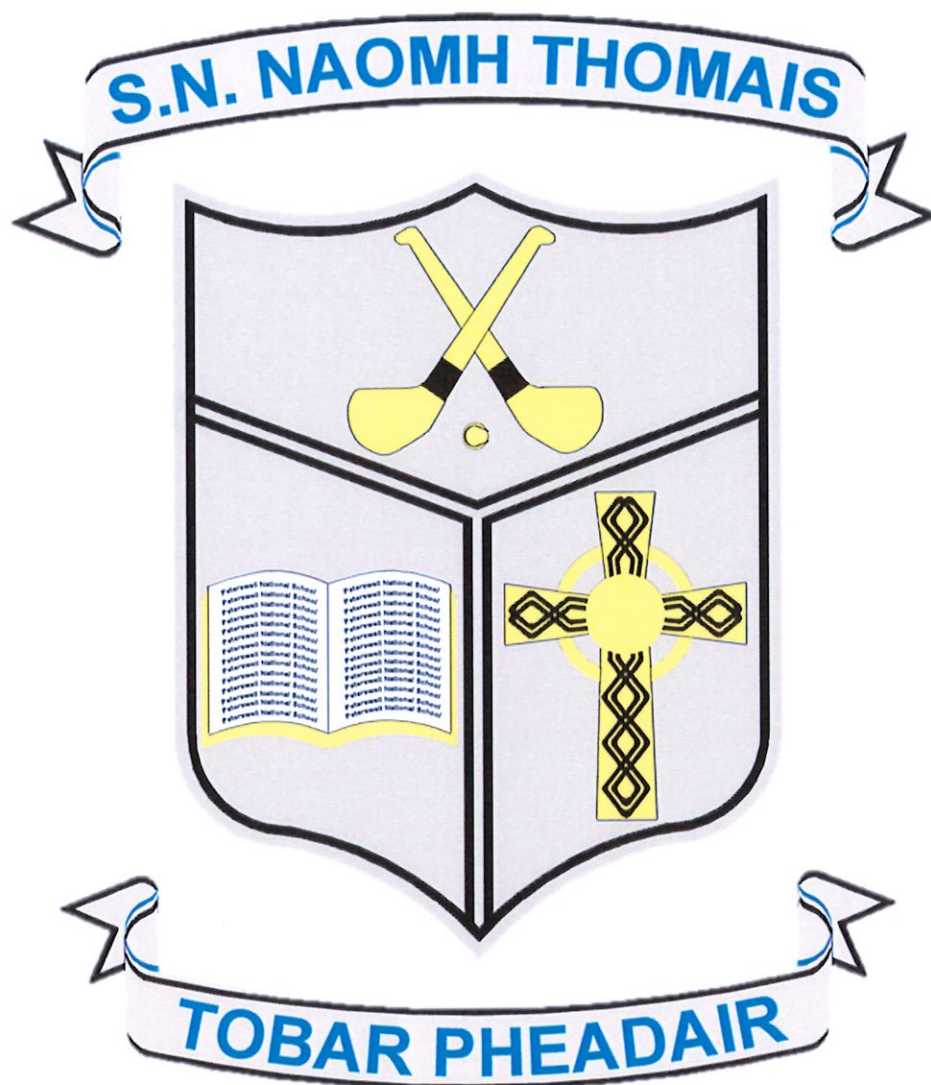




Code of Behaviour Policy

September 2026

Code of Behaviour

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management and staff of SN Naomh Thomáis have formulated a Code of Behaviour. This is a review of the existing policy. This review was co-ordinated by the principal.

In **SN Naomh Thomáis** National School, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

The code of behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe these standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil;
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; See Bí Cineálta Policy
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Policy Formation

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps:

1. Parents were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
2. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of rules with their classes and submit a list of pupils' suggestions to the principal.
3. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
4. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's approval.

Aims and Objectives of the code

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, 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 appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

Whole School Approach

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the code.

Standards of Behaviour

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults.
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings, having their own belongings labelled including coats, sweaters, tracksuit tops and indoor shoes.
- Attend school on a regular basis and be punctual.
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Observe usual courtesies eg. Please, thank you, excuse me etc.
- Walk on the left side of school corridors in a quiet, orderly fashion.
- To address all staff courteously using correct term of address eg. Mrs Jones, Mr. Smith, Teacher etc
- Wear correct school uniform-no jewellery (apart from a watch (no smart watches) and single stud earrings worn on both ears)
- Respect healthy eating and anti-litter policy
- Obey school rules with regard to mobile phones-no mobile phones to be brought to school (unless in exceptional circumstances, see mobile phone policy)

Classroom behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Listen-to the class teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- Work-to the best of his/her ability
- Value-school property and the belongings of fellow pupils
- Follow-the direction of his/her teacher
- Obtain-his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- Sign out in sign out book inside main door if leaving school for medical or dental appointments or any other reason
- Obey classroom rules
- Respect rosters for use of electronic devices.
- Keep classroom reasonably tidy by replacing books, games etc in the appropriate storage area.

Playground (Playing pitches) Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Play-safely avoiding any games or play that is rough or dangerous
- Follow-the directions of the playground supervisors
- Remain-on school grounds at all times
- Obtain-permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- Respect-the yard supervisor(s) and fellow pupils
- Avoid-swearing, fighting or name calling
- Play within designated areas
- Follow roster for playground activities
- Obey any sanctions imposed in playground for breach of playground rules.
- Return to class in an orderly fashion when teacher indicates it is time to do so..

