



Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

Code of Behaviour

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby
Principal (A): Ms. Mairéad Lyons
Date: 20th June 2024

CODE of BEHAVIOUR Meán Scoil Mhuire

Our mission statement:

Meán Scoil Mhuire is a voluntary Secondary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women.

Aims

- We respect the dignity of each person with her unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs.
- We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially and culturally.
- We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills, which enables them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, parents, students and the local community.
- Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition, we also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Introduction

A school's Code of Behaviour is a very important policy document. It sets out, for the whole school community the standard of behaviour expected, the supports in place to assist the students in upholding the code as well as rewards, sanctions and procedures involved in the code.

Meán Scoil Mhuire's Policy Document

Meán Scoil Mhuire's Code of Behaviour takes cognisance of current, relevant legislation, current thinking on behaviour management and good practice evident in many schools, at home and abroad. As with other policies, it has been well developed as part of the DEIS school plan and as a policy central to the mission of a CEIST school.

The Nature of a CEIST School

CEIST schools are constantly striving to be caring, inclusive places of learning, where positive behaviour is encouraged and recognized and where every effort is made to assist students to comply with the Code of Behaviour. It's code is positive in nature, student centred and in accordance with the ethos of CEIST. Meán Scoil Mhuire is catholic in character, inclusive in its intake, allows for and encourages the active involvement in the whole school community in decision making, and has a curriculum suited to the needs of its students and is permeated by justice and fairness.

Relevant Legislation

The following legislation and relevant documentation are informative for our Code of Behaviour, but not limited to:

Article 42 of the Irish Constitution
Circular Letters M34/88 and M33/91
The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
Article 19 of the Article of Management of Catholic Schools
Section 28 & 29 of the Education Act 1998
Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
The Equal Status Act 2000 (as amended)
Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004
The Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018
The Education Act 1998 (as amended)
The Education Welfare Act 2000 (as amended)
Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2012
Education (amendment) Act 2012
Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015
Misuse of Drugs Act (1977) revised 2021

Publishing the Policy

The Board of Management in accordance with its Statutory obligation has published its Code of Behaviour Policy and as recommended by the trustees of Meán Scoil Mhuire, it will be made available to the Parents and Guardians of all students enrolled in the school and of prospective entrants to the school.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This policy applies to students of Meán Scoil Mhuire and relates to all school activities both during and outside normal school hours. This policy was drawn up and reviewed in consultation with all the school partners, including Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students.

Relationship to school's mission, vision and aims

This policy has been developed in line with the mission of our CEIST Trustees, whose ethos and philosophy has at its core, care of the student. The school strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the development of our students. Our school Code of Behaviour is based on respect for oneself, for others and for our environment, so that a positive and co-operative school atmosphere prevails.

Rationale

Many people work together in our school each day and therefore a high level of courtesy and consideration for others is necessary. Behaviour which is ill mannered, dangerous or disruptive cannot be allowed. Our code is one that is based on the recognition of the student as an individual and yet creates an environment in which the welfare of all is protected.

Goals/ Objectives of our Code of Behaviour

- To create a safe, secure learning environment for all students by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- To have effective procedures in place which will allow for the day to day running of the school and which will meet the demands of the current legislation.
- To promote good behaviour and self-discipline.
- To allow for the appropriate involvement of all school personnel.
- To ensure understanding by the parents/guardians, students, staff and management of the code of behaviour and the reasons for it.
- To emphasise the promotion and acknowledgement of positive behaviour.
- To outline the strategies to be used to prevent negative behaviour and the ways in which positive behaviour is modelled and acknowledged.
- To outline the structure of fair consistent and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
- To outline the interventions to be used when a student repeatedly engages in negative behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Meán Scoil Mhuire acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community. Each member has a responsibility for the promotion of positive behaviour and a role in dealing with negative behaviour.

Students

The school expects that the student will at all times do her best to uphold the Code of Behaviour of our school.

Parents

The school acknowledges the role of parents in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour and expects them to support the code and encourage their daughters to uphold it. It is expected that parents/guardians show an interest in their daughter's homework and parents/guardians should sign their school journal every week.

Teachers

The school acknowledges the role of teachers in the development and operation of the code of behaviour. The school recognises that a teacher's main focus is in the area of teaching and learning, but that they also have a pivotal role to play in behavioural management. That pivotal role forms a core element of this code.

