

Code of Behaviour [2023]

Part A ... for the pupils in Gaelscoil Chill Dara

The Pupils' Council (*Comhairle na nDaltaí*) had an input into this Code.

Principles – “Be nice, show respect.”

The basic principle that all of us will follow is: *to always show respect for everyone.* The same respect must be shown in regard to every person and to always be fair to them. “*Be kind to everyone.*”

We understand that everyone is different from each other and we will be understanding of those differences in the Gaelscoil. We celebrate that we are different from one another.

We agree that if the entire Gaelscoil community works together (pupils, parents, teachers, assistants, etc), that each of us will be able to behave in a way that is positive for everyone, that is beneficial, caring, orderly and respectful.

We understand that the entire school staff are there to give support to the pupils, to the parents and guardians and to every member of staff in the Gaelscoil and that there is a duty on all of us to do our best to cooperate together.

We will use the Restorative Practice when necessary to address any harm that has been done and to put things right again.

“*Ní neart go cur le chéile i nGaelscoil Chill Dara.*”
[“To succeed in Gaelscoil Chill Dara, we must be united.”]

Aims

To show respect, all of us in Gaelscoil Chill Dara want that our school will be a place:

- that is welcoming to everyone (pupils, members of staff, parents and others),
- where people show respect for each other always,
- where every person can feel safe always,
- where we see the good in people and the various qualities that they have,
- where everyone makes an effort to be positive,
- where people listen to us and that fairness will be afforded to all,
- where we can live together and with an opportunity to build a positive, active relationship with other people,
- where everyone is able to learn and make progress, both young and old,
- where we can learn from our mistakes and that we have an opportunity to repair any harm that has been done and to put things right again,
- where people speak Gaeilge as well as they are able to with pride.

*Gaeilge on the tip of our tongues.
We will be pleasant and kind with everyone.
We will try our best always.
We will be sensible and stay safe as far as possible.*

With Confidence, without Fear, we go Forward Happy = RESPECT

Guidelines for the Classroom, Yard and School

At the start of the school year, there is often a discussion between teachers and their pupils to draw up classroom guidelines. There are particular guidelines for the yard for lining up, playing games, staying safe, etc. As well as that, there are school guidelines that are to be followed by everyone on the premises of the Gaelscoil itself and also when a group go on a trip or to some event.

1. In the Classroom:

- We will show respect for the right of the other pupils to learn.
- We will do our best to cooperate with the teacher and to help her/him.
- We will follow the instructions of the teacher always.
- We will do our best regarding work at school each day.
- We will do our homework as best we are able.

2. Be nice, show respect for Gaeilge.

We are very proud that our school is a Gaelscoil and we promise that we ourselves will use the Gaeilge that we have whenever we can in the Gaelscoil and on a trip or at an event together.

3. Be nice, show respect always for everyone and for their belongings.

We will be mannerly, use appropriate language and be considerate of the personal space of each other. We will show respect for the personal belongings of each other.

4. Be nice, show respect for the other classes that are at school with us.

We will walk quietly around the school on the left. We will be well-mannered and we will not be messing in the bathroom.

5. Be nice, show respect for everything belonging to the Gaelscoil.

We will keep the surroundings of all of the Gaelscoil clean, tidy and free of litter. We will be careful with the property of the Gaelscoil.

6. Be nice, show respect for the Restorative Practice.

We will make use of the Restorative Questions:

- i. What happened?
- ii. What did you think when you saw that happening?
- iii. How did this incident affect you and other people?
- iv. What was the most difficult thing for you?
- v. What do we need to do now to put things right?

“Be a giraffe – long neck, big heart, watchful.”

7. We will follow each direction from every teacher, in the class or outside in the yard, or otherwise. *In particular*, if a teacher gives us *an individual direct instruction* – [for example: “stand back” .. “stop” (some behaviour) .. “don’t do that” .. “leave him/her alone” .. “put it down” (some thing) .. stand out of the line .. sit down .. come here .. go to the Principal, etc.] – we will follow that instruction immediately in a mannerly, courteous way. We understand too, that teachers sometimes give us a direct instruction to keep ourselves or someone else safe from danger.

8. We will stay on the grounds of the Gaelscoil and within specified places under the care of a member of the staff during school time, except with the permission of a teacher.

9. We will leave a mobile phone, iPad and any other similar device, at home. We will not bring them with us on a school trip either, overnight or otherwise. If we do bring them to school, we understand that the Gaelscoil must take them from us for two weeks. We will leave our toys at home also.

Bullying and other Unacceptable Behaviour

Bullying behaviour or any other unacceptable behaviour is not accepted in our school. It is the responsibility of all of us to *tell some adult* without delay if we see anything like this. All of us will do our best to ensure that Gaelscoil Chill Dara will be free of bullying as much as we are able.

Gaelscoil Chill Dara has an *Anti-Bullying Policy* to help all of us.

If a pupil thinks that he/she himself/herself is being bullied, he/she should:

- *Say "Stop"* to that person(s).
- *Go* to another pupil(s) or to a member of the staff.
- *Tell* an adult.

We use various programmes to help us all to create a positive and kind atmosphere in the Gaelscoil.

Reinforcing Positive Behaviour

In the classroom, the teacher has the classroom guidelines and other means to reinforce positive behaviour. Teachers will praise the pupils through options such as the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show praise,
- Write a note in the pupil's copybook, in the School Diary, on Aladdin or Class Dojo, to let the parents know how good the pupil is,
- A visit to another teacher or the Principal to receive praise,
- A word of praise in front of a group or class,
- A Sticker, Merit Ticket or Homework Pass,
- A Card for Gaeilge or a Card for Kindness,
- Giving a special privilege to the pupil,
- A day without school uniform, Pyjama Day or Pets Day for the class,
- A Film, Pizza, BBQ or a Trip for the class,
- Nominating a pupil or class for a prize from the Principal or for Irish Speaker of the Week (Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine).

All around the entire school, also, the staff of the Gaelscoil can praise and show approval to pupils with options such as those above.

"Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí."
["Praise the Youth and they will thrive."]

When a Pupil Does not Follow this Code

We understand that each pupil and each case is different. The school can act with options such as the following:

- Talk with the pupil about the guidelines that are in this Code and explain to him/her the importance of them for the benefit of the entire Gaelscoil community,
- Use the Restorative Questions to discuss with him/her about the behaviour and to attempt to put things right again,
- Finish in the school or at home any work that has not been completed because of the misbehaviour,
- Give extra work to the pupil,
- Take “Time Out” to reflect on the misbehaviour – in the class itself or with a member of the staff in another classroom, or in the yard (depending on where the problem is and to ensure that everyone is safe),
- Lose a class privilege (Golden Time included),
- Talk with the parents about the pupil’s behaviour,
- Inform the Principal or Deputy Principal,
- Draw up an Individual Behaviour Plan for the pupil in partnership with the parents, and, maybe, make additional support available to him/her (taking any particular needs into account) and to the school team,
- Suspend the pupil from the Gaelscoil for several days.

Sometimes, when an incident (of misbehaviour) occurs the Principal will inquire into it and we understand that we might be asked to write down an account of what we saw and heard to help with that inquiry and for the benefit of all of us. Also, the Principal might ask the pupil who was the cause of the incident (who is mentioned in connection with the misbehaviour) to write down an account of what happened.

Code of Behaviour [2023]

Part B ... Additional Material for the Parents in Gaelscoil Chill Dara

The Parents of the Gaelscoil had an input into this Code.

[Tá an leagan Gaeilge den pholasaí seo ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin na Gaelscoile leis.]

1. Preliminary Notes

1.1

This new version of the policy comes into use in Gaelscoil Chill Dara [GSCD] during the school year 2021-2. The policy is divided into five parts. Part A is primarily aimed at the pupils themselves and to that end, it is written in child-friendly language as far as possible. That is the version they will see in the School Diary also.

1.2

Wherever “parents” are mentioned in the policy, that word includes “guardians” and, in particular exceptional circumstances, some other adult who has the child under his/her care. Further, the plural form is the same as one parent or one guardian. The term “pupil” is the same as “child”.

1.3

Wherever a reference is made to “teacher” in this policy, that covers every adult who is in charge of the pupils, for example, a Special Needs Assistant. They are all seen as teachers by the pupils themselves.

