

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This Code of Behaviour was formulated to allow St. Felim's NS to function in an orderly and harmonious way and to enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development. The previous policy was reviewed in November 2013 and it was a collaborative exercise between teachers, parents, Board of Management, [BOM], and pupils as appropriate.

Rationale

This Code was reviewed in November 2013 in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, in order to ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school. It will specify as under *Section 23(2) of the Education Welfare Act, 2000*:-

- a. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- b. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- c. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- d. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student;
- e. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Ethos and Spirit of the School

Our school policy should afford both pupils and teaches an opportunity to engage with each other in a harmonious environment unique to St. Felim's. Relationships can be enhanced and new relationships developed to the enormous benefit of pupils, staff and parents, thus greatly enhancing a positive school environment.

Aims

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

Content of policy

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1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The guidelines for behaviour in St. Felim's NS are based on the characteristic spirit of our school.

The Basic Principles are

- Providing Clarity
- Affirming that everyone's behaviour matters
- Focussing on promoting good behaviour
- Balancing needs
- Ensuring fairness and equity
- Promoting equality
- Recognising educational vulnerability
- Attending to the welfare of students
- Attending to the welfare of staff
- Promoting safety and freedom from threat

2. Whole school approach to promoting positive 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).

Expected standards of behaviour

Staff

In St. Felim's NS staff are expected to:

1. Be punctual
2. Be prepared for their class
3. Be courteous, respectful to each other, to pupils and to parents

Board of Management

The Board of Management (BOM) has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair Code of Behaviour and discipline within the school.

1. The BOM of St. Felim's NS is consulted when reviewing / drafting the Code of Behaviour.
2. The BOM supports the Code of Behaviour on an ongoing basis
3. The BOM provide opportunities for staff development in implementing the Code of Behaviour
4. The BOM will follow the procedures that are in place to deal with serious breaches of behaviour (*see under 'suspension' and expulsion*)

Parents

In St. Felim's NS we expect parents to:

1. Ensure children come to school clean, in full uniform and on time.
2. Ensure children have all necessary equipment / PE gear on appropriate days
3. Ensure that each pupil has their copies, books, pens, pencils, etc
4. Check and ensure all homework is completed (written and oral) and sign homework diary on a daily basis
5. Provide children with a healthy lunch each day
6. Provide a written explanation for all pupil absences / homework not completed
7. Inform teachers in writing if pupil is being collected early or by someone other than a parent. (*see Board of Management page*)

Pupils

In St. Felim's NS pupils are expected to:

1. Be courteous and respectful to each other, to all staff members, including Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) and to parents

2. Be punctual and in full uniform
3. Have all their copies, books, etc., as per rules
4. Be respectful of school property and equipment and the equipment and property of their fellow pupils
5. Have all homework completed to the best of their ability
6. Maintain a good / high standard of behaviour, both in class, in the yard and during all out of school activities

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

"The most effective methodologies that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it happening in the first place."

In St. Felim's NS ***Discipline for Learning*** (DfL) is used to promote positive behaviour in the school. DfL places the emphasis on rewarding and highlighting good behaviour but also as a method of discouraging undesirable behaviour.

Discipline for Learning has three parts

1. Rules
2. Rewards
3. Sanctions

The whole staff collaborated to devise a set of rules, rewards and sanctions which are outlined below.

1. Rules

There are 5 main rules in the school that govern behaviour in both the classroom and yard. Each of these rules has a key message behind it which is highlighted to the children.

These rules are 'taught' to the children and are kept from 2nd class to 6th, including the Speech and Language Unit.

School Rules

1. BEFORE WE SPEAK IT IS THE RULE TO PUT OUR HANDS UP IN OUR SCHOOL

Key Message: ***Courtesy***

- If you want to answer a question, ask a question or make a point in class then raise your hand.
- By doing so you are being polite to your teacher and classmates and everyone will hear what has to be said!

