

Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche



Code of Conduct

In Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche we want all our students and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time in school and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the Irish-medium educational experience which our school offers.

Pupils at Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche have the right to this education, which offers them every opportunity to attain their full potential through the medium of Irish. The Principal, teaching staff and support staff are here to create the circumstances to allow this to happen. Governors, parents and the wider community also assist in this process.

We aim, at all times, to behave appropriately and warmly towards each other and to support one another both personally and professionally. As members of our school community, we are mindful that our behaviour towards one another and towards our pupils should always be above reproach and we acknowledge the need to exercise prudence in our dealings with the students in our care.

The main points of our code of conduct are:

- Respect self, pupils, teachers and other adults
- Respect your own and other people's property
- Be courteous and well-mannered
- Be honest, trusting and hard-working
- Take responsibility for words and actions
- Be friendly and co-operative
- Show tolerance towards others
- It is the statutory duty of staff to record and report safeguarding matters/issues.

Staff of Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche

We subscribe to the following good practice in this area:

- When the need arises to interview a student alone it is wise to let another member of staff know that the meeting is happening and where it will be taking place. The venue should, if at all possible, have a window and, if this is not so, a door should be left ajar if this is appropriate to the meeting.
- It is good practice to avoid **unnecessary** physical contact with our students. We acknowledge, however, that it is neither practical nor desirable to suggest that there should be no physical contact and we would not wish to see a distressed student deprived of a reassuring or comforting touch because of a fear of physical contact. Where a student indicates, however, that she/he is uncomfortable with such contact it should never take place. Additionally, it is prudent to avoid any physical contact which might be open to misinterpretation by the student or by others.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the student or others around them, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.
- There should **never** be any physical response to misbehaviour, whatever the provocation, except where it is required to maintain the safety of the student or that of others. In this event the reasonable force policy should be fully adhered to and the incident reported immediately to the Principal.

- If it is necessary to administer first-aid this is best done with another person present. The welfare of the student is, however, paramount, and intervention should **never** be delayed because there is no other adult present.
- It is the statutory duty of all staff at Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche to record and report safeguarding matters/issues should they arise in a timely and accurate manner, according to their Safeguarding and Child Protection training.

What happens if ...?

- There is an accident ... it should be recorded in the incident book in each individual classroom.
- There is an incident ... it should be reported to the Principal and recorded in the main office.
- A child wets or soils himself/herself ... assistance should be provided as per the Intimate Care Policy. Staff should use professional judgement re a telephone call to parents. Teacher should record incident in the class incident book.
- It is inevitable that some of our teaching will involve the use of sensitive materials and it is very difficult to anticipate when these might impact negatively on our students. If the material to be used is very contentious, and if there are concerns about any students in a class in relation to it, it is good practice to consult, in the first instance, the Principal or if required permission should be sought from the parents.
- Members of staff should **never** allow students to have access to their personal mobile phone numbers or to their personal email addresses. If contact via mobile phone is necessary eg on a school trip, a mobile phone (or a SIM card) provided by the school should be used. All electronic communications with pupils should be via the official school e-mailing system or educational apps such as Google Classroom, Class Dojos, Seesaw.... Further guidelines regarding the use of mobile phones are provided in the Mobile Phone Policy (Appendix 1).

- Social Networking Sites present particular difficulties for staff in all schools. In an ideal world, for their own protection, no member of staff would have a Facebook or other such site but, since this is an unlikely scenario, great care must be taken to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained between staff and students in this arena, as in all others. Staff members are not to communicate with pupils via social networking sites. Information directly related to the school community should never be posted on personal social networking sites. Staff should also be mindful of content attributable to them, posted on others' sites (eg. friends and family) who may not have the privacy settings recommended. Staff should only use the internet within school for class or school purposes. Typically, staff should not be 'friends' with or 'follow' school parents on social media, except in the circumstance of a previous personal relationship prior to their child attending BBB.

- We value greatly the easy relationships which exist between staff and students in our school and we would wish to see those maintained. It is always necessary, however, to ensure that these relationships are appropriate and professional so that the warm and caring atmosphere may flourish.

Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policy of Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and gender of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Professional respect

We expect that all staff will treat each other with a level of respect and courtesy commensurate with a professional workplace. This is vitally important as our mission statement and pastoral care policy encapsulate an ethos of warmth, respect, dignity, understanding and concern for others.

