

‘Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí’

SCOIL MHUIRE

Clondra, Co. Longford

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We would like to welcome you and your child to Scoil Mhuire, Clondra and hope our partnership in your child’s education will be a successful and happy one.

This booklet has been produced to give you an insight into the school and to familiarise you with some of our policies.

Our policies are updated regularly and are available to view on our website clondrans.wordpress.com

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VISION FOR THE SCHOOL

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which serves to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the staff endeavour to identify and address the needs of all the pupils. While Scoil Mhuire is a school with a Catholic ethos, it allows due recognition for all other religions. The Patron of our school is the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois.

Pupils

Scoil Mhuire will endeavour to

- Allow pupils to feel safe, accepted and happy in our school.
- Enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community.
- Foster in the pupils respect for people and property.
- Encourage in pupils the idea of being responsible
- Treat each child equally, irrespective of family background, race, religion, gender or disability.
- Encourage pupils to do their best.
- Enhance the development of each child personally, socially, mentally and physically and to prepare them for life-long learning and opportunities.

Staff

Scoil Mhuire will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of staff through staff development programmes.

We envisage a professional, caring staff that is:

- Committed to supporting the pupils and all who are engaged in their learning and care.
- Co-operative, motivated, valued and respected.
- Open to new and innovative approaches and ideas.
- Supported in their efforts to provide the best possible opportunities to their pupils.

Parents

Scoil Mhuire will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts.

Parental involvement includes being:

- Committed to and interested in their children's learning.
- Ambitious for their children and expect high standards in terms of courtesy, respect and achievement from all in the school community.
- Supportive of the school.
- Consulted with and encouraged to communicate their needs to the relevant persons in the school.

Scoil Mhuire will promote gender equality amongst the teachers and pupils.

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt an t-am ar fad le haghaidh gníomhaíochtaí ginearalta an scoil.

**Please Note: All school policies are available to download from our website:
clondrans.wordpress.com.**

**GENERAL SCHOOL POLICY, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES AND
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, SCOIL MHUIRE, CLONDRA**

1. THE SCHOOL DAY

- (1.) **School door opens at 9.10a.m.** 9.10a.m.-9.30a.m. is assembly time. Formal school begins at 9.30a.m.. School finishes at 2.50p.m. For Junior and Senior Infants school ends at 1.50p.m. Formal school work begins at 9.30a.m. Every encouragement should be given to pupils to attend regularly and punctually. The Board of Management is **not responsible** for pupils arriving before 9.10a.m. and staying on after 2.50p.m. Even if a teacher is on the premises the door will not be opened to pupils until 9.10a.m. for insurance purposes. **Infants finish at 1.50p.m. and it is parents responsibility to be there on time. In the interest of safety please collect your child at school gate/door.** If, on the rare occasion you cannot arrange to have your infant child collected, you must ask to keep your child in the classroom. This request may be facilitated by the teacher, if it doesn't impinge on classwork for the afternoon.

School Breaks

11.00a.m.–11.10a.m. and 12.30p.m–1.00p.m.

Children may eat their lunch in the classroom. After eating, children are not allowed to remain in classrooms during lunch break as there is no supervision while teachers are on their lunch breaks. If they are well enough to be in school they will be required to go to the yard during break times. Children are encouraged to bring and eat a healthy lunch and snacks. See Section 3, below.

- (2.) **Security**

Please enter and exit through the main entrance at all times. The front door is locked on a safety lock. In the event of a fire all personnel are able to exit the building using the fire doors. If you need to take your child out of class during the school day, please ring the doorbell. The person who answers the door will bring your child to you. Please sign your child in/out using the 'Children leaving/arriving' book. In the interest of safety we will be keeping all other entrances to the school closed, so please remember to leave by the main door. Visitors to the school are asked to sign our Visitors' Book when arriving and leaving.

When a pupil has to leave school early or be absent from school for part of the day a **written note** must be forwarded to the school if **anyone other than a parent is calling to collect them or if they are cycling or walking home.** The school must be informed if any particular individual is **not** allowed to collect a pupil. This is to ensure as far as possible the safety of the pupils during school hours. Please try to keep these absences to a minimum.

- (3.) **Traffic Control**

Parents are requested not to obstruct the entrance to the school morning or evening. We appreciate that parking is difficult but the entrance must be kept clear at all times. "Drop and go" to the best of your ability.

- (4.) **Pupil illness during school hours**

Where a pupil becomes ill during school hours you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. **If you are not available the contact numbers on your child's form will be called and**

they will be asked to collect your child. For this reason it is very important that the school is informed of any changes in telephone or mobile numbers.

(5.) Emergency Closures

In the event of an emergency closure, e.g. no heat, no electricity, no water, etc., parents/guardians/or those people nominated by parents to collect their children will be contacted by phone/text and an explanation for closure will be given. Time for collection of children will be arranged. A teacher will remain on the premises until all pupils are collected. **Please inform us of any change in mobile phone numbers during the school year.**

(6.) Pupil Absences

Under the Education Welfare Act which became law on 5th July 2002 it is the legal obligation on all schools to inform the Tusla (formerly National Educational Welfare Board) if your child is absent for a total of 20 days at any time during the school year. **Each day that your child is absent is counted, whether single days or multiple days. Once 20 days is reached Tusla must be informed.** This is a legal obligation on all schools and the Welfare Board must be informed even if a child is absent due to illness.

A written note must be supplied for each day/days a child is absent from school explaining reasons for the child's absence. These notes are kept on record and entered into our School Management Attendance system. If a child leaves the school early or arrives late, this is noted in the 'Sign In/Out Book' and also recorded on the Aladdin (online school management) system.

(7.) Text-a-Parent

We use the 'Text-a-Parent' messaging system to inform parents of upcoming events/closures/information or to inform parents that a note/letter has been sent home with their children. It is essential that we be informed of any change in telephone number in order that you can continue to receive messages.

(8.) Yard Duty And Supervision

During break times children are supervised at all times, responsibility being shared by the teachers. A rota is drawn up at the start of the school year. Some supervision duties are part of the extra duties for the post of responsibility holder in our school..

2. CLASS ALLOCATION

This year, the division of classes is as follows.

Junior and Senior Infants

1st and 2nd Classes

3rd and 4th Classes

5th and 6th Classes

This division will be reviewed annually and changed as appropriate. If numbers are large in any classroom, the class allocation may vary in the interests of all children involved and to avoid overload or stress on a teacher.

3. CALLING TO THE SCHOOL

Co-operation between the parents and teachers is essential for the child's development. The teachers and Board of Management have always found that the parents in this school co-operate fully in every aspect of school life and this is greatly appreciated.

The school phone number is 043-3326417; the e-mail address is clondrans.ias@eircom.net and our website address is clondrans.wordpress.com. Our secretary will pass on a message if a parent needs to make contact with a pupil.

You are welcome to the school to discuss any aspect of your child's education. **As the school day is very busy you must ring in advance to make an appointment with the teacher concerned to find a mutually acceptable time.**

4. PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once annually, normally in the first term. The class teacher and Special Education teacher will normally attend this meeting. Each family will be allocated a time for your child/children.

The purpose of the parent/teacher meeting is to allow a general discussion on your child's progress at school. As time for annual parent/teacher meetings is limited, specific concerns should be raised with the class teacher through an informal parent/teacher meeting at another time. Informal parent/teacher meetings are arranged by appointment, either by the teacher or parent, at a mutually agreed time.

5. STAFF MEETINGS

There will be one staff meeting per term. We hold staff meetings in order to foster collaborative decision-making. Members of staff should be willing to make constructive contributions to listen to each other's viewpoints, to be prepared to be flexible and to compromise if necessary and to uphold the majority decision. The person chairing staff meetings should encourage such open and constructive discussions. Staff meetings will be held in order to develop or change aspects of the School Plan and to discuss school-related policies and problems. These meetings help to engender a sense of collective, team commitment and to explore areas in the curriculum which might need attention and other aspects of the management of the school.

6. SCHOOL CALANDAR

The DES have now standardised the school year with each primary school having the same holidays, i.e. Hallowe'en, Christmas, Spring Mid-term and Easter. There are a few closures that are at the discretion of the school. The School Calendar is enclosed with the Book List for the next school year.

We are unable to inform the parents of the In-service Curriculum days until they have been decided upon, but as soon as we are made aware of the dates, we will inform the parents by text.

Taking into consideration Section 21(9) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the Principal. Therefore, the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time.

7. ROLL BOOK

We now use the Aladdin School Management system and the Rolla is called each morning by each class teacher.