2. IN THE LINE, IN CLASS, IN SCHOOL QUIET WALKING IS THE RULE

Key Message: ***Quiet Walking***

- When walking in the school we walk on the right hand side of the corridor and coming down or going up the stairs.
- By doing so we are showing respect to others we meet in the corridors and also eliminate accidents!

3. WHILE LISTENING TO THE TEACHER WE ALWAYS WILL TRY TO KEEP OUR HANDS STILL

Key Message: ***Good Listening***

- By listening to the speaker (teacher or a classmate), we are showing respect while learning at the same time.
- No body likes speaking when there is no one listening to them!

4. SHOW CARE IN ALL WE SAY AND DO TO ALL THE PEOPLE IN OUR SCHOOL.

Key Message: ***Respect & Co-Operation***

- When we are kind and helpful to others, others will be kind and helpful to us. This includes our friends, our teachers, our SNA's and everyone who works in our school.
- When visitors come to our school it is also important that we are friendly, welcoming and courteous to them.

5. SILENCE, WHISPER, NORMAL TALKING – KNOW WHEN, KNOW WHERE, KNOW WHY

Key Message: **Quietness**

- Think about it...We have two eyes, two ears and only one mouth....
- This means that we can see and listen twice as much we should say!!
- By listening in class instead of talking we are going to learn so much more!

The school rules will also apply to out of school activities e.g. sports events, school tours library visits, church, theatre and swimming pool, etc.

Students will also be made aware that they are to treat visitors/guests to the school with the same respect that they treat school staff with. This also extends to the lollipop man on duty each morning and evening.

The Playground

School yard playtime in St. Felim's NS affords both pupils and teachers an ideal opportunity to engage with each other in an informal, friendly relaxed atmosphere unique to the school yard. Relationships can be enhanced and new relationships developed to the enormous benefit of teachers / SNA's and children, thus greatly promoting a positive school environment.

- Show care at work and play / be fair in what you do and say
- Help the staff in every way / be quick and ready to obey

Pupils will be reminded that the school rules also apply to behaviour on the yard. If a pupil does not follow the rules of the school on yard the following sanctions will apply:

- Stand at either wall for a period of time designated by supervising teacher/SNA
- If a case of serious misbehaviour has occurred then the pupil will be sent inside to the detention room to complete lines or sit in silence and think about their behaviour

The above slogan will be issued to all teachers and taught to all pupils in St. Felim's NS and a list of the following rules and a map of designated play areas will be copied, issued to all teachers, discussed with the pupils and displayed at exits to the playground.

Break-times

There are two break-times each day:

- 11am to 11.10am
- 1pm to 1.30pm

At both break-times pupils must leave the classroom before the teacher and walk onto the yard in an orderly manner.

No children should be left in classrooms unattended.

Children will have eaten their lunch before entering the school yard.

At playtimes three teachers will supervise all of the play areas, including toilets.

SNA's will be responsible for the children in their care and will remain in a position where they can observe them at all times.

Students are encouraged to avail of use of the toilet before exiting the school for break-time.

The toilets at the end of the corridor are available to students at break-times. Students who require use of the toilet at break-times must go and ask an SNA for a toilet pass. Only students who have this pass will be allowed access to the school at break-times unless accompanied by a teacher/SNA in the case of an injury/accident.

At break-times pupils should stay within the defined grounds of the school yard.

The school playing area consists of:

- (1) The main yard
- (2) Area to the rear of Ms Farrell and Mr Tighes room
- (3) Area behind Cana House

Area behind Storage Shed and the car-park is **strictly** out of bounds and any student found in these areas will automatically receive a sanction.

Children will not play in school corridor or toilets at break-time

Children using the prefab in rear car park will access school yard through the rear car park

Boundary walls, railings and fences are NOT for sitting or climbing on

During break-times children **MUST** play with their class groups, in a pre-defined area of the yard. (*see map*)

When a ball goes out of bounds, one pupil wearing a fluorescent jacket is nominated to retrieve it.

During break-times children are encouraged to play fairly, according to the rules, with due care for others.