Guidance Counsellor(s)

As a member of the Student Support Team (SST), the Guidance Counsellor(s) operates within the holistic model of wellbeing and student support within the school. A student may be referred to the Counsellor for personal, social, emotional and behavioural support.

Home School Community Liaison Officer

The Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCLO) works in partnership with parents, the school and local community organisations to support positive educational outcomes for students. The HSCLO also works closely with the two strands of Tusla Education Support Service (TESS), the Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) and personnel from the School Completion Programme (SCP) to improve educational outcomes for the students. As part of the work, the HSCLO meets parents during home visits. The HSCLO is a member of the SST in the school.

Other Staff

The school acknowledges the contribution of ancillary staff in the day to day running of the school. They too have a part to play in the successful delivery of our Code of Behaviour. In particular they have a responsibility to report incidents of misbehaviour and examples of positive behaviour they witness.

Student Support Team (SST)

The Student Support Team is a central part of the student support system in the school. It is the overarching team concerned with progressing actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all students. It is a mechanism through which many of the existing student supports are co-ordinated and planned. The Student Support Team acts as a school hub, bringing coherence to the support system by co-ordinating the valuable work of all departments and teams. Through the implementation of the continuum of support, the student support team provides for the educational, social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs of All, Some and Few students to ensure their ongoing wellbeing.

Board of Management

The BOM is the decision making body of the school. The school acknowledges the role of the BOM in the development and operation of the Code of Behaviour. All policies are developed with the authority of the BOM and must be approved by it before becoming an official school policy. While it is not involved in the day to day procedures, it is the body to whom parents and students over 18 can appeal in cases of suspension or expulsion.

RULES

THE SCHOOL EXPECTS THAT STUDENTS WILL;

- 1. Attend school and remain for the full day. Any absence must be accounted for in writing, or via the school administration system giving reason for absence.**
This is a rule of our school because missing class adversely affects progress.

2. Full school uniform must be worn.

This is a rule of our school because our uniform reflects the ethos and reputable name of Meán Scoil Mhuire. Therefore, students must ensure that they do not behave in a manner that will bring discredit on themselves, their parents or their school. Neatness and tidiness is expected at all times. It is also imperative that a student's name should be on all her possessions, i.e. coat, uniform, books etc.

3. Wear safe jewellery. No hoop piercings of any sort are permitted.

This is a rule of our school to comply with our Health and Safety Policy.

4. Attend class with all necessary equipment.

Students are expected to have all their requirements for class to allow for optimum learning to take place.

5. Be on time for class.

This is a rule of our school because not being on time causes disruption for the teacher and the class. Also, as our school is concerned with the development of the whole person we see the importance of encouraging students to develop good punctuality which will be expected of them in the workplace.

6. Listen to messages given by staff and do as instructed.

This is a rule of our school so that instructions given to assist the smooth running of our school are carried out in the interest of all.

7. Move around the school in a quiet orderly fashion. Walk on the right hand side of corridors and stairs.

This is a rule of our school to allow safe movement around school buildings.

8. Show respect for yourself and for others.

This is a rule of our school because having respect for oneself and others, promotes a respectful, caring atmosphere where the rights of all, students and teachers are upheld.

9. Show respect for school property.

This is a rule of our school because defacing / damaging school property is destructive and shows lack of respect for the school community of which the student is a member. Parents are responsible for any deliberate damage done to school property caused by students.

10. Place litter in bins provided.

This is a rule in our school because not only is it unsightly but also dangerous and unhygienic.

11. Chewing gum is forbidden in the school building and environs.

This is a rule of our school because chewing gum causes damage to flooring, school furniture, tarmac, clothes etc. It is also unhygienic and is a potential health hazard.

12. Stimulant Drinks are forbidden in school e.g. Red Bull, Monster, Boost etc.

This is a rule in our school because such products have a negative impact on attention, concentration and behaviour in school.

13. No banned substances are permitted as per the Substance Misuse Policy.

[Banned or Prohibited Substances - reference Misuse of Drugs Act (1977, revised 2021)- This includes any mood altering substances, both legal and illegal that cause changes in the way a person thinks, feels and acts. For the purpose of this policy this includes non validated prescription medication (see Administration of Medicines Policy), all alcohol, tobaccos and E-cigarettes, vapes, tippex, aerosol deodorants, all illegal drugs such as, cocaine, ecstasy, heroin, LSD, magic mushrooms, cannabis, solvents, barbiturates, tranquillisers etc. This list is not exhaustive. Any incident involving illegal substances will be reported to the Gardaí. The school reserves the right to determine that a substance found at the school qualifies as a banned or prohibited substance. Such matters will be reported to the Gardaí] A breach of this policy will be viewed as extremely serious and may result in suspension for a period.