1.4

Wherever a reference is made to the “Principal” (Príomhoide) in this policy, it is accepted that (s)he has permission to delegate some of the administrative work to other members of the staff (including the Secretary of the Gaelscoil), but that the work would still be under the guidance and responsibility of the Principal. If the Principal is absent (illness, or other), the Deputy Principal will take on the responsibilities related to this Code of Behaviour.

2. Basic Principles

2.1

It is most important to understand that there is a duty of care on Gaelscoil Chill Dara in respect of *every* member of the entire Gaelscoil community – pupils, parents and staff.

2.2

Health (including mental health), safety and bodily integrity during their time in the Gaelscoil are a basic right for every pupil and every member of staff.

2.3

Every pupil in the Gaelscoil has a basic right to education and to have an appropriate opportunity to learn in an environment that is safe and reasonably free from disruption.

2.4

In furtherance of the above, every member of staff and the Board of Management itself everything that is possible for them to defend and vindicate the welfare and rights of every pupil and staff member, alike.

2.5

When parents make a decision to enrol their child in Gaelscoil Chill Dara [GSCD], the Board of Management [the Board] assumes that the parents accept each policy, in its entirety, of this Gaelscoil. It is expected that the parents will be supporting us to in implementing those policies for the benefit of everyone in the Gaelscoil's community – including this *Code of Behaviour*. The active support of our parents in this aspect is a most important foundation for us.

2.6

The parents of every child will be requested to sign a standard form (See the Appendix here below) confirming that they have carefully read this *Code of Behaviour* and that they will do their best to assist GSCD to implement it for the benefit of the entire Gaelscoil community.

2.7

The staff of the Gaelscoil are acting *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent) during the school day. To that end, the Board directs the attention of parents to the task and responsibility they bear themselves to explain and discuss in detail Part A of this policy with their own child – *in particular, number 7* of the “Guidelines for the Classroom, Yard and School” in Part A.

3. The Role of the Parents in Gaelscoil Chill Dara

3.1

The parents will be shown respect and there will be a safe and welcoming environment for their children in the Gaelscoil. Every child will be accepted as a pupil with us and recognition will be given to differences between pupils, according to the resources that are available. Fair and consistent procedures will be applied in the way that the Gaelscoil deals with pupils and their parents. Reports will be sent to them during the school year. When parents show respect for the entire Gaelscoil community in front of their own child, he/she learns that good behaviour from them in like manner.

3.2

A class meeting will be organised in September; a meeting between teachers and parents in January; a report at the end of the school year; along with meetings regarding the continuum of support, if necessary. Information regarding policies and procedures of the Gaelscoil is provided on the website of the Gaelscoil

[*GaelscoilChillDara.com*] along with news letters, and through the Aladdin Connect internet system. There is a very active Parents Committee (*Comhairle na dTuismitheoirí*) in GSCD which helps parents and which gives great support to us during the school year.

3.3

The Board welcomes feedback (in writing) from parents about this Code of Behaviour and regarding any suggestion from them to amend it sometime in the future.

4. How to Assist Us - Participation of the Parents

4.1

- To put your child's name on his/her property.
- To see to it that he/she has the correct books and appropriate materials.
- To see to it that the child wears the appropriate school uniform.
- To see to it that the child has a lunch.

4.2

- To ensure that your child is brought to the school on time each day and that he/she is again collected on time at 1.40 or 2.40 in the afternoon.
- To inform the class teacher or the Gaelscoil's Secretary beforehand of any change regarding the collection of your child.
- To help your child to do his/her homework and to ensure that it has been done – to sign the School Diary each evening.

4.3

- Parents who cycle to school are requested to dismount from the bike at the school gate and to walk in with it.
- Parents are requested to always park slowly and carefully in the school's car park.
- Parents are requested to leave the school grounds when they collect their child, especially at 1.40, because there are school activities going on for older pupils.

4.4

You must:

- read every communication from the Gaelscoil concerning your own child and send a reply when appropriate,
- ensure that we have your precise correct home address (*i.e.* the postal address) at all times in the Office of the Gaelscoil – for both parents. To that end, it must be understood that there is a particular responsibility on you, if there is any change to that address or to the other contact details (phone number or email address) – the Gaelscoil must be informed, *in writing*, about any change without delay.

4.5

You must:

- call into the Office of the Gaelscoil, firstly, if you need to be in the Gaelscoil for any reason during the school day,
- make an appointment beforehand if you need to speak with a teacher, by making a phonecall to the Office, or sending an email to the Office, or writing a note in the School Diary,
- inform the Gaelscoil of the reason for any absence by sending a note on the Aladdin System,

- come in to the Gaelscoil if you are requested.

4.6

It is expected:

- that you will instruct your child to adhere to this Code of Behaviour,
- that you will help your child to learn and practice good behaviour, and to have a positive image about himself/herself and about others, about the Gaelscoil and towards Gaeilge,
- that you will inform the Gaelscoil, privately, if there are problems that are impacting upon your child's behaviour,
- that you will co-operate with the teachers if your child has learning difficulties,
- that you will co-operate with the teachers if your child's behaviour is interfering with other people,
- that you will assist the Gaelscoil in implementing the Restorative Practice when that is appropriate.

5. When a Pupil Does not Follow this Code

5.1

See what is set out under this particular heading in Part A.

5.2 Management of Risk for Special Occasions and Events

As well as that, it should be understood that the pupil could lose out on the opportunity to go on school trips, in particular one when they would be staying overnight (for example: Tayto Park, Ráth Chairn, Coláiste Uisce, etc) as a result of serious or continual misbehaviour in the Gaelscoil itself. If it is clear from continual misbehaviour from him/her that there could be a danger or risk to himself/herself or to the rights of others (pupils or teachers, etc) if he/she is allowed to go, GSCD will not allow him/her to travel with them. It would likewise be the case with some special event on site in the Gaelscoil itself also. This decision would be taken not as a sanction but to ensure the safety and bodily integrity of himself/herself and of others, as well as vindicating their other rights. The Board leaves any decision regarding that to the Principal herself/himself, in consultation with the relevant teachers, and to them *alone*.

5.3

The Gaelscoil (Principal or class teacher) will contact you if the behaviour of your child is causing a problem for other people.

5.4

The Principal will also give a copy of any account(s) written by any teacher(s) to the parents of the pupil.

5.5

Also, the Principal might ask the pupil who was the cause of the incident (who is mentioned in connection with the misbehaviour) to write down an account of what happened. This is also a part of the Restorative Practice. The Principal will give a copy of this page to the parents of that pupil.

5.6

Sometimes, when an incident (of misbehaviour) occurs the Principal will inquire into it and, to that end, some pupils (who were not involved in the incident) may be asked

to write down a note about what they have seen and heard. These accounts are taken so as to provide a better understanding to the Principal of what has occurred.

5.7

It is the ordinary practice of GSCD that these accounts (from those pupils) are kept confidential and that a copy will not be released, except:

(i) to the parents of the pupil who wrote it, if they request a copy from the Principal,
(ii) to the parents of the other pupil who is mentioned in the account in connection with the misbehaviour, *if* the Principal brings the case before the Board of Management *and* the Principal is relying on what has been written in an account by a pupil who was not involved in the incident. Regarding the second of these, the Principal will take particular care to protect the privacy of the pupil who wrote the account as much as is possible and, to this end, the text of the note itself could be typed and to use something such as ‘Pupil X’ in place of the name of the pupil, etc. Also, the Principal will inform the parents of that pupil of her/his intention to release a redacted version. [See Part C, item 8.]

5.8

When the Principal herself/himself writes a Report on the incident in its entirety (after inquiring into it) she/he will give a copy of the Report to the parents of the pupil who is mentioned in connection with the misbehaviour.

5.9

Sometimes, the teaching staff may draw up an Individual Behavioural Plan for the pupil in partnership with the parents and, maybe, make additional support available to him/her and to the school team. The Principal will give a copy of that finished Plan to the parents also.

6. A cause of Concern or Complaint from Parents about Another Pupil

6.1

GSCD will welcome any correspondence (letter or email) from parents about any cause of concern relating to misbehaviour which is interfering with the rights of their own child, or any complaint of that kind from them. The Principal will inquire into that matter and she/he will revert to the parents with feedback regarding the issue.

6.2

Every parent should understand, if they write a letter (or email, etc) to GSCD and in which they make a complaint, or other similar reference, regarding another pupil who is attending the Gaelscoil, that the Principal (on behalf of the Board) will give a copy of that correspondence to the parents of the pupil who is referred to in that document. [See Part C, item 5.7, also.]

