

## **2012 Behaviour Management In Scoil Mhuire Soisearach-Primary School.**

This document was first written in 2000; it was further refined in 2004. This most recent development was reviewed in 2012. The process followed for this development was:

1. **Staff review** using NEWB Behaviour Management Principles; discussion through team meetings; and through plenary staff meetings;
2. **Parents** – Focus groups; Discussion through facilitated workshops;
3. **Board of Management** and **Parents Council** gave it joint consideration;
4. **Parents** views expressed on an ongoing basis.

### **Introduction**

- Behaviour management is a critical factor in achieving the aims of our school. The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for reasonable and responsible behaviour by all concerned, staff, parents and children alike. The policy offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers. There is a strong emphasis on the development of self esteem. Research shows that the fostering of well functioning relationships is the critical factor in behaviour management.

Every effort is made to accommodate the individuality of each pupil while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

- Essential elements in the policy are to foster the development of social competence and the emotional well being of children, parents, staff and the school community;
- The school places emphasis on communication, reflection and individual as well as group discussion to modify behaviour;
- It is assumed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents.
- Parents have first responsibility in regard to the management of their child's behaviour.
- The principal in collaboration with the teaching team has the next level of responsibility subject to the authority of the school management.
- Each teacher works with each child in the school to support positive behaviour.

### **Recognising differences:**

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between pupils and between adults and the need to seek to accommodate these differences. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. In the cases where a child has special needs these efforts will include seeking the help and advice of outside agencies. With the support and ideally the consent of parents these agencies will include:

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB); Tusla and members of The Childcare Team and any other agency which may be deemed relevant when seeking to meet the needs of a child.

Where there are adult needs to be met then appropriate agencies may also be contacted e.g:  
The Ombudsperson for Children; The Education Welfare Service; The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO); The Catholic Primary School Managers Association.(CPSMA)

While the needs of an individual child will be addressed in so far as resources allow there must be balance between these and the needs of the other children and the needs of the school staff when addressing very serious behaviour management problems. In serious situations the help and support of parents will be sought consistently. Where this is not forthcoming the help of the social or mediation and industrial relations services will be sought.

