

Bennettsbridge N.S. Code of Behaviour Policy

Introductory Statement

The Code of Behaviour Policy for Bennettsbridge N.S. code was developed through a whole-school approach, involving consultation with the Board of Management, Principal, teachers, parents, and students of Bennettsbridge N.S. in order to outline our practices and procedures in fostering a positive school culture where appropriate behaviour is supported and promoted and so ensuring that the highest standards of teaching and learning can take place.

Rationale

The Code of Behaviour has been developed in compliance with our obligations under Section 23 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB, 2008) and addresses:

- The standards of behaviour expected in our school
- Our plan for promoting good behaviour
- The ways in which we respond to unacceptable behaviour
- The plan for implementing our Code of Behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion.

Relationship to the School's Ethos and Mission Statement

In Bennettsbridge N.S., we celebrate the uniqueness of the child, as it is expressed in each child's personality, intelligence and potential for development. We strive to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life; spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

Bennettsbridge N.S. is committed to fostering an orderly, harmonious, educationally stimulating, happy and safe school environment where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported. We endeavour to promote positive pupil behaviour and self-discipline, by setting high expectations, affirming good behaviour and ensuring fairness and equity. We recognise the differences between pupils and the need to accommodate these differences, while also balancing this need with the educational needs of other pupils in our school.

Aims

The aims of this Code of Behaviour are to:

- Create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- Create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- Encourage pupils to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- Help our pupils to mature into responsible participating citizens
- Build positive relationships of mutual respect, consideration and support among pupils, staff and parents/guardians
- Ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood

Expectations for the School Community of Bennettsbridge N.S.

Bennettsbridge N.S. endeavours to promote a whole school community approach to positive behaviour and aspires to ensuring that this positive approach helps each party contribute to creating a harmonious teaching and learning environment.

The school motto,

'Today I promise that I will not say or do anything to make anyone feel uncomfortable'
is central to Bennettsbridge N.S.'s expectation of the school community.

Bennettsbridge N.S. strives to ensure that all members of the school community:

- ❖ Feel safe, supported and respected in all areas and aspects of the school environment and school life
- ❖ Are listened to, treated equally, kindly and with respect
- ❖ Can expect behaviour that supports a teaching and learning environment
- ❖ Have clear boundaries set for them

The BoM are expected to;

- ❖ Prepare, ratify and review on an annual basis, the school's Code of Behaviour
- ❖ Ensure that the Code of Behaviour reflects the ethos of the school
- ❖ Provide a comfortable, safe school environment for all
- ❖ Support the Principal and school staff in implementing the Code in a fair and consistent manner

School Staff are expected to;

- ❖ Create a welcoming, happy and safe environment
- ❖ Be familiar with and implement the school's rules and policies in a consistent manner
- ❖ Treat all members of the school community respectfully, fairly and in a kind and caring manner
- ❖ Inform parents confidentially of behavioural concerns and devise and implement preventative strategies when necessary
- ❖ Model appropriate behaviour
- ❖ Adhere to the professional code of conduct for teachers

Pupils are expected to;

- ❖ Help create a positive and safe environment by being respectful towards other pupils, school staff and visitors
- ❖ Show kindness and willingness to help others
- ❖ Be courteous and mannerly
- ❖ Be fair and forgiving
- ❖ Committed to engaging in respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- ❖ Adhere to the school motto
- ❖ Keep the school rules and classroom contracts
- ❖ Attend school regularly and punctually
- ❖ Be attentive in class, take responsibility for one's work and to complete all assignments on time

and to the best of one's ability

- ❖ Wear the school uniform as outlined in the school prospectus
- ❖ Respect the school environment, the property of others and their own property
- ❖ Abide by the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure the smooth and safe running of the school.
- ❖ Participate in school activities.
- ❖ Behave in an orderly, safe manner when lining-up, entering and exiting the school, classroom and school yard and seek permission to leave the yard at breaktimes
- ❖ Play safely and in a fair and inclusive manner
- ❖ Follow staff instructions at all times.

