



Scoil na Maighdine Muire.

Code of Behaviour

Code of Behaviour 2025/2026

Virgin Mary GNS

Agreed through cooperation with teachers, parents and Board of Management

The following policy is to be read in conjunction with schools' Health & Safety Policy, Suspension Policy, Expulsion policy, Anti-Bullying policy and Anti Cyber Bullying Policy.

Mission Statement

Our school cherishes each child and in partnership with parents, aims to provide a safe and happy environment which, promotes esteem for oneself and for others and the value of lifelong learning.

The aims of behaviour policy of the Virgin Mary GNS are:

- In keeping with our mission statement we aim to create an atmosphere of respect, trust, and cooperation where children feel safe and secure and have a better chance to achieve their full potential.
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn without disruption.
- To continually recognise, name and reward good behaviour.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules which emphasise positive behaviour will be kept to a minimum and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to the pupil's individual difference. **Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded.** Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
2. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, wear school uniform or track suit, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
4. Pupils are expected to obey instructions from a member of staff, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments as neatly as possible.
5. 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, or by phone stating the reason for absence.

6. Pupils are expected to treat staff members and each other with respect and tolerance at all times regardless of race, sexual orientation, religion, gender, family background or educational attainment.
7. Pupils are expected to use all forms of communicative technology appropriately. (see Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy). With reference to Internet safety and in line with our Mobile Phone, I.C.T and Child Protection Policies the school has an excellent Firewall facility via the N.C.T.E and it is regularly updated and monitored by staff. We would ask parents to be vigilant in monitoring their child's use of communicative technology in the home in light of recent incidents of cyber bullying and the challenges it poses. (see attachment).

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Good behaviour Incentives used with pupils in the Virgin Mary GNS

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book/journal.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group, pupil of the week competition.
- Individual class merit awards.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.
- Homework passes, certificates and prizes.
- Trips out of the school.
- Points rewarded on ClassDojo.

Programmes and Initiatives to promote positive behaviour used in the Virgin Mary GN

- School Completion Programme (B.E.S.T.)
- H.S.C.L. (contact with parents, talks and courses for parents)
 - Peer Mediation
- Aisling Project (after school club)
- Special Education team (to provide support and differentiated learning programmes)
- Special Needs Assistants
- Circle time (as part of SPHE programme)
- I.S.M.T. (pastoral care to support pupils and staff)
- Board of Management (provision of in-service for staff)
- Lessons, talks and projects on multi culturalism, cultural diversity and racism.
- Lessons and talks on safe Internet use for both parents and pupils.
- Community Gardai.
- Parent teacher meetings.
- Pupils Charter (see appendix 1)
- Safety in the playground (see appendix 3)

Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development of the child. These include;

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including reminder of rule and advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class. (time out)
- Prescribing extra work.
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with parents
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention during break.
- Communication with parents.
- Omission from school trip.
- Exclusion (suspension or expulsion from school, alternative time-tabling or shortened day) if there are valid concerns for the Health and Safety of other pupils or staff members.

Suspension/Expulsion/Alternative time-tabling or shortened day

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion etc. are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter, email or text depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. **Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.**

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information.

Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act 1998.

- **a1** In the case of a serious breach of discipline or to deal with continuously disruptive pupils, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for an initial period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Rule 130 – Rules for National Schools Section 5
- **a2** However, The Board of Management may authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.
- **a3** A special decision of the board of management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the board of management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed. Rule 130 – Rules for National Schools section 5

Suspension Policy Virgin Mary GNS

Agreed through cooperation with teachers, parents and Board of Management

** This policy must be read in conjunction with the School Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, Anti Cyber Bullying Policy, Health & Safety Policy and Expulsion Policy.

