

1. Introduction

Gorey Hill School provides an appropriate education for students aged from 4 to 18 years old who have a diagnosis of autism and complex learning needs or complex learning needs. The school is under the patronage of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board.

This Code of Behaviour is drawn up to ensure compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools” (NEWB 2008).

The school will provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with a copy of the Code of Behaviour before enrolment of their child into the school. Parents/Guardians will be asked to confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them prior to enrolment of their child into the school.

2. School Ethos and Characteristic Spirit

Gorey Hill School is a state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a ‘multidenominational’ school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

3. Rationale

This policy was developed to ensure:

- A positive, non-confrontational and autism friendly learning environment for our students.
- That every effort is made to create an environment where our students and the school community
- are safe in the school.
- That best practice in relation to promoting positive behaviour is maintained throughout the
- school.
- That the school functions in an orderly and harmonious way.

4. A Partnership Approach

This policy has been developed in line with the ethos of Gorey Hill School. The objective of our policy is to create a respectful, tolerant and caring environment, in which every individual is given the best possible opportunity to grow and develop in a safe and positive environment. The Code of Behaviour applies in school and at school events or activities.

5. Aims of the Code of Behaviour

- To promote a positive and a safe learning and working environment for all students, staff and visitors.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To support the delivery of teaching and learning.
- To work in partnership to create a positive atmosphere and culture in the school where each student and staff member feels valued.
- To encourage high expectations of all students in learning and in behaviour.
- To modify behaviour through developing a positive, structured approach to correction. We will endeavour to do this by providing clear and secure boundaries within which the student's school day is structured, by encouraging student success, building their self-esteem and modifying inappropriate behaviour.
- To respect and to safeguard the rights and the dignity of every member of the school community.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where students can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.
- To assist staff, parents/guardians and students in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of this Code of Behaviour and to seek the cooperation of all in the application of these procedures.

6. School Context

Gorey Hill School is a Special School that provides an appropriate education for students, aged 4 to 18 years old, who have a diagnosis of autism and complex learning needs or complex learning needs, with a professional recommendation for a special school. The management of student behaviour will take account of this fact and decisions will be made in this context.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All school staff have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with students and with each other.

The Board of Management

- Is responsible for ensuring that Code of Behaviour is prepared, reviewed, ratified and implemented in the school.
- Has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for students and staff in Gorey Hill School.
- Supports the Principal and staff in implementing the policy.

- Is responsible for fulfilling responsibilities in terms of applying the sanctions of suspension and expulsion when necessary.

The Principal

- Has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour in a fair and consistent manner.
- Creates and promotes a positive culture within Gorey Hill school.
- Provides opportunities for and supports appropriate staff professional development.
- Ensures that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arranges for the review of the Code as required.

Teachers

- Promote and contribute to the development and maintenance of a positive climate in the classroom and in the school community.
- Create a positive learning environment that encourages and supports good behaviour.
- Implement the Code of Behaviour in a fair, consistent, appropriate and reasonable manner.
- Write/update Behaviour Support Plans in consultation with parents/guardians, SNAs and appropriate outside agencies.
- Plan activities to minimise opportunities for disruptive behaviour.
- Keep appropriate records of instances of misbehaviour.
- Communicate with parents/guardians, in accordance with the school policy on communicating with parents/guardians on matters of concern in a timely manner.
- Complete appropriate professional development and participate in any mandatory training as required by the principal/WWETB.

Special Needs Assistants and other school staff

- Promote a positive climate in the classroom and in the school community.
- Contribute to a positive learning environment that encourages and supports good behaviour.
- Is aware of their role within the school in relation to student behaviour.
- Complete appropriate professional development and participate in any mandatory training as required by the principal/WWETB.

Students

- Are responsible for doing their best to adhere to the Code of Behaviour.
- Are encouraged to assist staff in the maintenance of a positive and a safe environment for learning.
- Do their best to understand and practice school rules.
- Do their best to cooperate with staff.
- Do their best to treat other students and staff with respect.

Parents/Guardians

- Support their child in the understanding and the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any issues which may affect their child's behaviour or general well-being.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect.
- Ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually. The school will comply with the statutory requirements regarding the notification of student absences.
- Work collaboratively with the staff on the implementation of any behaviour support plans designed for their child.
- Attend meetings as requested by the teacher/management of Gorey Hill School.

8. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Communication with Parents/Guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to issues concerning their child's wellbeing and education. A high level of cooperation and open communication is seen as an

important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to talk in confidence to the principal and/or teachers about any significant developments in their child's life which may affect the child's behaviour. The methods of parent/guardian-teacher communication used include:

- Student Support file meetings/review meetings
- Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Text messages from the school to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Phone calls from school to parent(s)/guardian(s) and from parent(s)/guardian(s) to school.
- Notes from school to parent(s)/guardian(s) and from parent(s)/guardian(s) to school.
- Letters and emails from school to parent(s)/guardian(s) and from parent(s)/guardian(s) to school.
- Communication via the school website.
- Communication via a communication journal.
- Communications via approved school software platforms that may be used by the school.
- All communication between parents/guardians and school staff should be respectful and considerate of normal working hours.