6.3

If the name of any other pupil (including the child of the parents who wrote the document) is mentioned in that document, the Principal will redact the name, gender and class of that pupil before a copy is released to those other parents, to protect that additional personal information. The name of the parent herself/himself will be left there (*i.e.* the person who wrote it). [See Part C, item 8.]

6.4

The Principal will redact any contact details (address and phone number, etc) on the document before a copy is released to those other parents, to protect that additional personal information.

7. Suspension and Expulsion

7.1

Misbehaviour can be minor, serious or gross – with different sanctions (penalties) and consequences accordingly.

7.2

It could happen that it is necessary to Suspend a pupil from the Gaelscoil for several days, for example, because of one serious incident or when there are continual problems.

7.3

The Board has given authority to the Principal to impose short-term Immediate Suspension, also, when necessary. Detailed information and procedures relating to Suspension are in Part C of this policy.

7.4

It could also happen, in a very exceptional serious case, that is necessary to Expel a pupil from the Gaelscoil. See Part D and Part E of this Code, where there is detailed information about this. In the case of an assault on a pupil or staff member of GSCD, or other violence, this is very serious misbehaviour and Expulsion from the Gaelscoil might arise out of it. Expulsion might also arise from any other very serious misbehaviour or from any misbehaviour that is continual.

7.5

A serious incident may happen, very rarely, in regard of which there is a legal duty on the Principal to make a formal report to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

8. Complaint or Allegation without foundation to Tusla or An Garda Síochána in respect of a member of staff

In the event where a *parent* makes an unfounded, or unwarranted, complaint or allegation in respect of a member of staff in Gaelscoil Chill Dara to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the Board of Management will deem this to be a most serious act. There would be *most serious consequences* arising from an act of that kind. In the event that the Board decides not to accept a child of his/hers in the Gaelscoil thereafter, this would not be Expulsion (regarding the child) but a decision being implemented by the Board regarding the parent.

9. Physical Contact

9.1

Though teachers avoid physical contact as a usual practice in their work in the Gaelscoil, parents (and their child) should understand that some measure of physical contact happens as part of the school life, for example: taking a selfie .. ‘High 5’ as a small informal celebration during some sporting activity .. teaching skills in sport .. role-play during a drama class .. after a minor accident, to give comfort to him/her ..

managing the line in the school yard .. if it is necessary to quieten a pupil .. acting to manage an occasion of challenging behaviour (which is creating a danger or risk), etc.

9.2

A teacher acts at times to direct a pupil or to keep him/her or some other person safe from danger – fulfilling the duty that the Board has placed on them regarding same.

9.3

Also, a teacher acts at times if a pupil refuses to follow *an individual direct instruction* that is given to him/her, as the pupil should. [See Part A, “Guidelines for the Classroom, Yard and School” – number 7.]

Code of Behaviour [2023]

Appendix

This relates to Part B, item 2, of this Code.

Part B

1.2

Wherever “parents” are mentioned in the policy, that word includes “guardians” and, in particular exceptional circumstances, some other adult who has the child under his/her care.

2.5

When parents make a decision to enrol their child in Gaelscoil Chill Dara [GSCD], the Board of Management [the Board] assumes that the parents accept each policy, in its entirety, of this Gaelscoil. It is expected that the parents will be supporting us to in implementing those policies for the benefit of everyone in the Gaelscoil’s community – including this *Code of Behaviour*. The active support of our parents in this aspect is a most important foundation for us.

2.6

The parents of every child will be requested to sign a standard form on Aladdin (See the Appendix below) confirming that they have carefully read this *Code of Behaviour* and that they will do their best to assist GSCD to implement it for the benefit of the entire Gaelscoil community.

2.7

The staff of the Gaelscoil are acting *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent) during the school day. To that end, the Board directs the attention of parents to the task and responsibility they bear themselves to explain and discuss in detail Part A of this policy with their own child and to discuss it in detail with him/her – *in particular, number 7* of the “Guidelines for the Classroom, Yard and School” in Part A.

I / We confirm that I / we have carefully read this particular policy, *Code of Behaviour [2023]*, in its entirety and I / we sign this Appendix as confirmation that I / we will give full support to the Gaelscoil to implement this Code in its entirety.

Note: The Board of Management requests that *both* parents (if there are two of them), if at all possible, would sign this Appendix.

Name of the Child: _____

Signature(s)

Date: _____

Part C ... Procedures regarding Suspension in GSCD

1. Suspension as Part of a Plan to Address the Misbehaviour of the Pupil

1.1

The Board of Management (the Board) recognises that it is a significant step when a pupil is Suspended from school, even if it is only for one day, and GSCD will not do so without good cause.

1.2

GSCD uses Suspension to:

- to help a pupil learn that his/her behaviour is unacceptable,
- to help a pupil recognise the impact that his/her actions and behaviour have on other people,
- to impress upon the pupil and his/her parents the seriousness of the misbehaviour,
- to help a pupil (in appropriate ways according to age and development) to understand that he/she has choices regarding his/her own behaviour and that there are consequences attached to every choice,
- to help a pupil learn to be responsible for his/her own behaviour,
- to reinforce boundaries as set out in the Code of Behaviour,
- to afford an opportunity to the staff of GSCD to plan another intervention,
- to help to establish behavioural targets with the pupil and his/her parents,
- to make clear to the other pupils (as well as their parents) and to the staff of the Gaelscoil that their welfare is being protected,
- to avoid serious interruption of teaching and learning,
- to keep the pupil himself/herself, or other pupils or adults, safe from danger or risk,
- to protect and vindicate the rights of every pupil and staff member, alike.

1.3

Misbehaviour can be minor, serious or gross – with different sanctions (penalties) and consequences accordingly. Regarding Suspension, and the length of a Suspension, it must be a proportionate response to the misbehaviour of the pupil.

1.4

There must be serious misbehaviour before a pupil is Suspended, such as:

- The misbehaviour of the pupil disrupts appreciably the education of other pupil(s),
- The misbehaviour of the pupil has had a detrimental impact on the mental health of another pupil,
- Harm to some member of the Gaelscoil community through activity on the internet,
- The pupil is a danger or risk to the safety of himself/herself or to some other person,
- The pupil is responsible for damage to the possessions of someone else,
- The pupil refused to follow *an individual direct instruction* that a teacher gave to him/her. [See Part A, “Guidelines for the Classroom, Yard and School” – number 7.]

1.5

A pupil could be Suspended after a single serious incident of misbehaviour or after a series of continual problems has arisen.

1.6

In the case where there are continual problems with a pupil, he/she will not be

Suspended until after some other intervention or strategy (including an Individual Behavioural Plan) is tried, and the Gaelscoil staff have reviewed the reasons why those efforts have not worked.

2. The Authority of the Principal in relation to Suspending a Pupil

2.1

The Board delegates the authority to the Principal to Suspend a pupil, on behalf of the Board, but that it be done within the provisions, procedures and limits that have been set out in this Code of Behaviour.

2.2

Detailed provisions have been set out by the Board in this Code of Behaviour so that the Principal will be accountable to the Board regarding her/his use of that authority and she/he must fulfil that duty in its entirety in every case.

2.3

The Principal must distribute a written Report to the members of the Board in respect of every occasion that she/he Suspends a pupil. The Principal will also give a copy of that Report to the parents of the pupil in good time before the meeting of the Board.

3. Types of Suspension

Ordinary Suspension – As is referred to in item 1 above.

Immediate Suspension – When the Principal thinks that it is necessary to Suspend a pupil directly on the same day in order to ensure the safety of the pupil himself/herself, or the safety of other pupil(s), staff of the Gaelscoil or other people.

4. The Period of Suspension

4.1

The ordinary period of Suspension, in GSCD, is one day. A pupil should not be Suspended for more than one day other than in an exceptional or serious case, when the Principal thinks that a longer period than this is necessary to achieve a particular objective.

4.2

In the case where there are continual problems regarding a pupil and he/she has already served a period of Suspension, the Principal could impose a longer period in respect of a new occasion. The Board permits the Principal to impose *up to three school days* consecutively of Suspension in respect of any single occasion.

