



## Golden National School

Golden, Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

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### **Code of Behaviour**

#### **Introductory Statement**

This policy has been reviewed and amended in line with HSE and Department of Education guidance and guidelines regarding the ongoing global pandemic of COVID-19. Following our return to school in September 2023, in conjunction with Golden N.S., this policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on **Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023.**

#### **Rationale**

It is necessary to review a Code of Behaviour at this particular time:

- Due to HSE and Department of Education guidelines (COVID-19)
- Due to a change in school population
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
  - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
  - B. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
  - C. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
  - D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
  - E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*
- To ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.*

## **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Golden National School strives to provide a well ordered caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the moral needs of the pupil are identified and addressed. We encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Parents Association. Golden N.S. will endeavour to enhance the self esteem of everyone in the school community. We imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

## **Aims**

Golden N.S. hopes to achieve the following by introducing this policy:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

## **1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the School**

The following are the standards of behaviour expected in Golden NS:

- It is expected that all children will be on time for school at 9.30 a.m. The school will open to receive children at 9.20 a.m. No responsibility is accepted for children arriving before that time.
- Children must show courtesy and respect to teachers, school staff, traffic warden, visitors and parents at all times.
- Children must show respect and regard for other children at all times. Older children should be particularly kind and helpful to the younger children.
- Children are expected to be truthful, co-operative, helpful and diligent.
- Everybody is expected to show respect for school property, to help in keeping the school tidy and litter free and to use the bins provided.
- Children should enter the school in an orderly fashion and move quietly in the corridors at all times. On entering the classroom children should go directly to their places and remain seated.
- Children are expected to wear the complete school uniform at all times. Due to health and safety reasons children may only wear stud earrings and a watch at school.

Unacceptable behaviours are:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person – child or teacher
- Damage to property

- Theft

## **2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

It is hoped that all the stakeholders of Golden N.S. would work together in devising, implementing and supporting the schools code of behaviour. All stakeholders were given the opportunity to be involved in the review process of the code of behaviour.

### **Staff**

*Teachers and other staff members can play important roles in the work of reviewing and updating of the code. They bring to this work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community (p. 16 Guidelines)*

*Providing opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help students to change behaviour (p. 29 Guidelines)*

*Staff as a team should have opportunities to confirm that all school policies and practices support the objectives of the code of behaviour (p. 32 Guidelines)*

Issues in relation to behaviour may be raised at staff meetings to facilitate staff discussion on areas of concern. All existing, new and temporary staff will be given a copy of the code of behaviour. Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and to implement it consistently and fairly.

In the event of children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special education needs, an IEP with behavioural targets or an Individual Behavioural plan may be used as appropriate.

Teachers will encourage children to take part in all curricular and non-curricular activities which support the ethos of the school.(e.g. local religious activities, school choir, school teams, musicals etc.)

Staff are expected to model the standards of behaviour that the children are asked to respect.

The school's SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. SPHE is taught at all class levels and a co-ordinated approach across the school is to be developed for SPHE.

The following activities are used to develop these skills in children: circle time, role play, brainstorming and discussion.

### **Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies. The Board will play an active role in exploring

the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities. The Board of Management will support the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and provide training for the staff if required. The Board of Management was consulted in reviewing of the code of behaviour at a Board of Management meeting. The Board of Management are responsible for dealing with serious breaches of behaviour as deemed by the staff.

## **Parents**

Section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal '*may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child*'.

In this latest review, representatives of the Parents Association were invited to a meeting to discuss the contents of the Policy. In the original formulation of the Policy the principal attended a parent's association meeting and invited two parents to volunteer to become involved in reviewing the school's code of behaviour. Parents were informed of what topics would be raised and invited to attend a meeting in the school in relation to the policy. On each occasion parents were encouraged to voice their opinions on various strategies to be used within the school in relation to behaviour. These were recorded in the draft policy. For parents not directly involved in this meeting, a draft copy was available in the school and parents were invited to give their opinions on it. *Final authority rests with the Board in accepting or rejecting such suggestions.*

The code of behaviour will be communicated to parents on the enrolment of their child. Parents will be given a copy of the policy and asked to sign their acceptance of it.

Following enrolment it will be communicated in the following methods:

Parents will be informed of the code of behaviour as appropriate through the parent's association meetings. If parents require a further copy of the code of behaviour following enrolment, it is available on our school website. A Hard copy may also be requested from the school. Parents will be informed if any changes are made to the code of behaviour.

Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by

Notes from parents are required:

- (a) Following any absence of a pupil from school.
- (b) In the event of a parent wishing their child to leave the school before normal times of dismissal e.g. (Medical / Dental appointments, funeral Masses etc.)
- (c) In the event of a pupil not having completed his/her homework.

Homework is an integral part of a child's education. It is a useful means of: -

- (a) Reinforcing the learning done at school.
- (b) Developing a sense of responsibility and the habit of studying outside the classroom.

We ask that the parents act in the best interests of their child by ensuring that the homework is completed fully and neatly, as required by the teacher. If requested by the teacher, please sign your child's homework.

Children and parents **must** have regard for the Healthy Lunch Policy in the school as agreed by B.O.M., Parents and Teachers.

So as to avoid disruption of classes and teaching time, parents wishing to discuss an important issue, which may take a lengthy period of time, should make an appointment with their child's teacher through the school secretary or the school principal beforehand.

- Parents are asked to encourage their child to show respect to other children and adults outside of school hours.
- Parents are expected to model the standards of behaviour that the children are asked to respect and to speak respectfully about the school and staff.
- Parents are asked to contact the school if there is any issue in relation to their child.
- Parents are expected to ensure their children wear the correct school uniform and to inform the school in the event that they are unable to do so.
- Infant classes finish at 2.10 p.m. and children should be collected promptly at this time. Pupils are not allowed to remain in the school grounds after dismissal at 3.10 p.m. unless under the supervision of a teacher. An after school facility is available through an external co-ordinator.
- Parents are asked to contact the parents association with any issues or concerns in relation to the school policy.
- Parents are asked to work co-operatively with the school and in trying to resolve any issues which may arise e.g. discussing the problem with the child at home.
- Parents are asked to distribute personal cards / invitations outside of the school.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Pupils were involved in reviewing the code of behaviour through discussion at class level and this feedback was taken into consideration by the staff on the school development planning day. Pupils are involved in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

- Involving themselves in regular discussion on the code of behaviour
- Drafting rules for the classroom
- Informing the teacher of any issues in relation to behaviour

### **3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

*'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).*

## **Classroom**

In September of each year classroom rules are devised or revised in consultation with the children. These will be stated in positive terms and displayed in the classroom. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave and we strive to achieve a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. Classroom management techniques are used that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies that sustain pupil interest and motivation.

## **Playground(s)**

One teacher and a SNA are on supervision for each break time and a rota is in place. Children are visible at all times and play in the main yard.

Children are allowed to play games including ball games – specific arrangements are now in place for hurling/football.

The junior classes have a designated play area. On wet days children are allowed watch a DVD, read a book or play board games and one teacher patrols the classrooms in the GAA hall, one teacher supervises 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> class and SNA supervises the Infants classroom.

If children wish to leave the playground to use the toilets they must get permission from the teacher on duty. The sanctions as listed apply for the playground also.

## **Other areas in the school**

Children are only allowed to the toilet one at a time during class time.

## **School related activities**

The code of behaviour applies to all school tours, events or outings.

## **4. Rewards and Sanctions**

The school fully recognises the importance of cultivating a high level of self-esteem among its pupils. This is recognised as one of the best ways to improve behaviour in the school context. Good behaviour is encouraged by praise and reward. Misbehaviour is discouraged and disapproved of.

The class teacher is responsible for the effective implementation of the schools policy in relation to discipline within his/her own classroom and in communal areas during breaks and while on supervision. Each teacher is entitled to expect the support of the Principal teacher and the Board of Management with regard to the fair implementation of this policy. Rewards are given for good or improved behaviour. Rewards may take the form of: - praise, encouragement, being given responsibility or “jobs”, stickers, stars, homework passes, golden time or small material rewards, ‘Pupil of the Week’. Individual teachers may also devise other strategies, which they find effective for encouraging good behaviour. Sanctions may vary according to the seriousness of the offence. Fairness and consistence are of primary importance.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

- Reasoning with the child, pointing out that this type of behaviour is not acceptable and explaining why.
- Reprimand including advice on how to improve and what is expected.
- Behaviour Reflection Report
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privileges i.e. library, free time activity, class games, school team or training etc.
- Detention during breaks or separation at playtime.
- Prescribing additional work - Writing down the misbehaviour and having parents sign.
- Communication with parents by the teacher.
- Referral to principal, who may communicate with parents.
- Temporary suspension.
- In extreme cases of serious misbehaviour Expulsion is an option.