9. School Rules

Together we work towards standards of behaviour that are based on four general principles:

- Everyone has a right to be safe and to feel safe.
- All students have a right to learn.
- All teachers have a right to teach.
- School property must not be willfully damaged.

General School Rules

- We listen to each other and to staff.
- We walk in school.
- We are kind and gentle with each other.
- We do what our teacher/SNA asks us to do.
- We look after ourselves and our belongings in school.
- We take care with the belongings of others.
- We take care of our classroom.
- We are honest.
- We do our best.

Playground Rules

- We stay in our playground.
- We are kind to each other.
- We take turns.
- We speak kindly to each other.
- We do what our teacher/SNA asks us to do.
- We wait until our teacher and/or SNA collects us from the playground.

Transport Rules

- We stay in our seats until it is time to get off the bus.
- We wear our seatbelts.
- We are kind and gentle with each other.
- We do what our teacher, SNA, bus escort or driver asks us to do.

In addition, each class teacher will develop and maintain class rules appropriate to the age and needs of the students. The class teacher and SNAs will work collaboratively in the implementation of these class rules.

10. School Incentives

Good behaviour is acknowledged, encouraged and rewarded. There is a whole school approach to affirming and promoting good behaviour. A system of incentives and awards will be used to encourage students to follow the school rules.

Examples of some incentives that are regularly used include:

- Verbal praise and encouragement of positive behaviour.
- Displays of student work.
- Reward systems such as tokens, score boards, certificates of achievement/effort, visual charts or choosing a preferred activity.
- Giving the student the responsibility of important jobs in the classroom or in the school.
- A positive comment sent home in a student's communication journal.
- Giving the student extra time on preferred activity.
- The use of positive stickers, certificates or similar.
- The use of restorative practices.

11. Limitations

This policy is not designed to list all the possible violations which may arise or to state all of the possible consequences of all unacceptable behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the student, the teacher, the SNAs, the principal and parent/guardians of students to be used to solve individual problems as they occur.

12. Unacceptable Behaviour

While we endeavor to achieve the highest level of good behaviour amongst our students, we recognise that when implementing the policy, consideration must always be given to the level of understanding of the individual student.

Instances of minor misbehaviour are dealt with by the appropriate staff member. Parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage in the management of their child's behaviour. Where minor misbehaviour is persistent, a Behaviour Support Plan with appropriate interventions and strategies will be employed. These measures will be reviewed, monitored, and evaluated on an ongoing basis for individual students.

Some examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Littering on school grounds
- Disruption of learning
- Use of bad language
- Use of a mobile phone
- Refusal to follow instructions

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Possible interventions:

- Use of facial expression, firm tone and/or distracting activity.
- Use of quiet time – removal from the group under adult supervision.
- Removal of others from the vicinity of the child or removal to an appropriate area for safety and/or self/sooth reasons.
- Asking the Deputy Principal/Principal to speak to the child.
- Confiscation of inappropriate items
- Note in the student journal.
- In school detention or loss of privileges
- Restitution of the school/classroom environment following disruptive behaviour
- Use of restorative practices
- Use of modified timetable/reduced school day
- Use of appropriate resources to assist the student to regulate their behaviour.

Students will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health and safety. Continuous instances of unacceptable behaviour may lead to an escalation to more serious sanctions described below.

13. Individual Instances of challenging behaviour

In the event of an episode of extreme challenging behaviour where the principal and class team deem that there is a safety concern for staff and students and in the interest of the safety of all, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to collect the student from school at the time of the incident.

14. Gross Misbehaviour

Gross misbehaviour refers to repeated examples of serious misconduct or an individual example of very serious misconduct. Examples include:

- Any behaviour that poses a risk to the welfare of another student or staff member.
- Threatening, aggressive, intimidatory or violent behaviour towards staff or other students.
- Causing physical hurt to others by pushing, kicking, biting, spitting, punching or any form of assault.
- Possession of a dangerous weapon or an object which may be classified as a weapon.
- Continuous disruption of the learning environment.
- Leaving the school/school grounds without permission from staff.
- Bullying. Instances of bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Full parental cooperation will be expected when dealing with instances of bullying.
- Smoking/vaping on school property
- Possession or using illegal substances including alcohol, drugs or other contraband substances within the school grounds.
- A serious breach of the schools Acceptable Use Policy (ICT)
- Theft
- Truancy/ Unapproved absences.
- Damage to school property that disrupts normal school activities.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour/sexual assault.

15. Possible Sanctions for Gross Misbehaviour

In the case of gross misbehaviour all sanctions up to and including suspension and expulsion will be considered depending on the specific circumstances involved in the misbehaviour. In consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) an Individualised Behaviour Plan will be put in place where a student is suspended due to exhibiting persistent serious misbehaviour or due to an instance of gross misbehaviour.

Expulsion may be considered for a stand-alone incident of gross misbehaviour. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel include, but are not limited to:

- A series act of violence towards another person/ physical assault
- Possession of/ supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

16. Procedures for dealing with a Suspension or Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be utilised. Suspension and expulsion will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Full details of the policy and procedures for suspension are provided in Appendix A which forms part of this Code of Behaviour.