4.3

In any case of serious or gross misbehaviour (as it appears to the Principal) *and* the Principal is intending to place the case urgently before the Board at an Emergency Meeting, the Board permits the Principal to impose an Immediate Suspension with three days *as an initial period*. In such circumstances, the Principal *must* contact the Chairperson of the Board without undue delay to inform her/him of the case and to seek permission, if there is a definite need to extend the initial period of Suspension, to impose a longer period. This will not be done as a sanction but to afford GSCD an

opportunity to organise the members of the Board for an Emergency Meeting.

4.4

Further, *the Board itself*, at a meeting, could impose a much longer period (in the interim) when Expulsion or a lengthy period of Suspension could be in question and it is trying to afford an appropriate opportunity to the parents to prepare in advance of the meeting concerning that. It might arise also that legal advice might be sought (by any party) – something which would add further delay to the process and that the Suspension would continue in force in the interim.

5. Procedures in respect of Ordinary Suspension – Based on Fair Procedures and the Principles of Natural Justice

5.1

- The Principal (or another teacher) will tell the pupil himself/herself about the complaint / misbehaviour and the steps that are now to be taken.
- The Principal will tell the parents about the complaint / misbehaviour, the inquiry that is underway, and that it is possible a Suspension might be an outcome to it. This will be done early on by phone, if it is possible to contact them.
- The Principal will send an email to the parents without delay, explaining all of this again and how seriously the Gaelscoil is taking the misbehaviour that has been attributed to the child. The attention of the parents could be drawn to this Code of Behaviour and how to locate it on the website of GSCD.

5.2

The Principal will send an initial letter (by post) to the parents as soon as possible with the following information (but see also item 8 below regarding GDPR):

- details about the misbehaviour in question,
- that she/he is inquiring into it,
- that it is possible a Suspension might be an outcome to it,
- that there will be another letter to them without much delay with additional information about the misbehaviour itself,
- that they will be given a copy of any account written by a teacher(s) about the incident,
- that they will be given a copy of any correspondence received from any other parent,
- that they will be given a copy of any notes (in the inquiry) that are written by the Principal,
- that any information they wish to provide at this point will be welcomed,
- that there will be a preliminary report written by the Principal about the incident and they will be given a copy without undue delay,
- that they will have an opportunity to give a reply after they have received the preliminary report,
- that the Principal will be organising a meeting with them in the Gaelscoil to discuss the case,
- that no decision will be made until they have taken up these opportunities,
- that no sanction (penalty) will be imposed before them,
- reference to this Code of Behaviour being available on the website of the Gaelscoil.

5.3

If it happens during her/his inquiry that the Principal comes to the opinion that

Expulsion could be an outcome to it, she/he must inform the parents of this without delay, in writing.

5.4

There is a representative from the teaching staff on the Board and, accordingly, she/he should not be active in the inquiry itself, other than their limited role as a person who writes an account of what she/he saw and heard. [See Part E, item 5.3.]

5.5

The inquiry starts out with the presumption of innocence regarding the pupil who is mentioned in relation to the misbehaviour.

5.6

It happens, sometimes, that the Principal asks the pupil himself/herself (who is mentioned in relation to the misbehaviour) and other pupils who were present during the incident to write down an account of it – as part of the inquiry. [See Part B, item 5, regarding this aspect.]

5.7

It happens, exceptionally, that other parents write to the Principal / the Board to make known just how worried they are about the harmful impact that the misbehaviour is having on their own child (See Part B, item 6). Any such correspondence will be taken into consideration in the inquiry.

5.8

The Principal will send a letter by post to the parents and enclosing with it copies of the relevant records, from those referred to above, together with a Schedule (list) of those particular documents. [But, see also items 8.5 & 8.6. below.]

5.9

If the parents wish to provide a response in writing, the Principal will welcome same. Of course, they can further add to that response, orally, during the meeting between themselves and the Principal subsequently.

5.10

It is the usual practice of GSCD that the Principal will organise a meeting in the Gaelscoil, without undue delay, with the parents (and with the pupil himself/herself also present – if the parents wish it and if it is appropriate) when progress has been made with the inquiry. The meeting is a part of the inquiry itself and it affords an opportunity to them:

- to give their own side of the situation,
 - to discuss and question the facts / details,
 - to ask questions about all of the evidence that is there (in the documents),
 - to discuss the reason for the misbehaviour,
 - to discuss the best way to deal with it,
 - to discuss the objectives mentioned in item 1.2 above,
 - to make a case for a lesser sanction (penalty) to be imposed,
- [Any suggestions in this regard from the parents will be welcomed.]
- to discuss any conditions regarding the return of the pupil to the Gaelscoil.

5.11

The Principal (or another member of staff) will write a note on that meeting and she/he will send a copy to the parents without delay after the meeting.

5.12

If the parents do not attend the meeting, the Principal can move forward to make a decision on the case (in relation to imposing a period of Suspension, or other sanction, or not). But, if the parents make known to the Principal beforehand (letter or email) that they have some reasonable difficulty, she/he could offer a further appointment to them.

6. Implementing an Ordinary Suspension

6.1

Shortly after the meeting, the Principal will write to the parents about the decision she/he has made in relation to Suspending the pupil, or not. Where a Suspension is in question, the letter will clarify:

- that her/his decision is to impose a period of Suspension,
- the period of Suspension in question (one day, or otherwise),
- the day(s) and date(s) that will apply,
- the reason(s) for the Suspension (the basis to the decision regarding it)
- the arrangements regarding the pupil returning to the Gaelscoil,
- any programme of work that the pupil has to do at home,
- that they have a right to seek an Appeal to the Board of Management and specific information explaining to them how to set about that and a time-limit for it,
- that the Suspension will not come into effect (yet) if they are requesting an Appeal,
- that maybe, in an exceptional case, the Board would request them to sign the Appendix to Part B again (their support regarding the Code of Behaviour).

6.2

The Principal must write a (formal) Report, in English or Irish, for the Board of Management in respect of each case where a pupil is Suspended. She/he will send a copy of it by post to the parents as soon as possible. That Report will come before the next meeting of the Board, even if there is no Appeal in question. The Principal will clarify the facts that she/he has made a decision upon in relation to the incident, namely: which of them are true, or not, in her/his opinion following the inquiry. She/he will draw attention to the particular facts that were in dispute and she/he will explain how she/he decided on accepting one version of them as the truth.

6.3

If parents wish to seek an Appeal in respect of the decision of the Principal to Suspend their child (for a period that is not longer than three days), they can commence that process by sending a letter requesting that, addressed to: "The Secretary of the Board of Management, Gaelscoil Chill Dara", without any delay. The Suspension will not come into effect at that point and it will be left to the Board itself to make a decision regarding it at a meeting which will be held for that purpose. [See Part E.]

6.4

If a period of Suspension longer than three days is being advised by the Principal in her/his Report, the Board itself must determine that matter at a meeting of the Board. [See Part E.]

7. Records and Reports

7.1

When a record or report is being written by the Principal or other teacher about an incident, the following is advisable:

- that it is written as soon as is reasonable after the incident,
- that a clear title is put at the top of the document (which explains what is in it),
- to leave a margin all around the page,
- not to write on the reverse side of the page,
- if it is handwritten, that it is neat and legible,
- that the name of the pupil, who is mentioned in connection with the misbehaviour, is given in full, and likewise if his/her parents are mentioned also.
- that the name of any teacher / employee in the Gaelscoil is given in full,
- *but capital letters* are to be used in respect of the name of *any other pupil or parent* who is mentioned in the document, for example, SM (Seán Ó Murchú or Síle Ní Mhurchú) ... (In such a case, the Principal should keep an additional record herself/himself with a list of the names that match with those capital letters.),
- that any direct speech from the incident which has a particular importance to it is written down precisely (in parenthesis),
- that *the document is signed*, together with the day and date (and perhaps the time the document itself was written) added to it.

7.2

When a document (record, or other) is being written in the Gaelscoil, it will be taken into account that, possibly, a copy of it will be provided to parents and, accordingly, that record could be written in English or in Gaeilge. Either way, when the Principal provides a document, that is written in Gaeilge, to the parents, she/he must also provide a copy translated to English.

7.3

When a letter is received by post, the Principal is advised to write the day and date (on which it was received in the Gaelscoil) on the letter itself.

7.4

The Principal will keep a file with copies of all of the documents related to the case, including the following:

- accounts written by anyone (pupils, teachers or other),
- all of the letters and emails,
- letters or emails from other parents (on behalf of their own child),
- notes written by anyone,
- the notes regarding the inquiry carried out by the Principal,
- the preliminary report written by the Principal about the incident,
- the note that was written by the Principal of the meeting with the parents,
- the Report that was written by the Principal for the Board (in a case of Suspension).

