

**Meánscoil Muire gan Smál
Convent of Mercy
Roscommon**



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Our school is a voluntary secondary school in the tradition of the Mercy tradition under the trusteeship of CEIST

Mission Statement

In our school, we wish to provide a caring environment for all students and staff, in which every student is helped towards her fullest spiritual, educational, social, cultural and physical development.

The Code of Behaviour at Meánscoil Muire gan Smál, Roscommon is based on respect for self and respect for others. It seeks to promote individual self-discipline and the common good. It further seeks to encourage our students to act responsibly and take responsibility for their actions at all times.

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our Code of Behaviour. School management and staff will actively foster a school ethos, policies, and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

A safe and orderly school environment is essential for effective teaching and learning. The Code of Behaviour at Meánscoil Muire gan Smál, Roscommon aims to:

- create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- create a climate that encourages and reinforces appropriate behaviour.
- encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- help our students to mature into responsible, participating adults.
- build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.

- ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is one of the most powerful influences on student behaviour. For many students, their teachers are a major source of support, adult empathy and pastoral care, and are hugely significant figures in their lives.

As adults and professionals, teachers have a strong capacity to develop good relationships with students. Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

We, at Meánscoil Muire gan Smál Roscommon are proud of the high standard of behaviour of our students which has enabled our school community to enjoy a positive and collaborative working relationship

Code of Behaviour - Academic Requirements

1. To enable each student to work to the best of her ability and achieve her academic potential, the school authorities insist that each student:
 - is attentive in class;
 - shows respect for the person, property and professional status of her teachers and the right of her fellow students to work and make progress in the classroom;
 - attends class punctually;
 - has the required books, equipment, etc. necessary for each class;
 - records and completes her homework to the satisfaction of her teachers.
 - brings her journal with her to class each day and presents it when requested to do so. Journals should be clean and free from graffiti.
 - refrains from eating and drinking in class.
2. Activities, including part time jobs, should not be allowed to adversely affect a student's homework, attendance or her ability to concentrate during the school day.
3. Students are not permitted to use mobile phones and/or electronic devices this includes smart watches and smart glasses during school hours i.e. Mon-Thurs 8.55am-3.50pm and Fri 8.55am-1.10pm **inclusive of break and lunch and during all extra-curricular activities including after school study.** Students can be contacted through the school office during the school day. Failure to comply with this will lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone including SIM card and/or electronic devices including smart watches and smart glasses for a period of 3 school days for the first offence and 5 days for each offence thereafter.

The school assumes that any property on the school grounds in the custody of your daughter is her property as Meánscoil Muire gan Smál cannot accept responsibility for property belonging to parties outside the recognised student and staff body of the school. Any property brought onto the school's grounds by your daughter is done so at her own risk.

As regards the confiscation of mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses and/or electronic devices theft is defined as follows: *"a person is guilty of theft if he or she*

dishonestly appropriates property without the consent of its owner and with the intention of depriving the owner of it” (Section 4 Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act, 2001).

It must be noted that “*consent*” is given to the school once the Parent/Guardian signs the school’s Code of Behaviour and Enrolment is subject to signing the school’s Code of Behaviour.

4. In the event of a mobile phone or smart watch being confiscated, the school will provide the student with a replacement phone in order to travel home on the first evening. It is the responsibility of the student and/or her parents/guardians to return the phone the following morning to the Principal.
5. Unofficial photographic images of students in school uniform are prohibited.

The School Authorities expect full co-operation on these points in order to provide a setting conducive to good teaching and good learning in a disciplined environment.

Code of Behaviour - General

1. The highest standard of courtesy and good manners is expected when dealing with all those involved in school life - teachers, ancillary staff, fellow pupils and visitors/guest speakers. Answering back rudely, verbal insults, defiance, or any form of disrespectful behaviour to adult or student will not be tolerated.
2. Students' behaviour must at all times be in accordance with the School's Safety Policy. (Note Safety Policy in specialist rooms)

3. School Uniform:

- Full school uniform is obligatory and must be worn during school hours and at school functions/school activities/state examinations.
- The full uniform consists of: cream shirt, school tie, navy school jumper (with crest), **navy knee-length pleated** skirt, red school jacket with school crest, navy knee socks/navy or black tights (plain tights without design and must be 80 denier or greater), and flat/ low heeled black or navy leather shoes and these include **plain black leather Vans or Converse shoes.**
- **Runners/sports shoes/canvas shoes/leisure shoes are strictly prohibited**
- School uniform is to be kept clean and neat and is not to be altered in any way.
- The school jacket must be kept in the student’s own locker or placed on the back of her chair in class.
- **P.E. uniform: Half Zip School Top (can be purchased only from Azzurri website) and navy track suit bottoms and runners which will be worn for PE classes and can also be worn on match days.**
- Casual wear, scarves and hoodies are **not** part of the school uniform.
- On designated non-uniform occasions, dress should be appropriate to the event.