At the end of break all games will cease and children will line-up in their pre-designated areas. A best line award is given to the class with the best line i.e. standing in a straight line quietly, at each break. At the end of each week a compliment slip and 10 mins extra play is given to the class(es) with the most awards. At the end of each month a trophy is presented to the overall winner of the best line at assembly.

Football and other sports equipment will be collected promptly and put in the net

At the bell class teachers will promptly collect their classes

The supervising teachers and SNA's will remain in place until all classes are collected.

Pupils will not enter school corridor and classrooms until collected

In the event of a child having an accident, injury, or illness during playtime, one of the supervising teachers shall escort the child inside to report the incident and have the child treated by another member of staff. *Incident Report Sheets* are available in the secretary's office and will be written up by the staff members who witnessed the accident, injury or misbehaviour.

Wet Days

A wet duty rota has been drawn up and is displayed in the staff room.

Each class will remain in their classroom and the class teacher, prior to leaving the room will organise suitable activities, i.e., board games, computer / videos.

The three teachers on duty will supervise.

The SNA's will remain in the classroom with the child in their care.

The general school environs and out of school activities

- We in St. Felim's NS promote positive behaviour in the general school environs, i.e., corridors, halls, toilets, assembly hall, front steps, with lollipop-person, crossing to prefabs and coming in and leaving the school.
- We promote positive behaviour on all school sports events, outings, i.e., tours, library visits, church, theatre and swimming pool, etc.
- Behaviour will be subject to the schools Code of Behaviour anywhere on the school premises or on any out of school activity where the pupils are representing the school.
- We promote positive behaviour in the following ways:
 - (1) Pupils must show respect for and obey all staff members at all times and in all areas of the school or when on school outings.
 - (2) Pupils should be courteous towards staff members and fellow pupils at all times
 - (3) In the interest of health and safety, pupils are requested to walk in an orderly manner on all occasions outside the classroom, e.g, on the way to Learning Support, going on messages, going to Assembly, etc.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Promoting a positive school climate.

- Through the SPHE curriculum we will teach the skills the children will need to live up to the school expectations, e.g. co-operating with each other, listening to each other, showing respect, taking turns, using please and thank you etc.
- Staff have a common understanding of expectations and a common approach to sanctioning. Through daily contact class teachers will promote an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Ways of promoting good behaviour:

- Teacher's regularly praise good behaviour in a consistent manner.
- Teaching school rules to all students and regularly reminding students of them.
- Stamp Books – As part of the DfL, students will each have a stamp book where they will receive stamps for their good behaviour. A maximum of 3 stamps per day will apply.
- When students have 3 pages of completed stamps, they will receive a lucky dip from the Principal.
- When students have fully completed their stamp book they will receive an award at assembly from the principal.
- Compliment slips
- Good note to parents in homework journal.
- Teachers model good behaviour.
- Giving children responsibility in the school.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

The degree of misdemeanours i.e., minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers / principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity / frequency of such misdemeanours. This common sense approach will also apply to the recording of same.

Misbehaviour Level One

General demeanour in class – eg., leaning back in chair, slouching, inattentiveness, fiddling, etc

Uncompleted homework

Talking out of turn

Shouting out in class

Constant chatting in class

Not listening in class

Distracting others, ie., taking belongings, pushing, chatting, etc

Yard – kicking the ball away on purpose

 Rough play, pushing in line, not standing in line

 Leaving designated play area during break-time

Misbehaving in assembly

This list is not exhaustive!

Strategies Level One

Ignore when safe and feasible [if they are looking for attention]

Reasoning – explanation – advice on how to improve

Reprimand – warning about the consequences of repeating the behaviour

Temporary separation – ‘time out’ – ‘thinking chair’

Loss of privilege [refer to class reward system]

Extra work [signed by a parent]

Communicate with parent [class teacher and parent]

These strategies may not always be applied in this order. However, it is important that all staff ensures consistency in the application of the above strategies.

