



Code of Behaviour

Scoil Phobail Bhéara

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Scoil Phobail Bhéara opened in 1980 as a result of an amalgamation between Méan Scoil Naomh Iosaf run by the Mercy Sisters and Castletownbere Vocational school run by Co Cork Vocational Education Committee. The school has continued to grow, develop and improve. We recognize the importance of partnership between home and school and the need to encourage the student voice. We give every opportunity to each student to reach his/her full potential.

Vision Statement

We in Scoil Phobail Bhéara have a vision of the type of school we would like. It is a school guided by Christian values where students are happy and where everyone is treated with courtesy and respect. Our school encourages supports and challenges all students to reach their full potential.

While parents are the primary educators of their children, our staff members, who act in loco parentis, are our most valuable resource and every effort is made to ensure that we have a dedicated and committed staff and good student-staff relationships.

Our School is an integral part of our local community and in addition to providing the best possible education for our young people and preparing them for later life, our school serves as a resource for and enriches our community.

We do everything possible to assist our students to take responsibility for themselves and their actions and we help them to appreciate and care for the world in which we live.

School Motto

Ní Neart go cur le Chéile / Strength in Unity

CODE OF CONDUCT

The main function of the school's code of conduct is to ensure the creation and maintenance of a positive school climate where effective teaching and learning can occur.

The code outlined below was agreed by the Board of Management, Parents' Association, Students' Council and Staff of the school. It is based on values such as the dignity of the individual, mutual respect, self-discipline, social responsibility and the right of all students to benefit from teaching and learning.

The Code

- (a) Students are expected to behave in an orderly manner, to show due respect and courtesy to fellow students and school staff both in school and on school related activities.
- (b) Students are expected to show due respect for school property and for the property of others.
- (c) Students are expected to avoid involvement in any activity which might endanger the welfare of themselves or others.
- (d) Students are expected to comply with instructions from staff in the matters of safety, conduct in class and school environs, movement about the school, classwork and homework.
- (e) Students are expected to follow the uniform code and to wear the uniform with pride.
- (f) Students are expected to be punctual and to have full attendance.
- (g) Parental (or Guardian's) consent is required if a student is to be excused from school.

PASTORAL CARE SYSTEM

Promotion of Good Behaviour

The school promotes good behaviour through the pastoral care system. The Pastoral Care System in Scoil Phobail Bhéara is based on our vision statement and our agreed code of conduct.

Objectives

1. That students are happy and safe.
2. That students feel they are cared for and valued.
3. That students achieve to their full potential.
4. That good student-staff relationships are characterised by mutual respect and courtesy.
5. That parents/guardians are involved as much as possible in the education of their children.
6. That the principles of natural justice and restorative practice are followed.

The Structure of the Pastoral Care System

Pastoral care cannot be confined to a particular class session; neither can it be seen as the responsibility of a specific group of teachers. All contact between teachers and students presents an opportunity to develop and foster a caring learning environment.

The Subject Teacher has responsibility for promoting a suitable learning environment that nurtures good discipline within his or her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. The subject teacher is the key to achieving high standards and is key to student welfare.

Role of the Subject Teacher

The Pastoral/Disciplinary system supplements and supports the traditional role of the subject teacher. It is envisaged that most disciplinary problems will be solved within the confines of the classroom.

A Class Teacher is appointed for each class. His/her relationship with the group is central to the development of an effective system of pastoral care.

Role of the Class Teacher

The Class Teacher aims to create a well-motivated class group where high standards of work and conduct contribute to an environment where each student has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

A Year Head is appointed to look after the needs of students in a particular year group and to co-ordinate the work of the Class Teacher. The Year Heads will liaise closely with the Deputy Principal and will in turn attend the weekly Year Head/Care Team meeting with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Role of the Year Head

The Year Head is manager of his/her Year Group. The Year Head aims to create a well-motivated year group in which standards of work, conduct and responsibility induce individual, class and group excellence.

Role of the Additional Education Needs Co-ordinator

The AEN Co-ordinator and team will, when appropriate, support students, families and staff in the clarification and implementation of the code and will promote the welfare of all students who are identified as having an additional need.