- While wearing school uniform students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the standards of behaviour set by the school.
- Exemptions from the school's uniform code can only be considered with a note from a doctor/physiotherapist and an alternative item will be sanctioned by the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Jewellery should be simple and in keeping with uniform. (long dangling earrings, ear stretchers, chains and bracelets are not allowed on health and safety grounds).
- No facial jewellery is permitted.
- Extreme hairstyles/hair colours are not allowed with the exception of natural hair colours.
- Make-up should be discreet and appropriate to our school environment (eye make-up is not allowed).

The school management reserves the right to decide whether any aspect of a student's appearance is in compliance with the school dress code. The Principal/Deputy Principal is the final judge in this regard.

4. Personal Hygiene:

A high standard of personal hygiene is expected at all times from each student.

5. Attendance:

- Attendance is essential for effective learning. Students are required to be in attendance at school on every school day unless prevented by legitimate circumstances. Students are expected to participate in all school activities as instructed by the school authorities.
- The primary responsibility for a student's attendance in school lies with the Parents/Guardians (The Education Welfare Act, 2000)
- It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on all work missed through any absence from class.

Procedure for students and their Parents/Guardians to explain their absence from school:

Full Day Absence

- A note with full **explanation of absence should be listed on VS Ware** on/before the day the student returns to school. This is a legal requirement for our attendance report to TUSLA as regular reports are required by this government agency.
- Failure to comply with this requirement will warrant one lunchtime detention.
- After three lunchtime detentions, the Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the school.

Partial Day Absence

All appointments should be made out of school hours.

Partial absences are recorded as follows:

(a) If the student becomes ill during the during the school day

- If a student becomes ill during the school day the school office will telephone the parent/guardian.
Our Acceptable Usage Policy for digital technologies states that students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day, therefore if a student contacts their parent/guardian without going through the school office this will be considered a breach of this policy and therefore the student's mobile phone including SIM card and/or electronic devices including smart watches and smart glasses for a period of 3 school days for the first offence and 5 days for each offence thereafter.
- The parent will be required to collect their daughter at reception and sign her out in the sign out book.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the sign out book is fully completed by their parent/guardian.
- A note with full **explanation of this partial absence must be noted in the student's school diary** on the day the student returns to school.
- If the above procedure is not followed this is considered **absence without permission** and the following sanction will apply i.e. a lunchtime detention for each class period missed will be imposed.
- Failure to produce a note explaining this partial absence on three occasions will result in the Parents/Guardians being contacted by the school.

(b) If a family emergency occurs the during the school day:

- In the event of a family emergency the parent/guardian will contact their daughter through the school office.
Our Acceptable Usage Policy for digital technologies states that students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day, therefore if a parent/guardian contacts daughter without going through the school office this will be considered a breach of this policy and therefore the student's mobile phone including SIM card and/or electronic devices including smart watches and smart glasses for a period of 3 school days for the first offence and 5 days for each offence thereafter.
- The parent will be required to collect their daughter at reception and sign her out in the sign out book.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the sign out book is fully completed by their parent/guardian.

(c) If a student is signing out for an appointment during the school day:

- The note from the parent must **be noted in the student's school diary**.
- This note must be signed by their Year Head before the student is permitted to leave class.
- In the event that their Year Head is unavailable, students will be required to get their note signed by any Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal

- **The subject teacher cannot permit the student to leave their class to sign out unless the student has this note in their diary signed by a parent/guardian and a Year Head as the class teacher is legally responsible for the students they are timetabled with at any given time during the school day.**
- The parent/guardian will be required to collect their daughter at reception and sign her out in the sign out book.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the sign out book is fully completed by their parent/guardian.
- If the above procedure is not followed this is considered **absence without permission** and the following sanction will apply i.e. a lunchtime detention for each class period missed will be imposed.
- Failure to produce a note explaining this partial absence on three occasions will result in the Parents/Guardians being contacted by the school.