Misbehaviour Level Two

Persistent disruptive behaviour in class

Answering back

Sneering

Sniggering

Throwing things at others [rubbers, etc]

Spitting

Mimicking a teacher

Ignoring a teacher

Racist remarks

Stealing minor items eg., pencil, ruler, copy

Damaging property of others

Damaging school property

Writing on desks, walls, etc

Consistent incomplete homework

Refusing to do class work

Telling lies
Name calling
Leaving yard play area during break-time
Being out of bounds without permission
Rough and aggressive play
Abuse of toilet facilities, eg., throwing paper

This list is not exhaustive.

Strategies Level Two

Temporary separation in another classroom
Withdrawal of privileges [refer to class reward system]

Extra work [signed by a parent]
Communicate with parent [class teacher and parent]

Consult with Principal
Refer child to Principal
Communicate with parents
Request meeting with parents
Reach agreement with parents as to what improvements are required

Yard 'sin bin'

These strategies may not always be applied in this order. However, it is important that all staff ensures consistency in the application of the above strategies.

Misbehaviour Level Three

Persistent infringement of school rules
Truancy
Bullying
Physical violence towards pupil or staff member

Serious threat of violence towards another pupil or staff member

Refusal to co-operate with class teacher / staff member

Persistent disruption to learning of others
Leaving school premises without permission

Persistent tantrums
Consistent of abuse of toilet facilities
Serious damage to property
Persistent use of racist language and behaviour

This is not an exhaustive list.

Strategies Level Three

Temporary separation in another classroom
Withdrawal of privileges [refer to class reward system]

Extra work [signed by a parent]
Communicate with parent [class teacher and parent]

Consult with Principal
Refer child to Principal
Communicate with parents
Request meeting with parents
Reach agreement with parents as to what improvements are required

Yard 'sin bin'

Suspension [see guidelines pg. 69 and school policy]

Expulsion [see guidelines pg. 79]

These sanctions may not always be applied in this order. However, it is important that all staff ensure consistency in the application of the above strategies.

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

"Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort." (see Circular 20/90)

- Parents of children in St. Felim's NS have good access to both the teachers and the Principal and are invited to keep in close contact with the school with regard to all aspects of the child's progress.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage if problems occur by either the class teachers or the principal. (*see strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour*).
- Parents will be contacted by phone where a discussion can be held.
- Parents will be asked to attend the school to talk to the class teacher or to the principal.
- Parents will be informed in writing and asked to attend the school for more serious misdemeanours.
- On visiting St. Felim's NS parents will be treated respectfully and put at their ease in order to maximise a co-operative approach. We recommend that two staff members will attend all such meetings.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

These strategies are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems:

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), appropriate support is sought from services available, eg., Health Service Executive, NEPS
- Special Education Needs Personnel facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour
- The Learning Support teachers act as mentors for particular children and in assisting teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children
- Every effort is made to provide a mentoring system for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area.
- Professional development is available to staff, e.g., SESS, Colleges of Education, ICEP (ProfExcel) courses, Education Centres ...

- If the school proposes to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, it is advised to read *Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers*, INTO 2004: 11 and to consult competent legal advice.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself / herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school will ensure temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and / or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing, alternative placement.

5. Suspension

The BOM of St. Felim's NS has the authority to suspend a pupil.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension (see previous section). The staff of St. Felim's NS will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a pupil will include the following:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety (both his own and others)
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

Suspension as part of a Behaviour Management Plan

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

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with pupils and their parents
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on the pupil and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour

Categories of Misbehaviour that warrant suspension

Serious Misbehaviour

1. Bullying
2. Threatening / assaulting members of staff and or pupils
3. Damaging school / pupils' / staff property [deliberately breaking windows, doors, etc., damaging toilet facilities, defacing school furniture and property, destroying other pupils' / staff personal property].
4. Stealing school / staff / pupils/ property
5. Persistent infringement of school rules in class / in the greater school environment [being un-co-operative, telling lies, being cheeky, temper tantrums, deliberate disobedience].

