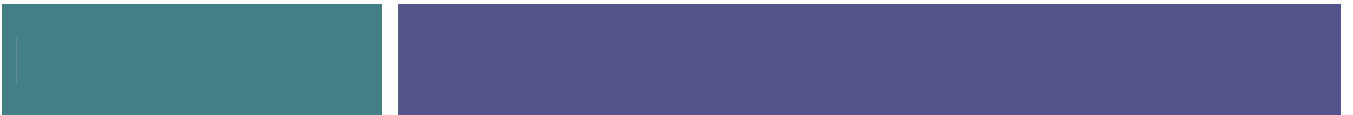


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# Code of Behaviour



# Code of Behaviour

ATHLACCA N.S.

FEBRUARY 2023

## INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of **Athlacca N.S.** has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of **Athlacca N.S.** has been developed in accordance with '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

## POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
- ii. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes. Our existing policy was reviewed in June 2007 by the Principal and staff members, circulated to parents and signed by the Board of Management. We then reviewed it as requested by the Diocesan Office, Limerick. We worked under the guidance of Máirtín Ó Riordán (P.P.D.S.)
- iii. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.
- iv. The policy was reviewed again in March 2014 and subsequently annually.

## RATIONALE

- It is an area of concern identified by the school community.
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school.
- It is a requirement under DES Circular 220/90 on School Discipline.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 23.

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- 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 self/ 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 wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To assist school staff, 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 and to help children become aware of the consequences of their behaviour.
- This can only take place when there is an appropriate balance between an individual's rights and respect for the rights of others.

## WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and, in this respect, the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

Outlined below are the roles and expectations of the various members of the School Community.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

### Pupils

#### ***General Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow the guidelines as outlined in our Health and Safety Policy.
- comply with our Acceptable Use Policy.
- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- show respect for the property of the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. Children should arrive in school between 9.00 a.m. and 9.10 a.m.
- do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- When it is necessary for a pupil to leave during school hours, the parent/guardian will be required to sign in/out the child in the school's in/out book, which is located in each classroom.
- should wear the complete school uniform every day.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, children from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class are expected to wear face coverings as recommended by Dept. of Education, NPHET or Public health guidance. Some children may be exempt from this depending on their specific needs.

#### ***Classroom Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking.
- work to the best of his/her ability.
- value school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow the direction of his/her teacher.
- obtain his/her teacher's permission to leave the classroom.
- respect the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.
- should remain seated in class when requested and especially during lunchtime.

#### ***Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour***

Each pupil is expected to:

- play safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous.
- follow the directions of the playground supervisor(s) and remain in the designated play area.
- should never leave school grounds without the permission of a teacher.
- obtain permission before re-entering the school building during break periods.
- respect the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- avoid swearing, fighting, name calling or any form of bullying.

### ***Behaviour in other School Areas***

Each pupil is expected to:

- walk in the school building.
- behave while in toilets and cloakroom.

### ***Behaviour during School Outings/Activities***

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow his/her teacher's directions at all times.
- remain with the teacher/supervisors and/or designated group of pupils at all times.
- behave politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- observe the rules of general good behaviour.

## **Staff**

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure that children are regularly reminded of the rules and expected behaviour.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.
- Always encourage good personal hygiene and nutritional lunches.

## **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by

the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Parents/Guardians must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

## PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognized and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

- All Staff endeavour to have a common consistent approach to behaviour.
- A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school' (Circular 20/90).
- The staff treats all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour
- In the case of very disruptive children who may have Special Needs, (Social/Emotional/Behavioural) certain modifications may have to be made to follow individual behavioural management programmes which set reasonable expectations for them. This behavioural programme will have input from the child, staff and parents.
- The school's SPHE 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.
- All parents are informed about the Code of Behaviour.
- Activities such as circle time will be used to promote positive behaviour.
- 'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school'.

- In the case of serious and gross misdemeanours, the chairperson of the Board of Management is informed.
- Our school needs the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.
- Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour e.g.
  - ❑ Be aware of and co-operate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
  - ❑ Ensure children are at school in time.
  - ❑ Attend meetings at the school if requested.
  - ❑ Help children with homework and ensure that it is completed.
  - ❑ Ensure children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Children are encouraged to play in a fair co-operative and inclusive manner in the yard.
- Children are informed of the activities that are/are not permitted, the various play zones and the procedure for reporting to the teacher on duty (see supervision policy)
- Children are informed at the beginning of the school year and regularly reminded of appropriate behaviour in classrooms, playground, corridors and toilets.

## INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

### Level One (Minor Misdemeanours)

#### *Level 1: Behaviours*

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1.

**Please note this list is not exhaustive.**

- Not completing homework without good reason.
- Running in the school.
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner.
- Ignoring staff requests.
- Not wearing correct uniform.
- Not having correct book, pencils etc.

#### *Level 1: Disciplinary Actions*

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour (Minor Misdemeanours) are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
- Prescribing additional work, to be completed at a time designated by the teacher e.g. during part of a break
- Loss of privileges.
- Communicate with parents concerning further/continued misbehaviour.
- While no child will be withheld from an aspect of the curriculum e.g. Art or P.E., he/she can be taken out of such activities if he/she is disruptive during those activities.
- Noting instances of persistent misbehaviour in the Incident Book and warning that particular pupil.



### ***Level 1 Supportive Interventions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Circle Time or class discussions, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.

## **Level Two (Serious Misdemeanours)**

### ***Level 2: Behaviours***

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well-being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2.

