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Scoil Mhuire Junior Code of Behaviour Policy

Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Junior is involved in an on-going process of reviewing all school policies in light of current legislation. A school Code of Behaviour is an essential element in the smooth running of a school. The school had a Code of Behaviour that is reviewed regularly, with the last review completed in May 2021. This review was carried out according to the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour from the National Educational Welfare Board. The guidelines were used as a tool to evaluate our existing policy and amend it where necessary. This task was delegated to the Principal, Deputy Principal and school staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying policy and any other relevant policies.

Mission Statement

We in Scoil Mhuire Junior strive to create an inclusive environment which cherishes the diversity and individuality of all members of our school community while upholding the Catholic Ethos.

“Explore, learn and succeed together”

Student Motto

. Kind heart, Kind words, Kind hands, Kind feet.

Aims:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
- To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- To create an atmosphere of *respect, tolerance and consideration* for others.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are clearly understood and implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.

Expectations

- All members of the school community will behave in ways that show respect for others
- All children will attend school regularly and punctually, will endeavour to do their best in class and will take responsibility for their own work and behaviour
- Full school uniform will be worn. For health and safety reasons, the only ear-rings permitted will be of the stud variety.
- In the playground, field and yard children will keep the Golden Goals and play with respect towards others
- All forms of bullying, racial or gender abuse will be unacceptable in the school.
- Discipline will be accepted with respect and good grace.
- All members of staff, parents/ guardians and children will adhere to the Health and Safety measures which we have in place.
- Staff will demonstrate a willingness to learn and change practice in line with school practice.

Promoting Positive behaviour

In Scoil Mhuire Junior, we adopt a **positive approach** to discipline by having high expectations and encouraging the development of self-discipline. The focus of the whole school approach is the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour.

- Positive reinforcement: Friendship bench, Good News Bulletin Board, Principal's Awards, Compliment Board in every classroom, Badges / Wristbands from principal, Good Behaviour Certs for the classroom and the playground.
- All staff members endeavour to praise good behaviour wherever they observe it –a quiet word or gesture to an individual or a word of praise to a group or whole class.
- Children may be sent to another class or to the Principal for commendation (Principal's Award)
- All class teachers devise reward systems appropriate to their class.
- Pupils are involved in creating a set of rules for their class.
- At the monthly assembly, we celebrate recent events and achievements.
- Parents are informed when their child's behaviour has improved.
- Ongoing communication with parents is an essential element in promoting and sustaining positive behaviour. This can take the form of notes home for individuals and items on the website or in the school newsletter.
- Where individual children have difficulty in adhering to the rules of the classroom or the school, the teacher will devise a reward system tailored to the needs of the child. This may form part of the Classroom Support Plan or the School Support Plan for that child, if one is required. (See Educational Support Policy)
- Privileges will be given to children, who have difficulty behaving well, when a real effort to behave well is noticed.
- Where a child has a particular difficulty with another child or with a specific behaviour, a variety of friendship programmes will be used to encourage positive behaviour towards other children. Parents will be informed and asked to encourage positive interactions with all children.
- Parents will adhere to the procedures when dealing with any issues.

General guidelines for Positive Behaviour

The school rules in Scoil Mhuire Junior are designed to support the maintenance of a safe, happy and orderly environment for all members of the school community. The underlying principles of our Code of Behaviour are;

- Respect for themselves
- Respect for others and
- Respect for property

Our school motto underpins the moral values of the school. They are:

Kind hearts; Kind words;
Kind hands; Kind feet.

Core to all areas in the school will be that:

- The safety of all children is of central importance.
- Staff will know, teach and model our school motto.
- Children will sit in their seats when teacher is out of the room
- Each teacher will create classroom rules in line with the code of behaviour and in collaboration with the children.
- Children will be reminded of the rules and the rationale for them regularly
- Good behaviour will be acknowledged and rewarded

See **Appendix A** for specific school rules

Behaviour

Levels of Misbehaviour:

There are three levels of misbehaviour: Minor, Serious and Gross.
Below are clarifications of what is meant by these terms

Minor Misbehaviour:

All misbehaviours of a minor nature are dealt with by the Class Teacher.

Some might include...

- Continuous talking or interruption
- Being discourteous/unmannerly
- Non completion of homework without good reason
- Pushing /pulling / poking other children.
- Running in the school building
- Repeated touching / taking / using other children's belongings.
- Breaking basic yard rules
- Endangering self/others in yard (e.g. having sticks/stones/climbing or swinging on trees)
- Non-compliance of usage of classroom resources / activities
- Non compliance of teachers instructions

Repeated Minor Misbehaviours:

These may include:

- Reasoning with the child
- Verbal reprimand with advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers within the class
- Thinking Time in the classroom.
- Loss of privileges (e.g. activity time / Golden Time)
- Time out while in the yard
- Communication with parents

Serious Misbehaviour

In cases of serious repeated misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the Teacher and/or Principal to discuss the child's behaviour.

- Some minor misbehaviours when on a continuous basis.
- Behaviour that continuously interferes with teaching and learning.
- Unprovoked acts of aggression
- Rough play causing injury
- Serious fighting—kicking/hitting/biting/spitting
- Stealing or damaging another person's property
- Ongoing lying and dishonesty
- Name calling
- Bad/Inappropriate language and gestures directed at someone
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, gender or racist discrimination and victimisation)
- Threats (physical/verbal) towards another child or adult
- Uncontrolled behaviours/tantrums
- Refusal to work
- Behaving inappropriately when representing the school
- Leaving the yard/school without permission.
- Non compliance of teachers instructions which may lead to a danger to themselves or others
- Other breaches not listed may also lead to sanctions.