Despite any personal or professional differences teachers should never act or behave in a manner which might impact on a child. We must remember that children are our first consideration and act accordingly. Our relationship with others associated with our school should aspire to uphold the "Seven Principles of Public Life"

- ★Selflessness
- ★Integrity
- ★Objectivity
- ★Accountability

- ★ Openness
- ★ Honesty
- ★ Leadership

Teachers should show their respect of other colleagues by being punctual and adhering to time especially when they are in charge of children in the morning, at break time and lunch time.

Interactions with Parents

It is the teaching staff's professional responsibility that during both parent teacher meetings and in the annual report to parents that the information they give parents is an honest reflection of their child's ability and is as informative as is possible, so that the parents and the teacher can work together in the best interests of the child.

Verbal Interaction

All verbal exchanges in school shall be conducted in a calm and professional manner. Only in unusual circumstances, for example in emergency situations or when attracting attention in large areas, will voices be raised. Sarcastic, threatening or demeaning verbal interaction is not acceptable. Verbally humiliating or frightening pupils as a means of punishment is not acceptable. The use of humour can be helpful in diffusing situations but the humour used must be understood and appropriate.

Ancillary/auxiliary staff

Our pupils will be taught that the same level of courtesy and respect, shown to teaching staff, should be afforded to **ALL** ancillary and auxiliary members of staff. If either of the latter deem it necessary to reprimand a pupil for any form of misbehaviour or inappropriate conduct they should do so with a 'common sense' approach in a low key manner. If they feel that the incident requires a stronger approach they should immediately pass it to a member of the teaching staff. Where any incident (minor or major) involves a child who is a friend, neighbour or relative of a member of staff, where possible the latter should 'step back' to allow another adult to take responsibility.

Staffroom interaction

Staff are advised not to discuss pupils, parents or other members of staff in the staffroom environment and are asked to remember the importance of confidentiality especially in regards to child protection issues.

Professional Attire

While we do not have a dress code and do not wish to dictate what professional teachers should/should not wear daily, there is an expectation that all staff will dress professionally.

School trips or outings

Throughout the school year almost every child and every teacher, and the majority of ancillary/auxiliary staff will experience at least one trip out of school which may involve part of the day, a whole day or an overnight stay. On all such outings, the school's positive behaviour policy and child protection policies should be adhered to so that decisions in such areas are easier for all concerned. Where indiscipline is so serious that it warrants action beyond an incident report, the principal must be contacted immediately.

A less formal approach than usual is typical on school outings but staff should remain aware how informal behaviour may be open to misinterpretation. The standard of behaviour expected of all in school should be the norm on a school trip.

Conclusion

We, the combined staff of Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche feel that it is impossible and inappropriate to cover all the circumstances in which staff interact with children or where opportunities for their conduct might be misconstrued.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgements should be exercised. From time to time it will be prudent to reappraise our relationships with children and our manner and approach to individual children to ensure that we give no reason for doubt about our intentions in the minds of our colleagues, associates, children, parents or guardians.

Parents / visitors to Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche

At Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche we are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognize that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community. As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents/carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, carers and visitors to our school about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to flourish, progress and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

At Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, we expect parents, carers and visitors to:

- Respect the caring ethos of our school
- Understand that both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children
- Make genuine efforts to use as much Gaeilge as possible when they can, even if that means just a simple ‘Dia duit/Go raibh maith agat/Slán’ etc...
- Demonstrate that **all** members of the school community should be treated with respect and therefore set a good example in their own speech and behaviour
- Correct own child’s behaviour especially in public where it could otherwise lead to conflict, aggressive behaviour or unsafe behaviour
- Approach the school to help resolve any issues of concern
- Avoid using staff as threats to admonish children’s behaviour

In order to support a happy, peaceful and safe school environment the school cannot tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of a classroom, an employee's office, office area or any other area of the school grounds including team matches.
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of school staff, Governor, visitor, fellow parent/carer or pupil regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff, at the school on Facebook or other social sites. Any concerns you may have about the school must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Principal or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.
- The use of physical aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment against your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other drugs whilst on school property.
- Dogs being brought on to school premises without being on a secure lead.

Should **any** of the above behaviour occur on school premises, the school may feel it is necessary to contact the appropriate authorities and if necessary, even ban the offending adult from entering the school grounds.

We trust that parents and carers will assist our school with the implementation of this policy and we thank you for your continuing support of the school.

