



# Code of Behaviour

## 01. Introductory statement

Powerscourt N.S. is a Church of Ireland School under the patronage of Archbishop Michael Jackson. The school reflects the ethos and tradition of the Church of Ireland. Section 4 of the Deed of Variation states that the Trustees of the School “are charged with the responsibility of upholding the doctrines, moral teachings, traditions, practices and customs of the Church of Ireland as defined by the General Synod. The onus on the Trustees is to take all reasonable steps to ensure that any Board of Management shall manage and cause the school to be managed in a manner which will uphold and foster the Ethos”. We aim to provide a happy, caring and safe environment of learning that has high standards and promotes Christian values. The duty is laid upon the Board of Management to uphold and be accountable to the Patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school (Education Act Section 15 (2) (b)) This ethos underpins our Code of Behaviour.

This policy was reviewed in 2024.

## 02. Rationale

Firstly, behaviour was an area of concern identified by the school community, over the past few years, relating to issues of consistency and fairness. The management of challenging behaviour, albeit concerning a very small number of children, had also been raised. Furthermore, we at Powerscourt N.S. felt that in light of this new, challenging behaviour, it was necessary to review the policies and procedures relating to bullying.

Secondly, this review was carried out to ensure compliance with the school's obligations under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, specifically in relation to suspension and expulsion and the procedures to be followed around a child's absence from school.

Thirdly, this review was carried out to ensure our existing policy complies with the legal requirements and the good practice standards as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, (2008). This document can be accessed at:

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

## 03. Relationship to the characteristic spirit/ethos of the school

The staff and community in Powerscourt N.S. believe in creating a safe and caring learning environment where children are valued, respected, nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential. We believe the code of behaviour impacts on the climate and atmosphere we wish to create and that it is vital to the overall success of our school.

The Code of Behaviour here in Powerscourt N.S. is based on the principle of equal respect for both children and their families and for the staff of the school, both teaching and non-teaching. We

assume that children are of their nature good, kind and thoughtful; that each child is naturally disposed towards sociable and co-operative behaviour and finally that each child does their best, within the circumstances of their situation. The Code of Behaviour will be based on these assumptions.

The purpose of this policy is to promote positive behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way, in line with our ethos. Children will be made aware of the Code of Behaviour every month at a level appropriate to their age and development. Children will have monthly input into the Code through their involvement in its informal review in their House Team meetings.

#### **04. Aims of the Code of Behaviour in Powerscourt N.S.**

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by Christian values.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way, so that the children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline.
- To promote an atmosphere that recognises the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To foster the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To assist parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

#### **05. A whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour**

Powerscourt N.S. is committed to a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour. A whole-school approach requires the school to provide opportunities and support for each group within the school (the Board, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the staff and the children) to take responsibility, at the appropriate level, for behaviour within the school. Teamwork, collaboration, inclusion and involvement are the hallmarks of such an approach. The school development planning process and the opportunity it provides for all partners in the school to work together on policy formation exemplifies this approach.

All members of the school community are provided with a copy of the written document upon enrolment/employment here in Powerscourt N.S. It is the responsibility of the school, led by the principal, and the deputy principal, to ensure that the students are taught the behavioural and learning skills they need to respond appropriately to the Code of Behaviour. The principal leads the staff in ensuring that there are additional communication mechanisms in place, so that parent(s)/guardian(s) are supported in understanding the norms and values underpinning the code. These may include class meetings, parent/teacher meetings, helping staff to build positive relationships with parent(s)/guardian(s), communicating clearly and in an ongoing manner with the

parent(s)/guardian(s) of the children in the school, and working in partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s) when there are difficulties. The Special Education Teacher has a responsibility to work with children with special educational needs, and their parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers, to reinforce the messages being taught in the classroom about appropriate behaviour. The mentoring of new staff members is a further responsibility of the principal and the deputy principal.

**The role of the Board includes:**

- Annual review of the Code of Behaviour.
- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Code of Behaviour; at the first BOM meeting in each term.
- Provision of support to the principal and the staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- Provision of support to the Parent Teacher Team to deliver parent programmes that are supportive of the work of the school generally and the Code of Behaviour in particular.