Parents are expected to:

- ❖ Support the school's standards, policies and ethos
- ❖ Support and encourage a positive attitude towards school, homework and school activities
- ❖ Support the school's Code of Behaviour and co-operate with school staff in instances where their child presents with inappropriate behaviour
- ❖ Ensure that their child attends school daily and on time
- ❖ Abide by the school uniform
- ❖ Encourage their child to be independent and able to care for personal needs and belongings
- ❖ Encourage and develop resilience in their children
- ❖ Help their child have all the required materials for school
- ❖ Support their child as appropriate with homework assignments
- ❖ Arrange meetings through the school office

These expectations also signal to members of the school community the kinds of behaviours that not acceptable in Bennettsbridge N.S. eg, behaviours that interfere with teaching and learning, behaviour that is hurtful, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation; threats or intentional physical hurts to another person; damage to property; theft. (This is not an exhaustive list).

Promoting Good Behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of this policy.

In Bennettsbridge N.S. we actively foster a school ethos, policies and clear, consistent practices that help promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

We encourage and promote good behaviour by;

- ❖ Having a safe and happy school with positive everyday interactions which encourage the building of positive relationships of mutual respect, warmth, empathy and support among students, staff, and parents
- ❖ Setting high expectations for pupil behaviour
- ❖ Ensuring the standards are fair, clear, consistent and widely understood for school, classroom and break times and all school related activities eg. tours
- ❖ Encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and learning by

involving them in the preparation of school, classroom and break time expectations and boundaries. This is prioritised at the beginning of the school year in the form of classroom contracts /agreements, through SPHE lessons and assemblies. Regular discussions /reminders take place throughout the school year when warranted.

We affirm positive behaviour in the following ways;

- ❖ A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- ❖ Recognition for effort
- ❖ A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- ❖ Certificates, stars, stickers, homework pass as appropriate
- ❖ A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- ❖ A word of praise in front of a group or class
- ❖ Acknowledgement at assembly
- ❖ Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- ❖ Student /class of the week /month
- ❖ Golden Time
- ❖ A mention to parent: written or verbal

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour disrupts and may prevent teaching and learning and calls for professional input and judgement on the part of all school staff to balance the needs of all students. The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

Levels of Intervention

1. Most students behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school. Occasional, minor misbehaviours are attended to routinely and effectively through the professionalism of the classroom teacher or supervising teacher.
2. Some students need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally.

Additional inputs or interventions might include:

- Referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the student
 - Involving the SET team and Special Needs Assistants
 - Formulating a behavioural plan as part of the Student's Support Plan with clear targets in conjunction with the pupil and parents. This plan will be monitored and reviewed as warranted in a supportive manner
 - Behaviour contracts
3. A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. They may have great difficulty in learning new behaviour and may not respond to low-level interventions. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. In conjunction with the above named interventions, local support services may also be able to assist in responding to the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties. Sources of support may include the National Educational Psychological Service, HSE

Community Psychology Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, The National Council for Special Education, Child Guidance Services or Adolescent Mental Health Services
Bennettsbridge N.S. is cognisant of its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 with regard to making reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities.

Strategies Used to Prevent Escalation of Inappropriate Behaviour

Bennettsbridge N.S. uses a range of strategies to respond to behaviour that interrupts or prevents teaching and learning and also helps to prevent inappropriate behaviour from escalating while endeavouring to keeping relationships positive between all parties. The following interventions and/or sanctions may be used in any particular order depending on the specific misbehaviour;

- ❖ A nonverbal signal such as a hand signal, a change in tone of voice or stopping speaking and waiting for attention
- ❖ Reasoning with the pupil: A simple and fair verbal discussion, using problem solving techniques and the implementation of a warning system if warranted
- ❖ Reprimand (including advice on how to behave)
- ❖ Overlooking or ignoring an inappropriate behaviour when the behaviour is not causing significant disruption to the lesson and the safety of other pupils is not threatened. This may include praising the appropriate behaviour of other pupils
- ❖ Temporary separation from peers, friends or others: Moving a pupil who is behaving inappropriately to another seat, classroom or area of the yard before speaking to the pupil in private, reminding them of the school's behaviour expectations and encouraging them to fulfil these expectations
- ❖ Carrying out a useful task in the school
- ❖ Withdrawal of privileges
- ❖ Detention during a break
- ❖ Prescribing additional work
- ❖ In the case of a pupil with more challenging behaviour an emergency strategy will be in place to ensure that the pupil and/or the class may exit the area safely and that extra support may be available immediately
- ❖ Communication with parents
- ❖ Referral to Principal Teacher
- ❖ Suspension
- ❖ Formal report to the Board of Management

The Use of Sanctions

Sanctions are used as part of a wider plan to bring about a change of behaviour aiming to defuse rather than escalate while preserving the dignity of all parties.