6. Leaving the school grounds without permission
7. Truancy
8. Serious verbal abuse including discriminatory / personal remarks or abusive language.

This is NOT an exhaustive list

Automatic Suspension

The BOM of St. Felim's NS, following consultation with the Principal / parents / staff and pupils agree that certain named behaviours [see below] incur suspension as a sanction. Due process and fair procedures will be followed in each case.

Categories of extreme misbehaviour that may incur automatic suspension

- Serious threatening behaviour
- Assaulting staff members / pupils
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal of St. Felim's NS will consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time represents a serious threat to the safety of the pupils, staff or any other person. Fair procedures will be applied. The formal investigation should immediately follow the suspension. Parents will be notified and will arrange for the pupil to be collected. St. Felim's NS will have regard for its' duty of care for the pupil.

Rolling Suspension

A pupil will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

- They engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and
- Fair procedures are observed in full and
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil.

Procedures in respect of Suspension

Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice

St. Felim's NS will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a pupil. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and the case law.

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- The **right to be heard**
- The **right to impartiality**

The **right to be heard** means:

1. the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
2. the right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account

3. the right to know how the issue will be decided
4. the right to respond to the allegations
5. where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body
6. where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts

The **right to impartiality** means:

1. the right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker
2. the right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making

Freedom from bias entails ensuring that a person with an interest in the matter is not involved in the investigation or decision-making. If a person has pre-conceived opinions, a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter, they should not attempt to settle that matter.

An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision maker comes to the task with an open mind.

Applying fair procedures in school

In St. Felim's NS fair procedures apply to:

- the **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion
- the **process of decision-making** as to
 - (a) whether the pupil did engage in the misbehaviour and
 - (b) what sanction to impose.

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of our school.

The **right to be heard** means that the pupil and their parents are fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter, and that they must be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation **before** a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed [suspension].

Absence of bias in the decision-making would mean, for example that if the child of the Principal was accused of misconduct that might warrant suspension or expulsion, the Principal would not be involved in the decision. Similarly, if the child of a member of the BOM was accused of misconduct, that parent would absent themselves from the BOM for any consideration of the matter by the Board.

The principle of **impartiality of decision-making** means it is preferable that, where possible, the Principal arranges for another member or members of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case and any other relevant information to the Principal. The Principal is then free to take a view about whether the pupil did engage in the behaviour and about the sanction, based on the report of the investigation.

Where circumstances require the Principal to conduct the investigation as well as making a finding before proposing the sanction, he must not only act fairly but be seen to act fairly. It is incumbent upon the Principal to review the investigation to ensure that it has been fully and fairly conducted. It should be evident to the

pupil, parents, staff and other pupils that the Principal, as decision-maker, is basing his decision, in an objective way, on the findings of the investigations.

The person alleging the misbehaviour, or who is a victim or a witness should not usually conduct the investigation.

Thoughtful application of professional judgement and knowledge of the requirements of fair procedures will generally guide decision-making about suspension and expulsion in St. Felim's NS. However, in circumstances of particular complexity, the BOM may need to seek legal advice to support their decision-making.

Involving the Gardaí

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil these will usually be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. The Juvenile Liaison Officer will be a significant source of support and advice for the St. Felim's NS and the pupil.

Procedures to be followed

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, St. Felim's NS will observe the following procedures.

1. Inform the pupil and their parents about the complaint
This will be done in writing to ensure what their child is alleged to have done and underlines the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.
2. Give parents and pupil an opportunity to respond.
A meeting will be set up with the pupil and their parents to provide an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour.
If a pupil and his parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter and 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. The school will record the invitations made to the parents and their response.

The Period of Suspension

A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances.

If a suspension for longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the BOM for consideration and approval.

The BOM will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension brings the number of days the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty or more.