**The role of the staff includes:**

- The promotion of positive behaviour through effective teaching, an inclusive and engaging curriculum and well-managed classrooms.
- The use of a variety of classroom management techniques and curricular methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation and maximise positive behaviour.
- Ensuring pupils are aware of and understand the Code of Behaviour and how it may influence their behaviour.
- A commitment to fully implementing the Code of Behaviour, and to applying the range of sanctions and rewards appropriately.
- Communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) about children's behaviour generally, both at Parent-Teacher Meetings and on an individual level, especially where IBSPs are appropriate.
- Engaging with in-school reviews of behaviour (e.g. at monthly staff meetings) to ensure consistency amongst staff members in how we respond to challenging behaviour.
- Participating in the regular review of the Code of Behaviour initiated by the Board of Management.

**The role of the parent(s)/guardian(s) includes:**

- Familiarising themselves with the Code of Behaviour, which will be available to them both when they enrol their child and on the school website.
- Encouraging their children to meet the expected standards of behaviour.
- Communicating with teachers about issues that affect their children's behaviour.
- Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work and their behaviour.
- Ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Attending meetings at the school if requested.
- Supporting their children with their homework and ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensuring that their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

- Cooperating with the rules and standards which apply to them (dropping off rule, clothing rule, etc).

#### The role of pupils includes:

- Behaving well and encouraging others to behave well.
- Informing staff of inappropriate, dangerous or bullying behaviour.
- Meeting classroom and playground expectations.
- **As part of the whole school approach to behaviour, the following courtesies are expected from all members of the school community:**
- Greeting others with a smile and saying 'please', 'thank you' and 'you're welcome'; 'go raibh maith agat', 'más é do thoil é' agus 'tá fáilte romhat'; and 'dia duit'/'good morning' and 'slán'/'goodbye' in the afternoon.
- Allowing others to go ahead of you through a door.
- Holding a door open for others, in particular; visitors, parent(s)/guardian(s), someone carrying something or someone (for example, a baby or a large parcel), or for someone younger or smaller than you.
- Saying 'thank you' to the person holding the door open.
- Giving people your attention when they are speaking to you.
- If you need to get someone's attention, say 'excuse me please' or 'gabh mo leithscéal' and then step back and wait until the person is ready. That is unless it is urgent, (for example you urgently need to use the bathroom or someone is injured) – in which case you say 'excuse me please, it's urgent'.
- Being patient if you are waiting at the secretary's office (for example if she is on the phone or the hatch is closed over).
- Complying with requests without discussion or questions as to why. If someone feels they have been treated unfairly or needs to discuss the request, they should comply first and then ask to talk about it later. Pupils could discuss the issue with their parent(s)/guardian(s)/teacher and get their advice.

#### 06. Guidelines for behaviour in Powerscourt N.S.

The general standards of behaviour which the school expects from the pupils are guided by Christian values.

These standards, which are regularly communicated to the children in the school, include:

- Respect, courtesy and co-operation to be shown towards other children, teachers, support staff and parent(s)/guardian(s), in the classroom, the playground and on school outings, at all times.
- Respect to be shown by the children towards their own and other children's property, school property and environment.

- Respect to be shown for other people's space i.e. no verbal or physical violence or aggression, or any form of bullying behaviour (See Anti-Bullying policy).
- Respect for each child's own feelings, i.e. it's okay to feel sad, quiet, etc.
- Respect to be shown for other people's feelings.
- Children are expected to behave in an orderly fashion in the classroom, moving around the school and going to and from the playground and on school trips.
- Children are expected to bring to school each day: all books, copies and materials necessary to do their class work properly - this includes appropriate clothing and footwear e.g. coats when it's cold, suitable footwear for P.E. / G.A.A. etc.
- Children are expected to complete assigned work (written and oral) both at school and at home.
- Children are expected to listen to others and to take turns to speak in class.
- Children must not behave in any way which endangers themselves or others.
- Children are expected to be mindful of children younger than them.
- Children are expected to include others in games.
- Children must remain within the designated playground boundaries during break times.
- Children are expected to show understanding towards children for whom some of these guidelines may be challenging e.g. children with special educational needs and/or behavioural difficulties.