We would expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Go raibh maith agaibh.

Méan Fómhair 2024

ANNEX 1

September 2024

Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

In Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche the welfare and well being of our pupils is paramount. This policy on the use of mobile phones in school has been drawn up in the best interests of pupil safety and staff professionalism, and is informed by guidance provided by the DE in their 2024/14 Circular “Guidance for Schools on Pupils’ Personal Use of Mobile Phones and other Similar Devices During the School Day”.

As set out in this Guidance, the Department advises that the personal use of pupil mobile phones and other similar devices should be restricted during the school day for the vast majority of pupils. This includes during lunch and recreational periods.

There is significant and growing evidence of the positive impact of such an approach, which has been implemented in a significant number of countries. Both the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have recognised that the use of digital devices such as mobile phones for leisure during the school day can negatively impact students’ academic performance.

There are risks associated with children and young people bringing their own personal mobile devices into schools. There is significant potential for misuse, both in terms of low-level disruption in classes and more serious misuse such as bullying and harassment of children and young people as well as staff. Such behaviour is unacceptable in any context. Such inappropriate use of this technology can also detract from their appropriate use in learning and can involve teaching staff, children and young people, and parents in investigations which can cause significant disruption to the school and wider community.

There is also growing evidence to indicate that restricting the use of mobile phones during the school day can have a positive impact on academic engagement and achievement. Further information on these studies is available from the DE Circular 2024/14.

Research has found correlations between mobile phone restriction in schools and a range of positive outcomes, including reduced bullying, an overall reduction in social media usage, increased healthy play, reduced distraction and improved academic attainment. Overall, the academic evidence of the positive impact of prohibited use is increasing.

Related Policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection
Positive Behaviour and Code of Conduct
ICT and eSafety Policy
Social Media Policy

Use of Mobile Phones

Pupils

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones during the school day. We understand that in some very exceptional circumstances, some pupils may need to have access to a mobile phone. In these very exceptional circumstances, which should be discussed with the class teacher in advance of the phone being brought to school on a case-by-case basis, phones are to be turned off when the pupil enters the school grounds and given straight to the class teacher. Phones will be returned to pupils at the end of the school day. Pupils are not to turn the phone on again until after they have left the school grounds. Parents/guardians must also provide the class teacher with a note explaining that their child will have a mobile phone.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones on school trips.
- Parents and carers need to be aware that whilst there are obvious benefits to pupils having a mobile phone in terms of personal safety there are also some associated risks such as potential for theft, bullying and inappropriate contact, including grooming by unsuitable persons.
- We would also like to alert parents and carers to the risks that using a mobile phone has while walking to and from school. Children who are concentrating on using their phone can have reduced general safety awareness which may result in road accidents and/or injury if a child is not paying attention to their surroundings.

Mobile phones brought into school without permission will be confiscated and must be collected by the parent.

Staff

- Staff must have their mobile phones on silent or switched off during class time or in the school playground when on duty.
- Staff must not use the **school phone** to take or make calls during class time or in the school playground when on duty. In an emergency, staff needing to make or receive a personal call during a lesson or whilst on duty should first obtain agreement from the principal and ensure that adequate cover has been put in place and make the call in an area not used by children.
- Staff may not make or receive calls or texts on their mobile during teaching time. If there are extreme circumstances the member of staff will have made

the principal aware of this and can have their phones on in case of having to receive an emergency call.

- Use of phones must be limited to the use of educational apps only i.e. uploading and correcting work on Google Classroom/ SeeSaw and awarding points/ sending messages on Class Dojo. When possible teachers should use these apps on their class computers/ iPads or during non-contact time i.e. before or after school hours or during breaks when the pupils are not in class.
- Phones should be kept out of sight when staff are with children.
- Phones will never be used to take photographs of children or to store their personal data.
- Staff should never allow students to have access to their personal mobile phone number. If contact should be necessary e.g. on a school trip, this will be made via the school office or by the member of staff with the school mobile phone. In an emergency a teacher may use his/her mobile phone to make direct contact.
- Staff are not required to make work calls on their own phones, either mobile or landline, however, in exceptional circumstances (working from home), if this should be necessary then they are advised to use the prefix 141 before dialling the recipient's number to ensure their own number is protected.
- Staff should never store parents', carers' or children's telephone numbers on their mobile phones and staff must never give their private mobile number to parents, carers or children.

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be available to view on the school website.