When sanctions have been applied the teacher will identify the misdemeanour to help the child to understand the expected behaviour.

To ensure consistency in the application of sanctions regular discussions will take place formally and informally between staff.

## **5. Suspension / Expulsion**

### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as requiring the child to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The Board of Management of Golden National School has the authority to suspend a child.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such as that:

- the child's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education, development or wellbeing of other children
- the child's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the child is responsible for serious damage to property

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

Suspensions can give the child time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the child to change unacceptable behaviour.

However, suspension can be counter-productive if used without a clear rationale or without measuring its impact and value. School management will consider the risk of any unwanted outcomes from suspension.

**The Factors to be considered before suspending a child as per NEWB guidelines (pg.72) will be used. See attached in appendix 1.**

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the child's behaviour. The suspension will:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the child and their parents
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a child and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

### **Forms of suspension**

#### ***Immediate suspension***

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the child in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of child or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- Inform the child and their parents about the complaint
- Let the child and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone and/or in writing.
- Give parents and child an opportunity to respond

Parents and child will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension also.

### ***Period of suspension***

A child will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the school considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

### **Appeals**

Parents can appeal a suspension through an appeals process provided by the patron.

#### **Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the child has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

### **Written notification**

The Principal will notify the parents and the child in writing of the decision to suspend. 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
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the child and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

### **Engaging with child and parents**

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal and/or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the child to behave well when the child returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

### **Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the patron decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

### **After the suspension ends:**

The school will make every effort to re-integrate the child successfully into the school. A child will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.



## **Records and reports**

**Records of investigation and decision-making** Formal written records will be kept of:

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

**Report to NEWB** The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

The school will review the use of suspension as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

## **Expulsion**

A child is expelled from a school when a Board of Management of Golden N.S. makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school. The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a child.

The BOM will only expel a child in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a child.

A proposal to expel a child requires serious grounds such as that:

- the child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the child's behaviour.

### **Expulsion for a first offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a child will be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another child or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other children in the school
- sexual assault.

**The Factors to be considered before expelling a child as per NEWB guidelines pg. 82 will be used. See attached in appendix 2.**

### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a child. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The school will refer to the NEWB guidelines pg. 83-86 for specific procedures in relation to expulsion.

### **Appeals**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a child.

The school will review the use of expulsion as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

## **6. Keeping records**

Teachers shall keep a written record on their internal secure Aladdin database of all instances of serious or gross misbehaviour in the classroom as well as the playground. A record will also be kept of continuous minor or disruptive behaviour. Improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils shall also be recorded. Communication with parents will be utilised at an early stage rather than as a last resort. In this regard we welcome and encourage regular visits from parents to enquire about their child's progress. Attendance at parent teacher meetings is **essential**. On the end of year school report a comment may be made regarding the child's behaviour.

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

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 the school must notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has missed a total of 20 days in the school year. Very often there will be good reasons for the absences e.g. illness, family difficulty etc. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. An Educational Welfare Officer may then visit the child's home to discuss the matter.

The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- System for rewarding full attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

Notes are provided to parents at the start of each school year (Homework journals) and are asked to return them to the school directly after the absence. The date, reason and signature of the parent are required. The notes are retained for the current school year and the year following that. The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board through the on-line system.

### **Success Criteria**

The following are indicators of the success of the policy:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are being consistently implemented by teachers

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and children

### **Roles and Responsibility**

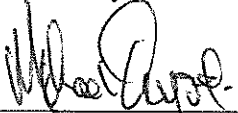
The teachers have responsibility for implementation of the code in their classrooms and playground. The Board of Management and the parents have responsibility for supporting the school staff in the implementation of the code. The parents have responsibility in reinforcing the code of behaviour with their children at home. The children have a role in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.

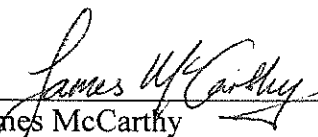
### **Timetable for Review**

The policy will be reviewed in three years or as the need dictates.

### **Ratification & Communication**

The BOM officially reviewed the policy on **21<sup>st</sup> September 2023**.

Signed:  (Chairperson)  
Michael Ormond

Signed:  (Secretary)  
James McCarthy