Serious Misbehaviour Sanctions

These may include:

- Referral to the Principal
- Principals communicates with parents
- The Principal may in some circumstances deem it necessary to request parents to collect the pupil from school.
- Parents must be available to collect their child in a prompt manner when requested and make alternative arrangements for immediate collection. Emergency numbers must be provided in case parent is unavailable.
- Parents will co—operate fully with individual behavioural plans set by teacher and attend regular meetings regarding child's progress.
- Detention at home: An agreement may be drawn up with parents as part of an overall behaviour management plan whereby the parents agree to keep a pupil out of school for a short period following serious challenging behaviour (see policy on Challenging Behaviour).
- Suspension (1, 3 - 5 days)
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Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between his/her action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The purpose of suspension is one of corrective support rather than punishing pupils for misbehaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour:

- 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 of the pupil himself or herself, staff or other members of the school community.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Gross Misbehaviour

In cases of serious incidences of Gross Misbehaviour parents will be asked to meet the Teacher and/or Principal to discuss the child's behaviour.

- Repeated serious misbehaviour
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Throwing furniture/objects in the vicinity of or at other pupils/staff members.
- Assault on a pupil/member of staff

This code of behaviour applies both in the school and its environs and to all school-related activities.

Gross Misbehaviour Sanctions

- Exclusion (Suspension or expulsion) from school, in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and the Education Welfare Act 2000). Procedures are outlined below.

In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to the managing of consistent/ disruptive /aggressive behaviour, the school under the guidance of the school principal may seek the advice of the appropriate external agencies (NEPS, EWO, SENO, SESS, Tusla) with the aim being to manage the behaviour more effectively.

Complaints or concerns about a child's behaviour should be brought, in the first instance, to the attention of the class teacher. Class teachers may seek the advice of the Mentor. Serious concerns would, of necessity, be brought to the attention of the Principal and /or the Board of Management. Parents / Guardians will be directed towards the complaints procedure if this is required.

Children with Special Educational Needs:

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour.

- The school recognises that children with special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain expectations

- Class teachers, Special Education Teachers and SNAs will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that children with special educational needs can understand. These rules will be explicitly modelled, taught and reinforced on a regular basis.
- Children will be given opportunities to practise observing the rules and given feedback on their progress.
- As appropriate, Specialised Behaviour Plans (see Appendix B) will be put in place in consultation with parents, the Class Teacher, Support Teacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and/or Principal. This will form part of the School Support Plus Plan.
- The school will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given.
- Professional advice from psychologists/Occupational therapy and Speech and Language assessments will be followed.
- The other children in the school or class may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special educational needs, to adhere to the expectations, thus providing peer support.
- The school community of Scoil Mhuire Junior will act in a supportive and safe way acknowledging the differences in all individuals.
- As children will become more mature with each school year, Scoil Mhuire Junior will consider each new year a fresh start

Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Scoil Mhuire Junior will endeavour at all times to ensure that discipline is applied in a fair and consistent manner.

Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour.

Suspension

- If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period to a maximum of 3 days.
- In the case of an incident of gross misbehaviour the Board of Management authorises the Chairperson to sanction an immediate suspension to a maximum of 3 days pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/ guardians.
- A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of suspension up to a maximum of 10 school days.
- In this case the Education Welfare Officer will be informed by letter of the intention to do so.
- Parents/ Guardians may meet with the Board of Management prior to the authorisation of this second period of suspension.
- In exceptional circumstances the Board may authorise a further period of suspension in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.
- A suspension may be lifted under exceptional circumstances, as so deemed by the Board of Management.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Expulsion

- Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, “A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an Educational Welfare Officer”. (Section 24 (4)).
- It is the right of a Board of Management 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))

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 Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management. The Board of Management will advise parents of this right if it has been decided to suspend (for more than 20 school days in a school year) or permanently exclude a pupil.

The Secretary to the Board will prepare a response to any such appeal, which is under investigation by the Department of Education and Skills.

Notwithstanding the above, in the case of any pupil behaving in a manner likely to be a danger to him/herself or others and where every reasonable effort made to address the matter has failed, the Principal shall request the parent/guardian to withdraw the pupil from Scoil Mhuire Junior until such time as the Board of Management deals with the matter. This shall be done as soon as is practicable. (in line with our Health and Safety Policy)

- Aggressive or violent behaviour is behaviour that puts a pupil himself or herself, other pupils or staff members at risk.
- The Board of Management may request that the pupil be withdrawn while a programme can be agreed or resources put in place in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the school community.

Record Keeping

Class Level

Teachers keep a record of misbehaviour, which is on-going, disruptive or serious. The type of misbehaviour is listed along with the date and a brief factual account.

When required, a Classroom Support Plan is devised to support a child with particular behavioural difficulties.

School Level

The Principal also keeps factual reports of particular incidents, communication between school and home, with outside agencies and Board of Management. These are stored in the office.

When required, a School Support Plan /School Support Plus Plan is devised to support a child with particular behavioural difficulties.

End of Year Report - The end of year report includes references to behaviour, which is standardised.

Yard Behaviour

- Instances of misbehaviour in the yard are referred to the class teacher to record. For incidences of serious and gross misbehaviour, they are referred to the Principal.

Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from School

The Education Act 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, “the procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.” Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence.