## **07. Our rules for behaving well**

We have agreed the following rules to help organise life in school so that it makes it easier for everyone to behave well:

### **Our school rules**

#### **The drop off rule:**

- School opens at 08:30 each day. No responsibility can be taken for children left before the school opens. All children should have had time to settle in and get organized for the day in time for the beginning of formal lessons at 08:50.

#### **The collection rule:**

- All children are dismissed from their classrooms each day. Junior and Senior Infants are dismissed at 13:15. First to Sixth Classes are dismissed at 14:10.

#### **The walking rule:**

- The inside of the school is a walking zone at all times. At drop off and collection times, everyone is asked to WALK too – NO running and no scooting. Toddlers waiting with parent(s)/guardian(s) or minders should not be allowed to run around as the school is very busy and congested at school closing time.

#### **The clothing for school rule:**

- Children are expected to be dressed appropriately at all times in school i.e. wear comfortable clothes and footwear that is suitable for P.E. all the time, as every day involves some movement and physical activity. Long hair should be tied back. Clothes should also be suitable for arts activities. All removable clothing and footwear should be labelled.

#### The never leave the school rule:

- Children should never leave the school without permission from the teaching staff.

#### The language rule:

- **Offensive language** or **derogatory language** should never be used.
  - **Offensive language** = curses, swear words and discriminatory language. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 ('the Acts') prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. They cover the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.
  - **Derogatory language** = language that is critical or disrespectful of others.

#### The wheels rule:

- Bicycles, scooters and skateboards should be parked each morning before school. 'Parking' is available at the bike rack outside the office.

#### The expensive toys rule:

- All electronic toys should be left at home as they can get lost or damaged, as well as creating difficulties at playtime.

#### The mobile phone rule:

- We prefer that children do not bring mobile phones to school. If they need to have a mobile with them, it should be switched off and put in their bag before they come into the school and not taken out until they leave the school premises. Children who do not comply will get one warning and then have phones confiscated. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may collect confiscated phones from the school principal.

#### The road safety rule:

- Walk on the footpaths, never on tarmac.
- Children must have written permission (on Aladdin) to walk across the road to the church carpark independently at home time.

#### Our classroom rules:

#### Procedures:

- Class rules / expectations are set in each class, by the teacher and the class, which are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- These include clear procedures for:
  - leaving your seat

- going to the bathroom
  - getting the teacher's attention
  - keeping the room tidy and safe for everyone
  - changing tasks
  - lining up and
  - generally looking out for each other.
- Teachers will endeavour to ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
  - A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour will operate in each classroom.

A set of classroom rules / expectations drawn up by a class with their teacher might look like this:

**Our classroom expectations:** so that classrooms are safe, happy places where everyone can learn.

**Learning Expectations:**

1. Actively listen.
2. Put up your hand if you'd like to speak.
3. Listen at your place during explanations.
4. Respond straight away.
5. Ask questions.

**Kindness Expectations:**

6. Speak positively.
7. Encourage others and set a positive example.
8. Help.
9. Use good manners.
10. Be kind.

**Safety Expectations:**

11. Stay calm.
12. Be safe in the classroom.

**Playground Rules:** so that playtime is safe and fun for everyone:

1. Include everyone and care for others.
2. Do what you are asked by all members of staff.
3. Play gently and safely.
4. Use the Restorative Questions to solve problems.
5. Line up safely and on time at the end of playtime.

**08. Our Approach to Managing behaviour:**

**Introduction:**

The school's SPHE Whole-School Plan is used to support the Code of Behaviour throughout the school. It aims to help the children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship (See the SPHE WSP). The emphasis in line with our ethos is on rewarding good behaviour, rather than on imposing sanctions i.e. 'catching them being good'.

### **Communication with parent(s)/guardian(s) about behaviour:**

Clear, honest, positive communication between parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers is essential for optimal pupil progress. To that end, teachers are committed to contacting parent(s)/guardian(s) with any concerns regarding a child's behaviour.

Equally, we would encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to talk to staff about their concerns, no matter how small.

Please contact the teacher via email to arrange a time that suits them so that both parties can sit down and discuss issues confidentially and in comfort. Appointments can be arranged with the secretary. If it is difficult for you to get to the school, phone contact may be arranged.

Individual parent/teacher meetings take place during November each year and behaviour may be discussed at that meeting.

