

Code of Behaviour Policy

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS - A Steiner Education



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Introduction

This Code of Behaviour has been developed to support the wellbeing, learning and healthy development of every child in Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School-A Steiner Education. It reflects our commitment to creating a caring, respectful and inclusive school community where children feel safe, valued and supported to grow. Grounded in our Steiner ethos and Community National School values, the Code emphasises relationship, guidance and understanding, recognising behaviour as a form of communication and learning. It sets out a shared framework to support positive behaviour, clear expectations and restorative responses, in partnership with children, parents, staff and the wider school community.

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Behaviour is to articulate the shared values, principles, expectations and practices that guide behaviour, relationships and wellbeing in Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School. It exists to support the creation of a safe, nurturing, inclusive and purposeful learning community in which every child is enabled to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and in their life. Central to this Code is a commitment to supporting children in the gradual development of self-regulation, personal responsibility and social understanding, recognising that these capacities unfold over time and through relationship, guidance and lived experience. The Code promotes a strong sense of belonging, dignity and mutual respect for all members of the school community and seeks to provide clarity, consistency and reassurance for children, staff and parents alike. It outlines clear preventative, supportive and restorative approaches to behaviour that prioritise wellbeing, connection and learning, while also ensuring that consistent responses to behaviour are held in a fair and compassionate manner. This Code reflects the Steiner ethos of the school, the inclusive values of a Community National School, and contemporary best practice in behaviour support, including regulation-first and restorative approaches, while also ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and national guidelines.

School Context & Steiner Ethos

Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School is a multi-denominational, co-educational primary school in Galway that delivers the full Irish primary curriculum through a distinctive Steiner educational approach, grounded in deep respect for the individuality, dignity and developmental stage of each child. As a Community National School under the patronage of GRETB, we are committed to equality, inclusion, community and care, welcoming children and families of all backgrounds and beliefs. Our Steiner ethos recognises the child as a whole being, thinking, feeling and willing

and places strong emphasis on rhythm, relationship, creativity, movement and connection with nature as foundations for healthy learning and development. This holistic understanding profoundly influences our approach to behaviour. Behaviour is viewed as a form of communication that reflects a child's developmental ability and needs, emotional state and sense of belonging. In line with Steiner principles, we prioritise prevention through warm relationships, predictable rhythms, developmentally appropriate expectations and rich sensory and creative experiences. When challenges arise, our responses focus first on regulation, understanding and guidance and on supporting children to grow in ability, self-awareness, empathy and responsibility over time. This approach shapes an ethos in which agreements are held with kindness and clarity, challenges are understood as opportunities for learning, and repair and restoration of relationships are central. Through this, our school seeks to nurture responsive support as well as develop resilient, compassionate and socially aware young people who feel secure, valued and connected within their school community.

Aims

The Code of Behaviour aims to:

- ❖ Support the holistic wellbeing, development and learning of every child by nurturing positive conduct and guiding pupils to understand how their actions affect their own learning, the wellbeing of others and the life of the school community.
- ❖ Create and sustain a safe, warm and welcoming school environment where every child feels secure, valued and included, and where a strong sense of belonging, care and shared responsibility is fostered across the whole school community.
- ❖ Foster positive, respectful and trusting relationships by care and thoughtful behaviour, and by supporting pupils to develop respect for themselves, for others, for staff and for the shared spaces and life of the school.
- ❖ Maintain a calm, purposeful and predictable learning environment that supports concentration, engagement and meaningful learning for all children, recognising diverse needs and using clear, consistent and developmentally appropriate expectations, routines and supports to help children succeed.
- ❖ Support the gradual development of regulation, empathy and social responsibility in children, recognising that inner discipline, emotional understanding and personal maturity unfold over time and require guidance, modelling and support.
- ❖ Our school community has a shared and clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of children, parents, staff, school leadership and the Board of Management in supporting positive behaviour through rights-based, safe and consistent responses that promote learning, responsibility and repair.
- ❖ Promote preventative, regulation-first and restorative approaches that support the repair of relationships, grounded in unconditional positive regard and the upholding of the dignity, rights and voice of every child.

Guiding Principles

Our Code of Behaviour is grounded in the following guiding principles. It is:

- ❖ Child-centred and responsive to individual needs
- ❖ Informed by children's voices and lived experiences
- ❖ Rights-based, upholding dignity, respect and fairness
- ❖ Relational, recognising the importance of connection and belonging
- ❖ Developmentally informed, reflecting children's stages of growth
- ❖ Inclusive and neuro-affirmative, valuing neurodiversity
- ❖ Proactive and responsive, focusing on prevention and early support
- ❖ Restorative, supporting reflection, repair and growth
- ❖ Collaborative, working in partnership with children, families and staff

Our Golden Agreements *formed by students & staff*

Be kind

We use gentle words and caring actions and look after ourselves, others, and our environment.

Be respectful

We listen, include others, and remember that everyone matters, even when we are different.

Be safe

We keep our bodies, feelings, and learning spaces safe so everyone can feel calm and ready to learn.

Be brave

We try new things, keep going when something is tricky, and know that challenges help us learn and grow.

Be supportive

We help others when we can and ask for help when we need it.

Our Golden Agreements apply throughout the life of the school, including classrooms, pathways, toilets, outdoor spaces, sandpit, forest, playground, assemblies, school tours, swimming, bus trips, extracurricular activities and all school-related events. Clear, predictable routines and consistent expectations support children to feel secure and successful. Staff are responsive in behaviour supports, using modelling, rhythm, guidance and resources and respond to behaviour of concern.