Parents/Guardians can notify the school of a pupil’s absence in the following ways:

- The school may be contacted by telephone by the Parent/Guardian.
- On the morning of the pupil’s return to school, parents must give the teacher at the door, a note explaining the reason for the pupil’s absence from school.
- All absences and the explanations for them are recorded by class teachers
- These records are stored in the school administration system (Aladdin)
 - Automatic texts are sent from the administration system when a child misses 10 days and 15 days.
 - Tusla, Child and Family Agency are notified once a pupil misses 20 days

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management will

- Work with other members of the school community in drawing up and reviewing the Code of Behaviour.
- Provide a comfortable safe school environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Junior reserves the right to amend the code of Behaviour as it sees fit in order to maintain proper standards of conduct and in the interest of the Health, Safety and Welfare of all persons who use this school.

The Principal will

- Facilitates the involvement of members of the school community in drafting and reviewing the Code of Behaviour.
- Make the Code available to all members of the school community.
- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Supports staff in implementing the Code in a fair and consistent manner.

The Principal, as instructed by the Board of Management, may have to act on certain Health and Safety issues which may have implications for our Code of Behaviour. The Principal reserves the right to do so and make any decisions necessary to uphold the Health, Safety and Welfare of all persons who use this school at her discretion.

All staff will

- Be familiar with and implement the Code of Behaviour.
- Promote positive behaviour and recognise and affirm good work.
- Model, develop, and uphold an atmosphere of mutual respect, kindness and inclusion.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.

- Ensure that all members of staff are treated and spoken to with dignity and respect at all times.
- All staff, including ancillary staff, must familiarise themselves with the teaching council code of conduct. All staff including ancillary staff are expected to behave in accordance with the teaching council code of conduct.
- Respect all visitors to the school - under no circumstances is any staff member/visitor to be videoed without their prior consent.
- Staff should not use any agreed recordings of visitors and/or staff members to defame, deride, insult, abuse or in any way harm the good name of staff members, outside coaches, outside visitors or any person on school campus.
- The Employee is expected to maintain and treat all matters relating to school business and his/her work in the school as an SNA, as strictly confidential. Any breach of this requirement will be treated as a serious matter of misconduct.
- Understand that raised voices and pugnacious / bellicose behaviour within the work place are unacceptable.
- All issues/concerns /conflicts should be approached in a conciliatory manner.

In addition Teachers will

- Maintain good classroom management and organisation to minimise opportunities for misbehaviour.
- Maintain records of repeated and/or serious misbehaviour.
- Communicate effectively with parents.
- Work with colleagues to devise specific behaviour supports when required by a child with behavioural difficulties
- Be familiar with and implement the Code of Behaviour.
- Promote positive behaviour and recognise and affirm good work.

Pupils

- Know, understand and follow the school Code of Behaviour.
- Be honest, respectful and kind.
- Work quietly and safely to the best of their ability at all times.
- Stay on the premises and within the designated areas during school times.

Parents

- Help their children to know, understand and follow the School Code of Behaviour.
- Ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be supportive of staff in their work with their child, in a partnership to promote the best interest of the children.
- Should an issue arise, follow the agreed procedures to deal with the same.
- Cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for themselves or others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any issues which may affect the child's progress and/or behaviour.
- Ensure that their child is provided with any materials necessary for school.

Communication

The policy will be published on the school website. A hard copy will be furnished if required. Parents must read the policy and sign the form, confirming that they have accepted the policy.

All parents/guardians will be advised of any amendments to the Code of Behaviour.

Review and Ratification

The Board of Management ratified this Code of Behaviour policy. The policy will be reviewed regularly.

Timetable for Review

The policy is reviewed and amended if necessary on an annual basis.

Reference to other Policies

The following policies have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour Policy and are all available from the office on request

- Admissions Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- School Tours and Outings Policy
- Support Policy
- SPHE Policy

Chairperson: ***Joan Ashbrook***

Date: 17th September 2025

Appendix A

School Rules

In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules.

□ Health and Safety

All members of the school community will adhere to the health and safety measures in place.

□ Personal Needs

All Children must be respectful of children's privacy when using the toilet. In order to ensure this privacy, The Board of Management requires that all children in mainstream class are toilet trained and can look after their personal care needs

□ Respect and Courtesy

Pupils are expected to treat themselves, all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable. Bullying, aggressive or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated from anyone and will be dealt with in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Pupils are expected to obey the instructions of principal, teachers, SNAs and visiting coaches and to work to the best of their ability.

Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter-free. Damage to, or theft of, school property is strictly forbidden.

Parents are expected to encourage their children to be kind, friendly and inclusive.

□ Before / After school

Parents / guardians are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before 8.50 or after 1.30 (Infants) or 2.30 (1st & 2nd) except where pupils are engaged in extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Children involved in these activities are expected to behave in accordance with the school code of behaviour. Children may not leave school early without being signed out from the office. Proof of appointments may be requested.

□ Opening time

The school opens at 8.50. Formal teaching begins at 9.10. We encourage the children to be in a line outside the classroom door for 8.50. Please maintain social distancing and adhere to the line markings outside the classroom. There must be one adult only present with the children when in their lines. Latecomers are noted by the class teacher. Notes are sent home to encourage good timekeeping or a phone call / meeting with parents may be required.

□ Attendance

Pupils are expected to arrive on time every morning (8.50 am) and to be collected promptly at the end of their school day (1.30 pm or 2.30pm). Pupils are expected to be present every day. Pupils are marked officially late on Aladdin from 9am. See 'Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from school' mentioned earlier.

