

Patron: Rt. Rev'd Paul Colton
Chairperson: Mr. Stephen Spillane
Principal: Mr. Eddie Pepper
Roll No: 13648D
Registered Charity No: 20111373



The Board of Management,
St. Luke's National School,
O'Mahony's Avenue,
Montenotte, Cork
T23DF30

St. Luke's NS Code of Behaviour

Developed by: St. Luke's NS in consultation with staff, children, parents, and Board of Management in 2025/26 School year

1. Introduction and Rationale:

1.1 Context and Ethos

St. Luke's National School is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. We embody the ethos of the Church of Ireland, which is inclusive, welcoming, and open to all.

Our Code of Behaviour is rooted in our school motto: "Le chéile, is féidir linn!" (Together, we can!). We believe that behaviour is a shared responsibility. We aim to create a safe, positive, and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected, and supported to reach their full potential.

This Policy applies to all school activities, including tours, yard time, and extracurriculars.

1.2 The "NCSE Relate" Approach

In line with modern best practices and the NCSE Relate framework, St. Luke's adopts a "Regulation-First" approach to behaviour.

- **Behaviour as Communication:** We understand that behaviour is often a form of communication. "Misbehaviour" is frequently a sign of stress or dysregulation rather than defiance.
- **Connection before Correction:** Staff are encouraged and work hard to prioritise relationships. A child cannot learn or reflect on their behaviour if they are in a state of high stress (fight/flight/freeze).
- **Inclusion:** We recognise that fair treatment does not always mean treating everyone the same; it means giving every child the specific support *they* need to succeed.

1.3 Legal Framework

This Code is legally underpinned by:

- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- NEWB Guidelines on Codes of Behaviour (2008)
- Equal Status Acts 2000–2018
- Circular 0055/2024 (Bí Cineálta Procedures)
- Circular 0081/2024 (Understanding Behaviours of Concern)

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2. Aims of this Code of Behaviour:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

To create an environment where teaching and learning can take place without disruption.

To equip students with the skills to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour.

To provide a consistent, fair, and restorative framework for responding to behaviour, fully aligned with our **Bí Cineálta Policy**.

3. Expectations and Standards:

We keep our rules simple, positive, and applicable to all ages (Junior Infants to 6th Class). We group them under three core pillars:

3.1 Be Safe

- We move calmly around the school building.
- We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
- We use equipment and school property with care.
- We report any safety concerns (bullying, rough play) to a teacher immediately.
- We SAY NO, GET AWAY, TELL
- We STOP, SCREENSHOT, BLOCK, TELL

3.2 Be Respectful + Be Kind

- We listen when others are speaking.
- We use kind words and manners.
- We look out for each other
- We respect the differences in others (ability, background, beliefs).
- We follow the directions of staff members.

3.3 Be Ready

- We arrive at school on time and prepared.
- We do our best in class and allow others to learn.
- We present ourselves with pride.

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4. Promoting Positive Behaviour (Tier 1 Support):

We the staff in St. Luke's aim to focus most of our energy on affirming positive behaviour.

- **The Relational Environment:** Staff model calm, respectful interactions.
- **Affirmation:** We aim to use specific praise (e.g. "I noticed how you shared your paints with X, that was very kind") rather than general praise.
- **Physical, Social and Emotional regulation:** Teachers endeavour to adjust the environment (visual schedules, movement breaks, sensory tools) to reduce stressors that might cause dysregulation.
- **School Assembly:** We celebrate collective and individual achievements, reinforcing the "Le chéile" spirit.
- **Hero of the Week:** We celebrate children's academic, emotional and social development and successes with our Hero of the Week award at assembly
- **Positive notes home:** Sometimes a teacher/SNA might send a positive note home about something a child has achieved or a positive behaviour.