Role of the Chaplain

The Chaplain is available as a spiritual support to students, families and staff of the school. He/she offers support and assistance to students who are experiencing personal or family problems.

Role of the Guidance Counsellor

The role of the Guidance Counsellor is to assist students in their educational career and personal and social development while in school. Counselling is a key part of the Guidance programme – it may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

Role of the Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal is responsible to the Principal for managing the Pastoral/Discipline system in the school.

Role of the Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the Pastoral and Discipline system within the school.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Promoting positive behaviour is the main goal of the code. The school will actively foster a school ethos, policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Strategies for the promotion of positive behaviour will include:

- Staff, students and parents should understand the importance of the code and have a responsibility in ensuring its success.
- The code will be clear consistent and fair.
- The code will be communicated to all parties.
- Parental support for the code is necessary in encouraging positive behaviour.
- Relationships between teachers, parents and students will be positive and a happy school atmosphere will be maintained.
- Adults will model and affirm positive behaviour.
- The use of restorative practice guidelines.

Possible External Supports for School

- Foróige
- Family Resource Centres
- Gardai
- Tusla
- West Cork Children Services
- National Education Psychological Support Service (NEPS)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Systems and Procedures supporting the Pastoral Care System

1. Prayers, Reading and Motivation at Morning assembly.
2. **Weekly Focus.** Each week the Principal, following consultation with the management team, will select some priorities for the week.
3. **Priority Class.** On occasion, a class group, needing extra support may be selected and prioritised.

4. **Liturgical Occasions.** Staff and students gather together on liturgical occasions to support our Christian ethos.
5. **Student Support Team:** If a member of staff is concerned about a student he/she may refer the student to the student support team. Students may refer other students through the year head.
6. **Counselling.** Counselling by the Guidance Counsellor and referral onward.
7. **Chaplaincy.** The Chaplain provides support to students.
8. **Students' Council.** The Students' Council is the structure by which students' opinions and concerns are formally voiced. It has tremendous potential for positive enrichment.
9. **Friendship Week.** Friendship week is held as an initiative to support the school's anti-bullying policy.
10. **Awards.** Awards will be made to recognise and encourage students' efforts in a wide variety of areas including curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular. Awards day in an inclusive activity.

Policies to support the Pastoral Care System

- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Whole School Inclusion Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Positive behaviour policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- RSE Policy
- Attendance Strategy

DAILY PROCEDURES AND ISSUES

Attendance

Students are required to be in school at 08.45 a.m. in the morning and at 1.45pm after lunch. If a student is absent from school a parent must telephone 70177 Ext 1 stating the reason for absence. Parents/Guardians are required to fill in the absence note at the back of the student's journal to explain the absence.

Entering and Leaving the School Building

Students may enter the school building through the main or side door in the morning before school or before the end of lunch break. If a student is late for school he/she must enter through the main door. Students may not leave the school building between classes or during morning break. Students must not leave school without permission.

Assembly

Assembly begins at 08.55.

Late arrival

It is expected that students will be on time for school and on time for class. If a student is late for school the journal must be presented when signing in at the library office (am) or the main office (pm). A record of lateness will be kept in the punctuality log in the student journal. The punctuality log may also be used by subject teachers to record persistent lateness by students.

Storage of bags, coats and personal belongings

School bags and personal belongings must be kept in an orderly fashion. School bags should be stored in the year areas at break and lunch time and coats should be hung up. Students should not bring valuables to school.

Uniform:

The official school uniform must be worn at all times. Students may not wear non-uniform jackets, hoodies, and scarves in school.

Ear-rings and Piercings

Ear-rings: studs or sleepers in ear only. All other piercings are prohibited in school for health and safety reasons.

Movement between classes

Students should proceed in an orderly manner to the next assigned class without loitering.

Entering and Leaving Classes:

Students should not enter a room if their teacher is not present. They should line up quietly in double file outside the room. If students must remain in the room the door should remain open until the arrival of the next teacher. Students should exit the room in an orderly fashion. Students may only leave a room when permission from a teacher has been obtained and a note is written in the permission to be out of class section in the journal.

Seating Plan:

Students are expected to sit in an assigned seat.