Full details of the policy and procedures for suspension are provided in Appendix B which forms part of this Code of Behaviour.

22. Record Keeping

A standardised system of record keeping for the recording of misbehaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will be in line with the school's Records Retention Schedule.

A standardised recording system will allow the school to track each student's behaviour and check whether efforts to change negative behaviours are working.

A written record of behaviour may be kept in relation to a student's behaviour in the classroom or when engaging in any other school activity.

23. Notification of a Child's absence from School

A Code of Behaviour must describe the procedures to be followed by parents when they are notifying the school about a child's absence. The procedures to be followed by parents in relation to a child's absence are:

- Students are expected to attend school on all official school days.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must inform the school of their child's absence for any reason.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must inform the school on the first day of absence by phoning the school and on the child's return to school by means of a written explanation for the absence.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) can inform the school if they know in advance of the absence.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) need to inform the school about the reasons for absence following a period of absence.
- Failure to notify the school about a student's absence will be followed up by phone call/text message/email from the teacher.
- Parents will be notified when their child's attendance is a cause of concern (15 days).
- TUSLA will be notified when a child has been absent for 20 days.

24. Ratification and review

This policy was ratified by the Single Manager/ Board of Management on 26/01/2024.

The next review of the policy will be in 2025.

Signed: 

26/01/2024

Appendix A: Suspension Policy and Procedure

Suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school and school grounds for a specified, limited period of school days. During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

Suspension is designed to address the student's behaviour. It is envisaged that any period of suspension:

- enables the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- gives school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impresses on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

The grounds for suspension

Suspension is used as a proportionate response to 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.

Factors that will be considered before suspending a student

1. *The nature, seriousness and persistency of the behaviour*
2. *The context of the behaviour*
3. *The impact of the behaviour on other students and staff, teaching and learning in the class group and the student concerned.*
4. *The interventions tried to date, including involvement of internal supports and supports from external agencies and services.*
5. *Whether suspension is a proportionate response to the behaviour.*
6. *The possible impact of suspension.*

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. Fair procedures must still be applied.

The Board of Management/Single Manger of Gorey Hill School has decided that, as part of the school policy on sanctions, that the incidents of gross misbehaviours as listed it the Code of Behaviour incur suspension as a sanction. The decision to impose suspension for these named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case.

Any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour must be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Procedures in respect of suspension

The school is committed to following fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student in line with relevant legislation. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will:

1. Inform the student and their parents/guardians about the issue, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone and/or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.
2. Give parents/guardians an opportunity to respond by phone, in writing or by attending a meeting, whichever is deemed most appropriate in the circumstances.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected, brought home or sent home with the agreement of parents/guardians. The school has regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

Implementing the suspension

The principal will 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
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Department of Education, if appropriate

Records and reports

Written records will be kept of:

- the investigation
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

Authority to suspend and the period of suspension

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

The Board of Management/Single Manager of Gorey Hill School has delegated to the principal, the authority to suspend a student for a maximum period of three days.

Students may be referred to The Board of Management for a review of their behaviour. The Board of Management may decide to suspend a student for a longer period of time. This will normally be a maximum period of ten days, except in circumstances where the Board of Management considers that a longer period of suspension is needed.

The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The provisions mean that the Board of Management takes ultimate responsibility for sanctions of significant length, especially where such suspensions might reach twenty days in one school year and therefore might lead to an appeal.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension. Students may be readmitted on a phased basis should this be considered necessary.

Appeals

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Secretary General of the Department of Education directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Appendix B: Expulsion Policy & Procedure

A student is expelled from the 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.

The Board of Management of Gorey Hill School has the authority to expel a student as devolved by Waterford & Wexford ETB.

The grounds for expulsion

Gorey Hill School considers that the expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that shall only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will endeavour to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried seeking the assistance of support agencies

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

The Board of Management of Gorey Hill School has decided that, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, that the incidents of gross misbehaviours as listed in the Code of Behaviour may incur expulsion as a sanction.

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

- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to others in the school
- sexual assault.

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management will undertake a very detailed review of the following factors in deciding whether to expel a student:

1. *The nature and seriousness of the behaviour*
2. *The context of the behaviour*
3. *The impact of the behaviour*
4. *The interventions tried to date*
5. *Whether expulsion is a proportionate response*
6. *The possible impact of expulsion*

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Gorey Hill School 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/Single Manager of the principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management/Single Manager deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management/Single Manager of Gorey Hill School has decided that the above procedural steps at 2, 3, & 4 can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice (at least 7 calendar days) of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Step 1 A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the principal will:

- inform the student and their parents (in writing) about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed. This will include a meeting with the principal, parents and the student and any other relevant personnel.

Step 2 A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

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

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

Step 3 Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. No party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case will be part of the Board's deliberations.

Where a Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board shall facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board shall ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)). The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).

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

Step 5 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

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

Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, a Board of Management/Single Manager may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained, and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the principal shall on behalf of the Board of Management formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents shall be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record shall be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by TUSLA on behalf of a student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management shall review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.