



Code of Behaviour

Edel Quinn School

Boghall Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Rolla 20610P

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1. Introduction

Edel Quinn School is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive and supportive learning environment in which every student is treated with dignity, compassion and respect.

The Code of Behaviour has been developed in recognition of the particular profile of students attending Edel Quinn School. Our students have autism and complex needs and may experience differences in communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation, cognition, social interaction and adaptive functioning.

For this reason, behaviour cannot be considered in isolation from the individual student, their developmental profile, communication needs, sensory needs, environment and circumstances.

At Edel Quinn School, we recognise that behaviour has meaning and may be an important form of communication.

Our approach therefore seeks to understand:

- What might this behaviour be communicating or indicating?
- What need may be underlying the behaviour?
- What stressors or demands may be contributing to dysregulation?
- What environmental factors may be contributing?
- What changes or supports may help?
- What skills can we support the student to develop?
- How can the adults around the student respond consistently and supportively?

The school adopts a relationship-based, regulation-first, individualised and rights-based approach to supporting student behaviour.

2. Application of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour applies during the school day, on school premises and, where appropriate, during school tours, educational visits, sporting activities, school transport and other activities organised by or on behalf of the school.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

The Code of Behaviour has been developed in accordance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and takes account of current legislation, Department of Education guidance and national good practice.

In particular, the Code of Behaviour is informed by:

- Education Act 1998, as amended;
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004;
- Equal Status Acts 2000–2018;
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018;
- Children First Act 2015;
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005;
- NEWB *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*;
- Department of Education *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations – Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students*;
- Department of Education Circular 0081/2024;
- Department of Education Circular 0042/2026;
- NCSE *Relate: A Regulation-First Approach to Reframing Behaviour and Supporting Student Engagement and Participation*;
- *Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools – Supporting Children and Young People*;
- *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*; and
- relevant Department of Education, Tusla/TESS and NCSE guidance as updated from time to time.

The Code of Behaviour should be read alongside other relevant school policies and procedures, including the school's:

- Acceptable Use Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Attendance Strategy;
- Bí Cineálta Policy;
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment;
- Critical Incident Management Plan;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Statement;

- Intimate Care Policy;
- Parent/School Communication Policy;
- Procedures relating to behaviours of concern and crisis situations; and
- Other relevant policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Management.

4. Characteristic Spirit and Ethos

Edel Quinn School is a Catholic special school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin which welcomes and respects students and families of all faiths and none.

The approach to behaviour reflects our commitment to the dignity and worth of every person.

We aim to create a school community characterised by:

Kindness – Respect – Safety – Understanding – Inclusion – Compassion – High Expectations

We recognise that students learn and develop best when they feel safe, understood, connected and appropriately supported.

Positive relationships between students, staff, families and the wider school community are therefore central to this Code.

5. Aims of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour aims to:

- safeguard the dignity, wellbeing and rights of every student;
- promote the safety and welfare of students and staff;
- create a calm, predictable and supportive environment for learning;
- foster positive relationships throughout the school community;
- support students to develop communication, regulation, independence and social skills according to their individual abilities;
- promote student participation and engagement in school life;
- understand behaviour within the context of the individual student;
- recognise and reduce stressors which may contribute to dysregulation;
- promote positive behaviour through proactive, preventative and individualised supports;
- ensure responses to behaviour are fair, proportionate and appropriate to each student's developmental level and individual needs;

- support staff to respond consistently and compassionately to behaviours of concern;
- ensure effective collaboration between home and school;
- protect the right of all students to access education in a safe and supportive environment; and
- ensure procedures relating to serious incidents, suspension and expulsion comply with relevant legislation and national guidance.

6. Our Understanding of Communication and Behaviour

Edel Quinn School recognises that all students communicate, but not all students are able to intentionally or independently communicate what they need, want, feel or understand.

Some students may communicate through speech, Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), Lámh, symbols, gesture or other recognised communication systems. Other students may communicate primarily through their behaviour, facial expression, body movement, vocalisation, changes in regulation, approach or avoidance.

For some students, communication may be pre-intentional or non-symbolic, and the student may not yet have a reliable means of communicating a particular need.

Behaviour may communicate, or indicate, factors such as:

- discomfort or pain;
- sensory overload or sensory need;
- anxiety or distress;
- tiredness or hunger;
- a wish to stop or escape an activity;
- difficulty understanding what is expected;
- a need for predictability;
- difficulty coping with change or transition;
- a need for connection, reassurance or co-regulation; or
- a need which the student is not yet able to identify or communicate in another way.

