated to the school may be referred by the School Principal to the Board of Management.

In the event that the pupil is reinstated a revised Behaviour Intervention Plan for the pupil will be required prior to re-admitting the pupil formally to the class.

#### **Appeal**

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

#### **Report to NEWB**

The Principal is required to report to the NEWB suspensions of a certain length (i.e. 6 days or over) or suspensions which mean that the aggregate number of days of suspension in a school year is 20 or more

## **EXPULSION**

After the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence. Expulsion will apply in the event of any of the following concerning behaviours:

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety of the pupil himself or herself or to any other member of the school community including staff or other pupils.
- The student is responsible for serious assault or damage to property.
- The pupil being uncontrollable and not amenable to any form of school discipline or authority.
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff.
- Repeated occurrence attempted violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff.
- Attempted self-harm resulting in the risk of potentially serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school.
- Actual self-harm resulting in serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school.

### **Procedure in respect of expulsion:**

- Detailed investigation of incident(s) by school principal including interviews with all relevant parties, witnesses and the alleged wrongdoer.
- Provision of written report by Principal to Board of Management outlining the facts of the matter as ascertained by the Principal and the Principal's recommendations in relation to sanctions.
- The Principal's report should be furnished to the parents of the pupil at least 5 working days before the hearing referred to below. Sufficient time must be allowed to them to review the report and be aware of what allegations are being investigated as part of this process. If statements have been taken as part of the investigation or evidence gathered, the parents are entitled to copies of such statements (unless the statement has been given in confidence and on the understanding that it will not be

shared with the pupil and/or their parents) and details about the evidence which will be considered by the Board of Management.

- The Board of Management considers the school principal's report and recommendations and holds a hearing at which the child's parents/guardian can make submissions.
- The Board of Management considers if expulsion is appropriate in light of the following factors:
  1. The nature, scale and persistence of the behaviour in question
  2. The effect of the behaviour on the school community (staff and pupils)
  3. The previous behaviour and conduct of the pupil
  4. Any contrition or attempts by the pupil to reform their behaviour
  5. Attempts (short of expulsion) made by the Principal and staff to divert, correct or check the behaviour and the effectiveness of those attempts
  6. The duty of the school to provide an education for its pupils and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to discharge this duty.
  7. **The duty of care owed by the school to its employees, pupils and to visitors to the school and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to meet this duty of care.**
- Based on the foregoing considerations (including any submissions from the parents and the Principal's Report); the Board then makes a decision as to whether or not to exclude the pupil.
- If the Board of Management recommends expulsion, it will propose a date on which the expulsion will become effective which will allow a 20-school day period from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer is notified of the proposed expulsion.
- The Board will come to a decision on whether the student should be suspended until the expiry of the 20-school day period.
- The Education Welfare Officer is informed of the proposal to expel the pupil and the effective date of that proposal.
- Parents of the pupil are informed of their rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998.
- The Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations with the appropriate parties.

- Confirmation of the decision of the Board of Management (and if relevant, the effective date of the expulsion) is sent in writing by registered post or a recorded delivery method to the parents of the pupil.

**The formal letter of notification should be sent by registered post and should include:**

- Notice of the expulsion.
- Effective date of the expulsion.
- Reasons for the expulsion.
- A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed of the expulsion.
- A statement that the pupil is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians for the period of 20 school days required by the Education Welfare Officer to examine alternative provisions for the education of the pupil.
- Information and documentation on S.29 Appeal rights.

### **Appeal of expulsion**

Parents/guardians have the right to appeal an expulsion decision of the Board of

Management to the Minister for Education or to an authority delegated for such appeals by the Minister under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Permanent expulsion may be appealed by a parent/guardian, by a student (over 18 years), or by the National Education Welfare Board. Any such appeal must be lodged within 42 calendar days of the decision of the Board of Management.

### **Record Keeping**

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records of behaviour are compiled by the teacher, psychologist and behaviour specialist where appropriate.

- Records are written in a factual and impartial manner.
- The teacher report includes a section on behaviour where positive and negative behaviour is noted.
- Serious incidents of misbehaviour are reported immediately to the principal.
- Parents are kept informed regarding behaviour issues during the year. ○ In general misbehaviour on the playground/lunchroom is dealt with on the spot by staff on duty. Verbal reports of behaviour are only given to the class teacher if necessary.
- All DES documentation relating to behaviour is kept in the principal's office.

### **Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

- In accordance with The Education Welfare Act (2000), written notification of absence or proposed absence should be supplied to the class teacher outlining the reason for the absence. A letter to this effect is issued to new parents. The written notifications are kept by the class teacher for one year.
- Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is advisable not to take pupils out of school during term.
- If a pupil is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. In the event parents will be informed.
- The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board)

### **Outcome Indicators**

Indicators of the success of the policy will include:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from staff, parents and pupils

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 23/06/25

This policy was reviewed and amended on 23/06/25

Signed: Al. O'Leary Simott (chairperson)

Signed: Sarah Browne (principal)