Sanctions are;

- ❖ Applied fairly and consistently and in a timely manner by all school staff
- ❖ Appropriate to the age, developmental stage, cultural background and or individual vulnerabilities/needs of the student
- ❖ Proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour factoring in the context, frequency, duration, persistence and /or escalating pattern

By using sanctions in Bennettsbridge N.S. to bring about a change of behaviour, we are;

- ❖ Reinforcing the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour
- ❖ Giving a strong message to other children and staff that their wellbeing and safety is being protected
- ❖ Preventing serious disruption of teaching and learning
- ❖ Helping the student to learn that the behaviour is unacceptable
- ❖ Recognising the effect of their actions and behaviours on others
- ❖ Understanding that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- ❖ Learning to take responsibility for their behaviour

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Including Social, Emotional & Behavioural Needs and Communication & Sensory Needs

Pupils with special educational needs are required to follow Bennettsbridge N.S.'s Code of Behaviour.

- ❖ Pupils with particular diagnoses, including social, emotional & behavioural needs and communication & sensory needs, will have a Student Support Plan (SSP).
- ❖ The SSP will set out the specific nature of the pupil's behaviour needs, the special needs provision required, the targets to be achieved in a given time, the monitoring and assessment arrangements in place and the arrangements for review. Specific programmes, social stories, role play activities are some of the tangible supports that may be utilised in support of the promotion of positive behaviour
- ❖ The special needs provision required may include the involvement of particular school staff, including a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), as well as the role of external specialists and support from parents/guardians at home.
- ❖ The staff supporting individual pupils will help them to appreciate school expectations, to understand and observe the Code and to understand their own behaviour, both its impact and consequences.
- ❖ The pupil's parents/guardians will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and will be encouraged and facilitated to work with school personnel in devising effective strategies to help their child to improve her/his behaviour.

Class teachers, special education teachers, SNAs and school management will use their professional judgement in the application of the Code of Behaviour in respect of pupils with special educational needs.

Implementing the Code of Behaviour

- ❖ Parents: Prospective parents are directed to the school website to view The Code of behaviour policy prior to enrolment. Printed copies are available in the school office. Parents are asked as part of the enrolment procedure to confirm that the code is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child. When required, parents are assisted in supporting their child understand the school's standards. Positive parent / school relationships strengthen the success of the policy where relevant information and /or concerns are shared. Draft policies are placed on the website and parents are encouraged to review.

- ❖ Students: In Bennettsbridge N.S. we use a wide range of strategies to communicate the expected standards of behaviour to our students eg. SPHE lessons, classroom contracts, assemblies, SET interventions, individual conversations
- ❖ Monitoring and Recording behaviour in the school: The school's Code of Behaviour is a constant 'work in progress', where pupil behaviour both appropriate and inappropriate is monitored, recorded and analysed regularly. The process includes formal and informal feedback and information about standards/ trends / patterns of behaviour in general and for specific groups and individuals . The Code of Behaviour may be reviewed and updated in consultation with the school community in response to this monitoring process.
- ❖ Incidents of behaviours of concern or repeated incidents of inappropriate misbehaviours are recorded by the relevant staff member on Aladdin, noting, date and location, incident of misbehaviour, pupils involved, actions taken and name of supervising teacher.
- ❖ Parental concerns /complaints: Any concerns about behaviour or about any aspect of the Code of Behaviour should be discussed with the child's class teacher, to resolve the matter as early as possible and as close as possible to the origin of the concern. If the matter remains unresolved or is not resolved satisfactorily, the matter may be addressed with the Principal.