### **Scoil Mhuire Behaviour Management Policy has the following features**

- A. Values
- B. School rules
- C. Class rules based on these values

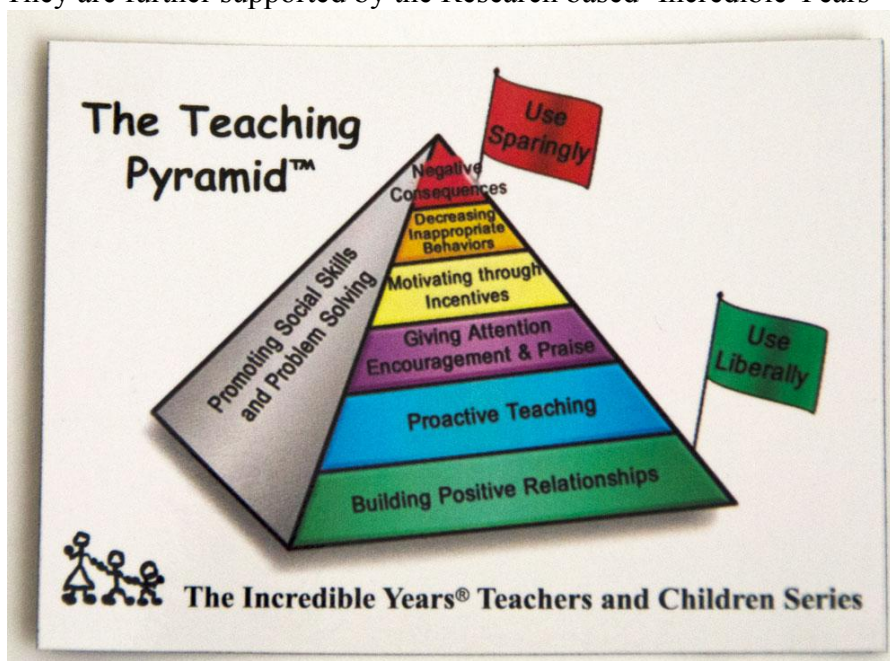
#### **A: Values**

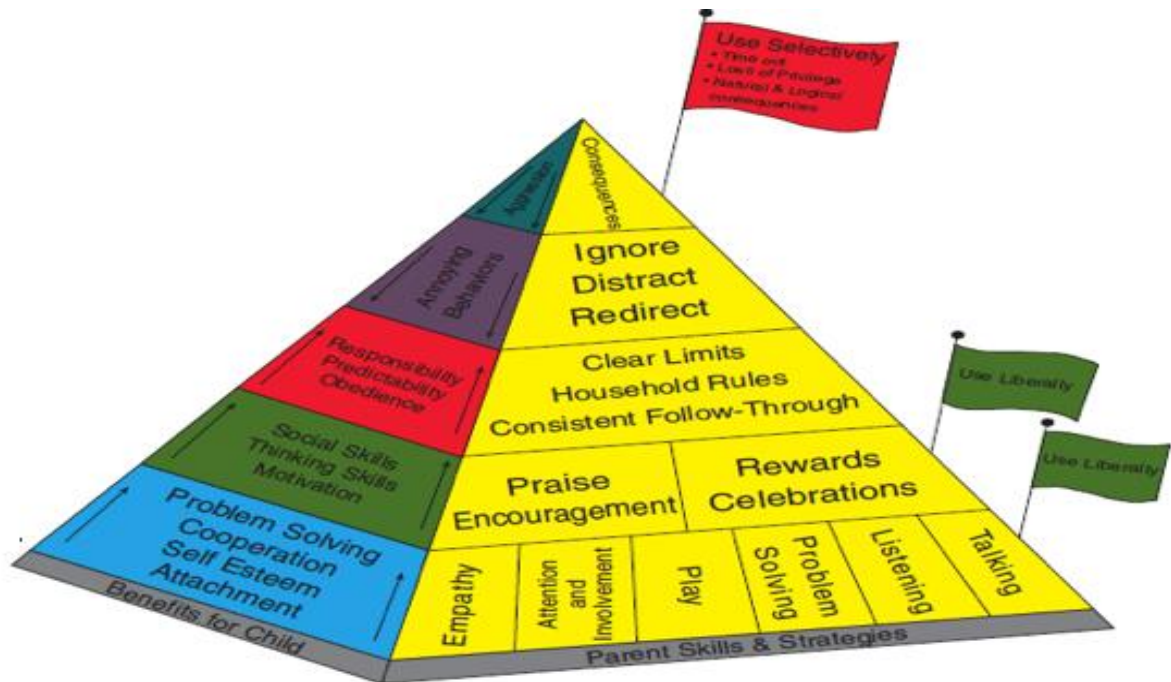
The **Values** that the policy seeks to teach are Consistent with the Catholic Ethos of the school and are stated simply so each child may learn them as follows:

- Kindness
- Gentleness
- Listening
- Hard work
- Honesty
- Respect for property

These values are promoted through monitoring experiences and by repeatedly teaching them based on the experiences of school life.

They are further supported by the Research based 'Incredible Years' © Pyramids.





**B: Ideal behaviours.** Each year children are asked to engage in a thought process with a view to getting commitment to the following behaviours in the interest of our having a happy school environment for everyone to learn in:

- Be kind and respect others feelings – for example name calling; excluding; making fun of; and making faces at are behaviours that can hurt others;
- Be gentle – for example kicking; pushing; thumping; spitting tripping are behaviours that hurt people physically;
- Listen – for example ignoring someone and being too busy to listen means that they must try to cope with a problem on their own;
- Work hard – for example interrupting, making unnecessary noise; distracting and not concentrating wastes everyone’s time. As time is precious we must not waste it;
- Be honest – for example misleading and not telling the truth causes mistrust between people;
- Respect Property – for example taking; breaking; writing on; or damaging; other people’s property makes them unhappy.

Each class then develops their ideal behaviours in their classroom

The children are taught and shown examples of the six behaviours as follows:

I will be kind – It is not nice to hurt others feelings.

I will be gentle – It is not good to hurt others physically.

I will listen - I rude to interrupt.

I will work hard – I will use the school time well.

I will be honest – I will work to tell the truth.

I will respect property - I look after others belongings.

In Junior and Senior infants they are taught the first part of the rules. In 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> the other aspects are taught

## **C Class rules**

Each class will have a set of rules based on these values that children and teacher will work out between them. They will be posted in the room and explained to parents at the A.G.M.

Reinforcement of the above rules or values happens on an ongoing basis through:

- one to one talk; teacher to child; child to child; teacher to teacher; teacher to parent; parent to child; etc This approach to talking will be supportive but assertive and situations will be investigated and inappropriate behaviour challenged;
- assemblies to reinforce the values and rules in a manner that promotes understanding and caring;
- talk in adult or class circles.

