

GAELSCOIL PHEIG SAYERS

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Gaelscoil Pheig Sayers school has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013. **This policy was reviewed by Múinteoir Hazel and Múinteoir Eoin in October 2022.**
2. The Board of Management recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is continuous unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The class teacher will deal with a situation as it arises.

If it is considered to be of a serious nature then the Principal will then become the relevant teacher.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, the school will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self worth.
- The school will deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. We will use measures to focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.(We will ask parents to prohibit the use of all social networks for all primary school children.)
- The school's approach will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or SEN, it will join up with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. We will improve inclusion, focus on developing social skills, pay attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post –primary and cultivate a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- The schools' measures will be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. The school will work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

- The school will organise a staff day once a year on the subject of bullying. The school will also organise an awareness session for pupils and parents. This will help give the parents of a pupil being bullied the confidence to approach the school and also helps to send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.
- The school will make use of the SPHE curriculum which makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The school will use the Stay Safe programme, a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self -protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. We will also use the S.A.L.T. programme in the second term and the RSE/Misneach programme every second year in the third term.
- In the teaching of all subjects the teachers will foster an attitude of respect for all ; we will promote the value of diversity ; we will address prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. As a Gaelscoil where we take pride in our language and culture we will give the children a broader exposure to and appreciation of the value of various cultures, greater tolerance and less racism. In Geography and History references to colonization, exploitation and dictatorships can be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work will be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Physical Education and Religious Education. Co-operation and group enterprise will be promoted through our football and hurling teams as well as our chess club and Irish Dancing club. Sporting activities in general will provide excellent opportunities for channeling and learning how to control aggression.
- **The school will use aspects of best practice from the ;**
 - **Traditional approach**
 - **Restorative Practice Approach**
 - **Mediation**
 - **Health Promoting School**

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows;
- (i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
 - (ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
 - (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
 - (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
 - (v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
 - (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
 - (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
 - (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
 - (ix) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

When interviewing any child on a one to one basis, the relevant teacher will always leave the door open or the child can be interviewed in a room with glass paneled door.

- (x) When analyzing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- (xii) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) On the second occasion where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
- (xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- (xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- (xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- (xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be

recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at [Appendix 1](#)

- (xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- (xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- (xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at [Appendix 1](#) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 schooldays after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
 - b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at [Appendix 1](#) will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at [Appendix 1](#) does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Steps taken in the case of bullying;

- 1. If there is continuous bullying the principal will speak to the child in question and give him/her a warning.**
- 2. If the bullying occurs a second time the parents of the child doing the bullying will be contacted to come in to school and will be told of behaviour and what the next step will be. There will be sanctions and a grace period for review.**
- 3. If the bullying persists for a third time the parents will be contacted again and this time will be informed that the case will be put before the Board of Management. There will be a review done in 20 days from that meeting.**
- 4. If there is no improvement and the bullying continues, it will be at the discretion of the Board of Management as to what sanctions they will impose.**

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. Our anti-bullying policy provides for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, [*Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 \(Children First\)*](#) and the [*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*](#) provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and [*the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*](#), be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The [*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*](#) also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place in the school. These are the **Early Completion Programme and Friends for Life**. Pupils may need counselling and / or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. The **Early Intervention/School Completion** programme will also be used in the last term with 6th class pupils to help with their transition to secondary school

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____[date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and available in the school office. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) . A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

(Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 2 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____, Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____, Principal

Appendix 3

Procedures for Suspension

Suspension is defined as a temporary, complete exclusion from school and activities.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. The authority to suspend a student for up to 4 consecutive school days has been delegated by the Board of Management in writing to the principal. The Principal is accountable to the BOM for the use of that authority.

A single incident of serious misconduct is grounds for immediate suspension.

Suspension

The Principal has been authorised in writing to impose an automatic suspension. The following behaviours are grounds for immediate suspension:

- Verbal abuse or threat of a staff member (1 day suspension).
- Initiating a physical fight (2 day suspension).
- Participating in a physical fight (1 day suspension).
- Persistent Insubordination i.e. refusing to follow the instructions of a staff member repeatedly during the school day (1 day suspension).
- Gross Insubordination i.e. refusing to follow the instructions of a staff member during an incident of violence or aggression (2 day suspension).
- Physical violence to a staff member (5 day suspension).

