



Code of Conduct - Parents/Guardians and Visitors

This Code of Conduct is an unsigned agreement between the Parent/Guardian, Visitor and Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire, Rathpeacon N.S.

1. Introduction

At Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire, Rathpeacon we are very proud and fortunate to have a very dedicated and supportive school community. In our school the staff, Board of Management, parents and guardians all recognise that the care and education of our children is a partnership between us.

We expect our school community to respect our ethos, maintain standards, and set a good example through their own behaviour on the premises. In addition, we also expect our parents, guardians and visitors to keep our children safe by adhering to the school's request to park safely outside at drop off and collection times.

As a partnership, we are aware of the importance of good working relationships and we all recognise the importance of these relationships to equip our children with the necessary skills for their care and education. For these reasons we will continue to welcome and encourage parents and guardians to participate fully in school life.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the expectations regarding the conduct of all parents, guardians and visitors to our school.

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. However, we understand that everyday misunderstandings can cause frustrations and have a negative impact on our relationships.

Where issues arise or misconceptions take place, please contact your child's teacher, who will be available to meet with you and go through the issue and hopefully resolve it.

The staff of our school are entitled to work in a safe environment, free from abuse of any kind. School staff must be treated with respect at all times. Inappropriate or serious misbehaviour of parents/guardians or visitors is deemed unacceptable.

This Code of Conduct aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated and seeks parental agreement to these expectations.

The Code of Conduct sets out the actions the school can, and will take should this Code be ignored or where breaches occur.

2. Behaviour of Parents/Guardians and Visitors that will not be tolerated

Disruptive behaviour which interferes with, or threatens to interfere with any of the school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the premises or at school events offsite e.g. pitch-side, competitions etc.

Examples of behaviour that will not be tolerated are set out below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Derogatory, demeaning or insulting comments - verbal or written
- Using loud or offensive language
- Displaying temper in any form
- Unrealistic demands for meetings at short notice
- Verbal, physical or sexual assault
- Threatening or harassing a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/guardian or child in any way
- Abusive phone calls, including putting down the phone abruptly
- Any form of written abuse, threats or intimidation (emails, notes, letters, comments on social media, WhatsApp groups etc.)
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parents/staff/BOM on Facebook, WhatsApp or other sites/social media
- Sending abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voice mail/phone messages or other written communications, including on social media, to anyone within the school
- Damaging or destroying school property
- Using physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on the premises
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises

3. What happens if someone ignores or breaks this Code?

At the discretion of the school and depending on the seriousness of the matter, the following may take place:

- The parent/guardian or visitor may be invited to a meeting with a view to resolving the matter. If the parent/guardian/visitor refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent/guardian/visitor and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern. It will be made clear that if they do not stop the unwanted behaviour, they may be banned from the school premises.
- The offending adult may be blocked from emailing/contacting the staff.
- The offending adult may be blocked from school social media accounts.
- The appropriate authorities may be contacted (the Board of Management, TUSLA, An Garda Síochána as appropriate).
- As a last resort, the offending adult may be banned from entering the premises.

A formal written apology and an undertaking that the offending behaviour will not reoccur is required before readmission to the school is granted.

In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will, in the first instance, be referred to An Garda Síochána. This will include any or all cases of threats or violence to any child, staff or member of the Board of Management of the school. This will also include anything that could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyber bullying.

In cases where evidence suggests that behaviour would be tantamount to libel or slander, then the school will refer the matter for legal advice on further action. In cases where the Code of Conduct has been broken but the breach was not libelous, slanderous or a criminal matter, then the school will send out a formal letter to the parent/guardian with an invite to a meeting.

Again, if the parent/guardian refuses to attend the meeting then the school will write to the parent/guardian and ask them to stop the behaviour causing the concern and warn that if they do not they may be banned from the school premises. If after this, the behaviour continues, the parent/guardian will again be written to and informed that a ban is now in place.

Note: (1) *a ban from the school can be introduced without having to go through all the steps offered above in more serious cases.*
(2) *site bans will normally be limited in the first instance*

4. Issues of Misconduct on Social Media

Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire, Rathpeacon has a school website, Facebook and Instagram page. These allow parents to check for updates on school activities. Within these spaces however, we ask that you use common sense and courtesy if discussing school online: Think before you post.

Social media must not be used a medium to air concerns or grievances. Social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, staff, parents or children.

If parents/guardians have any concerns about their child, they should initially contact the class teacher with a view to resolving the concern. If still unresolved, the parent/guardian should follow the Parental Complaints Procedure. This is available on the school website.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent/guardian to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent/guardian, member of staff or child. This includes posts and comments on WhatsApp groups etc.

5. Online activity which we consider inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, children or other parents/guardians
- Bringing the school into disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libelous comments

- Circulating e-mails, messages or screenshots directly or indirectly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching school's security procedures

At our school we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions previously outlined in Section 3 above.

A formal written apology and an undertaking that such behaviour will not reoccur is required before readmission to the school is granted or the parent/guardian unblocked from messaging the staff or school.

6. Conclusion

This Code of Conduct has been devised with the safety of our staff and school community in mind. Together we aim create a positive and uplifting environment not only for the children but also all who work and visit our setting. Thank you for abiding by the Code.

Signed: Maude
Chairperson, Board of Management

Susanne O'Neill
Principal

Date: 08/04/2025