At the beginning of each school year, each class develops its own Class Charter in partnership with the children and their teacher. This process supports children to have voice, ownership, and a shared understanding of how the Golden Agreements are lived

out in their own classroom. Through discussion, story, reflection, and age-appropriate activities, children explore what being kind, respectful, safe, brave and supportive looks like in their class, in their learning, and in their relationships with others. Each child is invited to sign the Class Charter in a way that is meaningful to them, for example, by writing their name, making a mark, or adding a symbol, to show their shared commitment to the class community. Teachers, SNAs, SET and interns are also invited to sign the Charter, modelling shared responsibility and respect. The Class Charter is written in child-friendly language, agreed together, and displayed in the classroom. It is revisited regularly throughout the year and used as a reference point for reflection, problem-solving, and restorative conversations. Each Class Charter sits within, and connects back to, the school's Golden Agreements, ensuring consistency across the school while recognising that each class community is unique.

Understanding Behaviour

In line with guidance from the NCSE, behaviour is understood as a form of communication and learning that varies from child to child and from moment to moment. A child's behaviour reflects their developmental stage, emotional state, sensory needs, lived experiences and current capacity for self-regulation, rather than a simple choice to behave in a particular way.

From a Steiner perspective, experiences of challenge are viewed as part of the child's unfolding development across thinking, feeling and willing. Children's behaviour is shaped by their sense of safety, belonging, rhythm and relationship, as well as by both internal regulation and the external learning environment. At times, behaviour that challenges may indicate unmet needs, stress, dysregulation, or difficulty expressing feelings and needs in ways that are understood by others.

Understanding behaviour therefore requires adults to look beyond what is seen on the surface and to consider what supports, adaptations or environmental changes may help the child to succeed. Consistent with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the school focuses on reducing barriers to participation and engagement by providing clear structure, predictable routines, emotional regulation supports, and strong relationships. Responses to behaviour are proactive, supportive and educational and recognise that children may need different kinds of support at different times.

By viewing behaviour as part of a developmental and learning process, the school aims to respond with empathy, guidance and consistency, supporting each child to develop self-awareness, responsibility and social understanding over time.

The Teacher-Child Relationship

At Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, the relationship between teacher and child is understood as the foundation for learning, wellbeing and positive behaviour. Strong, trusting relationships are recognised as essential in supporting engagement, emotional regulation and participation for all children, acknowledging that children experience learning and school life in different ways and at different times. When children feel safe, seen and supported, they are better able to access learning, develop self-regulation and take responsibility within the school community.

Teachers play a key role as steady, responsive adults who intentionally design learning environments that are calm, predictable and inclusive. Through clear expectations, warm interactions and consistent routines, teachers support a wide range of needs, strengths and regulation styles. Teachers model respectful communication and emotional regulation, recognising that children learn these skills through relationship, observation and experience, rather than through instruction alone.

When behaviour that challenges arise, teachers respond in ways that prioritise regulation, understanding and reconnection. Behaviour is viewed as meaningful information about a child's current needs, developmental stage or capacity to cope. In keeping with regulation-first, restorative and UDL-aligned approaches, teachers support children to feel safe and regulated before engaging in reflection or problem-solving. Strategies may include calm presence, clear and supportive language, movement, sensory supports, time, or space, recognising that different children require different supports to return to readiness for learning.

The school recognises that many behavioural responses cannot be resolved in the moment, particularly when a child is overwhelmed or dysregulated. In such situations, the priority is safety, connection and regulation, rather than correction or consequence. Meaningful behaviour change is supported over time through consistent relationships, flexible supports, clear expectations, skill-building and guided reflection. This paced approach allows children to regain balance before exploring what has happened and how alternative strategies or choices can be developed.

Consistency, trust and unconditional positive regard underpin the teacher-child relationship. Teachers support children by maintaining clear expectations while remaining flexible and responsive to individual needs. Through modelling, encouragement, reflection and restorative conversations, children are supported to develop self-awareness, empathy and social understanding over time. This relationship-centred approach reflects the school's commitment to dignity, inclusion and the holistic development of every child, and underpins all responses to behaviour within the school.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

A shared understanding of rights, roles and responsibilities supports a safe, respectful and nurturing school community. In Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, all members of the school community have a role to play in creating an environment where learning, wellbeing and positive behaviour can flourish. These responsibilities are

grounded in mutual respect, shared values, care for one another and a commitment to supporting the holistic development of every child.

Pupils

Pupils have the right to feel safe, respected, heard and included, and to learn in an environment that supports their academic, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. They have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them, in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are encouraged and supported to acquire skills in understanding responsibility. Restorative practice is valued, taught and supported.

Staff

Staff have the right to work in a respectful environment as valued members of the school staff within a supportive team. They play a vital role in supporting pupils' care needs, access to learning, emotional regulation and inclusion, in collaboration with the others. Staff support positive behaviour through modelling and understanding the underlying reasons for behaviour and communication, calm presence, consistency, encouragement and co-regulation, and contribute to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all pupils. They communicate relevant observations in a reflective manner to colleagues. They are responsible for implementing preventative, regulation-first and restorative approaches, maintaining appropriate records, communicating with parents as needed, and seeking support or guidance when concerns arise. Staff are expected to uphold school policies and to work collaboratively with others in supporting positive behaviour.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians have the right to respectful, timely and clear communication, to be informed about their child's progress, wellbeing and behaviour, and to access school policies and procedures. They have the right to be heard and to raise concerns in an appropriate and constructive manner. Parents are responsible for supporting the ethos, values and behaviour expectations of the school, ensuring regular attendance and punctuality, reinforcing positive behaviour, and communicating relevant information that may impact their child's wellbeing or behaviour. Parents are expected to work collaboratively with staff, to engage respectfully in problem-solving, and to support agreed strategies consistently at home and in school.

The Principal

The Principal has the right to lead and manage the school in a respectful and supportive environment. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the

Code of Behaviour, supporting staff in its consistent application, and ensuring that behaviour is addressed in line with national guidelines, fair procedures and the school's ethos. The Principal has responsibility for managing serious behavioural matters, maintaining appropriate records, communicating with parents, liaising with external agencies where appropriate, and ensuring that children's rights, dignity and wellbeing are upheld in all behaviour-related decisions at this level known to the Principal.