#### **Please note this list is not exhaustive.**

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting).
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Cheating.
- Use of bad language.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult.
- Possession or use of potentially dangerous toys/objects (e.g. any kind of knives, etc.)
- Telling lies.
- Bullying.
- Frequenting the school premises after school hours without appropriate permission.
- Leaving the school premises during the day without appropriate permission.
- Spitting at others.
- Deliberate isolation of another child.

### ***Level 2: Disciplinary Actions***

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 (Serious

Misdemeanours) are administered by the Staff, and may involve consultation with the principal. They may include the formal notification of parents, with written notification where deemed necessary. Disciplinary Actions outlined in Level 1 may be used here. In addition to those some examples of extra responses are:

- In-school supervised detention during part of a break.
- Report submitted to the Board of Management.
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour.
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan.

### ***Level 2: Supportive Interventions***

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal or Principal.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

## **Level Three (Gross Misdemeanours)**

### ***Level 3: Behaviours***

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3.

**Please note that this list is not exhaustive.**

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires.
- Intentional possession or use of weapons.
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin.
- Inappropriate comments or behaviour of a sexual nature.

### ***Level 3: Disciplinary Actions***

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- **Suspension from school for five to ten days:**

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- **Expulsion:**

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

## PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

In the case of Suspension or Expulsion the school will adhere to the Chapters 10 – 12 of NEWB Guidelines.

### Suspension

#### *Definition of Suspension:*

*'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

#### *Authority to Suspend:*

The Board of Management of *Athlacca N.S.* has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an '**Immediate Suspension**' to the Principal Teacher. An '**Immediate Suspension**' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an '**Automatic Suspension**' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

### ***Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension***

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of *Athlacca N.S.*, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- or
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of *Athlacca N.S.* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

### ***Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:***

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of *Athlacca.N.S.* will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

- A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);
- i. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
  - ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled **no later than 5 school days** from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of *Athlacca.N.S.* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- ii. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- iii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration 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 pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## **Expulsion**

### ***Definition of Expulsion:***

*'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'*

### ***Authority to Expel:***

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

### ***Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:***

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- iii. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
  - iv. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than **5 school days** from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond
- b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
  - ii. ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
  - iii. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)
- c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- i. as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer
- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the **twenty-day period** following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of *Athlacca.N.S.* acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- i. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- ii. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

## **NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher
- The absence should be notified in writing by letter / using the school journal
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

The school will inform The Child and Family Agency (**Tusla**) in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.

## **RECORDS**

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's Behaviour. Such records will contain;

- Incidents of misbehaviour,
- interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 and GDPR 2018.



## Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, **the Board of Management of Athlacca National School** has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

**(a) A positive school culture and climate which**

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-**

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

**Definition of Bullying**

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,

- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

The list below is non-exhaustive:

### Examples of Bullying Behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>•<b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>•<b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>•<b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>•Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>•Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>•Abusive text messages</li> <li>•Abusive email</li> <li>•Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>•Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>•Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<b>Identity Based Behaviours</b> <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>•Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>•Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>•Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>•Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>•Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Malicious gossip</li> <li>•Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>•Ignoring</li> <li>•Excluding from the group</li> <li>•Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>•"Bitching"</li> <li>•Spreading rumours</li> <li>•Breaking confidence</li> <li>•Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>•The "look"</li> <li>•Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>•Harassment</li> </ul>

<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>
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### Personnel

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:

The class teacher for each class grouping.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

### Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

#### School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community, as opportunities for training arise.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to

be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- A school assembly will be organised termly to promote friendship and maintain awareness of bullying prevention in the school.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - Worry box in the senior class.
- Our protocol to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied is to speak to the class teacher. This protocol is encouraged annually during the pre-enrolment meetings, annually at parent teacher meetings and at informal meetings with parents.
- There is an Internet Acceptable Usage and Mobile Phone Policy in the school that includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- School supports include Grow in Love, Meditation, SPHE programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE, NEPS book - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A continuum of Support (guidelines for Teachers).

#### **Implementation of Curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme and Grow in Love.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** i.e. resources related to the SPHE programme, Grow in Love programme and Stay Safe programme.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately, reference - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A continuum of Support (guidelines for Teachers) - NEPS

#### **Links to other policies**

- Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Supervision of Pupils, Internet Acceptable Usage and Mobile Phone Policy, Attendance Policy, Home-School Links

Policy, Healthy Eating Policy and SPHE Policy.

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

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

**The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);**

**The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

### **Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as the secretary or special needs assistants (SNAs) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

### **Investigating and Dealing with Incidents: Style of Approach**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first.

Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

#### **Follow up and Recording**

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

#### **Recording of Bullying Behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.



The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

**Informal - Pre-determination that Bullying has Occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These records will be made in an incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

**Formal Stage 1 - Determination that Bullying has Occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- Records from the relevant teachers will be stored in the filing cabinet in the lock up room.

**Formal Stage 2 - Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) In certain cases of gross misdemeanour e.g. where there is intentional possession or use of weapons or violent fighting or intentionally causing harm to others. In such cases bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records are kept in the filing cabinet in the lock up room.

**Established Intervention Strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Lesson from SPHE Curriculum
- Interventions suggested in NEPS book – Behavioural, Emotional and Social

Difficulties – A continuum of Support.

- In-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A continuum of Support (guidelines for Teachers) – NEPS
  - Get up, Stand up (6<sup>th</sup> Class only)
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies e.g. NEPS, and CAMHS to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

### **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified by the staff and lessened as far as possible.
- Pupils have been consulted in the identification of these danger spots.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues are addressed:
  - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.
  - Mobile Phone Policy is implemented.

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

### **Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, a copy given to each family and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school newsletter and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_