- All serious breaches of discipline will be automatically referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Teachers should keep a record of pupil misbehaviours.
- Pupils should not be suspended for;
 - Poor academic performance
 - Poor attendance or poor punctuality
 - Minor breaches of the school Code of Behaviour
- Following investigations, the Principal (or Deputy Principal acting on his/her behalf) may suspend the pupil.
- If suspension is to be considered as a proportionate response to misbehaviour, the length of the suspension will be determined
- Period of Suspension should not be more than three days except in exceptional circumstances;
 - If the pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others in the class/year group and the teaching process
 - If there is a real threat to the health/safety of the pupil and/or others.
 - Serious damage has occurred to property
 - A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension (Refer to pages 3/4, points a1 and a2)
- During the period of suspension, a pupil will not participate in any games/sporting activities/shows/school choir etc which represent the school or participate in any class trips/educational tours. The school's Board of Management will be kept informed of all serious breaches of discipline.
- Pupils will be given work to be completed at home during the period for which they are suspended to ensure they do not fall behind in curricular areas.
- Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals will plan other interventions with the class teacher as needed for the pupils return to school.
- In extreme cases, the Board of Management may deem expulsion to be necessary.

Procedures for Suspension

1. Inform pupil and parents/guardians of the details of the complaint about the pupils' misbehaviour. A pupil cannot be suspended without parents/guardians being made aware of the situation.
2. Inform the parents/guardians in writing of the decision in response to the misbehaviour. The letter to the parents should contain;
 - The period of suspension
 - The reason for the suspension
 - Any study programme to be followed
 - The arrangements for returning to school, including commitments to be entered into by pupil and parents
 - The provision for appeal to the BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
 - The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 if the total number of days suspension is 20 or more in one school year
 - The letter should be written in a style that can be understood by the parents

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Board of Management must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

School Rules (see Appendix 2)

These are the school rules which have been agreed by staff and pupils. They will be constantly taught and reinforced through modelling, class lessons, S.P.H.E., etc. School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

The B.O.M. is expected to:

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment for pupils and staff.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Cyber Bullying and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Ratify the policy.
- Review the Code of Behaviour annually.
- Provide in-service training for all staff.

Principal's Responsibilities

The Principal is expected to:

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Cyber Bullying and Anti-Bullying Policies are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code of Behaviour, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

The Teachers is expected to:

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents/guardian's when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Code of Behaviour for the Pupils

The Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.

- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.

Work to the best of their ability and allow fellow pupils to do likewise

Code of Behaviour for Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure that children attend school, arrive punctually and ensure that they are collected on time.
- Ensure that they cooperate with and facilitate school policy when dropping off children each morning and collecting them in the afternoon, in line with our School Child Protection Policy. This is to ensure the safety of school staff, pupils and the wider school community.
- Ensure that pupils do not arrive in school early on wet days.
- Ensure that absences from school are kept to a minimum and are explained by phone or in writing or accompanied by a medical cert.
- Respect school property and ensure their child does the same.
- Encourage their child to have a sense of respect for themselves and the whole school community.
- Be courteous towards pupils, staff and other parents.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their child's school work.
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Anti- Cyber Policy and support their implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in the promotion of the culture of inclusion of all pupils, in keeping with our ethos.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress or behaviours and make an appointment to do so.
- Equip their child with appropriate school materials and full uniform or tracksuit.
- Supervise pupils when in the school environment.
- Not bring dogs/other animals onto school grounds.
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health and Safety of all staff and students parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises or on a trip from the school.
- When assisting with class activities/excursions it is important that parents follow teachers instructions/guidelines at all times.
- Check in journal for notes, sign record sheets or journals, check bag for notes.
- Label pupils coats and other personal property.

***Comply with all guidelines (as communicated by school)in relation to Covid-19 in order to keep the children, themselves and school staff safe.**

Virgin Mary GNS Expulsion Policy

Agreed through cooperation with teachers, parents and Board of Management.

**The following policy is to be read in conjunction with the schools Health & Safety policy, Suspension policy, School Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy.

1. Expulsion will be considered only in the gravest of circumstances and only after every reasonable effort at rehabilitation has failed and every other sanction has been exhausted, except as outlined in subsection 2 below.
2. When an act of gross misconduct occurs, expulsion may be necessary to protect the safety and rights of the others in the school without recourse to the provisions outlined at 1.above.