### **Children with special educational needs and the Code of Behaviour (see also special educational needs plan)**

The enrolment policy of Powerscourt N.S. provides for equality of access and participation in the school, whatever a child's social, religious, cultural and racial backgrounds and whether or not they have a disability or special education need. While some children come to school with additional supports ready and in-place, for others, their needs become more evident as they get older.

Here in Powerscourt N.S., there are children with Special Educational Needs. Additional staffing and resources have been provided to help support these children and to ensure their successful inclusion in Powerscourt N.S.

Challenging behaviour can be related to special needs. Often, while the challenging behaviour is very obvious, the attendant special educational needs may not be. It may be perceived that somehow, the child is 'getting away with things' or being treated more favourably (for example, being allowed movement breaks). Every effort is made to deal with all the children through the regular Code of Behaviour. However, sometimes additional measures and a more individualised approach needs to be put in place to support children and to keep them and their peers safe and able to access the curriculum in school.

Part of the successful implementation of this policy will be in building a greater understanding among our school community of special educational needs, including challenging behaviour and its causes, which will in turn lead to more successful inclusion.

*'Fairness isn't about giving everybody the same; it's about giving everybody what they need.'*

### **Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour:**

The emphasis in Powerscourt N.S. is on 'catching children being good' and on the ongoing rewarding of good behaviour. Rewards work best when: they are meaningful to the child, the child understands why they are being rewarded, when they are given not just for achievement, but for effort too and when they are consistent and inclusive of all children. The following range of rewards and strategies may be used in Powerscourt N.S.:

- Praise and encouragement.



- Notes home.
- Golden time – sand time, games, free choice, extra playtime, video time, etc.
- Being sent to the principal for specific praise.
- Pick a prize from the box.
- Sticker charts – pupil(s) are rewarded with stickers for positive behaviour. When a sticker chart is completed the pupil(s) receive(s) a reward.
- Stars/stamps
- Quiz time
- Star of the Week
- Homework pass

## House Teams

Each child is part of a House Team. House Teams meet on Fridays after assembly. The aims of House Teams are to buddy up, to reinforce the Code of Behaviour including Restorative Practice. House Teams are also used to group children for special events such as Sports Day.

## Strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviours (from the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)):

- tactical ignoring
- seeing and encouraging desired behaviour
- non-verbal responses
- keeping instructions / directions positive
- reminders about rules; positively worded
- starting a correction with a positive comment
- distraction / refocusing; use of direct questioning and giving deferred or direct choices to pupils.

## Procedures for responding to inappropriate behaviour

- All observations/reports of inappropriate behaviour are investigated and dealt with by the teachers.
- Minor misbehaviour should be dealt with by the class teacher/teacher on yard duty by way of warning and/or advice in the first instance.
- The child/ren involved should be spoken to directly at an early stage as part of early intervention.
- Restorative Practice questions should be used. In many cases, the issue is resolved at this point. Sanctions should be in line with the school Code of Behaviour.
- Should this not resolve the issue, the advice of the principal/deputy is sought. Steps at this stage may include meetings between parent(s)/guardian(s) and the class teacher and/or the principal.
- The principal should not be involved in minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour. However, the principal may offer advice at any time to members of staff dealing with inappropriate behaviour of any sort.
- In general, sanctions should be associated with the misdemeanour.

- If there is not clarity around an incident i.e. where it was not witnessed or accounts vary, the “what, where, when, who and why” of the reported incident should be investigated by the class teacher/teacher on duty in the first instance and a Restorative Practice form filled in.

### **Restorative Practice:**

- The staff on duty will encourage and oversee children using the Restorative Practice Questions to help them resolve issues themselves, especially in the playground. Non-teaching staff, such as special needs assistants (SNAs) and the secretary are encouraged to report any incidents of inappropriate behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant class teacher and/ or the principal.
- Non-teaching staff should act as a prudent adult would act on observing inappropriate behaviour i.e. to tell the child to stop, intervene if someone is being injured or hurt. All incidents should be reported to the teacher on duty/class teacher as soon as possible. Sanctions should be imposed by the teacher on duty/class teacher, in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- The principal should be informed of all observed/reported incidents of major misdemeanours and of persistent minor infringements and consulted on appropriate action.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) should always be informed of and consulted on major misdemeanours and persistent minor infringements.
- A written record should be kept of all major misdemeanours and persistent minor misdemeanours.
- In addition to the sanctions for the offending child, as set out in this document, support may also be offered to the child who is the subject of the incident, and to the class, if appropriate. This might include whole-school / class / small group lessons dealing with respect, self-esteem, bullying, building a better understanding of special educational needs, discussion around how specific incidents are managed, etc.
- The Board of Management will be kept informed of all major misdemeanours and persistent minor misdemeanours.