☐ **Dress Code**

Tracksuit only for Early Start, Junior & Senior Infants

1st & 2nd Class pupils are required to wear the complete uniform every day except on the designated P.E. day (tracksuit & runners)

Stud earrings and watches are the only jewellery allowed

☐ **Healthy Lunches**

The children can avail of the school lunch which is supplied by Glanmore. Children are not permitted to bring nuts or products containing nuts to school. Healthy eating is encouraged. Every child must bring an empty, decent sized lunch box every day. This must be emptied and cleaned daily. Children must not share lunches.

☐ **Break Times**

Orderly behaviour is considered particularly important when children are proceeding to and from classrooms and to and from the yard. Running is strictly forbidden in classrooms and in corridors. As part of their social training the children eat their snack/lunch and tidy up properly afterwards under the supervision of the teacher on duty. All rubbish is placed in their lunchbox and taken home.

The children do not have permission to enter the school during break time without consent from the teacher on duty. During inclement weather pupils remain indoors in their classrooms and may play with the games provided or may watch a programme/dvd as selected by the teacher. Children are not allowed to walk around the room or leave their seat unless permission is granted.

☐ **The school environment**

Parents/guardians are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner while on the school premises. No smoking is permitted on the school grounds. No pets are permitted on the school grounds. No cycling is permitted on the school grounds. The principal may request a parent/guardian to leave the premises if their manner or behaviour is unacceptable or aggressive. Parents / guardians are expected to respond positively to any request made by the principal.

☐ **Homework**

Homework must be completed by the child every night and signed by parents/guardians. See homework policy for more detail.

☐ **Mobile Phones**

The children are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

☐ **Phone Numbers**

It is extremely important that you provide the school with up to date phone numbers (and addresses) in case of sickness or an emergency.

□ **Illness**

Children who are ill should not be sent to school. If a child presents with a contagious condition, parents/guardians will be contacted to take him/her home immediately.

□ **Special Occasions ex. Birthdays**

Children are not allowed to distribute cards/invitations/sweets/cake in school.

□ **School Tours / Outings**

The children must have permission to go on a tour or an outing organised by the school.

Appendix B

The Behavioural Support Plan

Where warranted a behavioural support plan (BSP) will be implemented. This is the component of the IEP that attempts to reduce behaviours that impede instruction with positive intervention strategies to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviours and increase socially and contextually appropriate behaviour. In order to make this connection the BSP includes the following elements:

1. The operational definition of the behaviour impeding instruction.
2. A reference to the key results of a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FA). The full results of the FA will be available in the case file of the child / young person should further consultation be required. A functional assessment is conducted to determine the purpose (function) the challenging behaviours serve for the student.
3. The intervention strategies to be used. These are selected based on the function(s) of the behaviours. Such strategies and supports are reinforcement based and may also include curriculum and instructional modifications, and changes in the classroom environment. These strategies may take a number of forms including skills teaching, generalisation planning, parental supports, reactive strategies, environmental adaptations, and direct interventions.
4. The behavioural objective(s) that state the agreed upon change in the form or rate of the inappropriate behaviour for the student along with a measurable criterion. Steps in scripting/compiling a Behaviour Support Plan The process by which behaviour is identified as requiring the further attention or analysis can take a number of forms. One potential identification of need takes the form of a referral from the child/ young person's parents regarding a behavioural issue of concern. Other examples are where the staff in the school witness a behavioural episode and report it to the school's Principal or class teacher. The steps that will be followed in the identification of behaviours for further attention and the compiling of a BSP are as follows;

- ♣ Identification of behavioural issue requiring further analysis.
- ♣ Baseline of behavioural incidents will be taken.
- ♣ Observation of behaviour of student.
- ♣ Consult with parent/s of the student.
- ♣ Consult with staff working directly with the child/young person.
- ♣ Carry out functional assessment and/ or collect additional data.
- ♣ Consult behavioural literature and tactics available in science.
- ♣ If necessary consult external multi-disciplinary support services. This will especially be the case where students are receiving medication which may have an effect on behaviour.

Informed consent will be sought for all new Behaviour support plans regardless of the specifics of the interventions. Any tactical changes during the plan's lifespan will also require additional parental consent. Maintaining Data Programs that use evidence based practice as the educational model

spend much time and effort in data analysis to guide the decision-making process. This ensures an objective view of the behaviour. Once an intervention procedure has been implemented, data will be maintained on how the intervention is having an effect on the behaviour. This data will determine if the intervention is effective or not. This is an essential part of any intervention phase as it ensures objectivity in decision-making. If the behaviour is improving, the behaviour support team will make a decision as to when the intervention will be discontinued. Data displays and analysis should play a key role in decision-making.

Elements of the Behaviour Support Plan

Information gathered from parents, and school observations, reports and assessments from other agencies.

♣ Target behaviour ♣ known reasons/triggers ♣ times and locations of behaviours ♣ behaviour directed at/ risk level ♣ strategies to be employed to avoid/manage or predict behaviour at home and in school ♣ Review Date ♣ Authors ♣ Staff Sign Off

Appendix C

Managing Behaviours of Concern

Introduction

This policy stems from Scoil Mhuire Junior's commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment for children with special needs. This policy is designed to ensure the rights of children with special educational needs and the staff who support them, so that everyone can learn, work, flourish and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive.

Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff, we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community, we will always endeavour to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building positive relationships with the pupils.

In Scoil Mhuire Junior we believe that children respond well to rules, routines and boundaries. In order for rules and routines to be effective, we feel that continuity and consistency are of the utmost importance.

Definition of Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are often defined as "Culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities" (Emerson, 1995).

In our school, behaviours of concern are those behaviours that interfere with the child's learning and/or that of others. These behaviours can be triggered by a wide variety of factors and influences, such as being a new pupil in the school, transitioning to a new teacher, or by other external events in their lives.