7.5

The Principal will keep up to date a Schedule (list) of all of the documents – listing them in chronological order and with the following relevant details in respect of each one: date, title & author. If there is any partly redacted photocopy here also (See item 8 here below), that will be identified too, here.

8. GDPR – Redaction of Personal Details

8.1

There is a duty on GSCD to see to it that the principles associated with the *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)* are followed when a document is being shared by the Gaelscoil with parents, in which there is information relating to some other person (as well as their own child).

8.2

In respect of every document that GSCD provides to parents, the Principal must firstly take steps to protect the privacy of particular people, who are also mentioned in the document. See, for example, Part B, items 5.6 & 5.7 and items 6.3 & 6.4.

- This will likewise be done in respect of every record that was written in the Gaelscoil (See item 7 above).
- The name, gender and class of any *other* pupil and the name of any *other* parent that is mentioned in full in it is to be redacted. Where capital letters are used in it (in respect of the name of a pupil), those capital letters might be left in place or something such as ‘Pupil X’ put in its place, depending on the particular circumstances.
- The Principal will redact any personal contact details (address and phone number) on the document.
- These steps are taken to protect the additional personal information, to comply with the provisions of *GDPR*.
- She/he should put her/his signature and the date (on which the redaction itself is made) on each document, one by one.
- A *partly redacted copy* will be furnished by the Gaelscoil to the parents.

8.3

The Principal will keep a (additional) photocopy of each partly redacted document with all of the other documents in the file that relates to the pupil in GSCD, as a record for the Gaelscoil of what was given to the parents.

8.4

The foregoing is given by the Board as a guide to the Principal. In any individual case, however, the Principal can seek advice from the Chairperson of the Board regarding any aspect of the abovementioned task. Further, any aspect could be put before the Board itself to consider it and to make a decision regarding it.

8.5

It is vital that parents would understand, when GSCD provides documents of the above kind to them, that there is a particular responsibility on them to ensure that the documents, and the information in them, are kept confidential. They, and the Board, must protect the privacy of everyone mentioned in them and vindicate their rights. The parents are not permitted to make any use of the documents other than when they are

dealing directly with GSCD regarding their own child. *There would be very serious consequences flowing from any such negligence.*

8.6

When the Principal is providing documents to the parents, she/he should draw the attention of the parents to item 8.5 here and the responsibility that is placed on them regarding confidentiality in respect of the documents.

9. Procedures in respect of Immediate Suspension

9.1

If the Principal considers in any case of misbehaviour that is serious or gross (as it appears to her/him), that it is necessary to Suspend the pupil straight away on the same day for purpose of the safety of the pupil himself, *or* to ensure the safety of another pupil(s), staff of the Gaelscoil or other persons, she/he will impose an Immediate Suspension.

9.2

If the Principal considers in any persistent case (in respect of which Suspension had previously been imposed) that Expulsion should now be considered regarding it, she/he can implement an Immediate Suspension until there is a Special Meeting of the Board about the case. [See item 4.3 above.]

9.3

There is little chance of the Principal carrying out anything more than a short preliminary inquiry before she/he decides that it is necessary to impose an Immediate Suspension. Also, a teacher(s) will have little opportunity to commit an account to writing until a time later on in the school day. The Principal will continue with the enquiry after she/he has sent the pupil home with his/her parent(s).

9.4

The provisions relating to Ordinary Suspension (above) will be adhered to, in so far as is possible and reasonable.

9.5

The Principal will phone the parents of the pupil as soon as possible to inform them of the incident and the Immediate Suspension. Of course, the Principal will not be able to share any more than an outline of the situation at this early stage, but she/he will explain to them that an inquiry is underway and that she/he will be in contact with them again shortly with further information about the incident. Arrangements will have to be made with them to collect the pupil from the Gaelscoil without undue delay. The pupil himself/herself will not be sent home, under any circumstances – the parents must make a definite arrangement with the Principal about collecting him/her from the Office in the Gaelscoil.

9.6

The Principal will send an email to the parents as soon as possible the same day:

- with further information and details about the incident,
- to tell them that she/he has a full inquiry underway presently and that she/he will contact the parents again shortly about it (See item 5 above),
- to tell them that she/he will be providing all of the relevant records to them later,
- to tell them, if it is in question, that Expulsion could be an eventual outcome and that

it might not just be a Suspension (regarding a serious or gross incident that has happened), (See Part D),

- to tell them of the *initial period of Suspension* that is being applied at this initial point, but that it might be increased if time is needed to organise an Emergency Meeting of the Board to consider the case (See item 4.3 above, also).
- to draw attention to this Code of Behaviour and that it is available on the website of the Gaelscoil,
- to tell them that there is no right of Appeal (in respect of the Immediate Suspension *itself*) in advance of the Emergency Meeting of the Board, but that there will be an Appeal available to them in respect of the decision of the Board regarding the entire case at the conclusion.

9.7

The Principal (now acting as the Secretary of the Board) or the Chairperson will make contact with all of the members of the Board without delay. It is sufficient to tell them, generally, that an Emergency Meeting of the Board is being called to discuss a case about the misbehaviour of a pupil that is serious; that an Immediate Suspension has been imposed regarding it and, accordingly, that there is an urgency attached to the situation.

Part D ... Procedures regarding Expulsion in GSCD

1. Expulsion as a Decision in respect of Serious Misbehaviour of the Pupil

1.1

The Board of Management (the Board) recognises that it is a very serious step when a pupil is Expelled from a school and GSCD would not do this without a very good reason.

1.2

Misbehaviour can be minor, serious or gross – with different sanctions (penalties) and consequences accordingly. From this, it is clear that gross misbehaviour, exceptional in kind, would be in question in any case where a pupil is to be Expelled from the Gaelscoil, as that is the most serious decision which the Board could take in respect of any pupil. Regarding Expulsion, in particular, it must be a proportionate response to the misbehaviour of the pupil. GSCD uses Expulsion, primarily, as a mechanism to defend and vindicate the welfare and the rights of *other* people in the Gaelscoil community (pupils, their parents and members of staff).

1.3

There must be gross misbehaviour in order to Expel a pupil, such as:

- The misbehaviour of the pupil has a persistent significant detrimental impact on the education of another pupil(s),
- The misbehaviour of the pupil has had a serious detrimental impact on the mental health of another pupil,
- The pupil is a danger or risk to the safety of himself/herself on a continual basis,
- There is a significant danger or risk to the safety of another pupil(s) or to a member of staff if he/she remains in the Gaelscoil, even subject to certain conditions,
- The pupil is responsible for violence or actual assault on a pupil or member of staff,
- The pupil is responsible for a sexual assault on a pupil or member of staff,
- He/she has made a serious threat of violence against a pupil or member of staff,
- The pupil made a serious allegation that was unfounded, or unwarranted, against another pupil or member of staff,
- The pupil did serious harm to some member of the Gaelscoil community through activity on the internet,
- The pupil is responsible for providing an illegal drug to a pupil or to any other child,
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to the property of the Gaelscoil or to the property of someone else in the Gaelscoil community.

2. The Threshold in respect of Expulsion

2.1

The core issue that has to be decided by the Board of Management is:

Does the gross misbehaviour of the pupil warrant that he/she should be Expelled from the Gaelscoil, in the light of the provisions in this Code of Behaviour, to defend and vindicate the welfare and the rights of *other* people in the Gaelscoil community (pupils, their parents and members of staff) in the future?

2.2

It is accepted that the following matters (which give additional contextual information) are in question in any case of Expulsion and they will be taken into account in the deliberations of the Board, but they will not *of themselves* be allowed to cause any impediment to the decision of the Board to impose an Expulsion, if that is the decision the Board is minded to make after reviewing the case carefully:

- the constitutional right to primary education (which the State has a duty to provide to the child),
- that, maybe, the Expulsion will impact upon the educational welfare of the pupil himself/herself,
- that, maybe, education through Gaeilge will not be available to the pupil in a new school,
- that, maybe, the parents will have a difficulty in getting a place in another local Primary School for him/her,
- that he/she will miss his/her friends in the Gaelscoil,
- that he/she has another sibling still in the Gaelscoil,
- that it will greatly upset him/her to be Expelled from the Gaelscoil.