5. Classification of Behaviour and Responses:

To ensure clarity and fairness, behaviour is classified into three levels. *Note: These lists are examples and not exhaustive.*

Level 1: Minor Misbehaviour

Behaviour that disrupts the child's own learning or low-level disruption of others.

- Talking out of turn / interrupting.
- Low-level distraction of others.
- Not completing homework (without a note).
- Running in the classroom/indoors/on stairs.
- Leaving the room/space without the knowledge/permission of the adult in charge.
- Littering or consistently leaving things untidy/not cleaning up
- Unintentional rough play (e.g. unintentional pushing/bumping/tripping/falling in the line/in the yard).

Response to Level 1 (Minor)

Managed by the Class Teacher.

- **Non-Verbal Cue:** Look, gesture, or proximity.

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- **Rule Reminder:** A private, calm reminder of the specific expectation.
- **Restorative Check:** "Is everything okay? You seem unsettled today."
- **Seating Change:** Temporary move to a quiet desk within the room to help focus.
- **Apology:** An apology to those affected - once everyone is regulated.
- **Note in Journal/email/notice to parents/guardians:** If the behaviour repeats, a note is sent home to parents/guardians.

Level 2: Serious Misbehaviour

Behaviour that significantly disrupts learning, endangers safety, or is hurtful.

- **Persistent Level 1 behaviour** (despite interventions).
- Use of bad/offensive/inappropriate language.
- Back-answering, lack of respect or defiance toward a staff member.
- Deliberate rough play or aggressive behaviour.
- Minor damage to school property.
- Telling lies/dishonesty that leads to others (pupils or staff) being affected negatively
- Excluding others (social isolation).
- Stealing minor items - school resources such as books, paint brushes, art materials, stationery items etc.
- Use of mobile phones or other such devices during the school day without express permission to do so (See Digital Device Policy for clarification).

Response to Level 2 (Serious)

Managed by Class Teacher, potentially involving Principal/Deputy.

- **In-Class Separation from peers:** Detailed work set at a separate table for a specific period.
- **Temporary Removal (to another Class):** The pupil completes work in another class (e.g. a Senior Infant goes to 1st Class) for 15–30 minutes to break the cycle of behaviour - this to be done in collaboration with other teachers, the SET team and SNA's to ensure adequate supervision.
- **Loss of Privilege:** Withdrawal of a specific privilege (e.g. Golden Time, using specific equipment).
- **Yard Restrictions:** If the behaviour occurred on the yard, the pupil may be asked to shadow the teacher on duty for a set time (1-2 days).
- **Reflection Sheet:** Pupil completes a restorative reflection sheet (age-appropriate) signed by parents.

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- **Restorative Conversation:** Once the child is regulated and the situation calm, the teacher uses the **Restorative Questions:**
 - *What happened? (Focus on facts)*
 - *What were you thinking/feeling at the time? (Exploring immediate reactions)*
 - *What have you thought about since? (Reflecting on the situation)*
 - *Who has been affected by this, and in what way? (Building empathy for others)*
 - *How could things have been done differently? (Considering alternatives)*
 - *What do you think needs to happen next to put things right? (Moving towards resolution)*
- **Communication:** A note/email/notice or phone call to parents to keep them informed and ask for support.
- **Confiscation of mobile phones/devices:** See Digital Devices Policy - depending on the nature of the use of these devices this may be a Level 3 Misbehaviour (see below).

Level 3: Gross Misbehaviour

Behaviour that causes serious safety risks, significant damage, or is illegal.

- **Persistent Level 2** behaviour (refusal to engage with support plans).
- Serious physical aggression (kicking, biting, punching) causing harm.
- Serious threat of violence against another child or staff member.
- Major damage to property (breaking windows, vandalism, damaging laptops or devices etc).
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Bullying (as defined in our *Bí Cineálta* policy—serious/systematic).
- Possession of dangerous/illegal items/materials in school.
- Recording(sound or images)/photographing teachers or other children by means of mobile devices or other electronic devices regardless of whether images or recordings are shared/distributed.