Notification of a Child's Absence from School *(See Statement of Strategy for School Attendance)*

In order to comply with obligations under Sections 18 and 23 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and to meet school expectations, a parent/guardian is required to notify the school on Aladdin at the earliest opportunity where their child is absent from school, arrives late or leaves early. The relevant category of absence can be selected and an explanatory note provided for the absence. A parent/guardian can view their child's attendance and punctuality for the school year to date and previous school years on Aladdin. Where a pupil is absent from school at roll call time in her/his classroom, the parent/guardian will receive an automated text to confirm that their child is absent from school.

As a school, we cooperate fully with the requirements and practices of Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with responsibility for school attendance. This includes the formal referral of individual pupils to TESS for poor attendance at school and the facilitation of in-school meetings with the EWO where the attendance of an individual pupil may be a cause for concern and where face-to-face contact with the parent/guardian is considered helpful to discuss the matter and to provide any necessary supports.

School Procedures for the Use of Suspension & Expulsion

Bennettsbridge N.S.'s policy and procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion are prepared in compliance with our obligations under Section 23 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB, 2008).

In implementing this policy and procedures, the Board of Management and Principal are committed to ensuring that:

- ❖ There are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion
- ❖ All matters to do with an investigation of alleged inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in confidence
- ❖ Fair procedures are followed, including the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil, the matter will usually be referred to the Gardaí which have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The services of a Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) may also be accessed as a source of support and advice for the school and the pupil and her/his family.

Suspension

For the purposes of this Code of Behaviour, suspension is defined as;

"requiring the pupil to absent herself/himself from Bennettsbridge N.S. for a specified, limited period of school days."

During the period of a suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school.

The Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. The Board has formally delegated the responsibility to suspend a pupil for up to and including three days to the Principal.

The Grounds for Suspension

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Suspension is normally only used when other sanctions and or interventions have been tried and reviewed.

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds, such as:

- ❖ The pupil's behaviour has had/ is having a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- ❖ The pupil's continued presence in the school at the time of the suspension constitutes a threat to safety
- ❖ The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for an immediate or automatic suspension.

Immediate Suspension: In exceptional circumstances, the Principal 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, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Automatic Suspension: The Board of Management may decide, as part of following the consultation process with the Principal, parents / guardians, teachers and pupils, that particular behaviours incur an automatic suspension as a sanction. These particular behaviours include but are not limited to, possession use of illegal substances, sexualised misconduct, behaviours which bring the school into disrepute, serious damage to school property/ school related property.

Considerations Prior to Suspension: (See Appendix 1 for detailed considerations: Pg 72 NEWB Guidelines for Schools: Developing a Code of Behaviour)

The following factors are considered before suspending a pupil:

- ❖ The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- ❖ The context of the behaviour
- ❖ The impact of the behaviour
- ❖ The interventions tried to date
- ❖ Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- ❖ The possible impact of suspension.

Where suspension is used, it is employed as part of an agreed plan to address the pupil's behaviour. The suspension should:

- ❖ Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- ❖ Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- ❖ Impress on a pupil and their parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

Procedures in Respect of Suspension

Bennettsbridge N.S. follows fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious inappropriate behaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

1. The pupil and their parents/guardians will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. The parents/guardians may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.
2. The pupil and their parents/guardians are invited to a meeting with the Principal and given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. If a pupil and their parents/guardians fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting, and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour.
3. Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of an immediate suspension, the parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

The Period of Suspension

A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management of Bennettsbridge N.S. has authorised the Principal to impose a suspension of up to five days, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

A ceiling of ten days applies to any one period of suspension imposed by the Board of Management. The Board will also formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more.

Appeals

Bennettsbridge N.S.'s Board of Management offers an opportunity to appeal a decision of the Principal and/or the Board of Management to suspend a pupil. Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. At the time when parents/guardians are being notified formally of such a suspension, they will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills and will be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians in the presence of the pupil to emphasise their responsibility in helping the pupil to behave well when the pupil returns to school and to offer help and

guidance in this. The Principal will provide the parents/guardians with written notification 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 reason(s) for the suspension
- ❖ Any study programme
- ❖ The arrangements for returning to school, including commitments to be entered into by the pupil and their parents/guardians
- ❖ The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where the parents/guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, the written notification will be forwarded by registered post and will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

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 & Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the Suspension Ends

A period of suspension ends on the date, given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension. When a suspension is completed, the pupil is given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Bennettsbridge N.S. expects the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

On return to school the pupil and their parents/guardians will meet with the Principal to commence the reintegration process. This will include discussion of, commitment to improved behaviour as well as a planned reintegration into her/his class, break times and all other school activities. Specific behaviour supports will be implemented, following a suspension, where it is deemed that such supports are necessary to ensure the pupil's successful return and reintegration to school.