Board of Management

The Board of Management has the right and responsibility to govern the school in accordance with legislation, patron requirements and Department of Education guidelines. The Board is responsible for approving, ratifying and reviewing the Code of Behaviour, supporting the Principal and staff in its implementation, and ensuring that policies are applied fairly, consistently and lawfully. The Board has particular responsibilities in relation to suspension and expulsion, the application of fair procedures, and the safeguarding of pupils' welfare and rights. The Board ensures that the Code of Behaviour is reviewed regularly and made available to the school community.

Wider School Community

Members of the wider school community, including visitors, external professionals, volunteers, partner organisations and service providers, have a responsibility to respect the ethos, values and behaviour expectations of the school. They are expected to model respectful behaviour, to communicate appropriately with staff and pupils, and to contribute positively to a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. Where external professionals are involved in supporting pupils, collaboration takes place with parental consent and in line with school policies.

Through shared responsibility, open communication and mutual respect, pupils, parents, staff, school leadership, the Board of Management and the wider community work together to support each child's learning, regulation, wellbeing and sense of belonging within Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School.

Preventative Strategies & Supports for Behaviour

In Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, preventative strategies are central to supporting positive behaviour, wellbeing and learning. The school recognises that children are best able to meet expectations when they feel regulated, safe, connected and understood. In line with a regulation-first approach, adults prioritise emotional and sensory regulation before addressing behaviour expectations or applying consequences. Prevention focuses on anticipating needs, reducing stressors and

creating environments that support balance, engagement and participation for all children.

Preventative work is embedded through the explicit teaching of wellbeing and social-emotional learning across the curriculum. Through SPHE, the GMGY (Goodness Me, Goodness You) Programme, the RELATE Framework and the Weaving Wellbeing Programme, children are supported to develop emotional literacy, self-awareness, empathy, resilience and positive coping strategies. These programmes help children to recognise feelings, understand stress responses, build healthy relationships and practise skills for managing challenges in developmentally appropriate ways. Learning from these programmes is reinforced consistently throughout daily school life and informs how behaviour is understood and supported.

The school places strong emphasis on the explicit teaching of regulation strategies, recognising that self-regulation is a learned skill that develops gradually over time and requires modelling, practice and repetition. Children are taught a range of practical techniques to support calm, focus and emotional balance, including breathing strategies such as box breathing and mindful breathing; body-based practices such as body scans, yoga, stretching and movement; grounding and soothing strategies such as butterfly hugs, finger holding, EFT (tapping), humming, meditation, mindfulness and self-compassion practices. These strategies are taught proactively, practised regularly and revisited as needed, enabling children to recognise their own states of regulation and to choose strategies that help them return to balance.

A wide range of sensory and regulatory supports is available to children, where appropriate, including fidgets, beeswax, blu-tack or therapy putty, chewable or biting objects, scent boxes, weighted blankets, wobble cushions and ear defenders. Seating arrangements and seating positions are considered carefully and adjusted to support comfort, regulation and engagement. Each classroom includes a calm or regulation care corner, providing a safe and supportive space where children can pause, regulate and return to learning when ready. In addition, access to a nurture room and outdoor shelter is available for children who may require more targeted emotional or sensory support. These spaces are used as supportive interventions and are always supervised and purposeful.

Teachers are attentive to identifying and responding proactively to stressors that may impact behaviour, including bodily or sensory stress, emotional distress, academic challenge and physical fatigue. Consistent daily rhythms, predictable routines and supported transitions are used to create a sense of safety and reduce anxiety, particularly for children who find change challenging. Strategies such as the “wait for 8” approach, which reduces language and demands, are used to allow children sufficient

processing time before responding or transitioning, reducing pressure and supporting successful engagement.

Staff recognise the importance of co-regulation, whereby calm, attuned adults support children to regulate through presence, tone of voice, body language, pacing and proximity before expecting independent self-regulation. Central to all preventative practice is the principle of connection before correction. Adults seek first to connect with the child, understand their experience and support regulation, before guiding behaviour or addressing expectations. Language used with children is respectful and strength-based, with a clear distinction made between the child and the behaviour, ensuring that dignity, identity and self-worth are always protected.

Visual supports and predictable structures are used consistently throughout the school to support understanding, regulation and participation. Visual timetables, schedules, cues and reminders are used to help children anticipate what is coming next, reducing uncertainty and anxiety and supporting independence and smoother transitions throughout the day. Clear visual aids support children in understanding routines, expectations and changes, particularly for children who benefit from additional structure or processing time. Predictable daily rhythms and consistent routines help children to feel safe and grounded, enabling them to engage more fully in learning and social interaction. Where changes to routine needs to happen, children are prepared in advance using visual, verbal and relational supports to ensure that transitions are experienced as manageable and supportive rather than confusing or overwhelming.

Time outdoors, movement and connection with nature are recognised as powerful regulatory supports and are used proactively to support emotional balance and wellbeing. Where appropriate, other structured preventative supports may also be introduced, such as brief, consistent moments of positive connection (for example, two minutes of focused connection over ten consecutive days), to strengthen relationships, build trust and support emotional safety.

Staff reflect regularly on behavioural patterns, stressors and supports, adapting approaches where needed and seeking collaboration or guidance to ensure children are supported effectively. Through these comprehensive preventative strategies, the school aims to reduce behavioural difficulties, support wellbeing and create a nurturing environment in which all children can learn, grow and participate meaningfully in the life of the school community.

Stages of Dealing with Behavioural Challenges

Where behaviour occurs despite preventative and proactive supports

Responses are regulation-first, relational, flexible and educational, recognising that children may move between stages, that stages may overlap, and that not all stages are required or followed in order in every situation.

Stage 1: Regulation and Emotional Safety

When behaviour that challenges arise, the priority is regulation and emotional safety. These supports are typically offered within the learning space and in the moment, where possible.

Children are supported to regain calm and balance through access to regulation strategies that suit their individual needs. This may include non-verbal supports such as visual tools e.g. emotion scales, blob tree, feelings cards, quiet presence, breathing, movement, or time and space. These approaches allow children to communicate without words when language is not yet accessible.