This is a rule of our school in the interest of protecting the health and well-being of all our students and staff.

14. Mobile phones must be switched off/powerd off for the duration of the school day. Student mobile phones may never be used except for educational reasons with the permission of and under the direct supervision of the teacher in the classroom. All communication between parent/ guardian and student during the school day must go through the office.

This is a rule of our school for the health and safety of students and staff and so that the business of teaching and learning can take place without unnecessary disturbances. All contact during the school day is made through the office.

15. Bullying will not be tolerated.

This is a rule of our school because bullying is identified as distressing and upsetting to others. It is the duty of every student, parent and staff members to report any incidence immediately. For further information please see our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Meán Scoil Mhuire strives to be a welcoming place we can all be proud of.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

STUDENTS WILL BE ENCOURGED IN THEIR ENDEAVOURS TO UPHOLD THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR BY USE OF THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

- (a) The Code of Behaviour is circulated to the parents/guardians of all new entrants into the school and they are asked to read it and then to sign their agreement with the content and their support and co-operation with it before a student enrolls in the school.

This is to ensure that parents and students understand what our rules are, why they must be adhered to and the procedures that will be followed if the rules are not upheld.



- (b) At the start of Term One each year, as a part of our induction process, all classes are brought through the code of behaviour and any amendments to it are highlighted. *This occurs to remind students of the content of the Code of Behaviour after the summer recess.*
- (c) Where a student is referred to the Year Head for a breach of the Code of Behaviour, she will be given an opportunity to develop an understanding of the impact of her behaviour on others. Where appropriate Restorative Practices are engaged. *This is done to develop the student's sensitivity and consideration for others and to assist her in upholding school rules in future. Only after this, is a sanction given.*
- (d) School rules and the reason for them are discussed as a part of the school's pastoral care programme and as part of SPHE. The notion of tolerance for others, self-control, a sense of fairness and the principles of natural justice are discussed as part of the Religious Education programme in the school.
- (e) Issues such as Bullying, Racism, Sexism, Harassment, Violence, Substance Mis-use are discussed with the students during their time in our school, using current legislation, current affairs and outside speakers. *This is done to help the students better understand these issues so that they can base their thinking, understanding and action on factual information and in the light of the Christian values exposed in the school.*
- (f) Restorative Practices were introduced to the school in 2021/2022. *Restorative Practice is utilised as part of our Code of Behaviour. This approach is taken, where appropriate, to assist in resolving issues and restoring relationships, as far as is practicable, in moving forward in a positive manner.*

REWARDS

In our school the following methods are used to reward students for upholding the code of behaviour:

- Verbal praise to student either in class or privately.
- Positive comment by class tutor / Year Head and/or recorded in student journal or on VSware behaviours.
- Positive note home to parents in homework journal.
- Display of Students' work.
- Affirmation and congratulations at assembly when the occasion arises.
- Public affirmation on Intercom System and school social media for success in games, competitions and other achievements.
- Leadership role given to student, e.g. Prefect, Student Council Representative, Mentor, Games Captain, Team leader for specific project or Events Co-ordinator.
- Achievements and awards, academic and extra-curricular are acknowledged and celebrated at assemblies and school when possible.
- Articles are written and published in the local newspaper, school website, school newsletters and social media.