3. Procedures in respect of Expulsion – Based on Fair Procedures and the Principles of Natural Justice

3.1

More often than not, it will happen that an Immediate Suspension will already have been imposed by the Principal when the case comes before the Board. Of course, also, it could be a persistent case (in respect of which Suspension had previously been imposed) that is returning before the Board together with a Recommendation from the Principal that Expulsion should now be considered regarding it. [See Part C, item 8.]

3.2

If a serious incident happened recently, and in respect of which Expulsion could be under consideration, the Principal must carry out a detailed inquiry (investigation) into all of the facts and circumstances relating to it and, also, that she/he would not make any decision regarding the truth of the situation until that inquiry is completed. She/he should direct the parents to this Code of Behaviour on the website of GSCD.

3.3

The Principal should consult with the Chairperson of the Board early on to inform her/him about the situation and to take any advice from her/him into consideration in the task. The Chairperson must remain in contact with the Principal throughout the process to ensure that the Principal follows the steps carefully as they are set out in this Code, in particular with regard to providing copies of all of the records to the parents as is appropriate in a timely manner and to direct attention to the practice of the Board in respect of redaction (See Part C, item 8), but it is not necessary for her/him to look over or evaluate the evidence itself.

3.4

If an Immediate Suspension has been imposed by the Principal, the Chairperson and the Principal should evaluate the period and any necessity that there might be to extend it until the Board will have a meeting. [See Part C, item 4.3.]

3.5

There is a comprehensive approach for the inquiry set out already, regarding Suspension, in Part C, items 5, 7 & 8. Those steps will be followed here also as far as is possible, taking the circumstances of the case into consideration. The Principal must, however, clarify to the parents at the outset, in writing, that Expulsion could be an outcome to it and that maybe, not just a Suspension would be in question. She/he will also explain that there are three separate steps in the particular process here: (i) a detailed inquiry being undertaken by herself/himself, and after that, (ii) a Report and Recommendation about it from her/him to the Board (See item 4 below) and, (iii) a Special Meeting of the Board to consider the case. Fair procedures and the principles of natural justice must always be adhered to in the process in its entirety.

3.6

In the case where a situation is sparked off by a particular serious incident that happened very recently, the inquiry must be detailed and comprehensive as so much will be depending on it for the pupil. Furthermore, and in other cases also – a *persistent case* (in respect of which Suspension had been imposed previously) that is returning before the Board – the Report from the Principal and any Recommendation from her/him will take into account the other incidents that occurred previously, perhaps over a year or more. Accordingly, the Principal must clarify that to the parents early on in the process and provide all of the relevant records related to those incidents to them in good time ahead of the meeting with them.

3.7

In a case where Expulsion could be an outcome to the inquiry (investigation), it is essential that there would be a meeting in the Gaelscoil with the parents, and their child also present – if the parents wish it and if it is appropriate. That meeting is a part of the inquiry itself. [See part C, item 5.10, in relation to Suspension.]

3.8

The Principal (or another member of staff) will write a note on that meeting and she/he will send a copy to the parents without delay after the meeting.

3.9

If the parents do not attend the meeting, the Principal should write to them again offering them another appointment and informing them:

- just how serious the situation is,
- that the meeting itself is a crucial part of the inquiry (which has not been completed),
- that Expulsion from the Gaelscoil could be an outcome to it,
- that there is a particular importance to attending at a rescheduled meeting,
- if they fail to attend at a rescheduled meeting, that she/he herself/himself will have to move forward to make a decision regarding the truth of the situation,
- that she/he will have to move on to make a Recommendation regarding the case to the Board,
- that the Board of Management has a duty to make a decision regarding the case then,

- If a Suspension is in effect currently, that it will continue until the Board has a meeting.

4. Report & Recommendation from the Principal to the Board of Management

4.1

When the meeting with the parents is over (or if they fail to attend it), the inquiry is then at an end and the Principal will write a (formal) Report about the case in its entirety for the Board.

4.2

It is recommended to the Principal to write this Report in English so that the parents, and any advisers of theirs, would understand it with ease.

4.3

The following points are mentioned as a guide for the Principal regarding the Report:

- the Principal herself/himself must write this particular Report,
- this Report is to be typed, font size of 12 or 13 point,
- to put a clear title (that explains what is in it) at the top of the document,
- to put the day and date to it,
- to leave a margin all around the page,
- to put numbers on the pages and not to write on the reverse side,
- to divide the Report into five parts (See below),
- to put numbers on the paragraphs (for ease of reference),
- that the name of the pupil (who is mentioned in relation to the misbehaviour) is given in full and likewise in respect of the names of his/her parents,
- that the name of any teacher / employee is given in full,
- *but* that capital letters are used in respect of the *name of any other pupil or parent* who is mentioned in the document, for example SM (Seán Ó Murchú or Síle Ní Mhurchú),
- to clarify the role of each person who is mentioned in it (class teacher, Special Needs Teacher, parent, etc),
- the Principal must sign it.

4.4 Regarding the Content of the Report:

The First Part

- The Principal will recount, in chronological order, the various incidents (relating to misbehaviour) that have happened in the Gaelscoil concerning the particular pupil over the years.
- Reference will be made to any relevant record in respect of each incident, one by one.
- Reference will be made to the school reports of the pupil over the years.
- If the case was before the Board previously, detailed information will be given about that.

The Second Part

Regarding the serious incident that happened recently, a clear comprehensive account should be given about everything relating to it – with references to the various records concerning it, and:

- The Principal will describe all of the steps that she/he took, in chronological order, to carry out the inquiry – making reference to any contact she/he had with the parents during it.
- Reference will be made to any preliminary report that she/he wrote early on in the inquiry.
- Reference will be made to the note that she/he wrote on the meeting that she/he had with the parents.
- Reference will be made to any reply or submission from the parents regarding the situation.
- The correspondence between GSCD and the parents about the situation will be summarised.
- The Principal will confirm that she/he gave copies of the relevant documents to the parents and that she/he drew attention to the responsibility that is on them regarding confidentiality in respect of them (See Part C, item 8.5).
- The Principal will confirm that she/he drew the attention of the parents to the Code of Behaviour being available on the website of the Gaelscoil.

The Third Part

A Schedule (list) of all of the documents in the case (records, correspondence, reports, or otherwise) – listing them in chronological order and with the following relevant details in respect of each one of them: date, title & author.

The Fourth Part

- The Principal will clarify the facts that she/he has made a decision upon in relation to this most recent serious incident, namely: which of them are true, or not, in her/his opinion following her/his inquiry.
- She/he will draw attention to the particular facts that were in dispute and she/he will explain how she/he decided on accepting one version of them as the truth.

The Fifth Part ... The Recommendation of the Principal

If the Principal is of the opinion, based upon the inquiry that she/he has carried out, that Expulsion is warranted in respect of the pupil, she/he will put a clear Recommendation before the Board to consider Expulsion in the case or, alternatively, she/he can recommend another sanction (penalty) in its place.

The Principal can also include in the Report any other particular information that is appropriate in this particular context, but to explain its relevancy.

4.5

The Principal will send a copy of that Report in the post to the parents as soon as is possible. She/he will explain also that she/he will be in contact again with them soon regarding the Board of Management now considering the case. She/he will draw their attention to Part E of this Code of Behaviour – “The Practice before the Board of Management of GSCD”.

5. Informing the Members of the Board and the Parents about the Meeting

5.1

The Principal (now acting as the Secretary of the Board) or the Chairperson will make contact with all of the members of the Board without delay. It is sufficient to tell them, generally, at this point that a Special Meeting of the Board is being called to discuss a

case of misbehaviour by a pupil which is serious; that Expulsion will be considered in the case; that an Immediate Suspension has been imposed regarding it and, accordingly, that there is an urgency to the situation.

5.2

As soon as is possible, the Principal (now acting as the Secretary of the Board) will write to the parents to inform them of the date and time of the hearing (the Special Meeting), and to invite them to attend at that hearing. The specific procedure (practice) that is intended by the Board for the Meeting will be explained to them, but that the Board will be willing to take on board their own suggestions regarding that if it is possible.