### **Examples of minor misdemeanours include (A-Z):**

Lack of respect, for example:

- Chewing gum
- Displaying a lack of attention in class or yard
- Distracting others in class or yard
- Homework not done or incomplete
- Interfering in others’ games in the playground
- Leaving seat without permission
- Making inappropriate comments
- Messing / mock fighting / jostling and pushing
- Mobile phones out / switched on
- Not following instructions

- Shouting and loudness in class
- Spitting on the ground
- Talking out of turn
- Throwing things inappropriately
- Unsupervised climbing/running inside the school
- Using inappropriate language

**Sanctions for minor misdemeanours include (A-Z):**

- Communication with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Confiscation of item
- Discussion with pupil and agreement on a more appropriate way to act in future
- Extra work
- Informal word with the principal, who has a quiet word with the child
- Loss of privileges
- Reasoning with the pupil
- Teachers may also use the strategy of planned ignoring (ignoring attention seeking behaviour, that is not a danger to other pupils), followed by discussion.
- Time out
- Verbal and/ or written undertaking to improve
- Verbal and/or written apology
- Verbal warning

**Examples of major misdemeanours may include (A-Z):**

- Abusive/threatening or violent language directed to a person
- Bringing any dangerous objects or illegal substances to school
- Bullying
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Deliberately damaging property
- Endangering self and/or others in the classroom or the playground
- Hitting out in a threatening manner at another person
- Leaving the class, yard, school or activity without permission
- Rudeness
- Sexual harassment of a person by word, action or gesture
- Stealing
- Telling lies
- Using unacceptable language

**Sanctions for major misdemeanours include:**

Discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff, including the principal, together with any or all the following sanctions, as appropriate:

- Removal from class
- Formal communication with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Sent home early (informal suspension) with parent
- Immediate suspension for up to three days

- Use of the Individual Behavioural Support Plan procedure (see below)
- Expulsion
- Report to Gardaí

### **Individual Behaviour Support Plan**

An IBSP may be put in place for the management of ongoing, serious challenging behaviour/aggression from an individual child. The following is an example of the serious behaviours:

- The consistent refusal of a child to obey instructions.
- Includes persistent seriously disruptive behaviour.
- Exhibitions of unpredictable and, possibly, violent or aggressive behaviour.

### **Procedure for putting an Individual Behaviour Support Plan in place:**

A team meeting to prepare an Individual Behaviour Support Plan shall be convened. All those involved with the child may be invited to attend (for example, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, principal, teacher(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), special needs assistant and school psychologist etc). Please see the IBSP template in Appendix 3.

### **The agenda for the meeting shall comprise:**

An assessment of the strengths and needs of the child, to include his/her academic and attainment record; behaviour record; interests; any special educational needs; temperament; priority needs, both short-term and long-term, in terms of learning and behaviour.

An IBSP (Individual Behaviour Support Plan) shall be agreed between school and home and approved by the Board. The plan shall include:

- Strategies for encouraging positive behaviour (praise, encouragement, incentives),
- General strategies for dealing with poor behaviour/lack of engagement with learning.
- Particular set of strategies for specific named behaviours.
- Supports for staff /other children in the class.
- Rewards for good behaviour both at home and at school.
- Sanctions or consequences for poor behaviour both at home and at school.
- Resources available (materials, personnel, equipment) to implement the plan.
- Arrangements for monitoring targets.
- Referral to outside agencies.
- Agreed home-school communication going forward, i.e. parent / teacher contact, behavioural diary
- Agreed timetable for action and date for follow-up meeting.

In these instances, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be told that a safety assessment shall be done on all activities the child is involved with to ensure his/her safety and the safety of others. This shall apply particularly to school tours and other out-of-school activities. This may mean the child may not be allowed to take part in some school activities for his/her safety and that of the others in the class.