Ladder of Referral

Step	PROBLEM	What to do	Possible Disciplinary Course of Action
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross insolence Repeated Truancy Serious theft, acts of vandalism Serious acts of bullying Intimidation of students or staff Breaking the school rule on possession or use of banned substances Breaking the school rules on smoking 	Refer to Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review options taken and supports implemented Formal meeting with parent/s, guardian/s Refer for counselling or other appropriate supports Apply formal disciplinary sanctions Withdrawal of privilege to attend or travel to school events Suspend students for up to 5 days (in accordance with guidelines) Refer student to Board of Management
3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any of the misdemeanours listed below that are long standing or where a student has failed to comply with sanctions outlined below. Persistent disruptive/ insolent behaviour in class Theft/ vandalism Bullying Persistent wearing of incorrect uniform Truancy Mitching 	Refer to Deputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review actions taken Interview student Detention, record on VSware Refer for counselling or other supports Phone parents/ Request a meeting with parents Request parents to take the student home Remove lunch pass Withdrawal of privilege to attend or travel to school events Refer student to Principal for further disciplinary action Restorative practice is employed
2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual failure to improve Behaviour/ Work/Attendance Continual misbehaviour in class Disruptive/ insolent behaviour in class Continually not having materials/equipment for class Theft/ vandalism Bullying another student Continual failure to present journal Accumulation of negative comments in school journal or incident sheets/ VSware behaviours Repeated wearing of incorrect uniform, makeup Mitching classes Not having Journal when requested Lack of respect for other students 	Refer to The Year Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview student, issue reprimand Place student on report Letter , Phone call and/or meeting with parents/guardians Detention, record on VSware Refer student to Counsellor Removal of lunch pass In-school suspension organised by the Year Head Withdrawal of privilege to attend or travel to school related events Refer students to Deputy Principal or Principal for further disciplinary action Restorative Practices employed
1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insolence, defiance Repeat offences from list below Continued failure to improve despite positive intervention Breaking classroom rules Misuse of a device in class , Serial breaches of I.T. policy, AUP Policy Disorderly noise in classroom, on corridor Forgetting of books or materials for class, failure to complete homework Inattention/ Talking/ Misbehaviour in class, Lateness for class Incorrect uniform, make-up, Wearing of jewellery No gear for PE, no ingredients or Art materials Using mobile phone or device Use of chewing gum, spray deodorant 	<u>Teacher</u> <u>on the spot</u> should deal with the problem without referral for further discipline	<u>Possible course of action by Teacher on the Spot</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reprimand , Move student, Give extra homework Give theory sheets/ additional questions to be copied out by end of class for practical classes Write a note to parent in journal to be signed Ask for piercing to be removed Detention Inform Year Head Write an incident sheet, record on VSware and consult with Year Head Subject Department letters may be sent home for missed deadlines for projects, failure to complete coursework, lack of materials for class etc. Complete incident sheet for serious issues that are beyond minor misdemeanours Mobile phone/device confiscated in accordance with the mobile phone and acceptable use policies Restorative Conversations employed

Formal Disciplinary Sanctions

Sanctions for Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

1. Teachers may use the normal in-class sanctions to reprimand a student for poor behaviour such as moving student seat, assigning additional classwork/homework etc.
2. Teachers will communicate minor breaches of Code of Behaviour, such as no homework, to parents by writing a note in the student journal or on VShare. Parents should check the journal on a regular basis, at least once a week.
3. A teacher will record an incident/complaint/ negative behaviour on VShare. For **persistent (3 consecutive repeat offences in a two week period)** minor offences. A teacher may contact the parent/ guardian to discuss the matter.
4. More serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour are recorded in writing on VShare and reported to the Year Head who will investigate and follow up accordingly.
5. An accumulation of **five** incident/complaints or five negative comments on VShare will be dealt with using the ladder of referral and may result in a detention issued by the Year Head.
6. Serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour will be recorded on VShare, and be will be brought to the attention of the Deputy Principal(s) and/ or Principal as appropriate.
7. Loss of lunchtime privileges to go down town or home at lunchtime may be imposed on any student with a lunch pass.
8. A student who fails to show that she is willing to abide by the rules of the school may be precluded from going on a school organised outing.
9. Repeated Minor Breaches will result in more serious sanctions being applied, up to and including suspension.

Positive behaviour and achievement is encouraged, recognised and rewarded on positive behaviour comments on VShare, by notices on the school notice boards, assemblies, website, Instagram and Facebook. Positive behaviour is noted in the school journal for parents/guardians to see. Intercom announcements are also made to congratulate students on their outstanding achievements.

Restorative Practice provides a platform for dealing with conflict in a healthy manner when conflict occurs. Restorative Practices are an evidence-based set of skills that help develop and sustain strong and happy organisations and communities by actively developing good relationships, preventing the escalation of conflict and handling conflict and wrongdoing in a creative and healthy manner.

Serious Incidents

Certain behaviour will be deemed by the school to be a **very serious breach** of the school Code of Behaviour and may lead to an automatic suspension. Bullying.