Part E ... The Practice before the Board of Management GSCD

1. Emergency Meeting – (in respect of Suspension)

An Emergency Meeting of the Board of Management is called in a case where:

- (i) the parents are requesting an Appeal regarding a Suspension (that is not more than three days) which the Principal intends to impose (See Part C, item 6.3),
- (ii) a period of Suspension longer than three days is being recommended by the Principal in her/his Report to the Board of Management (See Part C, item 6.4),
- (iii) an Immediate Suspension has been imposed by the Principal (See Part C, item 4.3),
- (iv) a direction from the Board of Management is being sought by the Principal regarding any aspect of a case that she/he is dealing with under this Code of Behaviour.

2. Special Meeting – (in respect of Expulsion or other Serious Sanction)

A Special Meeting of the Board of Management is called in a case where:

- (i) an Immediate Suspension has been imposed by the Principal and there is a recommendation from her/him in her/his Report to the Board of Management that Expulsion should be considered regarding it (See Part D, item 4.4),
- (ii) an Immediate Suspension has been imposed by the Principal and there is a recommendation from her/him in her/his Report to the Board of Management that some other serious sanction (penalty) (for example: a lengthy Suspension under particular conditions) should be considered regarding it (See Part D, item 4.4),
- (iii) there is a persistent case (in respect of which Suspension had previously been imposed) which is now returning before the Board with a recommendation from the Principal that Expulsion should now be considered regarding it (See Part D, item 3.1).

3. The Immediate Suspension continues in the Meantime

3.1

If an Immediate Suspension has been imposed, that will continue until there is a Meeting of the Board. [See Part C, item 4.3, and Part D, item 3.4, and Part E, item 6.1 below.]

3.2

The Board could, at an Emergency Meeting, increase the period of Suspension in the interim until the Special Meeting (in a case when Expulsion or a lengthy period of Suspension could be in question), in particular to afford an appropriate opportunity to the parents to prepare in advance of the Special Meeting concerning it. It might also arise that legal advice might be sought (by any party) – something which would add further delay to the process and that the Suspension would continue in force in the interim. [See Part C, item 4.4.]

4. Secretary of the Board - (The Principal)

4.1

The Principal is now functioning as the Secretary of the Board (a new role for her/him). She/he accepts all correspondence that comes in for the Board and she/he must put every one of them before the members before/at a meeting. She/he writes the minutes during the meetings of the Board.

4.2

When parents are trying to put a letter (or email, etc) before the Board, it should be addressed as follows: “Secretary of the Board of Management, Gaelscoil Chill Dara, An Bóthar Glas, An Currach, Co Chill Dara.”. *It is not appropriate*, ever, to make contact directly with any member of the Board, the two representatives from Gaelscoil parents included. There is a total prohibition on every member of the Board from discussing any aspect of any case outside of a meeting of the Board. Likewise, they are not allowed to give any advice or suggestion to parents regarding any case.

4.3

The Secretary makes contact with all of the members of the Board, in consultation with the Chairperson, when a Meeting is to be arranged, to inform them about the subject of the Meeting and to fix an appropriate date as is suitable to them, in so far as is possible. She/he informs the parents of the date and time of that Meeting without any delay and also inviting them to attend at the hearing. She/he will explain to them the detailed procedures (practice) that the Board intends in respect of the Meeting, but that the Board will be willing to take on board their own proposals regarding it if that is possible.

4.4

There is a particular responsibility on the Secretary of the Board (the Principal) in regard to providing copies of the relevant documents (after taking *GDPR* provisions into account) to the parents in good time ahead of the Meeting, together with a Schedule (list) of all of them. See, for example: Part C (Suspension), items 5.2, 5.7, 5.8, 6.2 & 7 and Part D (Expulsion), item 4.5.

4.5

The Secretary will compile copies of the various documents (records, correspondence, Report of the Principal, etc) together, in chronological order, along with a Schedule (list) of them at the front, into a neat booklet. She/he should distribute a copy of this Booklet of Documents to all of the members of the Board *and* to the parents by post in good time ahead of the day of the Meeting so that everyone will have an appropriate opportunity to read them carefully beforehand.

4.6

After she/he has distributed that Booklet of Documents, no telephone call should be accepted (or to have any conversation) that could place further information/ facts before her/him *orally*, but she/he could accept an email or letter (with additional information of that kind). A clear explanation must be stated therein, also, as to the reason why it would not have been possible for this additional information to have been given to the Gaelscoil before then – an aspect that the Chairperson will take into account when considering it. [See item 8.3 below.]

5. Chairperson of the Board

5.1

The Principal makes contact with the Chairperson without delay when an Immediate Suspension is being imposed by her/him. The Chairperson will advise her/him of the appropriate steps (as they are laid out in this Code) that are to be taken she/he gives permission, if necessary, to add to the period of Suspension in the meantime until an Emergency Meeting of the Board is held. [See Part C, item 4.3, and Part D, items 3.3 & 3.4, and Part E, item 3.1 above.]

5.2

The Chairperson will satisfy herself/himself that the provisions which are laid out in this Code are being followed by the Principal, especially with regard to providing copies of all of the documents to the parents as appropriate in a timely manner and, also, to direct attention to the practice of the Board regarding redaction (See Part D, item 3.3.). She/he will also ensure that a copy of the Booklet of Documents has been given to the parents and to the members of the Board in good time ahead of the day of the Meeting so that they will have sufficient time to read them carefully at home.

5.3

The Chairperson will be in charge of the Meeting when the case is heard in its entirety. She/he should ensure at its commencement that no one, who was connected with the circumstances of the case, has any involvement in the discussions of the Board regarding it (for example, a member of the Board who made a complaint against the pupil previously or a member who was involved (actively) in the inquiry, including the Principal herself/himself, etc). [See Part C, item 5.4, also.]

6. Solicitor for the Parents

6.1

The parents have a right to use a Solicitor to act on their behalf when they are dealing with GSCD, especially when the case of their own child is coming before the Board.

6.2

That Solicitor, however, must clarify *at the outset* that she/he is acting on behalf of both of the parents in the case, *or not*. There is duty on GSCD to ensure that the Board itself is dealing with both of the parents if a letter is received from a Solicitor which begins with a sentence such as: “We act on behalf of (name of one parent mentioned) and his/her child ...”. The Board will not reply to the content of a letter of that kind until it receives a further letter from the Solicitor which clarifies this specific information. If necessary, the Board will make other efforts to make contact with the

other parent (who is not mentioned in the letter from the Solicitor) to vindicate his/her own rights as far as is possible.

7. Composition of the Board

7.1

There are eight members on the Board: The Chairperson, the Principal, two parents (a father and a mother), another teacher from the Gaelscoil, a representative nominated by the Patron and two people from the local community. The Principal acts as the Secretary for the Board.

7.2

The Board does its work through Gaeilge normally but any case will be dealt with through English, and the Emergency Meeting or the Special Meeting will be held likewise, if that is the wish of the parents. A translation in English will be provided to the parents of every document that is related to the case, including the minutes of the Meeting.

7.3

There should be five members, at least, present (as a quorum) at a meeting of the Board. It is recognised that there could be a necessity, in an exceptional case, to make use of a conference call to facilitate a meeting of the Board (with regard to having the appropriate quorum present).

8. Procedures in respect of an Emergency Meeting – item 1(i) & 1(ii) ... (Suspension)

8.1

When an Appeal comes before the Board, it is a new hearing (*de novo*) that will be held. With regard to the particular sanction (penalty) that is in question in any case which comes before the Board as an Appeal, the Board could, after hearing and considering the case:

(a) affirm it, or (b) annul it, or (c) reduce it, or (d) increase it, or (e) replace it with an entirely different sanction.

8.2

- A booklet with all of the relevant documents about the case will already have been received by each member of the Board (See item 4.5 above) and it is these alone that will be before the Meeting as information on the case.
- There will be a particular importance attached to the Report of the Principal, and any Recommendation from her/him that is in it, together with any reply (in writing) from the parents.
- The Principal will not be afforded any opportunity to give additional information orally at the Meeting (other than what is stated in those documents).

8.3

The Chairperson will make a decision in regard to allowing, or not, any additional document (*i.e.* that arrived late to the Board) into the hearing. She/he should, however, be very cautious as to the problems that could arise (including, regarding fair procedures if any new allegation is being raised) if the substantive issue of the hearing

itself were to be expanded from what is already on record in the Booklet of Documents. [See item 4.6 above, also.]