Verbal prompts are kept brief, calm and supportive, focusing on safety and guidance. When appropriate and once the child is regulated, the teacher may gently explore possible stressors or unmet needs through a short conversation.

Examples:

- Offering a visual to indicate feelings rather than requiring verbal explanation
- A calm reminder of shared agreements
- Sitting quietly beside a child until they feel settled

Stage 2: Restoration & Reconnection

Once regulation is restored, teachers use restorative and relational approaches to support understanding and repair.

Through restorative conversations, small circles or supported dialogue, children are helped to reflect on what happened, who was affected, and how relationships or the environment can be restored. The focus is on empathy, accountability and reconnection.

Where appropriate, natural and meaningful responses are used. Natural responses are never used when a child is dysregulated and are introduced only when the child feels calm, safe and supported. These responses are:

- Directly linked to the behaviour
- Restorative in nature
- Proportionate and age-appropriate
- Supported and modelled by an adult

Examples of Natural Responses with the support and modelling of an adult:

- ❖ Spill or mess → clean it up.

- ❖ Damage to something → help fix it or replace it.
- ❖ Unkind words or actions → offer a gesture of care e.g., make a card, picture, or friendship bracelet; sit beside the child until they feel regulated
- ❖ Disruption of class rhythm → help re-set the space e.g. tidy desks, arrange chairs, prepare materials.
- ❖ Careless use of materials → clean brushes, sharpen pencils, or prepare fresh supplies for others.
- ❖ Taking without asking → return the item and offer a gesture of giving e.g., help hand out resources.
- ❖ Exclusion of another child → participate in a shared, cooperative task e.g. gardening, craft, simple game.
- ❖ Speaking hurtfully → practice speaking words of kindness e.g. compliment, apology, positive sharing in circle time.
- ❖ Disrupting group work → take on a role that supports the group e.g. carrying resources, organising, assisting a peer.
- ❖ Careless movement indoors → practice mindful movement e.g. carrying something carefully, walking calmly, helping with something.
- ❖ Damaging nature outdoors → nurture the garden e.g. watering, planting, mulching, weeding.
- ❖ Contribution to school life e.g. where needed → sweeping, spreading woodchip, weeding, or cleaning a shared area.

Stage 3: Supported Regulation Spaces

Some children may require additional time, space or adult support to regain regulation. This stage is used where environmental change, time or increased support is needed beyond in-the-moment strategies.

Supports at this stage may include:

- Access to a calm or care corner within the classroom
- A movement or sensory break with a trusted adult
- Temporary support in another classroom or nurturing space
- Access to the SET area, sensory nurture room, outdoor shelter or sandpit

Throughout this stage, the rhythm of the day is maintained as consistently as possible, supporting predictability, safety and reintegration into learning and play.

As part of supporting regulation and safety, a child may be supported to take a brief pause from play. This may involve standing or sitting quietly in a designated space, within sight of a supervising adult, for a short and defined period of time, typically one to three minutes. This pause is intended to support the child to calm their body, regain emotional balance and prepare to re-engage safely and positively.

All supports at this stage are supervised, proportionate and explained to the child in a calm and respectful manner. Children are supported to return to play or learning as soon as they are regulated and ready to re-engage.

Stage 4: Flexible Supports

Where behaviour continues to impact learning or safety, flexible supports and adjustments may be introduced to reduce barriers and support the child's engagement. This may include adapting expectations, providing additional scaffolding, or temporarily adjusting access to certain activities to support regulation, reflection or safety.

Examples of flexible supports and adjustments may include:

- Reducing task length or complexity, or breaking work into smaller, manageable steps
- Providing additional adult support, modelling or visual prompts
- Offering alternative ways to participate in an activity e.g. observing before joining, working alongside an adult, or choosing a different role
- Adjusting transitions, pace or timing within the day to support regulation
- Temporarily stepping back from a particular activity or space if it is overwhelming, with support to rejoin when ready

All adjustments are made respectfully and proportionately, are reviewed regularly. Access to activities is restored as soon as the child is ready to re-engage, with the aim of strengthening readiness to learn and maintaining connection to the class community.

Stage 5: Reflection, Story & Skills

Once the child is calm, regulated and receptive, opportunities for reflection, learning and skill-building are offered. These supports are matched to the child's developmental stage, communication style and current capacity, recognising that children reflect and express understanding in different ways.

This may include:

- A reflection sheet, journal entry, drawing or visual response
- Supported discussion with a teacher or trusted adult, exploring impact, feelings and alternative choices
- Social Stories or visual narratives, co-created or selected to help the child understand social expectations, emotions, perspective-taking and possible responses
- Pedagogical stories created by the teacher to gently mirror themes of behaviour, relationship, courage, repair and growth
- Role-play, modelling or guided practice of social or regulation skills
- Visual prompts, symbols or sentence starters to support communication and reflection

Stories, rhythm, imagination and curriculum content, including fairytales, legends, myths, SPHE, GMGY and wellbeing lessons, are used intentionally to support emotional development, moral imagination and social understanding. These approaches allow children to engage with learning about behaviour in ways that feel safe, meaningful and

developmentally appropriate, supporting lasting growth over time rather than immediate compliance.

Stage 6a: Partnership with Parents and Carers

Where behaviour concerns persist, parents or carers are informed and invited into a collaborative, supportive partnership.

Meetings may involve the child, teacher, special education teacher and a senior staff member, with the focus on shared understanding, consistency between home and school, and identifying supports that will help the child succeed.

Parents are supported to share insights into the child's strengths, needs and experiences.

Stage 6b: Child Study and Behaviour Support Planning

If ongoing support is required, staff may engage in a Child Study process to better understand patterns, triggers and strengths.

This may include:

- Behaviour observation and reflection
- Collaboration with the SET team
- Development of a care or behaviour support plan
- Clear, achievable goals and strategies
- Regular review and monitoring

Plans honour the child's developmental stage, temperament and needs, and are adjusted as progress is made.