8. VISITORS – Sales representatives, etc.

In order to avoid disruption of class, the secretary, if possible, will open the door and take a brief outline of what the person wants. The principal will then talk to the visitor if appropriate. Visitors to the school are asked to sign our Visitors' Book when arriving and leaving.

- We have a number of sales representatives with school material who we deal with each year eg. Cregal Art and Tyrrell's .
- The Folens/Fallons/Edco representative and other representatives from publishers/educational suppliers usually call annually.
- A company with sanitary products calls approximately once a term;
- A First Aid supplier calls a number of times during the year.

9. TRAVELLING IN STAFF CARS

Where possible, teachers or other members of staff will not carry children in their cars. Parents or their nominees will be asked to bring the child home if they are sick, etc. If this is not possible a staff member may be asked to bring the child home. If such an emergency or a situation arises, staff must not bring one child on their own in their cars at any time. The staff member must bring three children in order not to have one child alone in their car at any time. See Child Protection Policy

10. USE OF COMMON AREAS IN BUILDINGS/GROUNDS

Staff collaboratively decide on the use of common areas, e.g. GP room/yard, etc., each year. The Special Education teachers' timetables will be taken into account to facilitate all children benefiting from the activities.

GP Room:

- When using the GP room children must play within the defined designated area.
- All windows must be closed before leaving the GP room.
- All equipment to be returned to GP store and left in its designated area.
- Lock the GP store door.

11. USE OF SHARED EQUIPMENT

There is verbal communication between teachers on the use of all shared equipment, e.g. maths/music/science, etc. A timetable will be drawn up for shared use of computers.

12. PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Our Parents' Association was formed in 2012 and has become an enormous asset to the school community. As well as vital fundraising activities, the Parents' Association fulfils an important role in supporting the school through reviewing and commenting on school policies, suggesting activities and supporting and inviting suggestions from parents in the school. Over the past few years, the Parent's Association have organised many events including:

- Annual Car boot sale/s
- Table Quiz
- Race Night
- Annual Hallowe'en Pumpkin Competition
- Santy visit and Grotto
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Organising sponsorship prizes for our annual raffle.

Through their fundraising efforts the Parent's Association have also contributed financially to the purchasing of school equipment and materials. They have subsidised the cost of school tour buses and contributed towards the cost of our eight-week swimming programme.

The Parents' Association have also assisted us with our Christmas concert and Raffle and are always at hand when called on to provide support for school-run events. Their help and support is invaluable and greatly enhances the school community.

The Board of Management and Parents' Association have an informal 'get together' at the end of the school year.

13. FUNDRAISING

Usually

- A Christmas concert is held annually.
- A draw is held annually at Christmas and, occasionally, if funds are low, also at summer. Lines are sold for this draw.
- Occasionally other fundraising efforts, e.g. jumble sale, are organised

Parents, Parents' Association and Board of Management members help with all these fundraising activities.

14. HEALTH & HYGIENE

1. Any contagious illness should be notified to the school immediately and your child should return to school only when fully recovered. You should contact the school as soon as possible. All parents will be notified of the illness in question. The confidentiality of the parent reporting an issue is assured.
2. Your child is sharing a room daily with a large number of children. Close contact with other children is unavoidable, so particular attention should be paid to health and hygiene.

Head Lice

Head lice are a common problem in primary schools. As your child shares a classroom and playground daily with a large number of other children, it is very easy for head lice to spread. Unfortunately head lice are extremely mobile and infectious and can pass from one individual to another by head to head contact.

You should check your child's hair regularly in this way for head lice – if your child has contracted lice **you should inform the teacher or principal and treat the hair immediately**. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence. A text will be sent out each family informing them that there has been an outbreak of head lice in the school. **No names will be given.** Everybody, including you, other members of the family and school friends, who have been in contact with your infected child should be checked for lice infections. The reality is that anybody your infected child has been in contact with could catch head lice. Head lice are not choosy about what type of hair they go for. In fact, they tend to prefer clean rather than dirty hair.

Head lice are very easy to treat – lotion or shampoo treatments can be bought from pharmacies without prescription.

- 3 **Children who are sick** should not be sent to school. You must consider the other children in the class. If a child is fit to attend school they must be out at break time.
- 4 The HSE offers a medical screening for children at least once during primary school years. This includes screening for vision, hearing, general health and nutrition. In some HSE areas children are also screened for behavioural and emotional problems. Where problems exist they are discussed with parents and teachers.
- 5 Each year, the HSE ask for the names and addresses of children in our school. This is to facilitate the school nurse and school doctor, who visit the school annually and carry out vision tests, hearing tests, immunisation, etc. You will receive forms requesting your permission which you return to your child's class teacher. The HSE dentist may call or may send an appointment for you to attend the clinic. You may also contact Longford Health Centre for an appointment once your child starts school.

If your child has *a particular health problem* such as allergies, asthma, diabetes etc – you should advise the school. The school should be made aware of the name and address of your family doctor. If your child needs drugs on a regular basis you may need to make special arrangements for this.

15. HEALTHY LUNCHES

We encourage you to send your child to school each day with a healthy and nutritious lunch. We wish to emphasise our School Health Eating Policy: all **fizzy drinks, sweets, crisps, biscuits, cake, buns including cereal bars** are **not allowed** in children's lunchboxes. Our healthy lunches policy outlines acceptable and unacceptable food. The only exception to this rule is the **last Friday of each month** when children are allowed to bring in two **small** 'treats'. Pupils will be allowed to eat their lunch in the classroom in an effort to get pupils to eat their lunch. The teachers encourage the pupils to eat their lunch but it is ultimately the child's own responsibility. **For pupil safety, do not put drinks in a glass bottle.**

16. UNIFORMS

The Parents' Association brought in a uniform in September 1999. In January 2016 the Parents' Association suggested to the Board of Management that the uniform be made mandatory for all pupils. The Board accepted this proposal and from September 2016 all children will be expected to wear school uniforms. The uniform consists of a navy sweatshirt/jumper and bottoms or trousers and white tee-shirt/shirt. Plain shorts and white t-shirts may be worn in summer. The girls may wear a navy pinafore or skirt and navy cardigan if they wish.

17. PERSONAL PROPERTY

1. The school cannot be responsible for the loss of students' property. All books, lunch-boxes, jackets, coats, erasers, pencils, copies etc., should be clearly marked with the pupil's name.
2. Valuables should not be brought to school.
3. **Money should not be brought to school unless it is specifically required for school purposes - it should never be left in the cloakroom.**

We strongly advise parents not to allow your child to wear jewellery to school. Ear studs only are acceptable and perhaps a watch. This is all in the interest of safety for your child at playtime, during PE and Games. Children wearing earrings which teachers deem unsafe will be requested to remove same or refrain from playtime, PE or Games.

18. BANNED ITEMS

1. No chewing gum, glass bottles, Tipp-ex or correction fluid, aerosols, cigarettes, matches or other dangerous items are allowed in pupil's possession on the school premises.
2. **Fireworks** are banned due to the fact that pupils could be seriously injured. Parents of any pupil who brings fireworks to school will be contacted to bring their child home.
3. **Mobile Phones, tablets, i-pod or any device with internet connection** are not allowed in school. If a child is found to have any of these devices it will be taken up and left in the main office until it is collected by a parent/guardian. On very rare occasions, pupils from the senior room are allowed phones, etc. on the last day of term with the permission and under the supervision of their class teacher.
4. Pupils should **not bring in toys, computer games**, etc., as they disrupt school work - unless asked to do so. Exceptions - Books.
5. Please read our Substance Use policy.

19. ACCIDENTS

All parents will be aware that even the most closely supervised children will have accidents occasionally. This is true of both home and school. If your child has an accident at school the teachers will respond in a caring and professional manner. Boards of Management and teachers often feel that parents have been misled on the issue of compensation for accidental injuries. There is no automatic entitlement to compensation for accidents in the school any more than there is for accidents in the home or elsewhere.

PROCEDURES:

- 1 Teacher in Charge to be informed about any accident which occurs.
- 2 Teacher in Charge will assess the severity of the accident, to the best of his/her ability.

IN THE CASE OF MINOR ACCIDENTS:

- Where deemed appropriate First Aid may be administered (as decided by staff, and as determined by contents of First Aid kit).
- Teacher on yard duty will record Accident and procedures adopted in the Yard Incident Book.

IN THE CASE OF MORE SERIOUS ACCIDENTS:

e.g. Broken bones/fractures, Bang to head, Deep lacerations , Bleeding, Eye injuries etc., etc.