(d) If a student is late to school or returning to school after an appointment:

- If a student is late to school and has missed roll call during first class, a note from a parent/guardian with a full explanation as to the reason for their daughter's lateness must **be noted in the student's school diary.**
- Students who are late on three occasions without a note of explanation will be given a sanction of one lunchtime detention.
- Students who are signing in during the school day after they return from an appointment will be required to follow the above procedure also.
- Failure to produce a note explaining this partial absence on three occasions will result in the Parents/Guardians being contacted by the school.

Monitoring Attendance

- When patterns of absence are identified, the school will endeavour to address this issue through engagement with the student and her parent/guardian.
- When 8 full day absences are identified a letter requesting parents to contact the school to arrange an appointment to discuss the matter will be issued.
- The names of students under 16 years who are absent for twenty annually will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Officer in accordance with the Education Welfare Act.

6. Punctuality:

The school day is as follows:

Mon-Thurs: 8.55am to 3.50pm. Breaktime 11.03am-11.15am. Lunchtime 1.15pm-1.50pm

Friday: 8.55am to 1.10pm. Breaktime 11.03am to 11.15am

If a student is late to school or returning to school after an appointment:

- If a student is late to school and has missed roll call during first class, a note from a parent/guardian with a full explanation as to the reason for their daughter's lateness must be noted in the student's school diary.
 - Students who are late on three occasions without a note of explanation will be given a sanction of one lunchtime detention.
 - Students who are signing in during the school day after they return from an appointment will be required to follow the above procedure also.
 - Failure to produce a note explaining this partial absence on three occasions will result in the Parents/Guardians being contacted by the school.
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- An automated text message will be sent to parents/guardians of absent students each morning after 11 am

7. Property

We expect that all students are respectful of school property, the property of others, and their school environment. The school building is home to all of us during our time here and each of us has a right to a clean, safe workplace.

The school assumes that any property on the school grounds in the custody of your daughter is her property as Meánscoil Muire gan Smál cannot accept responsibility for property belonging to parties outside the recognised student and staff body of the school. Any property brought onto the school's grounds by your daughter is done so at her own risk.

- School furniture must not be defaced or wilfully damaged.
- Litter is forbidden, and use should be made of the school bins that are located around the school.
- Books and clothing should be clearly marked with the student's name. It is inadvisable for students to bring items of value to school. School management accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to a student's property. School insurance does not cover loss or damage to bicycles or any other property of the student.
- Students do not bring valuable items to school.
- School bags must remain in the possession of the student or left in the locker room.

School management accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to a student's property. Students/Parents will be required to compensate for loss or damage caused to personal or school property.

8. Student Journal

The student journal is a valuable means of communication between the school and home. All students are required to:

- Keep their journal in their possession at all times during class.
- Keep their journal in good condition.

- Record their homework accurately in their journal.

All first year, second year and third year students are required to get their journal signed by a parent/guardian at the end of each week. Failure to have your journal signed will result in a lunchtime detention.

Transition year students are required to get their journal, class passes and school passes signed by a parent/guardian at the end of each week. Failure to comply with this will result in a lunchtime detention.

9. Lockers

Student lockers are available in the school for each student. This facility is advantageous to students in our school as:

- It prevents students having to carry heavy school bags
- It keeps students' property safe

In order to have the Lockers used to their best advantage, the following rules must be observed:

1. Lockers are for storing books, jackets, phones etc.
2. Students are required to pay an annual fee for the use of the locker.
3. Lockers are allocated at the beginning of each school year by the Year Head, when the fee is paid.
4. Each student is responsible for her own locker and lockers may not be shared.
5. Lockers may be opened on the request of the school management.
6. If students do not use their locker in the appropriate manner the locker may be withdrawn from the student.
7. Lockers must be locked at all times and it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have their locker key with them at all times.
8. It is the responsibility of the student to inform her Year Head that she needs a replacement key if her key is lost. She will be required to pay for the cutting of a replacement key.
9. Lockers which are left open will result in a lunchtime detention.
10. Students are not permitted to go to their lockers between classes.
11. Students may only go to their lockers at the following times:
 - Before first class in the morning
 - Morning break
 - Lunch break
 - After school

10. Prohibitive Substances:

Students are forbidden to take into school or to use any of the following:

- Chewing gum
- Cigarettes
- E-Cigarettes
- Alcoholic Drink

- Other dangerous or illegal substances.

Chewing Gum:

To avoid damage to the general school environment, chewing gum is prohibited in all areas of the school and grounds. Its use may lead to fines, cleaning duties and possibly further sanctions.