Student Journal

Students will be provided with a school journal. There is a section at the front of the journal for parents to sign. It is expected that the student will treat the journal with respect and it must be kept free of graffiti and in good condition. The journal must be available at each class and all homework recorded. A student must give the journal to the teacher if requested to do so. The journal remains the property of the school and may be kept in the student file.

A journal may only be replaced by a class teacher/year head. There is a charge of €12 for the journal.

Students must bring journals with them when meeting class teacher/year head, deputy principal/principal on a disciplinary matter.

School Book Loan Scheme

Students are expected to look after the books from the book loan scheme.

Students Leaving School Early:

In exceptional circumstances students may need to leave school early. In this case written permission in the school journal is required from parent/legal guardian.

The student must present the note to his/her class teacher/year head for signing. Students may then sign out at the library office during the morning and the main office thereafter.

Parents/guardians collecting students should present themselves at the main office in the front of the school.

Accidents/Illness

Parents will be contacted by the school office if a student has an accident or is ill. Students with their parents' consent will be brought to the doctor if necessary.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is strictly forbidden in the school because it destroys tables and carpets

Tippex

Tippex is strictly forbidden as it is toxic and stains furniture and carpet.

Smoking

In line with State legislation smoking is banned at all times in the school, on the grounds, or in the environs of the school.

Study Library

A quiet library area has been created for reading and study for staff and 6th students. An application form for students for a place in the study library must be completed and signed by parents before a place is assigned. Places can only be assigned by the 6th Year Teacher

Student Cars

Students are not permitted to have cars/motorbikes on the school grounds.

Sexting

Sexting is the sharing of sexual text, video, and photographic content using mobile phones, apps, social networking services and other internet technologies. The sharing of explicit text, images and/or video, is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour and will have serious consequences and sanctions for those involved in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Please note that:

- All incidents involving creating, storing, or sharing of explicit text, images and/or video of children under the age of 17 years will be reported as an incident to the Gardaí and Tusla and the State Claims Agency (to the latter as there is the potential to cause injury/harm to the individual).
- Sharing of explicit text, images and/or videos of pupils in the school will incur serious sanctions including suspension and up to expulsion as determined by the Board of Management.

Respect for school building and surroundings

Students are expected to treat their surroundings with respect and pride. Students are expected to avoid littering the school, school grounds and town.

PROCEDURES FOR INCIDENTS OF MISBEHAVIOUR

For incidents of misbehaviour the following sanctions may apply:

Subject teacher

- Discussion with student
- Record in teacher's journal
- Change of location within the classroom
- Informal detention with 24-hour notification
- Note to parents in student's journal
- Text to parents
- Phone call to parents
- Letter to parents
- Removal of privilege
- Consultation with Class Teacher
- Formal referral to Class Teacher (referral form)
- Gross non-compliance – Referral to Year Teacher/ Deputy Principal and inform Class Teacher.

Class teacher

Class teachers check student's journal weekly and sign it. He/she will monitor attendance and performance.

On referral of a student to the Class Teacher he/she may take the following action:

- A. Meet student/discuss and advise
- B. Resolve/monitor progress and sanction if necessary
- C. Advise and refer for support.

Sanctions may include:

- Note in student's journal
- Detention (lunchtime)
- Contact parents i.e. text, phone, letter
- Consultation with Year Head
- Use of Yellow Report Card (parents/guardians informed)
- Invite parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting
- Referral of serious issues of misbehaviour to Year Head
- Referral for issues of gross non-compliance to Deputy Principal

Year Head

On referral of a student to the Year Head he/she may take the following actions:

- Consultation with Class Teacher
- Meet student/discuss and advise
- Resolve/monitor progress and sanction if necessary
- Advise and refer for support.
- Refer for Detention (Wednesday afternoon)
- Consultation with Deputy Principal
- Discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s) (phone call)
- Place student on report card yellow/red as appropriate
- Invite parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting
- Gross non-compliance – referral to Deputy principal

Year Heads will have a weekly care team meeting with Principal, Deputy Principal, Additional Needs Co-ordinator, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor. Any relevant information will be communicated to the class teacher. Parents may be advised to refer students for external support.

The Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal may require that a student be placed on Report. Other sanctions open to the Deputy Principal include:

- A. Contacting/meeting parents/guardians
- B. Withdrawal of student from class for a period

- C. Referral for school counselling and/or assessment
- D. Advise referral for external support in consultation with parents/guardians.
- E. Referral to Principal of most serious cases

Restorative support sessions. (RSS)

- **Lunchtime RSS** 1.20-1.45 pm. Parents are informed by a note in the student journal. 24 hours' notice will be given to the student. Reflective form to be used.
- **Wednesday RSS** 1.45-3.00 pm. Parents are informed by a letter which is posted home. Reflective form to be used.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting on 1/10/24

Signed: Mary Hegarty
Chairperson

Pauline Hurley
Principal

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

This Policy applies to management, students, teachers and parents/guardians.

Suspension

The Board of Management of Scoil Phobail Bhéara in its procedures on suspension complies with sections 22 and 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Definition of Suspension

Suspension is defined as: *Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a limited period of school days. During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school.*

Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of Scoil Phobail Bhéara has the authority to suspend a student.

The Board of Management has delegated the authority to suspend to the Principal or person acting in this capacity.

The Principal may suspend a student for a maximum of 3 days.

If the Principal wishes to impose a suspension of 4 or 5 days then he/she must consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The Board of Management normally places a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension.

The Board undertakes a formal review to suspend a student, when the suspension will bring the number of days suspended to 20 days or more in the school year. Suspensions of 20 days or over may be appealed under section 29 Education Act 1998.

Delegation to the Principal or person acting in this capacity was formally adopted at a Board of Management meeting on:

Date: __1/10/24

All suspensions must be reported to the Board of Management.

Suspensions of a cumulative total of 6 days must be notified to TUSLA.

Grounds for Suspension

Suspension is a proportionate response to behaviour that is a cause for concern.

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may result in suspension.

The following factors will be considered before suspending a student:

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

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

Suspension is part of an agreed plan to address a student's behaviour.

The suspension will:

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

Forms of Suspension

- **Immediate suspension.** This may be used if the continued presence of the student in the school would represent a serious threat to the safety of the students or school staff. Fair procedures must be applied.
- **Suspension during the state examinations.** The Principal will consult with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The DES Best Practice Guidelines concerning Certificate Examinations will offer guidance. This sanction will be used where there is
 - A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
 - A threat to the safety of other students and personnel
 - A threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

Fair procedures must be applied.

- **‘Automatic’ suspension.** Particular behaviours incur automatic suspension as a sanction. We are committed to follow due process and fair procedures.
- Any exclusion imposed by the school is a suspension, and should follow the guidelines relating to suspension.

Procedures for suspension

The principles of natural justice and due process will be used when proposing to suspend a student

- Inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint. Parents/guardians will be informed by phone or by text or in writing.
- Parents/guardians and student will be given an opportunity to respond. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter.
- If parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting the Principal will reschedule the meeting and invite the parents/guardians by registered letter which will outline the gravity of the matter and the importance for parents/guardians to attend a meeting.
- When an automatic suspension is considered, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish a case for suspension. Parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for collection of the student.

Right of appeal

Parents /guardians have the right to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student. The right of appeal will be communicated to parents/guardians in writing.

Section 29 appeal

Where the total number of days for suspension in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents/guardians or a student over 18 may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will be informed in writing of the right of appeal under section 29.

Implementing the suspension

- Parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the decision to suspend
- The letter will confirm the following:
 1. The period of suspension and the dates when the suspension will begin and end.
 2. Reasons for the suspension.
 3. Any study programme to be followed.
 4. The arrangements for returning to school and commitments required.
 5. The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
 6. The right of appeal to the Secretary Department of Education and Skills.

(Education Act 1998) Circular letter M48/01

Re-integrating the student following suspension.

The school will support the student who is returning from suspension through the pastoral care system. A student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Records and Reports

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions agreed.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management giving reasons and duration of each suspension.

The Principal will report suspensions to Tusla in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines.

Review of Suspension

At regular intervals the Board of Management will review the use of suspension.

Expulsion

The Board of Management of Scoil Phobail Bhéara complies with section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 in its policy on expulsion.