## **Circles**

The establishment of circles of discussion is an ongoing feature of classroom life. Circles are used to raise awareness for issues that arise in the classroom. They are also used to teach the skills necessary for helping to maintain our values and keep our rules.

Teachers will teach and re-teach awareness for skills so that pupils will apply them to maintaining the values and keeping the rules. These skills are:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Looking and Concentrating.

Children and staff will make positive suggestions through circle time discussions to help maintain the values and keep the rules. Circles will be challenging but positive and supportive.

## **Procedures for dealing with misbehaviour:**

Extrinsic rewards and sanctions are kept to a minimum in the belief that each person has the innate capacity for self-discipline. Young children get great benefit from simple reward systems which are used as motivators and in group contexts. These will be used positively and in a manner designed to foster the desired behaviour and values.

Where a child is in breach of any of these rules he or she will be asked to consider it in the light of the ideal school for each person. Initially, cursory and efficient correction will be tried. For more persistent or serious undermining of the values the following process will be observed

### **1. Mediation**

An explanation will be sought for what happened through an interview with the perpetrator and the victim:

- Each person will be listened to carefully;
- Each person will be asked to listen to the other point of view. It may be necessary at this point to challenge the versions of stories. Investigations to establish clearly what occurred may also be required;
- Clarifications will be sought and given if necessary;
- The person will be asked to acknowledge the hurt and accept responsibility. This can be emotionally upsetting for both adults and children. They will be supported but the acceptance of responsibility will be asserted;

- Time will be given for reflection if necessary;
- Solutions will be sought from each person;
- If necessary an apology will be prompted or sought and given;
- The injured party will be asked to forgive the undermining;
- People will be encouraged to be reconciled.

In situations where the teacher is satisfied that the incident is within the child's capacity to manage the child will be encouraged to do so. A teacher may take a note if deemed necessary. In such instances parents may **not** be informed about the incident. Teachers shall keep a written record of instances of serious misbehaviour. A standard behaviour note (see Appendix 2) will be issued if deemed necessary to communicate a concern to parents.

## **2. Sanctions/ Consequences**

The following strategies may be used as the ultimate step and only after the other steps in the pyramid have been exhausted to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

Reprimand such as assertive description of unacceptable behaviour; Criticism of the behaviour; the denial of a privilege for a short period; time spent in a thinking chair; (including advice on how to improve).

Temporary separation from peers to allow time to reflect or in the case of children to complete work in hand in another classroom or a learning support room assigned to the classroom.

Loss of privileges such as 'golden time' or some of an extra curricular activity.

Detention during a break for a specific number of minutes.

**Referral to Principal:** If after the application of these strategies for a number of times the inappropriate behaviour continues the matter will be referred to the principal. mediation process referred to above will be engaged in with a view to ensuring that the behaviour changes. Depending on the nature of the behaviour the principal may seek the help of others such as colleagues, parents, or other professionals such as a counsellor, social worker, therapist or psychologist.

**Communication with Parents in regard to children's behaviour:** Communication with parents will be verbal, by text or by letter, depending on the circumstances. Parents will be informed initially by a note home with the child, by a phone call or by text.

After a number of such incidents parents will be contacted with a view to discussing the situation.

Parents will be involved and their active cooperation sought at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

**Mediation** as outlined above will happen.

Specific strategies will be devised and implemented by parents and teachers.

These will be reviewed at regular intervals. In cases where there is a repeated incident a record of improvements in behaviour will be kept.

### **Supports when dealing with challenging situations.**

In situations where a staff member is finding the management of behaviour very challenging or stressful a number of strategies will be adopted:

- There will be a facility for debriefing provided;
- A support person or supervisor will be available to that person. That support person will be a colleague, someone with a specific expertise or the principal. The staff member may discuss all the details of the situation exclusively with that person. The details will remain confidential to that person;
- Such support will be ongoing for as long as the stressful situation continues;
- The advice of the Education Welfare service will be sought;
- Contact may be made with the Social services;
- Appropriate opportunities for professional development will be sought.

### **Serious misbehaviour.**

Where there are instances of serious misbehaviour by children, the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Manager or Principal.

Examples of serious misbehaviour: Bullying – (including alienation and intimidation) See Appendix 1. ; Racism; Verbal /physical abuse of adults and children; Theft; Damage to property; Any behaviour which poses serious damage to the pupil or others.

### **Gross misbehaviour.**

For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered.

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil; Serious Theft; Serious Damage to property will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board of Management shall empower the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents in accordance with the terms set down by the National Education Welfare Board.

