



**Code of Behaviour
&
Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion**

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – UPDATED NOVEMBER 2015

Policy reviewed in 2009-2010 in accordance with N.E.W.B. guidelines and Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals reviewed the original policy and the proposed changes were put to the Staff and Parents' Association. The Board of Management sanctioned the revised policy at its meeting in September 2010. This policy was further amended in November 2015 to include reference to the School's Revised Anti-Bullying Policy and to address issues arising from inappropriate use of social media by pupils. This revised policy should be read in conjunction with the revised School Procedures for Suspension & Expulsion. (Appendix 1)

Mission Statement

Scoil Thomáis promotes the fullest possible development of each child socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually so that he/she

- **May lead a full enjoyable life as a child.**
- **Be prepared to avail of further education.**
- **Be able to contribute to society as an adult and enjoy leisure time.**

Scoil Thomáis also promotes

- Self confidence and independence and a co-operative spirit among the pupils.
- Respect for and kindness to all human beings and all of God's creatures.
- Participation in and the enjoyment of creative, artistic and physical activity.
- In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the personality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of all children to education in an environment free from disruption.
- Staff members have been involved in planning the code. This code has been discussed with the Parents Association and the Board of Management.
- Every effort will be made by the staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in school. The code offers a framework within which positive motivators and encouragement are used by teachers. On enrolment a copy of this code will be given to assist parents and pupils understand the systems and procedures and to seek cooperation in the application of these procedures. A copy of this policy is also available on the school website.
- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of respect and co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- Rules will be kept to a minimum and will be positively stated in terms of what pupils should do.
- Every effort will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.
- Every effort will be made to have children displaying emotional/behavioural difficulties referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, for example Community Care Services provided by Health Boards and the Educational Welfare Office.
- The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his / her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will be referred to an Assistant Principal and if necessary to the Deputy Principal or Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

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A separate policy document exists on Anti-Bullying (revised Nov 2015). Adult Bullying is dealt with in the Safety Statement. Other policies e.g. Homework, Attendance, Substance Use may be referred to as necessary.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow students with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

The school promotes/encourages good behaviour through some of the following:

(I) Private or public praise of a pupil's good behaviour, manners, politeness

(II) Class "Pupil of the Week" award.

(III) Star / Points e.g. "Best Behaved Group of the Week"

Rewards: appropriate to class level, e.g. stickers, free from some homework

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following : A quiet word or gesture to show approval. A comment in a pupil's exercise book. A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation. A word of praise in front of a group or class, Individual class merit awards, points awards, Delegating some special responsibility or privilege. Written or verbal communication with parent

Teachers may suggest appropriate interventions to improve behaviour to parents/guardians.

The school manages unacceptable behaviour by the following strategies:

(I) Reasoning with the pupil.

(II) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)

(III) Prescribing extra work for individual pupil.

(IV) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.

(V) Communication with parent/guardian(s):

Note in Homework Journal or Misbehaviour Note or Punishment Homework Sheet as deemed appropriate by the teacher. Parents are expected to sign the above notes and return to the teacher.

Punishment Homework Sheets and Misbehaviour Notes are filed in the office for the duration of the child's school life in Scoil Thomais. *Parents are requested to respect the judgement of the teacher in these matters.*

(VI) Detention. Class teacher sends note to parent/guardian(s) informing them about detention and notifies them of the time and duration of the detention. Class teacher gets parental consent for that detention.

Detention note (signed) to be returned and filed in office.

(VII) Teacher request meeting with both parents/guardians.

(VIII) Referral to Assistant Principal.

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Detention. Assistant Principal sends note to parent/guardian(s) informing them about detention and notifies them of the time and duration of the detention. Class teacher gets parental consent for that detention. Detention note (signed) to be returned and filed in office.

**(IX) Assistant Principal sends for parent(s)
Parent / Teacher / Assistant Principal meeting.
Principal to be informed of the outcome of the meeting.**

(X) Withdrawal of privileges.

School trips, Extra-curricular activities etc.

(XI) Meeting with Deputy Principal / Principal.

(XII) Involvement with Board of Management as per guidelines

(XIII) Suspension.

(XIV) Expulsion.

Gross Misbehaviour or Repeated Incidences of Serious Misbehaviour

For gross misbehaviour or repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or staff member will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances. Reports of Bullying Behaviour and the investigation of such matters will be dealt with in accordance with the most recent Anti-Bullying Policy* and school procedures. Sanctions up to and including suspension are in place for repeated and serious matters of bullying including cyberbullying

Posting or circulating defamatory or insulting comments about a teacher or member of school staff on social media sites or on any online or offline medium is regarded as gross misbehaviour and constitutes grounds for suspension

Where there are repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools. (see **Appendix 1 for Suspension & Expulsion Procedures**)

In the case of gross misbehaviour where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of pupils the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130 (6) as amended by circular and the Education Welfare Act 2000. (see **Appendix 1 for Suspension & Expulsion Procedures**)

***Dealing with Bullying Behaviour: Refer to Scoil Thomáis Anti-Bullying Policy – revised 2014 and reviewed in November 2015 to comply with the requirements of the Department of Education *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013**

This amended policy was ratified by the BOM on 17th November 2015 for immediate implementation.