The procedures to be followed (not necessary in the following order)

- Teacher on yard duty will send another student for another member of staff
- Teacher will assess the severity of accident to best of his/her ability
- Where appropriate First Aid maybe administered as decided by staff and determined by content of First Aid Kit
- Parent or other named person will be contacted.
- Nearest Doctor **may** be contacted.
- Student **may** be sent to Accident and Emergency.
- Serious accidents will be documented in detail in the Yard Incident Book. This account may be used to complete the appropriate insurance form in the event of a parent instigating an insurance claim.
- B.O.M. will be informed of serious accidents resulting in insurance claims.

Every effort will be made by us to make contact first with the parent but this may be impossible when an accident occurs. We will follow appropriate procedures i.e., call a doctor/ambulance. If parents wish to name their own doctor we may try him/her first but if we fail to make contact we may send pupil to the first available doctor.

Our school enrolment form requests parents to inform us if their child/children has any allergies. A record of these will be kept on file. For those children with specific medical needs an Individual Administration of Medicines Policy must be completed by the parents and Board of Management (see 20, below). An outline of procedures to follow will be posted in the staff room.

20. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

Procedures:

It is recommended that:

Any pupil who has a contagious infection or is in need of receipt of medication during school hours, on a short-term basis, may find that home is a more suitable environment than school during recuperation.

As a general rule, teachers will not be involved in the administration of medication to pupils. No staff member (teacher, SNA etc.) can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil.

No pupil may have medicines on the school premises, or use same. Any pupil needing medication or possibly needing medication on school premises must inform the Board of Management in writing.

In exceptional circumstances, where a teacher/designated person agrees to become involved in the administration of medication, it should be noted any teacher who is willing to administer medicines should only do so under strictly controlled guidelines, fully confident that the administration will be safe and under the authorisation of the School Manager. It is wise to limit this willingness to emergency situations only. A teacher who does take responsibility for administering medicines takes on a heavy legal duty of care to discharge the responsibilities correctly. Every reasonable precaution must be taken. **Clear written instructions about medicines requiring regular administration or occasional administration must be obtained and strictly followed.**

The procedure to be followed is that:-

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil concerned should write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a teacher/teachers, or other designated person to administer the medication, on the school premises.
2. The request should also contain written instructions of the procedure to be followed in administering the medication, and the circumstances under which it is necessary to do so.
3. The Board of Management, having considered the matter, may authorise the teacher/designated person to administer medication to a pupil. If the teacher/designated person is so authorised he/she should be properly instructed by the Board of Management.
4. A teacher/designated person will not administer medication without the specific instructions of the Board of Management.
5. In administering medication to pupils, teachers/designated person will exercise the standard of care of a responsible parent.
6. The Board of Management will inform the school's insurers accordingly.
7. The Board of Management will seek an indemnity from the parent/guardian in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of medication (form from CPMSA Handbook to be completed, available from Principal).
8. The Board of Management will organise storage of medicine for each individual pupil. It will be arranged according to individual requirements, taking into account the age and needs of the child concerned, the level of access required, personnel involved, and circumstances guiding the use of the medication.
9. Where the above procedure is put in place the Board of Management will give consideration to authorising another member of staff to administer the medication in the event that the regular teacher is absent from school.
10. Storage of medication and responsibility of parents re supply and supervision of medications will be determined on an individual basis.

It is the parents and child's responsibility to have medication/nutritional needs/equipment, etc. in the child's possession when they are going on all school activities outside the school premises, e.g. swimming, tours, sports blitz, etc.

Arrangements should also be made for the safe storage of medication and procedures for the administration of medication in the event of the authorised teachers' absence. It is the parents responsibility to check each morning whether or not the authorised teacher is in school unless an alternative arrangement is made locally.

In emergencies teachers should do no more than is obviously necessary and appropriate to relieve extreme distress or prevent further and otherwise irreparable harm. Qualified medical treatment will be secured in emergencies at the earliest opportunity in so far as is possible.

Where possible schools should request that medical practitioners would arrange times for medication so that they don't coincide with school times.

Teachers should be made aware in writing of any medical condition suffered by any children in their class. Children who have epilepsy or diabetes or who are prone to anaphylactic shock syndrome may have an attack at any time and it is vital, therefore, to identify the symptoms in order that treatment can be given by an appropriate person as necessary.

Where teachers have been given medication to administer in cases of emergency e.g. adrenaline in case of anaphylaxis, this medication should be the smallest dose possible to ensure recovery until a medical expert can take over. At no time should an emergency dose be such that it could harm the child if inappropriately administered. Confirmation of this should be obtained in writing from the medical practitioner responsible for the child before a school would agree to hold such life-saving medication in its care. Where possible, injection needles should not be held on the premises and epipen type injections should be used.

Where children are suffering from life-threatening conditions such as the above, parents should outline clearly in writing and complete the indemnity form from the Board of Management, stating what can and can't be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.

21. CURRICULUM

In accordance with the curriculum for primary schools, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, endeavours to provide a broad general education, emphasising high academic standards combined with a wide range of experiences which will develop the whole child to achieve his/her full potential and prepare him/her for the demands of further education and the rapidly changing society in which we now live. The curriculum includes: English, Irish, Mathematics, Religious Education, Arts (Music, Drama and Visual Arts), PE, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) i.e. History, Geography and Science and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

Information and Communication Technology

We are very committed to the continuing development of our IT programme. Our classrooms are equipped with Interactive Whiteboards/Touch-screen monitors and we have a number of laptops for teachers and pupils. Every classroom is connected to the Internet with Broadband access. We are continually striving to update our hardware and software resources. We have developed a policy on Information and Communication Technology which has been ratified by the Board of Management. We have also developed an Internet Use Policy which is distributed to the parents of children in First Class. All parents are expected to familiarise themselves and their children with this policy and sign a 'Responsible Use of the Internet Undertaking'.

Gaeilge Activities

We strive to celebrate Seachtain na Gaeilge in March every year and encourage participation in our Irish language and culture.

In October 2008 we produced Irish book packs, with accompanying CDs, which were given to the children to bring home every week. Some of these CDs were produced by the sixth class pupils in our school at the time in conjunction with the Cuiditheoir Gaeilge, Eamon Ó hAlpín. This innovative initiative has been videoed for the School Development Planning Department's website. It has been adopted as best practice in the teaching of Gaeilge in multi-class situations.

In Junior, Senior Infants and First Class, parents receive a book pack with a CD, book and comment card every Monday for 10 weeks, usually in the spring term. They listen to the CD and read the book with

their child/children every evening. The pack is returned to the school the following Monday and another pack issued.

English Book Packs

Book packs are given out weekly in English also from Junior Infants to 2nd class. In the folder are 4/5/6 books. This is a home-based shared reading scheme for parents and children. The aims for this scheme are to:

- improve the literacy skills and sight vocabulary of each child
- encourage a love of reading
- allow the children access to as wide a range of book/stories as possible

We hope that parents and children will enjoy talking about the books together and that they will have fun reading them together.

Religious Education

Religious Education is part of the school curriculum. We prepare children for the Sacraments – First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation. First Communions are usually in May and Confirmation is every second year for 5th & 6th class.

Special Education

In September 2017 Scoil Mhuire, Clondra was allocated 1 full-time Special Education Teacher and is the base school for a shared post with Naomh Earnán Killashee (12.5 hours each). This was reviewed by the Department of Education in 2019 and our allocation remains the same.

The Special Education Teachers set up Learning Support/Resource Programmes in conjunction with Class Teachers and Parents and monitor the success of these programmes. The Special Education Teachers work with children who have learning difficulties or a disability and, where time permits, will work with gifted children. Our Special Education Teachers may also help the Class Teachers to implement class-based programmes. The role of the Special Education Teacher may also involve helping children who have a particular difficulty with a topic or supporting children who may have missed out on a curricular area through illness or bereavement. This support is normally carried out informally in the classroom setting or in the Special Education Room and parents are not contacted. If a parent has any objection to this, the school must be informed in writing.

22. HOMEWORK

It is this school's policy that some type of homework is given each night on a time graded basis - no overloading. We see homework as a continuation of lesson or lessons taught during the day. It is also an opportunity to explore new areas e.g. projects. Homework will not be given at weekends.

Pupils are expected to complete homework which may be oral, written or memorisation. Homework is an important part of the child's learning. It links the home and school and can be a means of self-discipline and good study habits for the pupil. Parents are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework. A special emphasis is placed on nightly spellings and tables. Parents expect homework to be given and it is also a good way for them to be involved in the child's education. It gets the child into the habit of home studying which will increase greatly when they move to secondary school.