Response to Level 3 (Gross)

Managed by Principal & Board of Management.

- **Immediate Removal:** Pupil is removed from the classroom/area to another space for safety. In crisis situations where the child who is misbehaving cannot be safely removed, it is recommended that other children are removed from the space. The principal should be informed and the parents/guardians contacted immediately.
- **Referral to Principal/Deputy:** The Principal or the Deputy Principal will meet with the pupil for a discussion around the behaviour, the impact it is having, the expectations we have in our school around behaviour and the necessary steps needed to be taken to resolve issues.

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- **Formal Parent Meeting:** Parents are required to come to the school at the earliest possible time. This meeting will be used to agree a plan of action to ensure that misbehaviours cease and that behavioural plans and expectations are communicated and drawn up efficiently.
- **Individual Behaviour Support Plan:** A formal plan is drafted with the SET team, parents, and teacher.
- **Privilege Withdrawal:** Loss of specific privileges may occur, but these will always be proportionate and time-limited. If a child's behaviour is deemed a risk for safety, school tour/trip privileges may be removed - this decision is to be taken only in consultation with the principal and Board of management.
- **Internal Suspension:** Pupil attends school but works in isolation from their class (e.g. in the Principal's office or another room - supervised) for a full day.
- **External Suspension:** The Board of Management (or Principal via delegated authority) suspends the pupil from school (1–3 days). See also below section 8.
- **Expulsion:** In extreme cases, the Board may move to expel (see below section 8).

6. Procedural Fairness and Record Keeping:

To ensure our policy is fair and just, we will adhere to the principles of Natural Justice.

6.1 Right to be Heard

In any investigation of serious or gross misbehaviour, the pupil has the right to present their side of the story.

- We will listen to the pupil (using scribes/visuals if necessary).
- Parents will be informed of any serious allegation before a major sanction is imposed.

6.2 Record Keeping (GDPR)

- **Level 1 (Minor):** Not formally recorded unless persistent - Aladdin Behaviour Log
- **Level 2 (Serious) :** Recorded by the class teacher e.g. in a specific behaviour notebook (if in use by the teacher) and on the child's log of actions on the **Aladdin** system.
- **Level 3 (Gross):** Formally recorded on the child's file in a behaviour log on **Aladdin**. Factual, objective language is used.
- **Bí Cineálta:** Bullying reports are recorded using the specific templates in the *Bí Cineálta* policy.

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7. Specific Provisions:

We in St. Luke's understand that misbehaviours may be the result of unmet needs or crisis situations. The following are areas in which specific provisions/sanctions/actions may be relevant:

7.1 Pupils with Additional Needs

- **Differentiation:** St. Luke's recognises that some behaviours are related to a student's additional needs (e.g. sensory overwhelm).
- **The Student Support Plan (SSP):** For students with complex needs, the SSP (or Behaviour Support Plan) takes precedence. Sanctions will not be applied for behaviours that are a direct manifestation of a disability **unless** safety is compromised.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** We will make reasonable adjustments (e.g. sensory breaks, visual cues) before moving to sanctions.

7.2 Crisis Situations & Physical Intervention

Reference: Circular 0081/2024.

A **Behaviour of Concern** is behaviour that causes physical harm to the child themselves or others, or seriously interferes with the learning of others.

- **Policy:** Physical intervention is **never** a sanction. It is a safety response.
- **Threshold:** It is only used if there is an **imminent danger** of physical harm to the student, staff, or others.
- **De-escalation:** Staff will use verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques (calm tone, giving space) as the first priority.
- **Physical Intervention:** This is a **last resort** and is **never** used for discipline.
 - It may only be used when there is an immediate risk of physical harm to the child, staff, or other students.
 - It must be proportionate and last for the shortest time necessary.
- **Reporting:** Any use of physical intervention **must** be recorded using the Department of Education templates and reported to the Principal and Board of Management. Parents will be informed on the same day.