Stage 7: Formal Support Measures (Exceptional Circumstances)

Formal support measures are considered only where behaviours are persistent, serious or pose a risk to safety, and where all reasonable supportive and restorative measures have been explored.

These may include:

- Written warnings
- Fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion (in exceptional circumstances only)

Any formal measure is implemented in line with Department of Education and GRETB procedures, with care taken to preserve dignity, fairness and the child's right to education.

Across all stages, the emphasis remains on understanding need, reducing barriers, supporting regulation and strengthening relationships so that children can learn and grow within a safe and inclusive school community.

Stages of Behaviour and Teacher Responses

In Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, behaviour is supported through a graduated, supportive and developmentally appropriate approach. The school recognises that most children respond positively to clear expectations, warm relationships and consistent routines, while some children may require additional or more specialised support at times. For this reason, responses to behaviour are organised into three stages, or levels, with the aim of intervening early, supporting learning and maintaining the dignity and wellbeing of all children. The regulation-first stages outlined above may be used within Stage 1, Stage 2 or Stage 3, depending on the child's needs, the nature of the behaviour and the context in which it occurs.

Stage 1: Universal Support for All Children

Stage 1 applies to the majority of children and to everyday, minor behavioural difficulties that may arise from time to time. At this stage, the class teacher responds within the classroom using proactive and preventative approaches, such as clear routines, visual supports, calm redirection, modelling expected behaviour and positive reinforcement. When a child does not meet the expected standard, the teacher addresses this through a quiet, respectful conversation, helping the child to understand the expectation, reflect on their behaviour and practise a more appropriate response. Environmental adjustments, short movement breaks or temporary changes within the classroom may be used where helpful. The focus at Stage 1 is on guidance, regulation and learning, and teachers reflect on context and practice to ensure the child is being supported appropriately.

Stage 2: Additional Support for Some Children

Stage 2 is used when behaviours are more serious in nature or when Stage 1 strategies have not been sufficient and difficulties are becoming persistent. At this stage, the teacher works more intentionally with the child and may involve parents and support teachers. Responses may include structured restorative conversations, reflective activities, targeted behaviour goals and the development of a Behaviour Support or Behaviour Management Plan. Behaviour is sensitively documented, communication with parents is strengthened and strategies are reviewed regularly. The emphasis at Stage 2 is on understanding underlying needs, providing consistent support and helping the child to develop the skills required to manage behaviour more successfully.

Stage 3: Specialised and Intensive Support

Stage 3 is reserved for serious or ongoing behaviours that significantly impact safety,

wellbeing or learning, or where previous supports have not brought about sufficient change. At this stage, the principal becomes directly involved, and parents are invited to meet with the school. A coordinated and individualised approach is taken, which may include external professional advice and a formal review of supports. In exceptional circumstances, and in line with legal requirements and fair procedures, sanctions such as suspension may be considered. Any such measures are used only, when necessary, are proportionate and are accompanied by a clear plan to support the child's return and reintegration. The focus at Stage 3 remains on safety, learning, restoration and supporting positive change.

Restorative Practice

In Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, restorative practice and restorative justice are used as proactive, relational approaches to supporting positive behaviour and resolving conflict across the whole school community.

Restorative practice is embedded in daily interactions and is used by teachers, children, parents, school leadership and the wider school community to build trust, strengthen relationships and address difficulties in a fair and respectful way.

Teachers use restorative approaches to guide behaviour, support reflection and repair harm following incidents, and to model respectful communication. Children are supported, in age-appropriate ways, to reflect on their actions, understand the impact of their behaviour on others and take responsibility for making things right. Parents are engaged in restorative processes when appropriate, particularly where behaviour has had a significant or repeated impact, so that school and home can work in partnership to support the child. School leadership uses restorative practice to support staff, address concerns and ensure that responses to behaviour are consistent, transparent and centred on learning and wellbeing.

Central to this approach are the six restorative questions:

- 1. What happened?*
- 2. What were you thinking at the time?*
- 3. What have you thought about since?*
- 4. Who has been affected and in what way?*
- 5. How could things have been done differently?*
- 6. What do you think needs to happen now?*

These questions are used once all parties are calm and regulated, helping to promote understanding, accountability and learning rather than blame.

Restorative conversations are used for everyday incidents and minor conflicts, restorative circles are used with classes or groups to build community, address shared concerns or repair collective harm, and restorative conferences are used in more serious or ongoing situations where deeper dialogue, shared agreements and coordinated support are required.

Through this approach, restorative practice supports a school culture where conflict is seen as an opportunity for learning, relationships are prioritised and dignity and respect are upheld for all members of the school community.

Anti-Bullying and Bí Cineálta

Bullying behaviour is taken seriously and is addressed through the school's Anti-Bullying. In Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS, we emphasise a culture of kindness, inclusion, dignity and belonging, with proactive teaching of empathy, friendship skills and respectful relationships through SPHE and wellbeing programmes. Concerns about bullying are responded to promptly, sensitively and in line with required procedures, with restorative practice used where appropriate to support understanding, repair and change, while ensuring that children's safety and wellbeing remain paramount.

Balancing Needs and the Use of Supportive Consequences

When a child's behaviour impacts on the learning, safety or wellbeing of others, the school carefully balances the needs of the individual child with the needs of the wider school community. Behaviour is understood as communication and responses are designed to reduce barriers, support regulation and promote learning. Teachers and school leadership apply professional judgement in each situation, drawing on factual and objective information about the behaviour, its context and its impact.

Fairness is understood as equity rather than sameness, recognising that children differ in their developmental stages, regulation needs and capacities, and therefore may require different levels or types of support to thrive. Equity recognises that children may require varying degrees of guidance, support or accommodation. Supporting children to understand fairness and difference helps to foster empathy, inclusion and respect for diversity within the school community.

Supportive consequences are used as part of a planned, educational and relational approach to support learning, accountability and positive behaviour change, rather than as punishment. Consequences are considered only once a child is calm and regulated and are designed to help children understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility and learn alternative, more appropriate behaviours. Any consequence used aims to de-escalate situations, support reflection, preserve the dignity of all involved, and be timely, meaningful and proportionate.