Smoking:

In accordance with the Department of Health Regulations, Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 (Section 47) Regulations 2003, smoking is strictly prohibited, inside or outside the school, in the school grounds or in school uniform. To smoke is considered a serious offence and sanctions will be imposed. (See sanctions below). Breaches of this Act may also lead to a fine of up to €3000.

Substance Abuse:

Possession, use or supply of drugs, alcohol or any illegal substance is completely prohibited during the school day, at school functions and on school outings/trips. (See sanctions below).

11. Bullying- verbal, physical or otherwise is **forbidden**, and is considered to be a serious breach of discipline. (See our school's Anti-Bullying Policy).

12. Truancy is forbidden and is considered to be a serious breach of discipline. (See sanctions below).

13. Car Parking: All day parking within school grounds is reserved for staff only. Visitors park in the car-park at the side of the school i.e. at the front of the old convent or in the two designated parking spaces at the G.P. room door.

Every student without exception is expected to observe our school's Code of Behaviour.

SANCTIONS:

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- to reinforce the boundaries set out in the Code of Behaviour.
- to signal to other students and to staff that their well-being is protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- keep the student, or other students, or adults safe.

For the great majority of students, the question of sanctions does not arise. However, sanctions will be applied where breaches of school rules occur.

Depending on the severity of the offence, sanctions may include the following

- Reasoning with student and advice given on how to improve
- Warning/verbal reprimand by teacher and/or extra work given.
- Note in school journal to be signed by parents
- Incident report form to be presented to Year Head
- Detention: Break-time /Lunch-time
- Detention: After-School
- Pupil placed on a report card for a period of time determined by the Deputy Principal. The report card must be signed nightly by parents.
- Pupil may not be permitted to travel on school tours/outings
- Suspension: Internal/External determined by the Principal
- Expulsion

Discipline begins in the classroom and is essential for a good learning environment. In general teachers handle problems and apply their own sanctions.

Steps in the Disciplinary Process

Procedure to deal with unacceptable behaviour or failure to comply with the standards set out by the school is as follows:

1. Reasoning by the subject teacher/staff member and advice given on how to improve.
2. Reprimand and Apology.
3. Teacher notes details of unacceptable behaviour in the student's journal. Parent/Guardian must then sign the journal indicating awareness of this complaint.
4. Student is referred to the Year Head and the persistent behaviour is detailed on a Student Referral Form. A copy of this form is given to the Deputy Principal who in turn sends it to the parents for signing. It is then returned to the school to be kept on file.
5. Break-time and/or Lunchtime Detention is then imposed at the discretion of the Deputy Principal. This is communicated to parents/guardians by a written note in the student's journal.
6. If the behaviour persists, it is recorded on a Student Referral Form and given to the Deputy Principal who will interview the student and issue her with a Report Card (a blank time-table which is signed by the teacher at the end of each class documenting the student's behaviour and/or improvements noted). Parents/Guardians are notified and required to sign the Report Card each night. Each negative comment on a Report Card will result in Break-time and/or Lunchtime Detention. This is communicated to parents/guardians by a written note in the student's journal.
7. If the behaviour continues to persist, the pupil will be brought to the Principal for interview. The student may be placed on After-School Detention. Twenty-four hours notice of the Detention will be given to the parents/guardians on the issue
8. The Principal will arrange a meeting with the Parents/Guardians to discuss the student's continued misbehaviour.

9. Failing resolution of the unacceptable behaviour, the Principal initiates a Student Case Conference attended by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and Staff Members. Case history from previous meetings will be read and documented instances of unacceptable behaviour will be discussed.
10. The decision to suspend/exclude/impose a lesser sanction will be taken by the Principal after the Case Conference. This decision will be recorded and communicated in writing to the parents/guardians at a meeting convened by the Principal for this purpose. The Board of Management will be notified of same.

Students may be interviewed as part of investigations carried out by the school.

Transgressions from the school's Uniform Code will be dealt with by the Deputy Principal as follows:

- Provide the student with the missing item of clothing/footwear for the course of the school day.
- Notify parents/guardians of the breach of Uniform Code on second offence and impose Detention, and Parents/Guardians are expected to supply the missing item of clothing/footwear.
- Failure to comply with the dress code will ultimately result in removal from class.

During the course of school life, some behaviour may require urgent attention and will be referred directly to the Principal, who in turn may impose suspension/other sanctions. The transgressions listed below might fall into this category. (This list is not exhaustive).