Teachers should not leave the school premises, with children involved in an IBSP, without an additional staff member to support the teacher and a mobile phone.

The principal shall give a regular brief report to the Board of Management, in relation to all children involved in an IBSP, by way of ongoing updating on the situation.

Where there is no significant improvement following the implementation and review of the IBSP, the principal may convene a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant members of staff and any outside agencies involved (e.g. HSE, NEPS, SENO ) with a view to considering an alternative educational placement for the child.

## **09. Suspension and Expulsion**

### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as 'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (NEWB guidelines, p.70). Exclusion for part of a school day, as a sanction, or asking parent(s)/guardian(s) to keep a student from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a student has engaged in a major misdemeanour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other students of the student's behaviour to date
- Whether the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The purpose of suspension includes; providing a respite for staff and students, giving the student time to reflect on their actions and the staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change their unacceptable behaviour. Suspension shall be used as part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour.

The procedures in respect of suspension are those outlined in section 11.5 of 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', NEWB, 2008:

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

These are as follows:

- The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension (where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension).
- The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) are given the opportunity to respond.
- If the suspension is warranted, the Principal will issue a letter to parent(s)/guardian(s), notifying them the details of the suspension, which will include arrangements for returning to school.

The Board of Management of Powerscourt N.S. has delegated authority to the Principal to suspend pupils for periods of up to three days. If a suspension for a longer period is being proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to be heard and the right to impartiality. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB guidelines.

**Appeals (outlined in section 11.7 of 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', NEWB, 2008):**

Where the total number of days or which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007. At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and should be given information about how to appeal. If the student is attending a school under the management of a VEC, the appeal must be made in the first instance to the VEC. Where an appeal to the VEC is concluded, parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

**Expulsion (permanent exclusion)**

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5))

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. This authority will be exercised in line with the following procedures, from 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', NEWB, 2008 [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

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

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

**Appeals (outlined in section 12.5 of 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', NEWB, 2008):**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The appeals process under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and

Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

## **10. Keeping Records**

It is important for staff to keep a record of poor behaviour so that they can be confident of their accuracy when discussing the matter with parents/guardians and so that patterns in behaviour can be noted. It is the practice of the school that parents/guardians are informed of persistent minor misdemeanours and major misdemeanours sooner rather than later. Underlying this reporting should be an ongoing positive dialogic relationship between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school that fosters good communication and maintains high levels of parental involvement in the interests of the child. Consistency is achieved through clear adherence to this policy and regular discussion at staff meetings.

The following records are kept:

### **Aladdin:**

- Relevant notes are kept on each child's file on Aladdin.

### **The Yard Book**

The Yard Book is used to record injuries, incidents of misbehaviour and any other issues relevant to playtime. It is also used for mention of major incidents/accidents. The SNA oversees the Yard Book. The SNA brings the Yard Book out at the beginning of each break.

All recorded incidents during playtime should be reported to the relevant class teacher at the end of break. Sanctions should be imposed by the teacher on duty and communicated to the class teacher. Serious incidents should be reported to the principal, or in their absence, the deputy principal.

### **Class records**

Any Restorative Practice forms should be filed in the child's file in the classroom assessment folder.

In addition, the formal parent teacher meetings each year shall include reference to a child's behaviour in school. The end of year report also includes a section on behaviour, both in the classroom and in the yard.

## **11. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

Powerscourt N.S. requires the parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform the school of a child's absence on Aladdin connect.

Powerscourt N.S. complies with the following requirements of the NEWB on reporting student absences:

Schools are required to submit Student Absence Reports twice each year on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students that have been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more falling within the following categories:

- Illness
- Urgent Family Reason
- Holiday

- Suspended
- Other
- Unexplained

Schools should not submit children with less than 20 days absence. Only children over the age of 6 years and children who have not reached the age of 16 years, or have not completed 3 years of post-primary education (whichever occurs later), should be reported.

All students who miss twenty or more days cumulatively (including suspensions) must be included in the school student absence reports. These reports must be submitted twice annually in January and at the end of the school year.