**Expulsion** will be considered only after every effort at rehabilitation has failed and every other sanction exhausted. It will be based on the regulations set down by the National Education Welfare Board under the terms of the Education Welfare Act.

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also from support services with the wider community e.g., Community Care Services provided by Health Boards.

### **In conclusion:**

In formulating this policy, all partners in the education of the children have been consulted. All members of the teaching staff have been involved. A copy of this policy has been made available to all school partners and can be considered at [www.scmj.ie](http://www.scmj.ie).

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well-informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere. Positive behaviour will be acknowledged and appreciated and negative behaviour will be challenged systematically and logically according to the policy.

The Policy will be reviewed at agreed intervals.

### **Appendix 1 Addressing bullying in Scoil Mhuire.**

Parents often express concern in regard to their child being bullied at school. An integral part of the behaviour management policy is our approach to bullying or potentially bullying behaviour.

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person ( or person) and which is repeated over time. *(Taken from The Department of Education and Skills website)*

There are two dimensions to any bullying behaviour/incident

#### **The Victim**

Any pupil through no fault of their own may be bullied.

It is common in the course of normal play for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils are particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different are those more prone to encounter such behaviour. It is of note that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a manner which attracts bullying behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour is directly related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.

#### **The Bully**

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour.

Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They can lack any sense of remorse; often they convince themselves that the victim deserves the treatment meted out.

Pupils who bully can also be attention seeking; often they set out to impress bystanders and enjoy the reaction their behaviour provokes. They tend to lack the ability to empathise. They are unaware or indifferent to the victim's feelings. Others seem to enjoy inflicting pain. It is of note that many bullies suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.

It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are also victims of bullying themselves. They tend to be easily provoked and frequently provoke others.

In Scoil Mhuire we are committed to:

Working hard towards resolving any issues and restoring as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Creating a 'telling culture' in school which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.

Raising awareness of bullying, as a form of unacceptable behaviour, with school management teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.

Developing procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

Developing procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.

Developing a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

#### Our Actions include:

1. Each class engages in the Stay Safe programme as part of S.P.H.E.
2. On an annual basis teachers, children and parents, will be reminded of the
  - focus on personal experience of bullying and develop an empathy for bullies and victims.
  - procedures for reporting incidents. These will be explained at assemblies; in class as incidents arise and through the use of Circle Time
  - importance of reporting repeated incidents to the Class Teacher as well as the teacher on Yard Supervision
  - value of talking to their parents at home about their experiences in school.
3. A Rota is drawn up to ensure that the yard and the corridors are supervised at break times. (See Yard Supervision Policy).

#### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the individuals involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the individuals concerned. Persons who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way. Work will be done to mediate the



issues and enable the victim to gain confidence and the bully to recognise the effects of their behaviour.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, will be sought in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Other persons may also be interviewed to get a clearer picture.
3. Incidents of once off aggression will be dealt with according to the schools Behaviour Management policy. If it is concluded that bullying behaviour has been engaged in, it will be made clear to him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. A mediation approach will be used to resolve incidents of bullying.(This is explained in the body of the policy)
5. Follow up sessions will be arranged for more serious incidents.
6. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will where necessary keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident. Teacher may also write down in the words of the child an account of incidents. These notes will be kept on the child's notes section of the Aladdin database system.
7. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meetings will be arranged as appropriate to (a) explain actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy, (b) discuss ways in which the actions taken by the school can be supported or reinforced.
8. Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved will be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

### **Procedures for Noting and Reporting an Incident of Bullying Behaviour**

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with by class teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal.
3. Records of such investigations will be maintained on the Aladdin database system, under the notes section of the individual child involved. Individual children may be asked to write an account of incidents involved.
4. Parents or guardians of victims or bullies will be informed by the Principal of incidents as early as possible so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter and understand the actions being taken. . They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.

5. Non-teaching staff such as caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff or principal.
6. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be raised with the Principal.
7. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unsolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management.
8. If not solved at Board level, the matter may be referred to outside agencies listed above including local Department of Education and Skills inspectorate.

Amended January 2014 in light of Circular

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Behaviour Note**

**Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),**

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that \_\_\_\_\_'s  
behaviour has been unsatisfactory as indicated below.

Behaviour in class

Behaviour in playground

Attention in class

Respect for teacher / pupil/property

Work effort in class

Other \_\_\_\_\_

—

—

I would be grateful if you would discuss the above with your child. Please acknowledge receipt of this note by signing below and returning it. Thank you for your co-operation. A copy of this will be placed on your child's file.

**Teacher**

**signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) or Guardian(s)**

**signature** \_\_\_\_\_