- Use of offensive language, and/or abusive behaviour to a staff member or another student.
- Alcohol/ Illegal substance use or possession.
- Truancy/Repeated Truancy.
- Damage to/or theft of school property/ student belongings.
- A student caught smoking on school grounds.
- Bullying of any kind.
- Interference with Fire Alarm/ Smoke Alarm/School CCTV cameras.

Such cases of serious breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour will be dealt with by the Principal as a matter of urgency.

Suspension:

Only the School Principal may suspend a student from school. In the case of serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour, and/or on the grounds of Health and Safety, the Principal can sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion with the Parents/Guardians and a review of the incident. Except in exceptional circumstances, written notification of the suspension and its duration will be given to parents/guardians. The student will be regarded as being in the care of her parents/guardians during the period of her suspension from school.

Return to school following a period of suspension will be subject to the student's signed acceptance of the school Code of Behaviour and may be subject to any further conditions, which the school may deem necessary depending on the circumstances of the suspension.

Expulsion

The Board of Management alone has the power to expel a student. Expulsion is a last resort and is considered when the continued attendance of the student at the school is, in the Board's view, harmful to the education, health and/or safety of other students (or any member of the school community), and when, in the Board's view, the student concerned can no longer benefit from remaining in the school and/or when the student concerned has, through continued misconduct, displayed her unwillingness to accept the standards set out in our Code of Behaviour.

Changes to the Code of Behaviour will occur and are communicated to students and parents/guardians by letter. Students are bound by any changes in the school rules.

Reward System:

We consider that it is important that praise and rewards should have a considerable emphasis within Meánscoil Muire gan Smál, Roscommon. We believe that students should be rewarded for their positive contribution to school life.

A system of informal rewards such as giving praise and encouragement for appropriate behaviour/ improved behaviour in and outside the classroom is encouraged.

A system of rewards may include formal recognition of the following:

- Good attendance
- Outstanding academic achievement
- Outstanding work ethic and effort
- Outstanding contribution to school activities
- Outstanding contribution to sport
- Outstanding student mentor
- Student of the Year nominees
- Overall Student of the Year for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th year.
- Leaving Certificate Student of the Year
- Election of Head Girl/ Deputy Head Girl

Role of Parents/Guardians

Supportive parents/ guardians play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in school.

In particular, parents are requested to:

- Co-operate with the school by encouraging their daughter to abide by the School's Code of Behaviour

- Actively support the school staff in the application of the Code of Behaviour.
- Keep themselves informed of their daughter's behaviour, progress, attendance and punctuality by regularly checking their daughter's journal;
- Contact the school if they are concerned about any aspect of their daughter's behaviour and/or progress. This line of communication to discuss the issue may include Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Career Guidance Counsellor or Subject Teacher. Appointments can be arranged through the school office at 090 6626321.
- In the spirit of good communication, the school will endeavour to keep parents/guardians informed of their daughter's progress and to alert them at an early stage if difficulties arise.

Parents should note that they have the right to appeal any decision to the Principal or to the Board of Management as appropriate.

Health and Safety

The safety of each student is of prime concern to school management and staff. The school has a very clear and comprehensive Health and Safety Policy.

- Students are asked to show courtesy to others on the school premises.
- Students are expected to be vigilant at all times to ensure their safety and the safety of others.
- Students must show respect for all safety notices throughout the school.
- Students should not at any time interfere with the fire alarm/smoke alarm/CCTV cameras.

It is not possible to cover all infringements of behaviour and their eventual sanctions. The Board of Management reserves the right to interpret the above rules and to make the final decision.

Attendance at Meánscoil Muire gan Smál, Roscommon, is conditional on the acceptance of the Code of Behaviour by each student and her parents/guardians. Please sign below and return immediately to the designated Year Head.

Amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be communicated in writing to parents/guardians.

REPLY SLIP

I have read and understood the Code of Behaviour of Meánscoil Muire gan Smál. I have discussed the Code with my daughter and I am happy to support the school by ensuring that my daughter behaves in accordance with the Code. I understand that any future amendments to the Code will be communicated to me in writing.

I agree

I disagree

I have read and understood the Anti-Bullying Policy of Meánscoil Muire gan Smál. I have discussed this policy with my daughter and I am happy to support the school by ensuring that my daughter behaves in accordance with this policy. I understand that any future amendments to the Anti-bullying policy will be communicated to me in writing.

I agree

I disagree

Student's Name: _____ Class _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Enrolment in Meánscoil Muire gan Smál is subject to the parent/guardian signing and agreeing to the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying policy.

PLEASE SIGN AND DETACH THIS REPLY SLIP AND HAND IT TO YOUR YEAR HEAD