#### **Annual Attendance Report (AAR):**

Each recognised school in the State is obliged to submit a report to the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency, on the levels of attendance at the end of each academic year. Schools are required to provide the following data in the AAR:

- Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school year.
- Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.
- Total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year.
- Total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the school year.

## **12. Reference to other Policies**

The following policies are relevant to the proper implementation of the Code of Behaviour

- SPHE WSP
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Health & Safety Statement

## **13. Success criteria**

Success criteria establish the link between information as to how things should be and information as to how things are. The criteria are used to express the ideal. The criteria allow the school to judge how well it is achieving its stated intention. Success can be measurable through perceptions or by using factual data.

#### **Through the successful implementation of this policy the intended outcomes are:**

- Children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Children are making informed choices about their behaviour through understanding and awareness of their role and responsibilities (as outlined in section 1)
- Children, parents/guardians and teachers understand the need for some deviations from the standards of behaviour for children with SEN and do not complain about unfairness in relation to this.
- Children are responsive to positive correction and show respect for other people.
- Children are including others in their games.
- Children are following playground rules.
- Children are following class rules.



- Children are following school rules.
- School property is respected and there is no intentional damage being caused.
- Children, teachers and parents/guardians are reporting any bullying behaviour (see anti-bullying code).
- Teachers are implementing the range of sanctions and rewards as listed in this policy.
- Children, teachers and parents/guardians have appropriate awareness of the Code of Behaviour, are consulted about it, and reminded of its content on an ongoing basis.
- Children, teachers and parents/guardians are greeting each other, saying thank you and please, allowing others to go ahead of them through the door when appropriate.
- Children are getting someone's attention without being rude or interrupting.
- Children are not querying the requests of the staff, as they understand these requests are based on the principles of this code.
- Bad language or derogatory language is not heard around the school.
- The Board of Management continue to be actively involved in the promotion, implementation and review of the code of behaviour.
- Behavioural plan strategies are being implemented where necessary and all relevant educational stakeholders have been part of this process.
- Where cases of suspension and/or expulsion have occurred the procedures as outlined in this policy have been followed.
- Teachers are keeping factual records of incidents of poor/disruptive behaviour in their classes.
- SNA(s) are using the Yard Book to record incidents of misbehaviour and any other observations of note in relation to the children at playtime.
- Serious incidents or issues are recorded in the pupil files and on the Aladdin system.
- Behaviour is noted in parent / teacher meetings and in end of year pupil reports
- Parents/guardians are informing the school about their child(ren)'s absences.

#### 14. Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Powerscourt N.S. on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024. It is acknowledged that this is a fluid document and will require regular revision to effectively fulfil the aims contained in it. Children, staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management will engage with the Code of Behaviour on an ongoing basis as outlined below;

Children:

- Standards of behaviour, sanctions and rewards as detailed in this policy will be reviewed with each class, in an age-appropriate manner, at the start of each school year.
- Class rules will also be drawn up at this time.
- Class rules will be reviewed after each mid-term and term break with the children.
- In term three, a lesson in SPHE, will be based on the Code of Behaviour and will be used to gather any feedback from the children. This feedback will be given to the principal.

Staff:

- 'Behaviour' will remain a standing point on the agenda for staff meetings.
- One staff meeting annually will specifically address the Code of Behaviour, where staff can review their responsibilities for its implementation and discuss any suggestions for change or amendment to the document.

Parents/guardians:


- Code of Behaviour and will give parents/guardians a brief outline of the responsibilities of the children, the parents/guardians and the staff, respectively, in ensuring that the guidelines are being adhered to and fully implemented.
- Parent-teacher meetings will include reference to the behaviour of the individual child.

The Board of Management:

- The Board of Management will be kept informed by the principal, about any major breaches of the Code of Behaviour in Board of Management Meetings.
- Annual feedback from the staff meeting, the written feedback from the parent(s)/guardian(s) and feedback from the children will be presented to the Board by the principal.

### Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the priorities set by the Board of Management.

Signed:  Date: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Signed: Rev. Cathy Hallissey - Chairperson, Board of Management

### Appendices:

1. Individual Behaviour Support Plan Template
2. Relevant legislation and legal instruments
3. Restorative Practice Question Prompt Cards for Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class
4. Restorative Practice Question Forms for 3<sup>rd</sup> Class – 6<sup>th</sup> Class