Appeals [see page 76 of *NEWB*]

The BOM will offer an opportunity to appeal the Principal's decision to suspend a pupil. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the BOM, an appeals process will be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education Act 2007*.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the pupil will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science, [DES], under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the Suspension

Written Notification

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

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end

- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents (*for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour*)

- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES [*Education Act 1998 ,Section 29*].

The letter will be clear and easy to understand. Particular care will be taken in communicating with parents who may have reading difficulties, or whose first language is not English.

Engaging with pupil and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, the Principal, Mr. Tierney, or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents 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.

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

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the BOM decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the DES directs that it be removed following an appeal under *Section 29 of the Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.

Re-integrating the pupil

St. Felim's NS will help the student to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. Where possible, the school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the pupil during the re-integration process.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed, the school will expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

Records and Reports

Records of investigation and decision-making

Formal written records will be kept of:

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

Report to the BOM

The Principal will report all suspensions to the BOM with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to NEWB

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

Review of use of suspension

The BOM will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000,

'a student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an education welfare officer' (Section 24_(a)). It is the right of a BOM to take '... such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (section 24₍₅₎)

Expulsion (as per page 82 of the NEWB guidelines)

Procedures in respect of expulsion

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
 - (1) Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
 - (2) Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the principal (see page 84 NEWB guidelines)
- Consideration by the BOM of the principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing. (see page 84 NEWB guidelines)
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing. (page 85 NEWB guidelines).
 - (1) If BOM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion.
 - (2) The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification.
- Consultations arranged by the EWO
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18), are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (DES) against some decisions of the BOM, including:

- (1) permanent exclusion from a school and
- (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (see *Circular 22/02*).

- State how, when and by whom parents(s) / guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BOM in relation to suspension or expulsion. Will parents be given a copy of *Circular 22.02* and related forms?
- Who will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the DES? (*Section 12, Circular 22/02 - Processing of an Appeal*)

6. Record Keeping

Class / Playground –School Records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping and data protection legislation, any records kept are written in a factual and impartial manner.

At class level the teacher will use a common sense approach in maintaining records and will use positive comments to reinforce good behaviour.

(See strategies for dealing with minor, serious and gross misbehaviours for the appropriate time re reporting to the principal)

An incident report will be written up by the staff members who witnessed the misbehaviour and will be filed. This will apply to incidents in all areas of the school.

The incident reports will be stored in the secretary's office.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

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

In St. Felim's NS the following strategies are used to encourage school attendance.

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- In conjunction with school completion programme a system of acknowledging / reading good or improved attendance is in place
- The curriculum is being adapted to maximise relevance to pupils
- Parents are made aware of the Education Welfare Act, 2000, section 23 and its implications.

- Notification will be sent to parents if the child misses more than 15 days
- The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

8. Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be measured using the following criteria:

- (a) Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- (b) Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- (c) Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Roles and Responsibilities

The BOM is responsible for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared in this school and will play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

Responsibility for implementing this policy lies with the BOM, the school principal, the teachers, the SNA's, other school staff, parents and pupils.

It is the responsibility of the Principal under the direction of the BOM to lead the work on the Code of Behaviour.

Teachers, SNA's and other staff members will play an important role in the review, updating and implementation of the Code of Behaviour. They can bring to this work:

- (i) Their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning
- (ii) Their experience of what works to help students to behave well
- (iii) Their knowledge of the school and the school community

Parents will contribute to the Code of Behaviour and recognise their responsibilities for their children's behaviour.

Joint work between parents and staff will enable parents to:

- (i) Re-enforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour
- (ii) Have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work
- (iii) Have insight into what teachers need in order to be able to teach effectively
- (iv) Give consistent messages to students about how to teach others

The Roles and Responsibilities the pupils of St. Felim's NS will include:

- (i) Being part of a collective effort to make sure the school is a good place to teach and learn
- (ii) Taking personal responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's wellbeing and the wellbeing of the teachers, SNA's and other staff
- (iii) Learning essential skills of listening, negotiating and managing differences