The school ensures that expectations and supportive consequences are clearly communicated to children and parents. Children are supported to understand when a

behaviour has not met agreed standards and how the response relates directly to that behaviour. Consequences are proportionate to the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour, taking account of factors such as frequency, persistence, developmental stage and individual circumstances.

Consequences are adapted where necessary for children who are vulnerable or who have special educational or additional needs. Reasonable accommodations are made, and responses are always sensitive to the child's age, developmental level, cultural background and individual profile. For some children, repeated consequences may indicate that the current supports or learning environment require further adjustment, rather than an escalation of consequences.

The school is committed to ensuring that supportive consequences are applied consistently in principle, while remaining responsive to individual needs. Staff are supported in this through shared understanding, professional dialogue and clear procedures. Certain practices are considered inappropriate and are never used, including physical punishment, humiliation, ridicule, collective punishment, unsupervised isolation, discriminatory sanctions, or any practice that undermines dignity or access to learning, except where temporary restrictions are required for immediate health and safety reasons and form part of an agreed support plan.

Through this balanced and thoughtful approach, the school seeks to uphold high standards of behaviour while protecting relationships, inclusion and the wellbeing of every child within the school community.

Examples of Behaviours and Supportive Consequences

The examples below illustrate how behaviour may be responded to in a fair, proportionate and educational way. Professional judgement is always used, taking account of context, frequency, developmental stage and individual needs or underlying reasons.

Level 1: Minor / Occasional Behaviours

Addressed by the class teacher through guidance and supports

Examples of behaviours:

- Talking out of turn or calling out (excluding behaviours arising from differences in impulse regulation, attention or neurological conditions such as Tourette's syndrome)
- Difficulty staying on task or remaining seated
- Forgetting classroom routines
- Minor disputes with peers
- Running indoors or unsafe play due to excitement

Examples of supportive responses:

- Gentle reminder of expectations using calm language
- Non-verbal cues or redirection
- Use of visual supports
- Quiet restorative conversation with the child
- Opportunity to pause, regulate and rejoin the activity
- Temporary adjustment within the classroom environment
- Teacher-supported reflection (age-appropriate)
- Positive reinforcement when behaviour improves

Purpose:

To guide, teach and support self-regulation while maintaining connection and dignity.

Level 2: Repeated or More Serious Behaviours

Requires additional support and collaboration

Examples of behaviours:

- Persistent Level 1 behaviours that disrupt learning despite guidance and support
- Refusal to follow instructions
- Hurtful language or unkind behaviour towards others
- Physical behaviour such as pushing or hitting
- Damage to property
- Ongoing playground conflict

Examples of supportive responses and consequences:

- Structured restorative conversations using reflective questions
- Completion of a reflection or “think sheet” with adult support
- Temporary removal from an activity to regulate and reflect
- Repairing harm (e.g. genuine apology, restoring damaged property)
- Parent/guardian informed and involved
- Behaviour targets agreed with the child
- Introduction of additional supports or a Behaviour Support Plan

Purpose:

To support accountability, repair relationships and teach alternative ways of responding, while continuing to prioritise regulation and skill-building.

Level 3: Serious or Persistent Behaviours

Requires leadership involvement and coordinated planning

Examples of behaviours:

- Persistent Level 2 behaviours despite supports
- Serious physical aggression
- Bullying or discriminatory behaviour

- Leaving supervised areas without permission
- Behaviour that poses a significant safety risk

Supportive responses and consequences:

- Immediate steps to ensure safety and support regulation
- Principal involvement and parent meeting
- Formal restorative conference where appropriate
- Review or introduction of an individual Behaviour Support Plan
- External professional advice sought where needed
- Time-limited suspension considered only where necessary, in line with legal procedures, as a protective measure to ensure safety and support learning for all
- Clear reintegration plan to support a positive return

Purpose:

To protect safety, support learning and restore trust, while maintaining fair procedures and dignity.

Important Notes on Supportive Consequences

- ❖ Consequences are never used as punishment, but as part of a planned approach to support learning and behaviour change.
- ❖ Consequences are developmentally appropriate, proportionate and sensitive to individual needs.
- ❖ Children with special educational or additional needs may require adapted responses and reasonable accommodations.
- ❖ Practices such as humiliation, isolation, collective punishment or physical punishment are never used.
- ❖ All responses aim to preserve dignity, strengthen relationships and support growth over time.

Physical Intervention, Safety and Restrictive Practices

The school is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children and staff. Physical punishment is never used. In rare situations where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or others, staff may need to intervene to ensure safety. Any such intervention is used only as a last resort, is proportionate to the risk, and is applied for the shortest time necessary to prevent harm. Following any serious incident involving safety concerns, the school records what occurred and communicates appropriately with parents/guardians, with a focus on learning, support and prevention. This approach is consistent with the school's duty of care and the emphasis in national guidance on safe, fair and planned responses to serious behaviour.

Procedural Fairness and Fair Procedures

In implementing this Code of Behaviour, the school is committed to fair procedures and transparent decision-making, particularly where behaviour is serious, repeated or may lead to formal sanctions. Responses are guided by factual and objective information, professional judgement, and consideration of the context, frequency and impact of behaviour, as well as the child's developmental stage and individual needs. Children are supported to share their perspective in an age-appropriate way, and parents/guardians are given timely information and an opportunity to engage in the process. Decisions about consequences, including suspension and expulsion, are reasonable, proportionate and consistent with this Code, and are documented appropriately. This approach reflects national guidance on codes of behaviour and the statutory duties of schools and Boards of Management.

Suspension & Expulsion

In Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School, suspension is used only in exceptional circumstances where a child's behaviour seriously disrupts the learning, safety or wellbeing of others and where all other appropriate supports and interventions have been considered and applied. Suspension means that a child is temporarily required to absent themselves from the school for a specified, limited period of school days, as outlined in this policy and in accordance with national guidelines. Schools are required to operate within fair procedures and good practice when considering a suspension, ensuring that decisions are reasonable, proportionate and clearly linked to the nature and impact of the behaviour.