Children are encouraged and guided to develop respect for themselves, other children and all adults with whom they come in contact with.

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is defined as the manner of conducting oneself. It also reflects one's response to one's environment or stimuli. Behaviour may be conscious or unconscious (e.g. quickly pulling one's hand away when one touches something hot). Many factors may contribute to a child's particular behaviour.

Internal factors include:

■ age and stage of development

- personality and temperament
- personal history and experience
- physical, sensory or medical factors
- skills, ability to learn
- beliefs about self and others
- resilience and self-efficacy

External and interpersonal factors include:

- parental and family patterns and relationships
- social networks - friends and peer groups
- neighbourhood and community factors
- the status and standing of different groups in society
- school factors
- time, opportunity and support for personal and social development

6 KEY ASSUMPTIONS IN UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Ref: Daly, Patricia. (2019) *Small changes can make big differences*, Limerick: CDU

■ **Behaviour is not random:** It is connected to events which occurred before the behaviour and is reinforced, positively or negatively, by reactions to the behaviour. It is therefore controllable in terms of interventions targeted at antecedents, or “triggers” and consequences

■ **Behaviour works, has meaning and is not random:** It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise. The functions of behaviour which negatively affect learning are:

- o Getting attention, from adults or peers
- o Getting an object – something the child wants e.g. a ball, a chase
- o Avoiding something e.g. attention or a particular task
- o Getting or Avoiding a sensory experience or human contact

■ **Children want approval:** Adult approval, particularly affirmation and approval from key adults such as teachers, is as important to children as the air they breathe. Your approval is the strongest reward you have in the classroom

■ **Children want to learn:** This has been demonstrated time and again, both in scientific and psychological studies, and is borne out by the experience of teachers over the years. Some may have particular difficulties with the learning process, but they all want to learn

■ **Children who know “what” and “how” cannot always “do”:** It takes a while for children to fully know, understand and apply social interactive skills. Not all children grasp them easily and they need to be taught and supported

■ **Some behaviour has hidden dimensions:** These are related to a particular child’s unique life experience. We see what happens in the classroom and in the playground but we cannot see the child’s unique history or underlying “invisible” conditions e.g. anxieties, sensory difficulties or learning difficulties. We should always be aware of this, especially with children who display challenging behaviour.

INFLUENCES ON PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

There are many potential influences on student behaviour, and many factors that can lead to behaviour that is challenging for schools to deal with. These include:

- **Biophysical factors:** such as medical conditions or disabilities
- **Psychological factors:** including emotional trauma or lack of social skills
- **Behavioural/social factors:** including where a student’s problem behaviour has been learned through reinforcement, consequences or adaptation to social practices (a student with a learning difficulty)

repeatedly misbehaves knowing that he/she will be removed from the class and this will avoid his/her learning difficulty being exposed)

■ **Student group dynamics:** such as bullying and teasing, cliques or student apathy or hostility

■ **Environmental factors:** e.g. the level of classroom noise or seating arrangements

■ **Classroom organisation issues:** such as inconsistent routines, inadequate materials or obliviousness to cultural differences

■ **Teacher behaviour:** e.g. boring or disorganised lessons, over-reaction to misbehaviour or over-reliance on punishment.

In many cases, there is no single “cause” of challenging behaviour, but it is the result of several factors and influences operating in combination.

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

The following behaviours where excessive and infringing on the rights of others are not acceptable:

Aggressive behaviour: pinching, biting, scratching, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling, kicking, head butting, pulling hair, using objects against people and themselves.

Non-compliance: lying down, non- cooperation, resistance to teaching, refusing to do things.

Disruptive or threatening behaviour: shouting, screaming, swearing, repetitive vocalisation, verbal abuse, remarks/discrimination, curses, gestures or threats to harm, teasing, arguing, interrupting, obstructing, taking food or drink from others, setting off the fire alarm, invading personal space.

Absconding / Flight risk: wandering outside the classroom without permission, running away or trying to run away.

Attention seeking: constantly misbehaving in order to seek attention.

Sexually inappropriate behaviour: inappropriate sexual language or sexual gestures including inappropriate comments about the sexuality of others.

Destruction of property: damage to property belonging to self, other children or adults or damage to school property.

Socially- inappropriate behaviour: spitting, interrupting others, provoking others, making inappropriate comments.

Temper tantrums: outbursts of bad temper, emotional reaction

Self-injurious behaviour: head banging, scratching, biting and poking.

Passive challenging behaviour: glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, withdrawal.

It is very difficult to list all possible misbehaviours and eventualities. However, we expect the children to behave in a manner which does not compromise the safety, wellbeing and education of themselves or others.

Positive parental input is paramount in ensuring that the children are supported and encouraged to respect and abide by our values and school rules. We look forward to full co-operation in these matters.

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STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication.

Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate which is supportive of positive behaviour. In Scoil Mhuire Junior, we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour.

The following are some of the strategies that have been developed throughout our school for pupils with SEN to promote positive behaviour:

- Developing language and communication skills – eg: PECS, Lámh,
- The use of visual cues to reinforce verbal instructions
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Individual behavioural plans
- Regular communication with parents –email and where necessary daily journal
- Teaching of social skills
- Use of social scripts(stories)
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child (if capable)
- Studio 3 Low Arousal

- Studio 3 Low Arousal – Managing Signs of Distress
- BrainCalm
- Pathways to preventions
- Middletown ASD course
- Ongoing Liaison and advice from outside relevant agencies, CDNT, NCSE etc
- Zones of Regulation
- Sensory detective

to help regulate and calm the pupils, it is also offered as a defusing tool.