7.3 Anti-Bullying (Bí Cineálta)

- Our separate *Bí Cineálta Policy (2025)* outlines the specific procedures for investigating and resolving bullying.
- Bullying is considered **Gross Misbehaviour** if it is systematic and persistent.
- However, the primary resolution method is **Restorative Practice**, ensuring the pupil who engaged in bullying behaviour understands the harm caused and repairs the relationship.
- **Zero Tolerance Strategy:** While we understand behaviour is complex, St. Luke's does not tolerate bullying behaviour. We are committed to a "prevention and education" approach.

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- **Reporting:** As per our *Bí Cineálta* policy, all incidents of bullying must be reported. Students are encouraged to "Say No, Get Away, Tell."
- **Investigation:** The relevant teacher will investigate all reports using the recording templates specified in the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.
- **Oversight:** The Principal reports on the effectiveness of the *Bí Cineálta* policy to the Board of Management at every meeting.

8. Suspension and Expulsion:

The Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student in accordance with the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and Chapters 10, 11, and 12 of the *NEWB Guidelines*.

8.1 Suspension

- **Authority:** The Board of Management has the authority to suspend. This authority may be delegated to the Principal for suspensions of up to 3 days.
- **Grounds:** Suspension is a serious sanction used when both of the below criteria are deemed satisfied by the Board (or Principal in the event that the decision is delegated to the Principal by the Board):
 - The child's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
 - The child's continued presence constitutes a threat to safety.
- **Procedure:**
 - Investigation of the facts.
 - Parents informed in writing of the complaint and the intent to suspend.
 - Parents invited to a meeting.
 - Formal letter of suspension issued (detailing dates, reasons, and right to appeal).
 - Suspension to commence after the 3 day appeals period closes.
- **Appeals:** Suspensions can be appealed to the BOM within 3 school days of a formal letter being issued. The Board's decision on the appeal will be final. If the total days of suspension exceed 20 in a year, an appeal can be made to the Department of Education under **Section 29** of the Education Act.

8.2 Expulsion

- **Authority:** Only the Board of Management can expel a student.
- This is the highest level of sanction which is only to be implemented in extreme cases (as deemed by the Board of Management). Grounds for expulsion include but are not limited to:

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- The child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or a risk to safety.
 - The child's behaviour caused a significant loss or damage to persons or property in the school.
 - All other interventions have been exhausted.
- **Process:**
 - A detailed investigation is carried out by the Principal who will provide a report and recommendation to the Board.
 - An emergency Board meeting is called. Parents/guardians and the child are invited to a hearing with the Board. The outcomes and particulars of the investigation will be discussed and used as evidence.
 - If the Board decides to expel, the **Educational Welfare Officer (Tusla)** is notified in writing.
 - A 20-day "cooling-off" period applies before the expulsion takes effect, during which the EWO may intervene.

9. Wellbeing and Pastoral Care:

At St. Luke's Mixed National School, we operate on the principle that **"A happy child learns best."** We recognise that positive behaviour is intrinsically linked to a child's sense of wellbeing. When a child feels safe, connected, and heard, they are more likely to engage positively with their peers and learning.

9.1 The Wellbeing-Behaviour Connection

In line with the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* and *NCSE Relate*, we view wellbeing as a multi-dimensional state.

- **Regulation:** A child who is dysregulated (stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed) often cannot meet behaviour expectations in the traditional sense. Our priority is to help them return to a state of calm.
- **Resilience:** We teach pupils that making mistakes is part of learning. When behaviour goes wrong, we support them to "bounce back" and repair relationships rather than labelling them as "bad/bold."

9.2 Curricular Support (SPHE & RSE)

Wellbeing is formally taught and reinforced through the curriculum, equipping children with the language to express their feelings:

- **SPHE:** The *Social, Personal and Health Education* curriculum is central to our Code of Behaviour.