8.4

An opportunity will be given to the parents to be present and, also, have an opportunity to reply orally (and a written submission from them, also) if it is an Appeal or a case in which a period of Suspension longer than three days is in question (See item 1 (i) & (ii) above). It is an opportunity for them, also, to make a case for a lesser sanction (penalty) to be imposed.

8.5

The Principal will answer any questions that are put to her/him about the case, as has been recorded in the various documents.

8.6

In the conduct of the hearing, the Chairperson and the other members must be careful *that the Board itself is impartial as between the Principal and the pupil*. After that presentation and reply, the Principal and the parents will leave the Meeting. The remaining members will discuss the case and make a decision regarding it.

8.7

The Chairperson will organise another person (a member of the Board, or otherwise), in place of the Principal, to take the minutes of the hearing and a copy (of that part of the Meeting where the parents were present) will be sent to the parents without delay.

8.8

In a letter *from the Chairperson* to the parents after the Meeting:

- At the beginning of the letter, the Chairperson will remind the parents that all correspondence from the Board is confidential and that they should ensure this likewise. [See also Part C, item 8.5.]
- Reference will be made to this Code of Discipline.
- The Board will clarify the central facts that are the basis for its decision.
- The Board will direct attention to the particular facts in respect of which there was a dispute and the reason will be explained why the Board settled on one version of them to be accepted as being the truth.
- The decision of the Board will be given and the reason for it will be explained.
- If particular conditions are being implemented with it, these will be explained here.
- Any further steps that are now to be taken will be explained.

8.9

Ordinarily, the Board should not go past an upper limit of ten days for any single period of Suspension. When a pupil has been Suspended for a period which would bring the totality of Suspension for him/her to 20 school days in the current school year, the parents have a right to seek an Appeal under *section 29* of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, from the Department of Education & Skills. The usual form, by which that Appeal is made, will be given to the parents, if that arises.

9. Procedures in respect of an Emergency Meeting – item 1(iii) & 1(iv) ... (Direction)

In the case of item 1 (iii) & (iv) above, the Principal will remain present and the case will be discussed. She/he should provide a Report (written) on the issue that is to be discussed by them to the members of the Board. She/he will take the minutes. The Board will give whatever direction to her/him that they think is appropriate to implement the provisions in this Code.

10. Parents of any other pupil

When a parent writes to GSCD regarding misbehaviour of another pupil in the Gaelscoil, that material will be taken into account when the Board is dealing with the case, but they will not be permitted to attend at the Meeting itself. [See Part B, item 6 and Part C, item 5.7, also.] The Board will write to them after the Meeting to provide limited feedback (in line with *GDPR* provisions) to them.

11. Procedures in respect of a Special Meeting – (Expulsion or other Serious Sanction)

11.1

The same approach as laid out in item 8.1-7 above in respect of an Emergency Meeting.

11.2

The parents can send a reply / submission in writing to the Principal beforehand and it would be a great help to the members of the Board if they had that in good time to assess their side carefully. Of course, they can present the same orally during the Meeting itself also when the case is being heard. It is also an opportunity for them to make a case for a lesser sanction (penalty) to be imposed.

11.3

There will be difficulties in organising all of the members of the Board with urgency to be available on the same night for the Meeting. The parents should send word to the Principal as soon as possible if they themselves have a difficulty with any particular date, before a night is fixed for that Meeting (hearing).

11.4

The parents can bring another suitable person(s) with them to the Meeting (such as a Solicitor, a relative for support, etc). However, the Board must be informed beforehand, in writing, of the name(s) of any such person(s) and the role they will have at the Meeting.

11.5

In a letter *from the Chairperson* to the parents after the Meeting:

- At the beginning of the letter, the Chairperson will remind the parents that all correspondence from the Board is confidential and that they should ensure this likewise. [See also Part C, item 8.5.]
- Reference will be made to this Code of Discipline.
- The Board will clarify the central facts that are the basis for its decision.
- The Board will direct attention to the particular facts in respect of which there was a dispute and the reason will be explained why the Board settled on one version of them to be accepted as being the truth.

- If the Board's decision is to impose a lengthy Suspension under particular conditions, these will be explained here and information will be given about any other steps that are now to be taken.
- If the Board's decision is to Expel the pupil, the reasons why the Board decided that another sanction (penalty) would not be appropriate in this particular case will be explained (for example, a lengthy Suspension under particular conditions).
- The further steps that are now to follow in the process will be explained and, in particular, will any Suspension continue in the meantime, or not.

11.6

The Chairperson must put this particular letter in the post herself/himself, that is, not to leave it with some other person to do so. Also, it would be good practice to stick the receipt from the Post Office on the reverse side of the end page – of her/his own copy – together with noting down the day and time and then to add her/his signature.

12. Actions following the Hearing in respect of Expulsion

12.1

The Board will notify the *Education Welfare Officer*, in writing, regarding the decision to Expel and the reasons for it without any delay. A copy of this Code of Behaviour will also be given to her/him. A copy of that notification will be sent to the parents also.

12.2

A pupil cannot be Expelled until 20 schooldays have passed from the time when the *Education Welfare Officer* receives that notification. Accordingly, the pupil will remain a member of the Gaelscoil though she/he could still be Suspended in the meantime.

12.3

The *Education Welfare Officer* will take various steps, consulting with the parents and the Gaelscoil, to see if it is possible to come to some other resolution in the case so that the pupil could continue with his/her education in the Gaelscoil or in another school. An agreement, as to some other intervention that would avoid an Expulsion, could be the outcome to these consultations. Also, the consultation could look at other educational possibilities for the pupil in the future.

12.4

The correspondence from the *Education Welfare Officer* (together with any opinions and recommendations from her/him) will be put before the Board.

12.5

When 20 schooldays have elapsed after the above notification being with the *Education Welfare Officer*, and if the Board is still of the opinion, at another Meeting (See item 7.3 above), that the pupil should be Expelled, the Board will make a formal declaration on the decision to Expel the pupil from GSCD. The parents will be informed immediately, in writing, and the Expulsion will then proceed.

12.6

The Chairperson will give a direction to the members of the Board with regard to returning the Booklet of Documents to the Principal, or as to destroying it carefully – but each member will keep a copy of the Schedule (list) of the documents that were in

it as a record for themselves of the material that was put before them in the case. They can also retain their own notes, permanently. It is not necessary to carry out this step until there is an end to any Appeal in the case, if there is one.

13. Appeal to the Department of Education & Skills – in a case of Expulsion

13.1

The Board must inform the parents regarding their right to seek an Appeal under *section 29 of the Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*, from the Department of Education & Skills. The Board will give the usual application form, by which that Appeal is made, to the parents.

13.2

The pupil will remain a member of GSCD, though she/he could still be Suspended in the meantime.

14. Endnotes

14.1

This Code of Behaviour will act as important guidance for the staff of the Gaelscoil when they are dealing with any case. The Board accepts that it may happen in a particular case that every step will not be applied, or that steps will not be applied in their entirety as they are laid out here in this Code of Behaviour.

14.2

If there is anything unclear or uncertain in this policy, the Board of Management that is there at the time will make a decision regarding it.

14.3

No policy could cover every new circumstance (that could yet arise in the future) with precision. This Code, as it is written in 2021, will be used as a guide to the Board when it is dealing with a case of that sort, if such arises in GSCD.

This revised policy was adopted at a meeting of the Board of Management in June 2021. It replaces the previous *Code of Behaviour*. It was signed a few days after that meeting (to take on board final minor changes) on behalf of the Board:

Cathaoirleach (Chairperson): Colm Ó Gógáin



Príomhoide (Principal): Niamh Uí Chadhlá



Date: 15.06.21

Notes:

All policies of Gaelscoil Chill Dara are subject to a process of review and amendment from time to time. The Parents' Association (Comhairle na dTuismitheoirí) and the teaching staff are consulted in this process before a new policy is finally adopted by the Board of Management. Further suggestions on any of the Gaelscoil's policies, made in writing to the Principal, will be welcomed at any time from any interested person. The policies, as they presently stand, are posted on the Gaelscoil's website in both English and Irish: www.gaelscoilchilldara.com. Also, a parent can collect a printed copy at the office in the Gaelscoil, if they wish.

All of the Gaelscoil's policies are drawn up in both English and Irish. In the event that some difference is noted between the two versions of any policy a parent, *etc*, may choose to rely on either version as being the more beneficial for their child or their needs generally. The Board conducts its meetings through Irish but it will deal with any matter through either Irish or English as requested by any parent or other person.