SCHOOL STAFF

THE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The school will establish a Behaviour Management Team whose function is to advise and assist those directly involved in a behaviour of concern situation when it arises.

The Behaviour Management Team will consist of those staff members who have special training or experience in the area of Behaviour Management, comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, senior staff members & current ASD teacher.

Those directly involved may be experiencing a behaviour of concern for the first time and will require advice and assistance in dealing with it. This can be a junior teacher or SNA.

STAFF TRAINING

In Scoil Mhuire Junior we promote Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers to develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. We implement Zones of Regulation programme throughout the school. We have completed in staff training in Berry Street Programme, Zippy Friends , incredible years.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Teachers will be responsible for:

Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage co-operation.

- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour.
- The creation of Behaviour Management Plans where needed.
- Participating in professional development that contributes to skill development in the pupils and a clearer understanding of students with challenging behaviour.
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur. Incident reports will be written when needed.
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/guardians.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal in relation to concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Providing suggestions which could assist in the development of Behavioural Support Plans and Individual Educational Plans.
- Cooperating with interventions and behavioural strategies that are proposed by the child's teacher and the principal.
- Working co-operatively with the school with the best interest of the child at heart.

The Principal will be responsible for

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the 'Behaviours of Concern Policy' within the school.
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students.
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal.
- Providing the opportunities for specialised teachers within the school to develop higher level skills so they can provide additional support and advice within the school.
- Seeking outside support and advice, such as: support from our NEPS psychologist and the NCSE in relation to behavioural supports for pupils with SEN.
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted e.g. reduced day, suspension, expulsion (as a last resort).
- Health and Safety: In the event that a pupil poses a risk to themselves or others, they will be removed from their class or setting to ensure that their safety and the safety of others. If this is not possible, the other children will be removed. If the threat to safety persists, the child's parents/guardians will be asked to take the child home.

Sanctions (in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy)

Minor challenging behaviour:

- Will be discussed with the child (Restorative Practice)

- Will be dealt with at class level and privileges will be withdrawn as appropriate.
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students.

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour – the parents may be asked to take the child home.
- Will be dealt with appropriately.

Damage to property:

- Child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- Will be reported to class teacher.
- Will be reported to parents/guardians and the parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The parents may be asked to take the child home.
- A written/verbal apology will be given by the child/parent to the owner of the property.

Aggressive behaviour – threats:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss the child's behaviour and appropriate sanctions may be put in place.

Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious challenging behaviour:

Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible. Referrals will be made by the Principal with the support of the parent/guardian

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Skills guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the Principal
- Parents/guardians must endeavour to support their child and school to comply with rules and aim to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. On failing this, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils parents/guardians

- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services

The School's Capacity to meet the needs of the child

The school will discuss with the parents the needs of the child and the ability of the child to adapt to the school setting.

Some children will exhibit behaviours of concern arising from distress or anxiety due to their inability to cope with what they perceive to be the overwhelming experience of being in a mainstream classroom. In such cases, it is important that both parents and school recognise children in such situations can respond by displaying behaviours of concern as a coping mechanism. Parents should be aware that such behaviours, where they are aggressive or violent, will often frighten other children and cause further social isolation.

The school will discuss with the parents what learning or social needs the child may have in relation to attending school.

The school will seek and receive full co-operation from the parents in relation to how the school will work with them and their child to meet his/her needs.

The school will analyse all relevant data pertaining to the child's behavioural issues so that the school can begin to understand the reasons why the child is behaving as s/he does.

The school will make the parents aware of the role of NCSE and the SENO and ask for all relevant data which might assist the school in seeking the required resources from NCSE or DES in relation to their child. The school will also work with parents to design and teach the child alternative and more socially acceptable responses/behaviours for the child. These new responses or behaviours will promote better acceptance by peers and a stronger, positive relationship with teachers.

Reduced School Day

Scoil Mhuire Junior's adapts a "build for success" approach. This approach allows the child to experience a positive experience in school when small measurable targets are attained thus ensuring success.

Circular 0047/2021 was issued to schools, as Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools, which came into effect from January 1st 2022. They can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63545-the-use-of-reduced-school-days>

In the context of challenging behaviour, reduced school days should only ever be considered in very limited and time-bound circumstances. It is acknowledged that a reduced school day may be helpful in exceptional circumstances as part of a transition or reintegration intervention, based on the needs of individual students. Any such arrangement should be short term and transitional, and designed to assist the student to attend for the full school day along with his/her peers.