If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are asked to talk to the teacher. If for an acceptable reason homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to send a **signed note**. We encourage parents to take an active part in their child's religious programme and say the prayers with them.

The following is a guideline as to the amount of time each class is expected to spend at homework each night.

- Junior Infants 10/15 minutes
- Senior Infants 15/20 minutes
- 1st & 2nd Class ½ hour
- 3rd & 4th Class 45 minutes approx.
- 5th & 6th Class 1 hour approx.

23. ASSESSMENT

1st-3rd class - Spelling, Tables and Maths are tested on a continuous basis in the Middle Room.

4th -6th class - Spellings, Tables, Maths, English, Irish, History and Geography are tested regularly in the Senior Room.

A variety of standardised tests may be used throughout the school, e.g.

- Drumcondra Primary Reading Tests – [given to 1st-6th class in May each year]
- SigmaT Mathematics Tests [given to 1st-6th class at end May/June each year]
- MIST
- Quest
- Ability test, e.g.,
NRIT
NefrNelson non-verbal Reasoning Test

Teachers also use general class and pupil observation sheets in assessing progress of each pupil. In this way the teacher can use his/her assessment, plan the curriculum so as to be relevant to each pupil. Please see Assessment Policy.

24. SCHOOL BAGS

We are very conscious of this issue in Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, and will do our best to ensure the children only take home the books they need for homework. However, we do notice that the bags can be full of unnecessary materials from time to time, therefore we ask that you would get your child to clean out the bag thoroughly every week.

25. TEXTBOOK SELECTION/BOOKLISTS

Teachers discuss textbook selection with each other and draw up a book list in June for issuing to parents. Books are picked on the grounds of suitability for class group/continuity for each class/book series in use in school (e.g. Reading Zone/Treo Nua, etc.).

Schemes of Work for each subject are decided by all teachers. The various schemes available will all be examined and the most relevant scheme for our school will be picked.

Our Booklists are reviewed annually by the teachers and each child receives their relevant booklist for the following year in June.

26. BOOK RENTAL SCHEME

Since 1997 our school has offered a book rental scheme. Initially only English readers were offered for rental. Nowadays, Infants receive English readers, Book Packs (both Gaeilge and English), Gaeilge, Religion, SPHE, SESE, and music materials. They are also provided with phonics books and a music

book. 1st-6th class can rent most of their books – Maths, English, Irish, Geography, History, Religion. This has considerably eased the financial burden on parents.

Books are given out in September and collected in June. Children are expected to take care of these book and keep them in the best condition possible. Each September parents are asked for money to cover rental of these books, photocopying and Art & Craft materials.

27. REFUSE

In order to educate the children in recycling and as part of the effort to receive our first green flag and to minimise the cost of disposing the rubbish, we make every effort here to ‘Reduce, Reuse, Recycle’. We have recycling and compost bins in each class which we encourage children to use. We ask the children to take home their unused lunches.

28. “CHILDREN FIRST” – NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

The Department of Education and Science have in place Guidelines and procedures for all schools in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. These guidelines promote the welfare of all children and are to be welcomed. SPHE (Social, Physical and Health Education) is part of the curriculum for all pupils and this includes a section on safety and protection.

- S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) is now an integral part of the Primary School Curriculum. The Stay Safe Programme, Relationship and Sexuality (R.S.E.) and Walk Tall programme are resources we use to teach this S.P.H.E. Programme.
- Stay Safe deals with specific areas of abuse, feeling safe/unsafe, bullying, touches, secrets and telling and strangers.
- R.S.E. deals with relationships and sexuality.
- Walk Tall deals with drug prevention and abuse.
- ‘Friends for Life’ programme will be conducted every second/third year.

In SPHE and R.S.E. parents are acknowledged as the primary educators of their children and the school works in a supportive role.

An outline of the lessons/sensitive issues will be available on request to parents, so that they can prepare the child before it is dealt with in school, if they so wish. A parents’ right to withdraw pupils from the process will be honoured. The parents will inform the school in writing of this decision. However if a child is withdrawn for the teaching of sensitive issues we cannot guarantee that the other children will not tell/inform him/her about what happened.

List of possible sensitive issues available from school office on request.
R.S.E. & SPHE policies available for viewing in Principal’s Office.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently if there is a matter of concern in relation to abuse of children we are obliged to report this to Tusla and to the HSE and Gardaí if necessary. They will assess the case and provide the necessary support for the child concerned.

29. STARTING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Each year we invite the new Junior Infants and their parents into the school for an afternoon in May/June. A meeting with the parents takes place explaining what their child will be doing during the year and also a short resume of what is covered in each subject and ‘little’ ideas which might help to make life easier for their child (eg. Velcro shoes, schoolbags big enough to take their workbooks, all clothes marked with their child’s name etc.). The children go into the classroom and become familiar with the layout and the

different games/books etc that are available in the classroom. The parents are given an information booklet explaining how to prepare their child for school. They are also given a 'Helping your Child with Maths' booklet which explains what is covered in each year with examples and explanations.

30. TRANSITION TO SECOND LEVEL

We will endeavour to facilitate and smooth transition to secondary level for pupils. We use the NCCA 6th Class Passport and when we receive notification that a child is enrolled in a particular secondary school we forward this and all appropriate records (where Educational Assessments are being sent parents will be notified) to said secondary school. Where a child has SNA or resource hours this information may be needed by the secondary school in the Spring Term. We encourage parents to bring the appropriate reports to the secondary school.

- Principals and pupils (sometimes former pupils) of secondary schools in catchment area call to our school and speak with 6th class pupils. A pack from each school is sent home to parents.
- Parents attend an evening in the secondary school after enrolment.
- We will approach various aspects of Secondary School life and issues in our SPHE and RE programme.
- Some local secondary schools invite the children to their school for a day to give them an insight into secondary school life.

31. CUSTODY/SEPARATION POLICY

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondra can facilitate parents experiencing separations who wish to come and speak confidentially to the teachers and/or principal regarding their schoolgoing child/children's welfare. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately our primary concern is for the wellbeing and overall development of the child.

1. When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers.
2. It is school policy to offer the option of separate parent/teacher meetings, if so desired.
3. It is assumed that when we wish to communicate with parents regarding their child, the parent who is contacted (i.e., the parent with whom the child principally resides) will inform the other parent of meetings, arrangements etc.
4. Special requests for separate communication can be accommodated.
5. Regarding notes, school communication via schoolbags, school reports etc, it is assumed that the parent with whom the child principally resides will keep the other parent informed.
6. In the absence of a custody arrangement, both parents will be treated as equal partners in terms of parenting rights and responsibilities.
7. The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent, in the absence of a custody arrangement.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All pupils are expected to participate in all activities during school hours – e.g., football coaching, basketball, etc., unless a note from the parent with an acceptable reason has been presented to the teacher

School Tour	We have a school tour every second year. Pupils from 1st Class to 6 th Class are allowed to go with parents' permission.
Concerts	Each Christmas the children have a school concert prepared by teachers in each classroom. Proceeds go towards resources for the school.
Swimming	In the summer term pupils from go to swimming lessons with parents' permission. A bus brings the children to and from the pool. When organising the aquatics strand of our PE policy, the school is unable to meet the running costs. Due to the costs involved the Board of Management charges for the lessons and the bus to bring them to the pool. The price of the bus is negotiated every year with the companies involved with a view to getting the best price possible for parents.. Every effort is made to keep the costs down and lessons usually work out cheaper than swimming lessons outside of school hours. For the past few years, the Parents' Association have subsidised the cost of swimming.
Green Schools Programme	This is an environmental educational programme, environmental management system and award scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment. We received our first Green Flag for Litter & Waste in June 2013, our 2nd flag for Energy in 2015. We received our 3 rd flag for Water Awareness in 2017 and our 4 th Green Flag for Travel in 2020.
An Taisce	Clean up week, planting trees
Heritage for schools scheme	Environmental workshops e.g: Martina Butler, Niamh O'Connor
Longford County Council	They provided us with environmental in-school workshops e.g: Magic recycling.
Food Dudes	We take part in this programme as it arises. Following the implementation of this programme we continuing to encourage a healthy eating policy.
INTO Handwriting Competition	This competition celebrates handwriting and recognises the handwriting talents in our school. We have had a number of local winners, particularly SEN children.
School Directed Literacy Programmes	CAPER (Children and Parents Enjoying Reading) – This Shared Reading programme is carried out by all children (Jnr Infants – 6 th class) and parents at home (not every year). Midlands Theatre company visit and put on a performance in the school biannually, in our school in conjunction with other schools in the parish. Buddy scheme-children from 5 th and 6 th buddy with a child in Junior or Senior infants and do reading and activities weekly.
Poetry Ireland	Have assisted with providing and funding visiting poets / writers eg: Mary Melvin Geoghan.
Longford Sports Partnership	We have taken part in a number of initiatives promoted and funded by the Sports Partnership: Tag Rugby – in-school coaching. Buntús - a comprehensive physical activity programme to support teachers in introducing children to sports and promoting physical activity. P.E. resources were provided for the school as part of this initiative.
Agri-Aware	Farm safety art competiton.
National Dairy Council	Moo Crew project for National Dairy Week
Longford GAA Programmes	Cumann na mBunscol competitions in Gaelic, Hurling/Camogie. School Sports Team: A mixed team usually selected from 4 rd -6 th classes (sometimes lower classes are included if our school numbers are low) takes part in the Cumann na mBunscol activities. Some of these activities are divided into mixed teams and some are boy/girl teams only. We also take part in FAI