Serious offences which may result in expulsion (this list is not exhaustive)

- Arson of school grounds/school related property while at school or outside school hours.
- Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- Actual violence or assault.
- Bringing alcohol, cigarettes, drugs to school.
- Supplying, selling or attempting to sell illegal drugs, on school grounds.
- Serious damage/destruction of property (school property, pupil property, staff property).
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Stealing (school property, pupil property, staff property).
- Illegal entry to school premises or grounds.
- Vandalism of school property or grounds.
- Possession of a gun or other deadly weapon on school grounds or at a school activity.
- Use of a firearm or other deadly weapon to commit a crime on or off school grounds.
- Acting in a way that is disruptive of the educational process.
- Repeatedly refusing or neglecting to obey rules.
- Engaging in conduct which endangers the property, health or safety of others while at school or under the supervision of a school authority.
- Engaging in conduct while not at school or under the supervision of a school authority which endangers the property, health or safety of others at school or under the supervision of a school authority.
- Engaging in conduct while not at school or under the supervision of a school authority which endangers the property, health or safety of a school Employee or Board member.
- Knowingly conveying or causing to be conveyed any threat or false information concerning an attempt or alleged attempt being made or to be made to destroy any school property by means of explosives.
- Repeatedly engaging in conduct while at school or while under the supervision of a school authority that disrupts the ability of school authority to maintain order or an educational atmosphere at school or at an activity supervised by a school authority.
- Persistent bullying (see School Anti-Bullying Policy and Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy)

3. Procedures in respect of expulsion

- Detailed investigation under the direction of the Principal.
- Principal makes recommendations to the Board of Management
- Board of Management considers recommendations from Principal and holds hearing (where the Principal and parents put their case to the Board of Management in each other's presence in oral and / or written form).
- No party who may have a conflict of interest or involvement with the circumstances of the case may be present for the Board of Management's deliberations.
- Where the Board of Management proposed that expulsion is appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer is notified in writing of the Board of Management decision and the reasons for the decision. [Education (Welfare) Act, Section 24 (1)]. The pupil cannot be expelled before the passing of 20 school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) receives written notification. Parents are notified in writing of BOARD OF MANAGEMENT decision. Parents should also be told about the right to appeal and given the standard form on which to lodge the appeal..
- Following period of 20 days from notification of EWO, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT formalises and records its decision and notifies parents.

Signed: *Teresa Hogan*

Date: *5/11/2025*

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Oisín O'Donovan*

Date: *5/11/2025*

Principal

Review date: School Year 2026/2027

Appendix 1

Pupils Charter

The senior pupils and senior members of the Student Council wrote this charter identifying what they felt were important rights for each child in the school. The staff of the school agrees with these rights and will do their best to protect them.

The charter will be reviewed in 2019.

Everyone has the right:

1. To be safe & feel safe.
2. To be themselves and respected without being bullied. No one should have to change to be friends with someone.
3. To be listened to by adults and other children.
4. To take part in games if they want to. To have fun on yard. Nobody should be left out if they want to play.
5. To play their game without being bothered.
6. To say what's on their mind if and when appropriate.
7. To do their work without being bothered.
8. To have only the truth told about them.
9. To give their opinion at the proper time. Believe in what you want.
10. To a clean, bright and warm learning environment.
11. To have their property respected.

Appendix 2

School Rules

Be on time & be prepared.

Wear full uniform every day.

Respect yourself. Respect others.

Respect property & keep our school litter free.

Walk quietly at all times. Keep right on stairs & corridor.

Eat only at lunch time. Chewing gum is forbidden.

Never leave class or school without permission.

Work quietly & take part in all subjects.

I will not use bad or threatening language in school to abuse my friends or a member of staff.

This is a telling school. If there is a problem I will tell a member of staff.

Appendix 3

Safety in the Playground:

- Find a game you like and play it. Respect others right to play without being bothered.
- Do not leave the playground without permission.
- Be a friend and not a bully. Keep unhelpful comments and your hands and feet to yourself
- Obey all playground supervisors. Be honest and helpful if there is a problem.
- Stay safe. Don't climb walls, railings or sheds. Do not throw stones or other objects.
- Keep the playground neat and tidy. Report glass etc. to playground supervisors.
- Report any bullying to the playground supervisors.
- When the bell rings all games are over. Move quickly and quietly to your line.
- Walk quietly to and from the playground. Do not run in corridors or push past others on the stairs. Do not jump down stairs or slide down banisters.
- Repeated misbehaviour means removal from the yard for a short period.

Pupil's Signature:_____.

Parent's Signature;_____.

Teacher's Signature:_____.