- Where in exceptional circumstances schools are placing a student on a reduced school day, the school authorities:
- Must have previously engaged with the relevant support services and professionals, including the special educational needs organiser (SENO) where appropriate, and have developed and implemented a student support plan for an appropriate period of time.
- If pupil is new to school, without any previous assessments, a settling in period is required. A shortened day may be necessary until the relevant advice etc can be sought from various outside agencies.
- Have clear evidence-based reasons for considering a reduced school day as a relevant and appropriate intervention with the best interests of the student at the core of the decision.
- Have the written consent of the parents/guardians of the student, and must also document if parental consent is subsequently withdrawn.
- Shall notify Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) of the decision to place a student on a reduced school day no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day.
- Should notify the NCSE/SENO of the decision to place the student on a reduced school day where the student has special educational needs.
- Should formulate and agree a plan for the reduced school day intervention which will specify the following: start, review and end dates; any educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day; the actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day.
- The plan with respect to the reduced school day intervention and return to school will have regard to any relevant medical reports or other relevant information held in the student's support file. The intervention and return to school plan must be discussed and agreed in collaboration with the parent/guardian.
- Ideally, the period for which the student is on a reduced school day, should not exceed six school weeks. A reduced school day cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next. While this is the case, Scoil Mhuire Junior always aims to build for success and if the school feel that a full return to school in a new academic year would be detrimental to the child we will implement a gradual return to full school day at the beginning of the year.
- Increase in school day will be based on child achieving small attainable targets and an incremental increase in reduced day will be implemented to smoothly assist the child to return to full day.
- Must include in the plan of action outlined above, the name of a contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate with, and, where appropriate, any work plan for the time during which the student will not be in attendance at the school.
- Shall provide the parents/guardians with a copy of the agreed plan, signed by parents/guardians and the school principal, and retain a copy which must be given to the Educational Welfare Officer or a member of the DE Inspectorate if requested. A copy should also be retained on the student support file. Should consider a graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally towards full attendance.
- Shall submit a new notification form to TESS when the period during which the student has been on a reduced school day is extended no later than the first day of renewal of the plan.
- Shall keep a record of all instances of students being placed on a reduced school day and access to this list should be made available to TESS educational welfare officers and the Department of Education Inspectorate if requested.
- Shall inform the parents/guardians of their right to withdraw consent at any time.

- Should inform the parents/guardians that TESS educational welfare officer can provide assistance and advice if required. TESS will provide support and guidance to both parents and schools in relation to the use of a reduced school day.

Suspension

Examples of grounds for suspension:

- 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 to themselves and others in the school community.
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- the student is responsible for a single incident of serious misconduct.

After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to suspend a student can be made. This decision will be made by the Board of Management. Each case will be looked at individually taking into account the child's circumstances.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Expulsion

Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others 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.

Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.

Methods of communicating with parents/guardians

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to working with children. Parents/guardians and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians are being established and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher.
- A written report will be made on the incident and recorded in the Incident folder.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the principal.
- Each incident will be reported to parents/guardians.
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behaviour Management Plan will be reviewed after each incident.
- If the behaviour persists, parents will be invited into the school to attend a meeting with the teacher and the principal and appropriate sanctions may be put in place- this may be that the child is sent home or put on a reduced school day.
- In the event of the situation not improving, the child will be suspended by the Principal. (The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed).
- Further serious infringements may warrant longer suspensions. (The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed)
- If no improvement is made the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management for consideration and a decision as to what actions should be taken.
- Continuous disruptions and/or violent behaviour may result in expulsion of the pupil. This will be considered where the student's behaviour is causing persistent and significant disruption to the learning, safety and wellbeing of themselves or others.
- When the child has had a six day suspension, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- For suspensions lasting more than three days, in exceptional circumstances, the matter will be monitored by the Chairperson of the BOM, in consultation with the principal.

- If a decision is made in relation to expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the application form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to the parents/guardians.
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Limitations

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour but to serve as a general guide to the students, the staff and the Principal. This policy should be used to assist in dealing with difficult situations.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of Scoil Mhuire Junior must adhere to the 'Behaviours of Concern Policy'. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff adhere to this policy.

Policy Review/Ratification

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Behaviours of Concern Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified.

Policy ratified in November 2022, reviewed November 2024

Modifying Behaviours in the Autism Classes

Introduction

There are many strategies which the teacher and SNAs employ in the autism class to deal with potential challenging behaviour before it escalates. Where deemed necessary, children have an Individual Behaviour Support plan (IBP). This IBP will be discussed with the parents and all staff involved and will be regularly reviewed

Communication

When promoting positive behaviour or experiencing challenging behaviour from the children, clear communication is important. The following strategies should be taken into consideration to support the child's self-regulation:

1. Short, clear and simple language
2. Use of LÁMH, when required, supported by verbal communication where necessary
3. Use of visual supports
4. Use of Pecs
5. Avoid reference to the behaviour that just occurred
6. Model and verbalise preferred behaviour
7. Distract and re-direct the child to focus their attention back to the tasks in hand

Behaviours

Promoting positive behaviour

The following is a list of strategies used in the autism classes to modify behaviours. Although this list is not exhaustive, some of the strategies used include:

1. Remind the child of the classroom rules. These are displayed using good choice / bad choice visuals in the classroom.
2. Remind the child of their reward and 'what they are working for'.
3. Use the 'first-then' strategy.
4. Distract and re-direct the child to focus their attention back to the tasks in hand.
5. Use LÁMH/PECs/ Visual cues to support verbal instructions.
6. Use of dark tent as quiet time
7. Promoting acceptable behaviour through the use of social scripts (stories)

Sensory seeking behaviour

The following is a list of strategies and methodologies used in the autism classes to help the children self-regulate when sensory overload is impacting on their behaviour.

1. Follow prescribed OT programmes when given by an Occupational Therapist .
2. Breathing exercises.
3. Visit to the rainbow room.
4. Movement break.
5. Sensory seeking walks.
6. Use gross motor equipment.

7. Access sensory activities to target oral, visual, auditory and tactile input where applicable.

Attention seeking behaviour

On occasions, staff will notice attention seeking behaviour and ignore it. *Planned ignoring* is a strategy where staff give no outward sign of recognising a behaviour.

- 1) No eye contact
- 2) No verbal response
- 3) No physical response

Planned ignoring is a strategy for a child to learn appropriate ways of gaining attention. However, staff are aware of the behaviour occurring and monitor the child (to ensure their safety and the safety of others when applicable).