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- **Programmes:** We may utilise evidence-based programmes such as "Friends for Life", "Zippys Friends", "Weaving Wellbeing" and the "Zones of Regulation". These tools give pupils a shared vocabulary to signal when they need support before a behaviour incident occurs.
- **Circle Time/Morning Meetings:** Circle Time/Morning Meetings sessions give opportunities to allow children to discuss rules, friendship, and conflict resolution in a non-judgmental space.

9.3 Student Voice & Agency

A key indicator of wellbeing is the feeling of being heard.

- **Student Council:** Our Student Council plays an active role in reviewing school rules and the Code of Behaviour to ensure they feel fair and relevant to the students.
- **Individual Agency:** In disciplinary situations we ensure the student's voice is heard. We ask, "What is your side of the story?" and "What do you think needs to happen now?"

9.4 The "One Good Adult"

Research shows that the presence of "One Good Adult" is a key protector of youth mental health. We strive to ensure that every child in St. Luke's feels they have at least one staff member they can turn to if they are worried or upset. This pastoral care extends beyond the classroom to the yard and school activities.

9.5 Staff Wellbeing

We recognise that "You cannot pour from an empty cup." To effectively co-regulate children, our staff must also feel supported and regulated. Management is committed to maintaining a positive, collegial, and supportive working environment where staff can debrief after difficult incidents without judgment. Staff should speak to the principal in these instances so that cover can be arranged for their classes while they take time to debrief/reflect.

10. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management: To ratify this code, support the staff in its implementation, and ensure compliance with Department Circulars.

The Principal: To ensure the code is implemented fairly and to facilitate and inform staff of opportunities for training in *NCSE Relate*, *Restorative Practice*, *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations* and *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Teachers: To model the ethos, build relationships, and apply the Code of Behaviour consistently. To use the correct recording and reporting procedures outlined in this document, other school policies and mandatory reporting procedures outlined in *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations*, *Child Protection Procedures*, *Safeguarding Procedures*. Teachers and staff should ensure up to date knowledge of these and other relevant procedures when engaging with this and other school policies.

SNA's: Inform class teachers of misbehaviours and uphold the ethos and policies of the school.

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Parents: To support the school's efforts, attend meetings when requested, and inform the school of any home issues that might affect their child's behaviour.

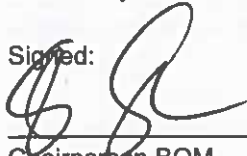
Pupils: To try their best to follow the St. Luke's "Standards and Expectations" (Safe, Respectful, Ready).

11. Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in April 2026. A copy of this procedure is available to parents on the school website and/or on request from the school.

This Policy will be reviewed annually or as is required in line with departmental/legal guidance.

Signed:



Chairperson BOM

Date:

28/4/26



Principal

Date:

28/4/26

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Behaviour Log (Add to pupils Aladdin profile when complete):

Name of Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Other Pupil(s) Involved (initials): _____

What happened (give detail): _____

Parents informed: YES / NO Who? _____

Bullying Concern: YES / NO Recorded if yes under Bí Cineálta Policy/Procedures

Agreed plan of action/sanctions: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Restorative Script for Behaviours:

Ask these questions to children involved in an incident, individually at first and then as a group if appropriate. Children who engage in behaviours AND children affected by the behaviours.

It would be recommended that teachers would record answers to these questions. If uploading to Aladdin profiles, please redact names of other children involved.

This process should only occur once all children involved are calm, regulated and ready to engage in the discussion.

- 1. What happened? (Focus on facts)**
- 2. What were you thinking/feeling at the time? (Exploring immediate reactions)**
- 3. What have you thought about since? (Reflecting on the situation)**
- 4. Who has been affected by this, and in what way? (Building empathy for others)**
- 5. How could things have been done differently? (Considering alternatives)**
- 6. What do you think needs to happen next to put things right? (Moving towards resolution)**

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