Definition of Expulsion

A student is expelled from Scoil Phobail Bhéara when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school. The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student.

The following steps will be included:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and student to find ways of helping student to change behaviour.
- Ensuring that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour.
- Ensuring that all possible options have been explored.
- The assistance of support agencies will be sought e.g. NEPS, TUSLA, NBSS, CAMHS, and NCSE.

A proposal to expel a student will require serious grounds such as:

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

Automatic Expulsion

The Board of Management may decide following consultation with the Principal, parents/guardians, teachers and student that named behaviours incur expulsion.

Expulsion as a first offence

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

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault
- Serious damage to school property

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student and factors to be considered

When determining the appropriateness of expelling a student The Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of all the factors in the case.

These factors will include the following:

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

Procedures that will be followed in respect of expulsion

Scoil Phobail Bhéara will follow fair procedures when proposing to expel a student. These are:

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

Parents/guardians will be given due notice of the meeting and will be allowed a reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

The procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. The parents/guardians and the student will be informed in writing about the details of the alleged behaviour and informed that it could result in expulsion.
3. The parents/guardians and the student will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of a serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed.
4. A meeting will be held with the student and his/her parents/guardians if following the investigation expulsion is proposed.
5. If the student and his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting they will be invited in writing to attend another meeting. The letter will explain the importance of attendance and the gravity of the situation.
6. A record of all letters, responses and meetings will be kept.

The Principal will make a recommendation for expulsion to the Board of Management.

- The Principal will inform the parents/guardians and student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- The Principal will ensure that the Parents/Guardians have records of: the allegations against the student, the investigation and written notice of the reasons why the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- The Board of Management will be provided with the same records as were given to the Parents/Guardians.
- The Parents/Guardians will be notified of the date of the hearing and invited to the hearing.
- The Parents/Guardians will be advised that they can make a written and an oral submission to the Board of Management.
- The Parents/Guardians will be given sufficient notice of the hearing.

The Board of Management will consider the recommendation of the Principal and will hold a hearing.

- The Board will review the initial investigation to ensure it was conducted properly and fairly.
- The Board will review all documentation and circumstances of the case.
- No party who had involvement in the case will be part of the Board's deliberations. (e.g. a member of the Board)
- The Board will organise a hearing where the Principal, the Parents/Guardians or a student over 18 will put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party may question the evidence of the other directly.
- The Board will be impartial in the conduct of the hearing.
- Parents/Guardians may request to be accompanied at the hearing and this will be facilitated by the Board.
- After both sides have been heard, The Principal and Parents/Guardians may not be present for the Board's deliberations.

The Board of Management will deliberate and decide on an action(s)

- If the Board decides that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of the decision giving the reasons.
- The student cannot be expelled for 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives the written notification. Education Welfare Act s24(1)
- The Board will inform the parents in writing of its conclusions and the next steps in the process.
- If expulsion is proposed the parents/guardians will be informed that the Board of Management will inform the Educational Welfare Officer (TUSLA)

Consultations will be arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

- Within 20 days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled the EWO must:
- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the Parents/Guardians and the student and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- The EWO must convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

- The purpose of the consultations is to ensure that the student remains in education and to consider an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion.
- If the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option the consultation will focus on alternative educational possibilities.
- Pending consultations about the student's continued education the Board may take steps to ensure good order is maintained in school and the safety of students is secured.
- The Board may consider suspending the student during this time particularly if there is a likelihood 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 students or staff.

The decision to expel will be confirmed.

- When 20 days following the notification of the EWO has elapsed and the decision of the Board of Management is still to expel the student the Board of Management will confirm the decision to expel the student in writing to the parents/guardians.
- The Board may delegate this task to the Chairperson of the Board of Management or the Principal.
- The parents/guardians should be informed of their right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge the appeal.
- A formal record should be kept of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent/guardian or a student over eighteen may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by Tusla on behalf of a student. Current DES guidelines for appeals should be used for guidance.

Review

At regular intervals the Board of Management will review the use of expulsion.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting on 1/10/24

Signed: Mary Hegarty
Chairperson

Pauline Hurley
Principal