The authority to suspend a child is formally delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management. In considering suspension, the Principal will undertake a preliminary investigation, give the child and their parents/guardians an opportunity to present their perspective, and communicate the proposed decision and its rationale in writing. Parents/guardians will be informed by telephone and in writing of the period of suspension, the reasons for it, the dates on which it will begin and end, any expectations regarding study during suspension, and the arrangements for the child's return to school. In line with best practice and procedural fairness, suspension is applied for the shortest necessary period and is used as a supportive measure within a broader plan to address behaviour, repair relationships and enable positive engagement.

Where a child is suspended for a cumulative total of 20 or more school days in a school year, parents/guardians have the right to appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Department of Education. Such an appeal must be made in writing within the timeframe set out in legislation, after which an independent appeals committee may review the case.

Expulsion is regarded as a measure of last resort and is considered only in the most serious circumstances, where a child's behaviour represents a persistent and serious risk to the safety, wellbeing or learning of others, and where all reasonable supports, interventions and alternative strategies have been exhausted. The decision to expel a pupil rests solely with the Board of Management and must be preceded by a thorough investigation, adherence to fair procedures, and careful consideration of the child's rights, needs and circumstances. Parents/guardians and the child are given the opportunity to be heard, and the Board ensures that the decision is reasonable, proportionate and supported by clear evidence. In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision to expel to the Department of Education. The school recognises that expulsion has significant implications for a child and family and is committed to working with parents and relevant agencies to support the child's welfare and continuity of education.

The school is committed to ensuring that any use of suspension or expulsion upholds the child's right to education, dignity and due process, and that such measures are always accompanied by careful planning, clear communication and partnership with parents and relevant professionals.

Reintegration After Time-Out, Removal from Class, or Suspension

Reintegration is a key part of behaviour support and is approached as an opportunity for reconnection, learning and restoration. Where a child has needed time-out, a movement break, temporary relocation to another space, or a period of suspension, the child is supported to return in a calm, respectful and planned manner. The class teacher (and where appropriate, leadership and support staff) checks in with the child, revisits expectations, supports repair where needed, and re-establishes the child's sense of belonging. Where a suspension has occurred, a short reintegration plan may be agreed with parents/guardians and the child, outlining supports, goals and any restorative actions. The school emphasises that children are welcomed back with dignity and care, and that the focus remains on learning, regulation and positive participation.

Children with Special & Additional Needs

Children with special educational needs and additional needs are fully included and valued members of the school community, and the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a flexible, supportive and equitable manner to meet their individual needs. While all children are expected to engage with and work within the Code of Behaviour, the school recognises that some children may require additional support, guidance and time to

understand and meet behavioural expectations. We acknowledge that some children with additional needs may not have a formal diagnosis.

In line with RELATE guidance, behaviour is understood first and foremost as a form of communication, reflecting how a child is coping within their environment at a given time. Behaviour may indicate unmet needs, challenges with emotional regulation, communication difficulties, sensory processing differences, stress or anxiety, rather than deliberate or wilful misbehaviour. RELATE guidance emphasises that children do well when they can, and that behaviour becomes challenging when environmental demands exceed a child's current capacity, skills or developmental stage. For this reason, the school prioritises understanding the function and context of behaviour and reducing barriers to participation before considering the use of consequences.

Behaviour expectations, supports and responses may be adapted through reasonable accommodations, individualised behaviour or support plans, visual supports, sensory regulation strategies and targeted interventions. These supports are developed collaboratively in partnership, as needed, with parents or guardians, the class teacher, support teachers, SNAs and school leadership, and may be informed by professional advice, including psychological or specialist assessments. A child's cognitive, emotional and developmental profile is considered at all times when planning and responding to behaviour.

Consistent with a Steiner-informed approach, particular emphasis is placed on rhythm, relationship, movement, imitation and a calm, nurturing environment as key foundations for regulation, security and wellbeing. Where behaviour does not meet expected standards, responses focus on regulation, guidance and skill-building rather than punitive consequences. Any consequences used are developmentally appropriate, proportionate and always part of a wider, planned approach to support learning, inclusion and emotional growth.

Where appropriate, the wider class or school community may be supported to develop strategies that help a child with additional needs to participate successfully and adhere to shared expectations. This is done in a respectful, supportive and safe manner, fostering empathy, understanding and peer support, while acknowledging and valuing individual differences. The school remains mindful of its obligations under equality and education legislation and is committed to ensuring that all children experience dignity, safety, belonging and meaningful participation in school life.

Reduced School Days

Reduced school days are not used as a sanction for behaviour. In line with Department of Education guidance, reduced school days are considered only in exceptional circumstances where they are limited, appropriate and necessary, and where the best

interests of the child are central. Where a reduced school day is considered as part of a planned support response, it will be time-bound, clearly documented and reviewed regularly with a plan to return to full school attendance as soon as possible. The school will follow required processes, including communication and collaboration with parents/guardians and relevant services, and will notify Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) as required, and the NCSE where a child has special educational needs

Communication

Open, respectful and ongoing communication is central to supporting children's wellbeing and positive behaviour in Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School. We recognise parents as partners in their child's education and value the shared responsibility between home and school in guiding children's behaviour and development. Communication with parents takes place both when behaviour is positive and when challenges arise, ensuring that strengths, progress and efforts are acknowledged, as well as addressing concerns in a timely, supportive and solution-focused manner.

When behaviour is positive, teachers take opportunities to affirm and share children's successes, recognising effort, growth and acts of kindness or responsibility. When behavioural difficulties occur, communication is approached with care, sensitivity and professionalism. Teachers work collaboratively with parents, and where appropriate with the child, to understand the context of the behaviour and to develop consistent, supportive strategies that can be implemented both at home and in school. Parents are encouraged to share relevant information, in confidence, about any significant changes or circumstances in a child's life that may impact their wellbeing or behaviour, as this enables the school to respond with understanding and compassion.