Self-Injurious behaviour

When the child displays self-injurious behaviour, they might have no other way of telling staff their needs, wants and feelings. The following strategies will be used and outlined in detail in the child's IBP:

1. Distract and redirect
2. Light physical guidance (for example: provide a pillow between the head and the hard surface)
3. Low arousal approach
4. Remove sensory discomforts (for example: give the child ear defenders to block out loud noises)
5. Reduce demands
6. Guide the child to a safe space/shared spaces to ensure their safety and the safety of others

Recovery

Staff will use a low arousal approach to support the child to return to the classroom / activity. This approach emphasises a range of strategies to restore the relationship between the child and others.

1. Appear calm: Relaxing body posture, avoid tensing muscles (such as clenching fists/folding arms)

2. Personal space: Do not crowd the child or stand within his/her personal space for too long as this may increase arousal levels.
3. Touch: Some children may be highly sensitive to touch, particularly when in an aroused state, so avoid touching him/her as much as possible.
4. Removing triggers: If possible, staff will identify the triggers and remove them from the environment. If not possible, reassure the child by labelling the trigger. e.g. for a stressful noise "It's just a fire engine, it will be gone soon".
5. Distraction: Distract and redirect the child to a favourite activity in a quiet/ low arousal environment.
6. Communication: use positive language to focus on the transition, *not* the behaviour that has just occurred.

***Note:**

The small safe space is used as a low arousal area where the child can self-regulate, away from the classroom setting. Staff will monitor and observe the child to ensure their safety.

**The Department of Education and Skills guideline on the design of schools makes reference to "a small safe place". A child may access the space for the protection of themselves, other pupils and the staff. The child must be supervised from inside or outside the room. Pupils will be encouraged to use the room themselves which will allow them to regulate and reduce their behaviour. Use of the safe space should be reviewed to ensure it is having a positive impact on behaviour. The use of seclusion should be documented in the IEP of the child.*

However, at present our Autism Class is in a temporary converted mainstream classroom . Therefore we do not have the normal small safe space. When necessary we use our rainbow room and learning support rooms as a small safe place.

Recording behaviour

Behaviour of the children will be recorded and monitored by staff present. All incidents should be brought to the attention of the class teacher.

1. Low level incidents will be recorded in the child's daily diary.
2. ABC charts will be completed to monitor reoccurring behaviour.
3. Incident reports will be completed when behaviours of concern results in self-injurious behaviour or physical contact towards staff or other children.

Reporting to the principal

Any time an escalation of behaviours of concern occurs, the class teacher will inform the principal. In the absence of the principal, the deputy principal will be informed.

Reporting to parents/guardian:

Any time an escalation of challenging behaviour occurs, it is school policy that it is recorded.

1. daily diary is used where necessary to communicate.
2. Teacher will communicate by email to parents when necessary.
3. Parents will be telephoned and informed of any escalating behaviours.
4. Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss persistent challenging behaviour.

Requesting clinical support:

The class teacher will contact clinical support / NCSE if a child's challenging behaviour persists and additional support is needed.

Modifying Behaviours in the Mainstream Setting

We are aware that some children may need extra supports in relation to their behaviour in the mainstream setting.

We are committed to helping children to modify their behaviour to enable them to engage in learning opportunities and have a positive experience of school. Positive strategies as outlined in our code of behaviour will be utilised in the first instance.

Failing this, the following strategies will be used to encourage pupils to self-regulate and take ownership of their behaviour. Each individual child may require an individualised response which may include.

- A movement break to prevent the behaviour from escalating further, when SNA support is available.
- Quiet time
- Sensory input
- Distract and re-direct
- Breathing and relaxation activities
- Removing triggers
- Decreasing demands

The child will return to class and re-engage in activities when it is evident that the child has self-regulated and is calm.

When it is appropriate to discuss this behaviour with the child, a discussion can take place. The aim of this discussion is to help the child to demonstrate an understanding of their behaviour and to identify strategies to prevent this behaviour in the future.

If a pattern of behaviour is identified, extra support will be sought to support the child and the teachers. The behaviour will be recorded through using an ABC chart, together with

observations of class teacher and SNA. Support may be sought from the National Behaviour Support Service (NCSE) & other outside agencies if needed.

Policy on Manual Handling of pupils

Introduction:

Scoil Mhuire Junior National School is a Junior co-educational primary school. The school is fully developed and caters for 200+ from Junior Infants to Second Class. Scoil Mhuire Junior also has one ASD class at present. There are current plans to build two more ASD classes. Special classes has six pupils. There are also a number of pupils in our mainstream classes with special needs. From time to time children can pose as a flight risk or as a danger to themselves or others.

Rationale:

The school management recognises the occasional need for teachers or SNAs to lift, move or handle children in the interest of Health and Safety. This can be particularly the case in relation to Junior Infant pupils, particularly at the beginning of the year, or pupils in our special classes.

The following are examples of incidents when the principal, teachers or SNAs may need to intervene physically (intervention will be at a minimum and only used as a necessity for the health, welfare and safety of pupils and staff)

- A child runs towards an exit with the intention of leaving the school
- A child is a physical threat to another child or themselves
- A child is a physical threat to a member of staff
- A child climbs / jumps on an item of furniture and is at risk of injuring himself or another child or a staff member
- A child goes to ground and is a disruptive force in the classroom or the playground or wider school area
- A child gets stranded on a piece of equipment in the playground, in the classroom, school hall or at a school event and needs assistance to descend
- A child is having difficulty transitioning from one area to another e.g. from the classroom to the PE hall.

In all cases the principal, teacher or SNA must show the utmost care and attempt to protect both him/herself and the pupil.

Staff have been in Studio 3 Low Arousal approach Managing Signs of Stress