

Bennettsbridge Mixed N.S. Code of Behaviour

The BMNS Code of Behaviour aims to:

1. Create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
2. Create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
3. Encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
4. Help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
5. Build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
6. Ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood

The commitments expected from students to their own learning and to that of their peers include:

- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Doing one's best in class
- Taking responsibility for one's work
- Keeping the rules
- Helping to create a safe, positive environment
- Respecting staff
- Respecting other students and their learning
- Participating in school activities

The values reflected in the standards of behaviour include:

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

These standards also signal to members of the school community the kinds of behaviours that are not acceptable in the school e.g. behaviour that is hurtful, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation; behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning; threats or physical hurt to another person; damage to property; theft.

In accordance with Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 the BMNS code of Behaviour specifies:

A. Standards of Student Behaviour

B. Measures that may be taken for failure or refusal to comply

C. Procedures regarding Suspension or Expulsion

D. Grounds for removing a Suspension

E. Procedures for notification of a child's absence

A. Standards of Student Behaviour. The Pupils are expected:

1. To be well-mannered and courteous at all times with teachers, staff-members, visitors, helpers and each other
2. To attend school regularly and punctually
3. To wear the school uniform on all school days except when otherwise instructed
4. To respect the school environment, the property of others and their own property
5. To be attentive in class and to complete all assignments on time and to the best of their ability
6. To behave in an orderly, safe fashion when lining-up, exiting and entering the school and classrooms or engaged in any school related activities
7. To furnish a note from parent/guardian explaining absences or seeking permission to leave school early
8. To abide by the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure the smooth and safe running of the school

B. Measures that may be taken for failure or refusal to Comply:

The plan for promoting good behaviour:

- a) A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- b) A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- c) A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- d) A word of praise in front of a group or class
- e) Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- f) A mention to parent: written or verbal
- g) Special mention in class or at assembly.

How the school responds to unacceptable behaviour:

- a) Reasoning with the pupil
- b) Reprimand (including advice on how to behave)
- c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- d) Carrying out a useful task in the school
- e) Loss of privileges
- f) Detention during a break
- g) Prescribing additional work
- h) Referral to Principal Teacher
- i) Communication with parents
- j) Suspension
- k) Formal report to the Board of Management

C. Procedures regarding Suspension or Expulsion:

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to suspend or expel a student. Under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, procedures for suspension and expulsion should be included in a school's code of behaviour. Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction

an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act. An appeal may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills in respect of a decision by a board of management or a person acting on behalf of a board of management to: permanently exclude a student from the school, to suspend a student from the school for a cumulative period of 20 school days in any one school year or to refuse to enrol a student in the school. [Circular letter M48/01 Appeal Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998](#) applies. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent.

In the event of a suspension the following procedures will apply (from the NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, 2008):

The Principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend. This letter will confirm:

- a) The period of the suspension
- b) The dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- c) The reasons for the suspension
- d) Any study programme to be followed
- e) The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (e.g. parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- f) The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- g) The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management 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.

D. Grounds for Removing a Suspension:

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and 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. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

E. Procedures for Notification of a Child's Absence

The Welfare Act 2000 section 23(2) (e) & section 18 instructs schools to describe the procedures to be followed by parents when they are notifying the school about a child's absence. Please note:

- Parents/Guardians should inform the school of their child's absence for any reason as soon as is practical
- The Class teacher, the Secretary or the Principal should be informed
- A written note explaining the reason for the absence should be submitted. An initial phone call is also appreciated
- A doctor's certificate for significant absences due to illness should be submitted when applicable
- When the school has concerns about a student's absence the Parents/Guardians will be contacted by phone or letter
- All schools are obliged by law to report to the National Educational Welfare Board those children who are absent from school for twenty days or more during any school year. Parents/Guardians will be notified when such action has been taken