	<p>activities. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate. Parents or past pupils volunteer to train the team for the year. Our school also takes part in an indoor hurling tournament organised by Longford GAA each year.</p> <p>Annual Gaelic Blitzes</p> <p>Gaelic Football coaching for all class levels. Indoor hurling/camogie for 3rd to 6th participation.</p>
Community Games	Children are encouraged to get involved in local Community Games-handwriting, art, draughts, soccer, Gaelic etc.
Texaco art competition	Annually
Aisling Arts festival	Art competitions, theatre visits, in-school theatre workshops
Credit Union	Quiz and Art competition
Astronomy Ireland	Presentations in our school in relation to the solar system and night sky. It took place in our school and was in conjunction with the other schools in the parish.
National Parents Council	Quiz held on a national basis, we have won the local competition a number of times.
HSE	Paramedics visit and tour of the ambulance
Gardaí	Garda Fun Day every summer, they visit regularly to discuss safety, including at Halloween
Fire Services	Regular visits to discuss fire safety in the home including participation in a Fire Services initiative.
Road Safety Authority	Safe Cross Code, Seatbelt Sherriff, this initiative provides the children with Hi-Vis vests for walking and cycling to school.
Irish Heart Foundation	Participation in the Skipathon
Waterways Ireland	They run Art Competitions from time to time.
Leinster Rugby Youth Programme	Coaching and competitions
Clothing Collection	We recycle clothing 3-4 times a year. At the moment we are recycling with the National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI)
Charities Supported	<p>Goal Jersey Day</p> <p>Trick or Treat for Temple Street Children's Hospital</p> <p>Trócaire's Lentan Campaign</p>
Sports For All Day	Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, hosts a fun 'sport for all' day each year. The emphasis is on participation in and enjoyment of physical activity and is essentially non-competitive. The children take part in a wide variety of events from flat races, novelty events such as throw the wellie to skittles, etc. Sport for all Day is in line with the ethos of our school and the revised Primary School Curriculum which promotes physical activity for all and encourages children to perform to the best of their own individual ability. A goodie bag is given to each child at the end of the day.
Backstage Theatre	From time to time the school attends relevant production in the Backstage Theatre in Longford, again with parents' permission. Bus transport is used.
Scór na bPáistí	We participate in these competitions if interest is expressed by the parents/children following a text home. We have had success in the past in solo dancing and have participated also in quiz, solo singing, music etc.
School choir	We prepare a school choir for various school masses and events.
Preparation for sacraments	All pupils who wish to receive the sacraments are prepared for these in our school.
Junior Entrepreneur Programme	We took part in this programme in 2015 and 2017, 2022 and are involved again this year.
Hallowe'en	We have an annual Fancy Dress Party in aid a children's charity. The Parents' Association have, for the past several years, organised a competition for the children with prizes for each class.

Code of Behaviour, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra

SCHOOL MISSION/VALUES STATEMENT

Vision for Code of Behaviour

We aim to nurture a partnership approach with regard to promoting positive behaviour in our school. We aim to nurture the potential of all the children in our care and to promote co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age-appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Purpose of the Code

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment. Rules are essential in order to ensure the smooth running of a school. No real educational progress can be made unless there is order in our school community. Promoting positive behaviour is a central component of the social and moral education of children so that they can be adequately prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood and citizenship. We must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility.

Parents can support and co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

In devising this code the school recognises the variety of differences that exists between children and the need to accommodate these differences while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruptive free environment

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while showing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Overall responsibility in school management of behaviour rests with the school principal.

Aims of the Code are to:

- **Create** a positive and supportive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour and mutual respect.
- **Promote** self-esteem, positive relationships and caring attitudes to one another
- **Foster** a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- **Facilitate** the education and development of every child
- **Enable** teachers to teach without disruption
- **Ensure** that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of our policies
- **Encourage** the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- **Foster** respect for school property, facilities and surroundings and the wider environment
- **Support** and ensure the wellbeing of all members of our school community.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Staff

We have a team approach to promoting positive behaviour, and are committed to our important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in our dealings with the children and with each other. The SPHE curriculum supports and promotes positive behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills and appropriate ways of interacting and behaving along with the development of conflict resolution skills

We aim to:

- **Create** a positive atmosphere with realistic expectations
- **Promote**, through example, honesty and courtesy

- **Provide** a caring and effective learning environment
- **Encourage** relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- **Ensure** fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- **Show** encouragement for and appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is updated and approved rests with the Board of Management.

Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Read carefully the Code of Behaviour and provide constructive feedback/input as part of the valued partnership between the school, Board of Management, and home.
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work.
- Be aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions.
- Attend meetings at the school if requested.
- Help their children with homework in an appropriate manner and ensure that it is completed to the best of their child's ability
- Ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Communicate with the school in relation to absences or any concerns they may have.

Pupils

- Pupils are involved in devising classroom rules and playground rules. This is done at the start of the school year and reiterated in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

General School Rules

The school's Code of Behaviour sets out in clear terms the Expected Behaviour required for the creation of a just, positive, safe, welcoming, supportive and encouraging climate for all within our school community. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage. Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile schools to school.

Pupils are expected to:

- **Respect** self and others
- **Respect** the property of others
- **Respect** other students and their learning
- **Show** kindness and a willingness to help others
- **Listen** to and follow instructions from staff immediately
- **Walk** quietly in the school building
- **Be courteous** and respectful to members of staff, fellow pupils and visitors
- **Be willing** to resolve difficulties and conflict in a respectful way.

Classroom Rules

Pupils are expected to:

- **Have** all books, copies and materials required for each school day.
- **Endeavour** to work to the best of their ability.
- **Show respect**, courtesy, and be co-operative at all times
- **Respect** the right of others to learn in a secure and safe atmosphere.
- **Follow** teacher's instructions at all times.
- **Keep** school bags and lunch boxes under the pupil's own desk for safety reasons
- **Ask permission** to leave the classroom and to leave their seat for any reason
- **Take responsibility** for their own work
- **Listen** to the teacher and to each other.

BEHAVIOUR OUT OF CLASS

Playground/Lunch Breaks/Hall/Toilets/Corridors

Pupils are expected to:

- **Participate** in all aspects of school life and encouraged to mix and play freely with other children.
- **Avoid** at all times any behaviour which endangers themselves or others or which interferes with other pupils at play.
- **Stay within** the school playground boundaries during breaks at all times
- **Seek** the permission of a member of staff to leave the playground area, to go the toilets, including re-entering the school building.
- **Go out** to the playground for breaks with exceptions on wet days.
- **Walk** in single file, on the left hand side of corridors to avoid accidents.
- **Line up** at their appropriate arrows when coming in from the school yard after breaks.
- **Observe for safety reasons**, the rule that children are not allowed around the back or front of the school.

School property

Pupils must respect all school property and treat all books and equipment with care. Any pupil who willfully damages or vandalises school property will be held accountable for the cleaning, repair or replacement of such property.

School Environment

Pupils are encouraged to keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully in any organised clean-up activity.

POSITIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

Classroom

- Teachers have behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- Teachers use a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupils' interest and motivation: a quiet word or gesture to show approval; a comment on a child's exercise book; a visit to another class or principal for commendation; praise in front of class or group.
- Reward systems, both group and individual. For example we may use: points system; stamps for homework, night off homework; traffic light system; raffle tickets to exchange for prizes; extra art/PE; homework passes after certain goals are met, class Dojo, etc.
- School awards, certificates etc

Playground

There is a supervision rota in operation and this is on display in the staff room. There are designated areas within the playground for the different age groups.