Signed: Patrick Keane Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 17th November 2015

Code of Behaviour (updated Nov 2015)

APPENDIX 1 : SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Authority to Impose a Suspension : The BoM of Scoil Thomáis has delegated authority to the Principal Teacher, to suspend a pupil for periods of **up to three days** for incidents of serious or gross misbehaviour. In exceptional cases where the principal considers that the period of suspension longer than three days is warranted, the matter will be referred to the BOM for consideration and approval. The BoM has also authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the BoM cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

Immediate Suspension: The Board of Management (BoM) has authorised the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, if warranted, for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff and others. In this case parents/guardians will be informed of the outcome of a preliminary investigation and a formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. If the parents/guardians do not attend the school meeting as requested, the pupil may be still be suspended with parents/guardians being contacted prior to the pupil being sent home. In such circumstances, full implementation of formal procedures may be deferred subject to being applied retrospectively as soon as practicable thereafter.

In all cases of suspension (immediate or otherwise) the following procedures will apply:

- An investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour will be carried out as soon as possible.
- Parent/guardians will be informed by telephone and in writing about the incident.
- Parent/guardians and the pupil/s involved will be given an opportunity to respond.
- When a suspension is decided upon, the Principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm (i) the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end (ii) the reasons for the suspension, (iii) any study programme to be followed, (iv) the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent/guardians, (v) the provision for appeal to the Board of Management (or Patron where the BoM itself has authorised the specific suspension under appeal),

Appeals: The decision to suspend a pupil may be appealed by parents to the BoM. This appeal must be lodged in writing within 24 hours and will be referred to the BOM who will issue their decision as soon as possible. An exception will be made in the case of an immediate suspension as per Section 11.5 NEWB Guidelines.

A parent/guardian may also appeal a decision to suspend (only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to suspension in writing from the Chairperson of the BOM/Principal.

Removal of a Suspension (Reinstatement): Following a period of suspension, the pupil will return to the school. The parents/guardians and pupil/s concerned must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school Code of Behaviour. When the suspension is completed the pupil will be supported to begin again with a 'clean slate' and a behaviour plan may be put in place.

Code of Behaviour (updated Nov 2015)

APPENDIX 1 : SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

EXPULSION: A pupil is expelled from school when a BOM makes a decision to permanently exclude the pupil from the school having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Expulsion will normally be considered only as a final step on the continuum of sanctions for extreme cases of serious or gross misbehaviour/s and/or persistence of such misbehaviour, and/or where school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and consider all other alternatives have been exhausted. The school will normally have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion such as:

- Meeting with parents and meeting with the pupil to seek to help the pupil to behave appropriately,
- Ensuring that the pupil understands the consequences of his/her behaviour should it persist,
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried,
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) Tusla/Education Welfare and other relevant agencies.

Expulsion for 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 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 or sexual assault.

Procedures when dealing with serious/gross misbehaviour where there are grounds for expulsion:

Scoil Thomáis will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend/expel a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following will apply:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A report and recommendation will be made to the BoM by the Principal
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's report and recommendations and the holding of a hearing involving all parties.
4. BoM deliberations and actions following the hearing:
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The above steps are outlined in detail in Section 12.4 (Steps 1-6) pages 82-86 of

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)

If the BoM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB has received written notification. The NEWB will be notified using a Notice of Intention to Expel Form. This form will be completed and sent to School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7.

Appeals: A parent/guardian may appeal an expulsion decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or pupil (Section 12 – DES Circular 22/02). Parents will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BoM in relation to expulsion in writing from the Chairperson of the BOM/Principal

SUSPENSION OF PUPIL

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO PRINCIPAL TEACHER

1. The BOM of Scoil Thomáis authorises the Principal to direct a pupil to absent himself/herself from school for up to three school days for serious misbehaviour in accordance with the school's procedures for suspensions.
2. The BoM additionally authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the BoM cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
3. Delegation referred to at 1 + 2 above was approved by the Board of Management at its meeting on *9th December 2014* **and** is subject to reporting the full circumstances of the suspension to the Board for confirmation at its next meeting.

Signed: *Patrick Keane*

Chairperson, Board of Management

9th December 2014