- Assaulting another student or staff member (ref: Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Cyber bullying of another student or staff member
- Intimidation of a teacher
- Smoking, carrying cigarettes, Vaping, using or distributing illegal substances i.e. drugs / alcohol (ref: Substance Misuse Policy)
- Verbal abuse of a teacher

- Physical abuse of a teacher
- Abuse of a teacher's property
- Abuse of a student's property
- Blatant disobedience of a teacher
- Carrying dangerous items e.g. sharp knives or weapons, fireworks, bangers etc.
- Stealing
- Vandalism
- Failure to do detention twice or in class punishment
- Disruption of detention in any way
- Forging parent's signature
- Disruption of examinations
- Any offence that severely undermines the authority of a teacher or the school management

(Please note that the list is not exhaustive)

Students found in possession of, or sharing illegal substances will be brought to the attention of the Disciplinary Committee, Parents/ Guardians, the Gardaí and The Board of Management. (Refer to Substance Misuse Policy).

Disciplinary Council

The Disciplinary Council will consist of the Principal, Deputy Principal and one other member of staff, usually the Guidance Counsellor or Year Head. The Disciplinary Council will meet to review evidence gathered and make a decision in relation to an incident that requires more formal disciplinary sanctions to be used. The Board of Management of the school will be informed of any meeting of a Disciplinary Committee in the school.

A student who persistently breaches the Code of Behaviour and has been suspended on numerous occasions may face possible expulsion. Such a case would be brought before the Board of Management in accordance with NEWB National Guidelines.

DETENTION

- A student will be detained on receipt of five incident/complaint sheets, for five negative behaviour comments on vsware or for a more serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Detention will take place after school on Fridays. Detention will be supervised by a members of the senior and/ or middle management team.
- Lunchtime detention may be issued by a Year Head or Deputy Principal for minor breaches of the Code of behaviour or a Year Head may arrange and supervise an alternative lunch time or after class detention in particular circumstances.
- Parents will receive notice of detention in writing or text message from the Year Head/ Deputy Principal or Principal, with a minimum of 3 days notice provided.
- On receipt of three detentions a student's behaviour will be discussed by the Year Head and members of the Senior Management Team. Where appropriate interventions or supports may be put in place which may include a report card, meeting with parents/ guardians, behavioural contract, referral to school chaplain, referral to the school counsellor(s) and/or referral to the Student Support Team, Home School Liaison Officer Intervention with parents/ guardians, referral to the school completion project supports.

- In certain circumstances a student's behaviour may warrant a meeting of the Disciplinary Council where suspension may be deemed the most appropriate sanction. appropriate.

REPORT CARD

Report Cards will be issued for a specific period of time due to repeated minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

The student uses the report card as follows:

- A student who receives a Report Card must present it to every teacher at the start of each class.
- The Report card must be presented to the Year Head/ Deputy Principal or Principal daily for review.
- Should the record be clear, the card will then be taken from the student within an agreed timeframe (minimum timeframe one week)
- However, if a student receives unfavourable comments on their report card during any given day, they will be asked to forfeit all or some of their break time(s).
- Report Cards are retained on the Student file.

BEHAVIOURAL CONTRACT

Students and parents may be required to enter into a behavioural contract as a result of persistent breaches of the Code of Behaviour. Entering into a behavioural contract will be seen as a final opportunity to improve behaviour prior to involving the Discipline Council and Board of Management.

Additional Policies that form part of the Code Of Behaviour:

- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Expulsion Policy
- GDPR Policies
- Homework Policy
- Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy
- School Outings (Trips and Tours) Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Suspension Policy
- Uniform Policy

CCTV

CCTV systems are installed (both internally and externally) in premises for the purpose of enhancing security of the building and its associated equipment as well as creating a mindfulness among the occupants, at any one time, that a surveillance security system is in operation within and/or in the external environs of the premises during both the daylight and night hours each day. CCTV surveillance at the School is intended for the purposes of:

- protecting the school buildings and school assets, both during and after school hours;

- promoting the health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors;
- preventing bullying;
- reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour (including theft and vandalism);
- supporting the Gardaí in a bid to deter and detect crime;
- assisting in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders; and
- ensuring that the school rules are respected so that the school can be properly managed.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

In consultation with all the stakeholders the school will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.