Pupils are expected to:

- mix and play within their own age group
- Play within their designated play area
- At certain times of the school year, specific sports/games e.g.: rounders, soccer league, are played and this promotes inclusiveness.
- Remain indoors on wet days and play with various indoor games e.g.: Knex, Lego, etc.
- Ask permission to leave the playground to go to the toilet, etc.
- Observe for safety reasons, the rule that children are not allowed around the back of the school building or front of the school.

School Related Activities

The Code of Behaviour applies during all extra-curricular activities e.g.: school tours, swimming, etc.

Incentives and Rewards

Part of the vision of Scoil Mhuire is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Rewards can help promote and support good behaviour. We use a variety of age appropriate rewards to recognise good effort in both school and home assigned tasks and also for good behaviour. We take into account the individual needs and efforts of the child.

All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements

Examples of rewards and praise used in school are:

- Stickers and merit marks, small prizes, e.g. pencils, rubbers, bookmarks.
- Homework Pass
- Some may use group/class of the week
- Extra art/play/computer work/playground.
- A special comment of praise in a pupil's exercise book or to pupil's parent/guardian
- Visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Accounts of good effort in all areas are conveyed to parents at Parent/Teacher meetings and informally whenever possible.
- Class Dojo points system

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: **Minor misdemeanor, Serious and Gross.**

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited verbally or by letter, depending on circumstances, to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Serious intimidation or threats of violence against another student or member of staff.
- Physical assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Supplying illegal drugs or alcohol to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

This list is not exhaustive.

Sanctions

We adopt a staged approach when dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Minor misdemeanour are dealt with by the class teacher or the teacher on yard duty. On occasion child/children may be referred to principal. Parents will be informed if necessary to address incidents of misbehaviour. Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to the school to discuss their child's case. Before resorting to serious sanctions, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

The following steps will be taken when a child or children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break/Lose part of break time/‘Time out’ during play time.
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

The legal context

The entitlement to education is protected in a range of constitutional and legal provisions and in human rights conventions. These legal protections for the individual student’s right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour.

The school will follow fair procedure when suspending a pupil. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality.

General suspension

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension, e.g. assault of staff member, setting fire to school property.

Immediate suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

Procedures in respect of suspension

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student. Where a preliminary assessment of facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

- Inform the student and their parents about the complaint.
- Give parents and students an opportunity to respond.

Parents and students will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts.

Procedures in Relation to Immediate Suspension

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected from school. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the student.

The period of suspension:

A student shall not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances. However, a Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days. At the discretion of the Board of Management, a three-day suspension can be extended to five days and to a maximum of ten days.

Appeals

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006.

Implementing the Suspension

Written notification

In normal circumstances there will be a written notification but in the case of risk to safety to staff or students, suspension will be immediate. The Principal shall notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

After the suspension ends

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Expulsion

The board of management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice that authority is reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated. Expulsion is an action that will only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence:

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Physical assault

- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- 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 the Educational Welfare Officer
- 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel.

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

These guidelines are in line with the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) guidelines and all schools must include these in their Code of Behaviour.

Thankfully, we have a positive school atmosphere and we continue to promote this and hope that suspension/expulsion will not become an issue.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, Special Education teacher (SET), and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

KEEPING RECORDS

In line with data protection legislation, records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour and any accidents that occur. Incidents and accidents are recorded in our general book and are written in a practical and impartial manner. Where ongoing behavior problems are occurring the class teacher will keep a record and a copy of this will go on child's file at the end of the school year.

Class level: Individual class records are kept. This includes emerging behavioural patterns. Information will be recorded as incidents occur.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF PUPIL'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23(2)(e) states that the Code of Behaviour must specify, 'the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school'. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence, date of absence and the reason for this absence. Under the Education Welfare Act we must advise Tusla (formerly the National Education Welfare Board) if a pupil has missed 20 days at school. A written note must be supplied for each day/days a child is absent from school explaining reasons for the child's absence. These notes are kept on record and entered into our School Management Attendance system. If a child leaves the school early or arrives late, this is noted in the 'Sign In/Out Book' and also recorded on the Aladdin (online school management) system.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school. Matters relating to discipline/behavior will be communicated confidentially:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Text-a-parent text messaging system
- Class DoJo (this application is used within some classrooms)
- School notice board
- Termly newsletter

REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

- SPHE
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record Keeping
- Health and Safety
- Learning Support

SUCCESS CRITERIA

We will judge success as we always have on:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or as the need arises.

CLONDRA NATIONAL SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The school community of Clondra N.S believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying (thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Note: A false accusation of bullying against a member of the school community is a serious misbehaviour.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Clondra NS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the 'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises 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) 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.
 -

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its member.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equality in general and gender equality in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Catch pupils being good – notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media: these issues are covered in the 'Stay Safe' aspect of SPHE.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

- (b) Effective leadership
- (c) A school-wide approach
- (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- (e) 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
- (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- (g) Supports for staff
- (h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- (i) 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:

Bullying is 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 policy.

Cyberbullying: 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.

1. Cyberbullying:

- It can occur 24/7
- It is conducted in private
- A negative message can be read over and over again
- The message can be made anonymously.
- Sometimes the person who wrote the message can be unaware of the hurt they are causing.
- It is widespread
- ‘Bystanders’ who like or comment on negative or hurtful messages are also bullying.

In the case of cyberbullying it is important to keep and save any bullying evidence of 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’.

Examples of bullying behaviours

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behavior and does not require face-to-face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance, etc. This form of bullying behavior will be investigated if it is found to have a negative impact in school. A once-off incident of on social media is considered cyber-bullying</p>	
<p>Cyber-bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian ... used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away • “Bitching” • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look” • Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

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

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Class Teacher
- Special Education Teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it: prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Staff professional development on programmes such as 'Fun Friends' and 'Friends for Life' which aim to promote resilience and as a prevention to bullying.
- Raise awareness within the whole school community (staff, pupils and parents) on all aspects of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with all pupils each year and is available for all parents/guardians to view on our school's website.
- The Board of Management review the anti-bullying policy each year and a copy of this review is given to the Parents' Association.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be displayed in a common area of the school.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Stress to pupils that bullying is never their fault. It can be stopped and children should be told to tell someone they trust such as a parent/teacher and never to ignore it.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf. (An appointment can be made to speak to a member of staff).
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Regular review of the Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupils are not allowed mobile phones in school.
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year.
- This is taught discreetly as part of SPHE programme and informally throughout the year, pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Fun Friends, Friends for Life.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in ‘Sexual Orientation – advice for Primary Schools’. See Appendix 1

Links to other policies: SPHE, RSE, Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Acceptable Use of Internet, Child Protection Policy, Complaints Policy.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim 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).

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/ guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), classroom assistants, bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- 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).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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.
- Non-teaching staff must be encouraged to report any instances of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the onset.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should 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 analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner and setting and should act as an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures they may face from other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should 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 should give the parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardians and the school. It is not necessary to disclose full details of what action has been taken/sanctions, etc. to other parties involved in the incident.

Follow-up and recording

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.
- 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 (Appendix 3, Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools).
- 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.
- 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;

- 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.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner and that all records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and our school's data protection policy.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal – pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1 – determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- These records will be held by the class teacher during the Process and retained indefinitely in a secure location (locked filing cabinet in upstairs locked storage room) by the Principal Teacher when the process has been resolved.
- Documents will be shared in accordance with GDPR regulations and names will be redacted.

Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template (Appendix 3, Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools) 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 school days 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.

When the recording template at Appendix 3 is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Principal must report to Board of Management once per term if Appendix 3 has been used. The principal will not attach any names or identification of pupils involved to this report. The report will be shared in accordance with GDPR regulations and names will be redacted. We will store these records in a filing cabinet in locked upstairs storage room indefinitely. As this room is locked, permission must be sought from the principal to access these records.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the designated liaison person (Colette McManus) shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Children First National Guidance 2017.

As part of the Principals Report to the Board of Management, the Child Protection Oversight Report shall specify the number of cases of child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils since the last Board of Management meeting where:

- (a) The Deputy Liaison Person has reported a concern about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils
- (b) The Deputy Liaison Person has sought Tusla advice as to whether to report a concern about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils.

Where there were no such cases at (a) or (b) above, the report shall state this fact.

Established Intervention Strategies to be used (in conjunction with our school's Code of Behaviour):

A Teacher Conversations/Interviews

The teacher will speak to both the pupil/s being bullied and the pupil/s engaged in bullying about what has happened. They will be interviewed individually, then together or as a group.

Questions for the pupil/s being bullied:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What do you think needs to happen next to make things right?