Communication may also involve school leadership, mainstream teachers, SET teachers, SNAs or colleagues, where appropriate, to ensure that responses to behaviour are coordinated, consistent and well supported. In some circumstances, and with parental consent, communication and collaboration with external professionals or agencies may form part of a wider support plan for the child.

Follow-up communication is an important part of this process. Where concerns have been discussed or supports put in place, progress is reviewed and feedback is shared, ensuring clarity, consistency and trust. Clear and agreed channels of communication between staff, pupils, parents and school leadership are maintained and reviewed regularly, with an emphasis on respectful, timely and purposeful dialogue. Through open communication, shared understanding and mutual respect, the school community works together to support each child's growth, regulation and sense of belonging.

Communication Pathways and Resolving Concerns

The school values respectful, solution-focused communication and aims to resolve concerns at the earliest possible stage. Where parents/guardians have concerns related to behaviour, communication is usually best initiated with the class teacher. Where concerns remain, the Principal may be contacted to support clarification and problem-solving. In the event that a concern cannot be resolved through these steps, parents/guardians may follow the school's agreed procedures for raising matters with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Throughout this process, the school emphasises calm, respectful dialogue, confidentiality and partnership, with the child's wellbeing and best interests at the centre.

Digital Devices, Recording and Respect for Privacy

In keeping with the school's child-centred, low-tech and dignity-based ethos, the school promotes respectful use of technology and protects the privacy of children and staff. Parents/guardians and visitors are expected to follow school guidance regarding photography, audio recording and filming at school events, and not to record children (or school interactions) without permission. Children are supported to understand privacy, respect and consent in age-appropriate ways, including that personal information and images are not to be shared without consent. Any concerns regarding online behaviour, cyberbullying, or misuse of devices are addressed in line with school policies and national procedures, including Bí Cineálta where relevant.

Record Keeping

Accurate, respectful and appropriate record-keeping is an important part of supporting positive behaviour and ensuring fair procedures within the school. Teachers maintain relevant records of significant behavioural incidents, supports put in place, restorative conversations, agreed actions and outcomes, particularly where behaviours are ongoing or require additional intervention. Records are factual, objective and proportionate, focusing on behaviours, responses and supports rather than personal judgements.

All behaviour-related records are held in a secure and confidential manner, in line with data protection legislation. Records are accessed only by relevant staff who require the information to support the child appropriately. Record-keeping is never carried out in a way that could undermine a child's dignity or sense of safety. Notes are taken discreetly and sensitively, and never in front of children in a manner that could cause embarrassment, distress or a sense of threat. Where aspects of restorative practice are

recorded, this is done with care and, where appropriate, with the child's understanding and consent, ensuring that the focus remains on learning, repair and growth.

Parents are kept informed where records are being maintained and are encouraged to share relevant information that may assist in understanding and supporting their child's behaviour. The Principal maintains oversight of behaviour-related records, including documentation relating to serious incidents, behaviour support plans, suspensions and communications with parents, and ensures that these records are stored securely and managed appropriately. The Board of Management is informed, as required, of serious behavioural matters and the use of suspension or expulsion, while respecting confidentiality and the privacy of individual children and families.

All records are used to support learning, monitor progress, review practice and ensure consistency and fairness in the application of the Code of Behaviour. At all times, record-keeping practices are guided by respect for the child's dignity, emotional safety and wellbeing.

Attendance, Punctuality and Wellbeing

Regular attendance and punctuality support children's sense of rhythm, belonging and success in school. The school recognises that patterns of lateness or absence can sometimes indicate underlying stress, anxiety or other barriers to participation and may impact behaviour, learning and wellbeing. The school addresses attendance matters in line with its Attendance Policy and works in partnership with parents/guardians to support children's full participation in school life.

Implementation

This Code of Behaviour is implemented through a whole-school, consistent and collaborative approach, supported by shared understanding and ongoing reflection. All staff are familiar with the policy and are responsible for applying it in a fair, respectful and developmentally appropriate manner, in line with the school's ethos and agreed procedures. The Code is introduced and explained to children in age-appropriate ways and is embedded in daily school life through modelling, routines, restorative practices and positive relationships. Parents are informed of the Code and are encouraged to engage with it in partnership with the school, supporting consistent expectations between home and school. School leadership supports implementation through guidance, oversight and professional development, ensuring that behaviour is responded to consistently and that supports are put in place where needed. The Code is applied with professional judgement, flexibility and care, with a focus on prevention, inclusion, wellbeing and learning, while upholding fair procedures and the rights and dignity of all members of the school community.

Consistency is essential to ensuring fairness, clarity and security for children. The school staff supports consistent implementation of this Code through shared expectations, collaborative practice, reflection, and ongoing professional development in restorative and regulation-first approaches. Substitute and student teachers are supported to understand key routines, expectations, safeguarding practices and behaviour support approaches. Staff reflect regularly on behavioural patterns and school-wide needs, reviewing strategies and supports so that practice remains effective, inclusive and aligned with the ethos of the school.

Review

This Code of Behaviour is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains effective, relevant and reflective of best practice, legislative requirements and the evolving needs of the school community. The review process involves consultation with staff, parents, student council and the Board of Management, and takes account of feedback, lived experience, recorded incidents and emerging guidance from the Department of Education and relevant agencies. Amendments to the Code may be made in response to changes in legislation, national guidelines or the school context. The Board of Management has responsibility for ratifying any revisions, and the updated policy is communicated clearly to all members of the school community. Through ongoing review and reflection, the school seeks to ensure that the Code continues to support wellbeing, inclusion, fairness and positive relationships for all.

Ratification

This Code of Behaviour was formally ratified by the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School – a Steiner education on 9th February 2026.

The Board confirms that the policy has been developed in line with national legislation, Department of Education guidelines and the ethos of the school and affirms its commitment to its implementation and review.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management

Helen Sherry.

Principal