Behaviour in other School Areas and on School Trips

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow-his/her teacher's directions at all times
- Remain-with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- Behave-politely towards those they meet
- Observe-the rules of general good behaviour so that the safety of all concerned is maintained
- Follow the School 'Code of Discipline' and other relevant school policies i.e. 'Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices' Policy
- Respect and obey coach at hurling, camogie, swimming etc.

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class.

They will:

- Discuss the code of behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are regularly reinforced in class and in assembly.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when incidences of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/Guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns. Parents are requested to follow the school complaints procedure and arrange a meeting with the class teacher first through the school office.

In cases of an identified pattern of behaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

Children will be encouraged to take part in sport and games, skipping and board games on wet days as a means to promote good behaviour.

A reward scheme for promoting positive behaviour may be used. Such rewards will include;

- Party Jars
- Extra playtime
- Homework passes
- Award stickers and stamps.
- Monthly Certificates for Random acts of kindness, Students of the Month, Award Wall, Gaelgeoir na Míosa.
- Class treat-eg. Movie at end of term

Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level One

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom and common areas. Students learn from their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers eg. Homework not done or done badly.
- Failure to line up in an orderly, quiet manner when requested to do so
- Running or shouting in the hallways.
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Disrespectful language, tone or manner.
- Ignoring staff requests
- Leaving designated areas in playgrounds without permission.

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at Level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing additional work
- Supervised detention
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact (eg note in diary, phone call)
- Behaviour contract
- School playground-time spent on the bench

Level 1: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as circle time, role play or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation (eg. with parent(s), guardian(s) or staff members).
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.
- Friends for Life

Level Two

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some of the examples of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated incidences of level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Behaviour that is dangerous to others (eg. shoving, pushing, hitting, spitting)
- Behaviour which results in emotional distress (eg. name calling, inappropriate use of photographs and/or comments on social media)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult.
- Possession or use of dangerous items/toys or sporting equipment (e.g. lighters/matches, any kinds of knives, weapons etc)
- Breach of school policy in other areas (e.g. mobile phone and electronic devices policy).

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the principal, and include the formal notification of the parents with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan.

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal/Principal
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- Referral of a child displaying behavioural problems for psychological intervention/assessment (with the parent(s), guardians(s) consent).

Level Three

Level 3: Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and the staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions towards another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap or ethnic origin.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend on the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific documentation about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document.

Level 3: Responses

- Suspension from school for one to five days:

This response will occur with the first incident of level 3 behaviour or level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- Suspension from school for five to ten days:

This response will occur with the repeated incident of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude can only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- Expulsion

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

Procedures for Suspensions and Expulsions

Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'.

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis** has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an immediate suspension to the Principal Teacher. An 'immediate suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'automatic suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An 'automatic suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation, the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'immediate suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'automatic suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of SN Naomh Thomáis having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by health and safety legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or a member of staff.

Or

- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

An 'Automatic Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the named behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an immediate or automatic suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s), guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration 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.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges the decision to impose an immediate or automatic suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

Procedures in respect of other suspensions

In cases other than those of 'Immediate or Automatic Suspension' the following procedures will apply

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis** will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed:

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction is imposed.

The Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No teacher with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/teacher(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- The duration 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
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

When a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion:

'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the 'Education (Welfare) Act 2000'.

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Education Board

Authority to Expel

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

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

- (a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a nominee of the Board if required).

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s), guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond.

- (b) The Principal (or BOM nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management.

Where the Principal (or BOM nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management has been asked to consider expulsion.
 - ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice on the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
 - provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- (c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) recommendations and the holding of a hearing.

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s), guardian(s) will be notified in writing.

- (i) As to the date, location and time of the hearing.
- (ii) Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- (iii) That they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing.

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing, the Board gives an undertaking that;

- (i) The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with the Board procedures.
 - (ii) The principal (or BOM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence.
 - (iii) Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party.
 - (iv) The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for the lesser sanction if they so choose.
- (d) Board of Management Deliberations and Actions following the hearing.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- (i) Will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- (ii) Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.
- (iii) Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Education Welfare Officer is being contacted.
- (iv) Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Education Welfare Officer.
- (v) Will suspend the student if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils and staff.

(e) Confirmation of the decision to Expel.

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent (s)/guardian (s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis** acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- (i) No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision making process.
- (ii) The person(s) involved in the investigation will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision making process.

Notification of a Child's Absence from School

Parents (s)/guardian (s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence:

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school.
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher.
- The absence should be notified in writing by letter/using the school journal.
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason should be provided.
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register. The school is also under obligation to notify TUSLA when a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year.

Records

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's behaviour. This will be stored in a locked cabinet in the child's file in the principal's office. Such records will contain:

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or other agencies (e.g. NEPS Psychologist).
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed and the reasons they were imposed.

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

Policy Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of **SN Naomh Thomáis**

Signed: *Francis Walsh* Date *1/10/26*

(Chairperson, BOM)

Signed *Michael Mulken* Date *1/10/26*

(Principal)

Patron's Approval

This policy has been sent for approval to Mr Pat Kelly, of the Galway Diocese acting on behalf of the Patron, the Bishop of Galway.