Questions for the pupil/s engaged in bullying:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts at the time?
- How has (relevant party) been affected by what happened?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

B Mediation

- Identify pupils who are in conflict and arrange a meeting once tempers have cooled.
- Establish the rules. I.e. only one pupil talks at a time and the others listen.
- The mediator asks each pupil to describe in turn what has been happening.
- The mediator must listen carefully and then summarise what has been said to the satisfaction of those involved.
- The pupils will then be enabled to share their feelings on what happened and to discuss what could have been done to improve matters.
- The mediator records the actions that the pupils have agreed to carry out and each pupil signs an agreement.
- Further monitoring will take place and, if necessary, further meetings.

C Implementation of our Code of Behaviour Policy

- Important: make it as clear as possible to the staff and the pupils what bullying is, the forms it takes and the harm it does.
- Engage in discussion with all pupils on the kinds of rules that ought to govern relations between pupils in the school.
- Intervene as soon as possible after an act of bullying has been identified.
- Apply positive reinforcements when a pupil acts constructively.
- Apply sanctions if necessary that are appropriate to the behaviour.
- Engage in 'serious' talks with the pupil/s involved (and, if appropriate, the parents also), giving reasons for the actions taken by the school.
- Maintain a practice of rigorous surveillance of pupils' interpersonal behaviour in the classroom and yard.

D Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions

- This may include meeting with parents

Other procedures which may be used

E Circle time in class (as part of SPHE lessons)

F Strengthening the victim: (pg. 31-33 of 'Anti-Bullying Support Material, PDST)

- Building the pupils' confidence
- Teaching the pupil to cope with verbal bullying and to react unemotionally

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - SEN team
 - Group work such as circle time
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system (if warranted)
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with parents and appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Community Guard may be invited to talk to parents
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

From time to time we use a Buddy System between 5th & 6th and the infant classroom which we feel is important in fostering communication, friendship and trust between the classes.

Pupils are supervised at all times when using the internet and the school's NCSE system does not allow access to chat room or discussion forum at present.

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying are:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Supervision of pupils
- Acceptable Internet Use policy (AUP)
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SPHE
- RSE
- General School Policy and Activities

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.

References:

Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

www.antibullyingcampaign.ie- free classroom resources -exercise sheets and videos for class use
School Programmes - Stay Safe / Walk tall / RSE /Making the Links

Review and Ratification

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. The 'Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation' (Appendix 4) will be completed annually. The policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. Notification will be sent to the Patron. The Checklist will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Acronyms

NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEWB	National Education Welfare Board
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Important note: Revised procedures for processing complaints by Parents will be prescribed for all schools under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. When available, the revised procedures will be sent to each school and will replace the procedures printed here. Please ensure that the correct and up to date Procedures are used. At the time of going to print these procedures are still the only agreed procedures.

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- i. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- ii. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
- iii. complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board of management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.
- 2.2 The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; *and*
 - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

- 4.1 If the complaint is still not resolved the chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.2 (b).
- 4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.

- 4.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
- (a) The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - (b) The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (c) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - (d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (f) The meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).

Stage 5

- 5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.
- 5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.
- 5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;
- 5.4 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.
In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Cf. Section 29 of Education Act

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

RATIONALE

These guidelines were introduced in 1999 and reviewed in May 2011 and October 2015 and in June 2019. As we have computers and iPads in each classroom it is necessary to set clear guidelines for all pupils and staff. Reviewed in October 2020 in light of use of online learning due to Covid-19. Current review: October 2022.

Internet access is available to all our pupils. Our school is pleased to offer this tool as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes and for researching project materials. Pupils now have ready access to thousands of libraries and databases on every subject written.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in the information age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

Pupil use of telecommunications and electronic information will be provided and only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and by pupils themselves.

ICT and Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to Internet Safety.

- Data Protection Act 1998 - this act was passed in order to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on a computer about individuals.
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 - this amendment extends the data protection rules to manually held records and also makes improvements to the public's right to access data.
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 - this act legislates against anyone who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography.
- Interception Act 1993 – this act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence. Authorisations are subject to certain conditions.
- Video Recordings Act 1989 - this act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the devaluation or corruption of the viewer.
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000 – this act governs copyright in Ireland.
- General Data Personal Regulation (GDPR)

See our Data Protection Policy.

Risks associated with the Internet

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet.

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

Categories of risk associated with children using the internet include:

- Exposure to illegal and/or harmful images and text, whether violent, racist or explicit in nature.
- Receipt of messages that are demeaning, threatening or in other ways disturbing or detrimental to a child's wellbeing.

- The possibility of being lured into a physical encounter that might threaten a child's safety and wellbeing.
- Risk that the child might upload inappropriate content.

Strategies for reducing risk to children are as follows:

1. Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)
2. Education
3. Filtering/Monitoring
4. Supervision
5. Password protection on all computers.
6. No access to chat rooms and strict adherence to our 'Guidelines for Internet Use'.

E-Mail

Electronic mail, or e-mail, allows communication with peers and educationalists around the world. In general, pupils are not allowed access to e-mail. In the event that access is allowed, pupils will send and receive e-mail during supervised sessions. Personal information about the child will not be disclosed without permission from the teacher supervising the session. E-mail messages for pupils will only be sent and received through the school e-mail address. A staff member will read these messages. Pupils will not be allowed to have a personal e-mail address in school.

If pupils are allowed to use email, the following rules will apply:

1. E-mail will be used for educational purposes only
2. Students will only use approved class e-mail accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher
3. Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
4. Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details e.g. addresses, telephone numbers, or pictures via school e-mail
5. Pupils will never arrange to meet someone via school e-mail
6. Sending or receiving e-mail attachments is subject to teacher permission.

World Wide Web

Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world. Access will be kept to certain sites that are of relevance to the pupils e.g. Scoil Net, World book Online, etc. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. **Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher/staff supervision.** The school's broadband is filtered by the NCTE which blocks out webpages containing expletive words, explicit pictures, or unsuitable content. Staff may regularly check computer logs of all information accessed by pupils. The following conditions apply to use of the internet by pupils:

1. Internet will be used for educational purposes only
2. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
3. Pupils will seek permission before entering any internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher
4. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
5. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage
6. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety
7. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites
8. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues
9. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned

10. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis
11. The use of personal external storage devices – USB sticks or CD-ROMS - in school requires a teacher's permission
12. Pupils will observe good 'netiquette' (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute
13. 'YouTube' (and similar social media sites) can be accessed only under the supervision and direction of the teacher. Other social media sites are filtered (Facebook, snapchat etc.) and access is not allowed.

Pupils Guidelines for Internet Use

- Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the internet just as they are in a classroom or on a school corridor. General school rules apply.
- Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility.
- Messages should be polite and sensible. Bad language and messages that could be offensive to another person are prohibited.
- Pupils must not look at or delete other people's files or change school passwords.
- Pupils may not put their own passwords or software or create internet or e-mail accounts on school computers.
- Pupils must not bring software or USB sticks into the school without permission.
- Pupils must not use internet chat rooms.
- Pupils will not use the internet to seek, read, print, or download any information in any media that would be considered harmful or in any way detrimental to the health, well-being, positive development of the pupil by the school staff or by the pupil's parents or guardians. Teacher's permission must be obtained to print or download any text, images, software or other data from the Internet.
- If a pupil sees anything they are unhappy with or receive a message they do not like, they must tell a member of staff immediately.
- No personal information such as your home address or telephone number, or the address or telephone number of another person, is to be given out..
- Be familiar with these rules and how to use the internet before going on-line. If you have any questions about these rules students should ask their teacher for clarification.
- Pupils and parents must sign and adhere to the Responsible Internet Use Undertaking (appendix A)
- Pupils need to become internet savvy about:
 2. Passwords: 'Your password is like your toothbrush – you wouldn't pass it around.'
 3. Privacy settings.
 4. Digital footprint: What goes online stays online forever – even when deleted the footprint still remains. This can be important for a child into the future and for work.
 5. Even when acting anonymously there is no guarantee that you can avoid detection.
 6. Cyberbullying:
 - It can occur 24/7
 - A once-off incidence can be considered bullying
 - It is conducted in private
 - A negative message can be read over and over again
 - The message can be made anonymously.
 - Sometimes the person who wrote the message can be unaware of the hurt they are causing.
 - It is widespread
 - 'Bystanders' who like or comment on negative or hurtful messages are also bullying.

See our Anti-Bullying Policy.