Other serious misbehaviours may warrant an immediate suspension if they put the health and safety of students or staff at risk.

When a assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension, the Principal will:

- Remove the student from the class.
- Inform the student of the suspension.
- Inform the parents of the suspension and need to collect the student from school.
- Arrange for a meeting with the parents on arrival to outline the behaviour and suspension.

Period of Suspension

A student will not be suspended for more than 4 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal recommends to the board of management that a period of suspension longer than 4 days is needed to achieve a particular objective.

The Board of Management considers the following circumstances are ones where the principal would consider recommending more than 4 days as an appropriate suspension. Any one of the following on its own may be considered appropriate to warrant a recommendation of a longer suspension:

- when the student fails to recognise or acknowledge the seriousness of the events leading to a proposed suspension.

- where injury has been inflicted on another person to such a degree of severity as to warrant medical attention and/or a visit to a doctor.
- where the student continues to display belligerence, hostility or aggression.

If a suspension longer than 4 days is being recommended by the principal the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

The Board of Management has authorised the principal in writing, with the approval of the Chairman of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the board of management cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance already provided to the principal concerning such suspensions.

The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more.

Appeals

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a principal's decision to suspend a student for 3 or more days. If an appeal is to be considered before a suspension is to take place, then the student will be removed from class until the appeal is complete and the appeal decision is relayed to parents.

If the appeal against the decision to suspend is not upheld or if the period of suspension is altered but not set aside, then the suspension will begin as soon as practicable after the decision on the appeal is relayed to parents, normally starting the next school day.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

Parents will be notified of this right at the time when they are being formally notified of such a suspension. Information on how to appeal will also be provided.

Suspension as part of a Behaviour Management Plan

Suspension if implemented will be part of an agreed plan to address a students' behaviour . The suspension should:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals for the student and their parents
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour

Removing a Suspension

A suspension may be removed or altered either immediately or retrospectively if the Board of Management decides, or, if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs it to be removed under Section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*

Reintegrating the student

Parents will meet members of the behaviour committee for a re-entry meeting. The principal will arrange for a member of staff to provide support for the student during the reintegration process. The student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

The school will then expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Recording and Reporting

A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be kept which will include:

- The incident report.
- The notes from the meeting with the parents and student.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management

The principal, if acting on the written delegated authority to suspend, will report all suspensions to the Board of Management.

Report to NEWB

The principal will report suspensions of 6 or more cumulative days in a year to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines (***Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 21(4)(a)***)

Review of the use of Suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Appendix 4

Expulsion Procedures

Expulsion is defined as the removal or banning of a student from a school due to persistent violation of that school's rules, or in extreme cases, for a single offense of marked severity.

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. This authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the Principal.

Before expelling a student, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

1. Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
2. Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of the behaviour, if it should persist.
3. Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
4. Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds, such that:

1. The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
2. The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
3. The student is responsible for serious damage to property
4. While the grounds for expulsion may be similar to those of suspension, where expulsion is considered, the school authorities are satisfied that they have tried a series of other interventions and are satisfied that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the students behaviour.

Expulsion for a First offence

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel students for a first offence for the following behaviours:

1. A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
2. Actual violence or physical assault.
3. The supply of illegal drugs to other students in the school.
4. Sexual assault.

Expulsion

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

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer of the National Educational Welfare Board
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation the principal will:

- Inform the student and parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could lead to expulsion.
- Give the parents and student every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and a sanction imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know.

Step 2: A recommendation to the board by the Principal

Where the principal forms the view, based on the investigation that expulsion may be warranted, the principal makes a recommendation to the Board of management to consider expulsion. The principal will

- inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parents have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board and the holding of a hearing

The Board will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing.

At the hearing:

- The Principal and the parents will put their case to the Board in each other's presence.
- Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.
- The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction.
- Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board will facilitate this.
- After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

The student will not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

To ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education the Educational Welfare Officer will:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

Pending these consultations, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)).

The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension will be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal).

Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