Records & Reports

Formal written records are kept of:

- ❖ The investigation
- ❖ The decision making process
- ❖ The decision and the rationale for the decision
- ❖ The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal reports all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension. The Principal also reports suspensions to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) in accordance with Section 21(4)(a) of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*. Records are maintained in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, the Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Expulsion

A pupil is expelled when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude the pupil from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and in accordance with *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB, 2008).

Authority to Expel

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. That authority is reserved to the Board of Management and is not delegated.

The Grounds for Expulsion

Expulsion of a pupil will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as:

- ❖ 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
- ❖ The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

While the grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension, they differ with regard to the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour. Where expulsion is being considered, Bennettsbridge N.S. will have tried a series of other interventions, and believe that all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour have been exhausted.

Such interventions will include:

- ❖ Meeting with the parents/guardians and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
- ❖ Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ❖ Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- ❖ Seeking the assistance of support agencies, including the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), HSE Community Psychology Services, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Forms of Expulsion

Automatic Expulsion: The Board of Management may decide, as part of Bennettsbridge N.S.'s policy on sanctions, following the consultation process with the Principal, parents /guardians, teachers and pupils, that particular behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction.

Expulsion for a First Offence: There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should 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 of Behaviour could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or serious physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault.

Determining the Appropriateness of Expelling a Pupil (See Appendix 2 for detailed considerations: Pg 82 *NEWB Guidelines for Schools: Developing a Code of Behaviour*)

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a pupil. They include:

- ❖ The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- ❖ The context of the behaviour
- ❖ The impact of the behaviour
- ❖ The interventions tried to date
- ❖ Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- ❖ The possible impact of expulsion.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion

Bennettsbridge N.S. will follow fair procedures, as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts

confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. The pupil and their parents/guardians will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The parents/guardians and the pupil will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour, including a meeting with the Principal, before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. If the pupil and their parents/guardians fail to attend the meeting, the Principal will issue a written notification by registered post advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the misbehaviour.
2. Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal will:
 - ❖ Inform the parents/guardians and the pupil that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
 - ❖ Ensure that the parents/guardians have records of; the allegations against the pupil, the investigation and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
 - ❖ Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents/guardians
 - ❖ Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
 - ❖ Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
 - ❖ Ensure that the parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.
3. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling the pupil, it will hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this. The Board will ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians are not present for the Board's deliberations.
4. Having heard from all the parties, the Board will decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate action. Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) of Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The Board will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents/guardians will be told that the Board of Management will inform the EWO.
5. Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the EWO must:
 - ❖ Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the pupil, and anyone else who may be of assistance
 - ❖ Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. Where the possibility of continuing in Bennettsbridge N.S. is not an option, the

consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of pupils and staff is secured. The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the pupil during this time. Suspension will only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the pupil during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

6. Where the twenty day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the pupil should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel in writing. The parents/guardians will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. The parents/guardians and the pupil will be informed about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

It is a matter for Bennettsbridge N.S's Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps require separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents/guardians due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board meeting.

Appeals

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. An appeal may also be brought by the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) on behalf of the pupil.

Ratification & Communication

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on _____ following consultation with staff, pupils and parents/guardians. The Code has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association. A copy of the Code will be made available to the Patron and the Department of Education & Skills if requested.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this Code of Behaviour will be monitored by the Principal, staff and Board of Management. It will be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals, including through formal and informal feedback from parents/guardians, pupils, staff and others. The Code will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation.

Signed: 
Fr Dalton: Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 23-6-25

Signed: Sheila Aylward
(Sheila Aylward, Principal)

Date: 23/6/25

Factors to consider before suspending a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?