SEESAW

Seesaw is an online learning platform which allows teachers and pupils to upload educational content in different formats (photos, video, links, document, voice message). We adopted this platform in light of the Coronavirus pandemic in order to facilitate distance learning. Parents signed a consent form (Appendix B) in April 2020. As classroom teaching has resumed, there will be very little use of this platform at the moment. We will continue to give a consent form to Junior Infant parents and to pupils new to the school. Our Child Protection Risk assessment and updated our Data Protection Policy reflects our use of this platform. Seesaw operates a robust privacy policy which is an appendix of our GDPR policy.

The following Code of Conduct applies:

Seesaw Code of Conduct

In order to create a safe and supportive online learning environment, the following guidelines have been put in place to protect Scoil Mhuire students and staff and to promote learning.

- You should treat your video at a live online session the same as a face-to-face session.
- When posting/creating a video, teachers and pupils should be dressed appropriately and in an appropriate environment for participation in a video or live online session.
- When your video is turned on, make sure you don't sit directly in front of or beside a bright light source, as only a bright light and a shadowy figure will be seen.
- Think about your actions on camera. Always remember that this will be seen by others.
- Videos/pictures that are to be uploaded should be recorded in a common family area, not a bedroom. No family pictures or identifiable features should be shown in the background.
- Parents are asked to supervise their children while they are on the Seesaw platform.
- When uploading videos/pictures/sound clips, parents must ensure that they are appropriate and upload to Seesaw only.
- Parents must ensure that all uploaded content is work assigned or responses to work assigned by teachers.
- Items posted on Seesaw by pupils or teachers must not be shared outside of the platform by any means, whether by social media, electronically or in any other form.

PUPILS:

Use of school-owned devices within or outside of school

- Pupils and parents have a responsibility to use the school's computer system in a professional, lawful and ethical manner.
- Pupils should always be supervised by parents when using a school-owned device.
- Pupils/parents should only install or remove software onto a school-owned device with prior approval by the school principal.
- Pupils/parent must not access inappropriate materials when using school-owned devices at school or when using school-owned devices when working outside school. Doing so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Our Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to all members of the school community when using any school-owned devices when working outside school.

ZOOM

We may use Zoom on as a method of communication.

Rules governing the use of Seesaw also apply to the Zoom platform. Our Remote Teaching and Learning Plan also covers the use of Zoom as an online tool.

Parent's e-mails may be used to inform them of Zoom meetings. Meeting will not be recorded.

Staff conducting Zoom meetings are aware of the risk of hacking/intrusion on meetings. They will respond by ending the meeting immediately

Parents and staff are aware of our Remote Teaching and Learning Plan which explicitly disallows the sharing by pupils, parents, teachers, or administrators using online platforms such as Seesaw and Zoom, any content outside of the platform whether on social media or by any other means, electronic or concrete.

Social Media

Pupils must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff or other members of the school community. This applies to both in school online communication and outside of school online communication.

Pupils must not post or share personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the school community on social media.

Pupils must not seek to 'friend' any member of school staff using any social media facility.

The use of all instant messaging services or apps including Snapchat, Whatsapp, etc. by pupils is strictly forbidden in school or on any school devices.

Access to blogs may be allowed in school for educational use only under the guidance and permission of teaching staff.

Access to video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. may be allowed for educational purposes only with guidance and permission of teaching staff.

Pupils must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology, which might bring the school into disrepute.

Internet Chat

Students are not permitted to use internet chat rooms.

Cyberbullying:

The school adheres to the DES Procedures for Anti Bullying for Primary & Post Primary Schools definition of bullying **as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time'. This definition includes cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school. Additionally the posting of an offensive comment online is considered as cyberbullying, due to its potential to be circulated to many users.** A once-off incident can be considered cyberbullying. Such incidents of cyberbullying will be dealt with under the our Anti-Bullying Policy.

- Pupils are expected to treat others with respect at all times when using any form of communications technology either as part of school based learning or for personal use outside of school
- Awareness of and the prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of our Anti-Bullying policy.
- Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Parents/Guardians are expected to take responsibility for their child's use of ICT and electronic devices (including mobile phones) and should monitor their child/children's online behaviour outside of school. School authorities cannot be responsible for pupil online behaviour that arises outside of the school environment. However the school will co-operate in so far as is possible with parents/guardians in dealing with reports of inappropriate online incidents that impact on the wellbeing of pupils and/or staff. Such matters will be dealt with in so far as is deemed necessary under the school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Sanctions for the misuse of ICT and Internet by pupils

The misuse or unlawful use of the Internet or ICT equipment during school /class time by pupils will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, and Mobile Phone/Electronic Devices and Games Policy. Sanctions will include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges to ICT and other school related privileges and, in extremely serious cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal or inappropriate activities to the relevant statutory authorities ie Gardaí, TUSLA, Office of the Data Commissioner etc.

School Website

Designated member/s of the school community will manage the publication of material on the school website.

1. Personal pupil information, home addresses and contact details will not be published on the school website
2. Class lists will not be published
3. Pupils' full details will not be published beside their photograph
4. Digital photographs, video clips and audio clips will focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils
5. Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website
6. Teachers will select work to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such
7. Permission to publish a student's work will be sought from pupils/ parents/ guardians. This permission may be withdrawn at any time.
8. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

STAFF /VISITORS:

Recording of Images & Video

- Staff will only use school digital cameras and school iPads/other school ICT equipment for the recording of images and video of pupils for school related purposes. Staff will not take photos or video pupils or school activities on personal mobile phones.

Social Media

- Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff, or other members of the school community.
- School staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not post or share personal information, use, share, publish or distribute images about pupils, staff and other members of the school community on any form of social media sites etc.
- Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology which might bring the school into disrepute.
- All members of staff have a responsibility to use the school's computer system in a professional, lawful and ethical manner.
- Staff must not access inappropriate materials at school when using school-owned or personal devices or when using school-owned devices when working outside school. Doing so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Our Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to staff using any school-owned devices when working outside school.

Internet Access/Web Browsing and Downloading

- Teachers must always supervise access to the internet by pupils and websites should always be previewed before presentation to the class. Where teachers seek to integrate a web page into a lesson, the web page must be fully previewed/evaluated to screen for inappropriate content, imagery, and text.
- Staff will ensure that school WiFi, Aladdin Pupil Management System and network administrator passwords are not disclosed to pupils or non-staff members.
- Use of the internet by staff members or authorised school visitors/agencies to access or download offensive or inappropriate material is strictly prohibited at all times. Staff or authorised school visitors/agencies are not permitted to alter the school broadband filtering preferences in any form or manner. What happens when staff bring home school laptops???
- Staff members may access the internet for personal purposes outside of pupil-teacher contact time only.

- Teaching practice students, transition year pupils or adults or students on a work experience/ placement may only access the computer facilities with the permission of their mentor or supervising class teacher. All teaching practice and placement students must adhere to our Acceptable Internet Use policy.

Education

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra will consistently educate children on the safe, responsible use of the internet. This education will continue and be reinforced on an ongoing basis.

21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include

- NCTE Internet Safety Awareness Video
- www.webwise.ie website has excellent resources for the entire school community.
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars
- Garda Primary Schools Programme

Filtering

‘Filtering’ is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance. Many browsers have their own built in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google’s search engine has a built-in “Safe Search”. This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page. Unfortunately it is also easily removed.

The access to websites from all school computers is filtered, monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCCA. Websites are only allowed following a verification of their suitability.

Firewalls

Our computers have a built-in firewall. We also have protection software, some of which is purchased (e.g. Nortons) or downloaded free from the internet (e.g. Avast).

Useful websites for further information on online and communications technology.

- www.iab.ie (Internet Advisory Board)
- www.esafety.ie (Internet Safety Seminars for Schools/Parents)
- www.webwise.ie (Information on Various Forms of Internet Usage): Get With it (Parents Guide to Cyberbullying)
- www.ncte.ie (Information on ICT in Education)

Links with other School Policies

This policy is linked to the following school policies:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices and Games Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in October 2025, or as the need arises.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, Co Longford

Scoil Mhuire Clondra is a primary school, providing primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Clondra has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- 1 The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Colette McManus.
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Fiona Reilly.
- 4 The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

- 5 The following procedures/measures are in place:
 - In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the DES website.
 - In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance

set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the DES and available on the DES website.

- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school-
 - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
 - Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
 - The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
- In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
- In this school the Board has appointed the above-named DLP as the “relevant person” (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to be the first point of contact in respect of the child safeguarding statement.
- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- In accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Board has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school’s procedures for managing those risks is attached as an appendix to this statement.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school’s website, the DES website or will be made available on request by the school.

Note: The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question.

- 6 This statement has been published on the school’s website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents’ Association (if any) and the patron. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.
- 7 This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