Behaviour may also be influenced by:

- physical health;
- developmental level;
- cognitive profile;

- previous experiences;
- trauma;
- relationships;
- environmental demands;
- task demands;
- communication difficulties; and
- the student's individual neurodevelopmental profile.

Staff have a responsibility to observe, interpret and seek to understand each student's individual communication, rather than assuming that a student is deliberately refusing to communicate or comply.

Where behaviour appears to serve a communicative function, the school's response will focus on understanding that function and, where possible, teaching and supporting a safer, more effective and accessible means of communication.

The school's primary question is therefore not:

"How do we stop this behaviour?"

but rather:

"What might this behaviour be communicating or indicating, what is happening for this student, and what support does this student need?"

7. A Regulation-First Approach

Edel Quinn School is guided by the principles of the NCSE Relate framework and adopts a regulation-first approach.

Regulation can affect a student's:

- energy;
- emotions;
- attention;
- communication;
- engagement; and
- behaviour.

A student who is significantly dysregulated may temporarily have reduced capacity to communicate, process language, solve problems, follow instructions or reflect upon consequences.

Staff responses will therefore take account of the student's state of regulation.

Where a student is becoming dysregulated, the immediate priority will generally be to:

1. maintain safety;
2. reduce stressors and unnecessary demands;
3. support regulation;
4. maintain connection and trust;
5. provide access to the student's communication and sensory supports;
6. allow appropriate time and space;
7. support recovery; and
8. return to teaching, reflection or problem-solving when the student is ready and where this is appropriate to their developmental level.

8. Neurodiversity-Affirming Practice

Edel Quinn School recognises and respects neurodiversity.

Not every behaviour which appears unusual to others is a behaviour that needs to be changed.

Behaviours such as:

- stimming;
- repetitive movements;
- repetitive speech or vocalisations;
- movement seeking;
- sensory seeking;
- avoidance of eye contact;
- preference for routine;
- use of alternative communication;
- need for additional processing time; or
- individual methods of self-regulation

will not be treated as inappropriate merely because they differ from neurotypical expectations.

Intervention is considered where behaviour significantly affects the student's own safety, wellbeing, learning or participation, or the safety, wellbeing, learning or rights of others.

9. Student Voice and Participation

Every student has a right to have their views, preferences and experiences considered.

Edel Quinn School recognises that student voice does not depend upon a student's ability to use spoken language or a formal communication system.

Students may express themselves through:

- speech;
- Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC);
- Lámh;
- symbols or photographs;
- objects of reference;
- gesture;
- facial expression;
- body movement;
- vocalisation;
- approach and avoidance;
- changes in behaviour or regulation; and
- other individual forms of communication.

For students who cannot independently communicate their views or needs, staff will use their knowledge of the student, careful observation, information from parents/guardians and relevant professional guidance to seek to understand the student's preferences and experiences.

A student's behaviour will never automatically be interpreted as deliberate non-compliance where communication, sensory, regulation, cognitive or developmental factors may be contributing.

10. Expectations for Students

Expectations at Edel Quinn School must be meaningful and accessible to students with a wide range of developmental, cognitive and communication profiles.

Our shared messages are:

- We help everyone to be safe.
- We treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- We help each other to learn.

These messages will be taught and represented in ways appropriate to individual students. Expectations will be individualised and appropriate to each student's developmental level, communication profile and capacity.

Students will be supported to understand and participate in these expectations to the greatest extent possible for them.

No student will be sanctioned for being unable to demonstrate a skill that is beyond their current developmental, cognitive, sensory, emotional or communication capacity.

Where a student does not yet have the skills required to meet an expectation, the school's responsibility is to teach, support and adapt, rather than simply demand compliance.

11. Supporting Functional Communication

Developing each student's ability to communicate is a central part of promoting positive behaviour, participation and wellbeing.

Where appropriate, students will be explicitly supported to develop ways of communicating important messages such as:

- yes/no;
- stop/finished;
- help;
- break;
- more;
- not that/don't want;
- pain/discomfort;
- toilet;
- hungry/thirsty; and
- other messages which are meaningful and functional for the individual student.

The communication method used will be determined by the needs of the student and may include speech, gesture, Lámh, objects of reference, photographs, symbols, communication boards, Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices or other appropriate systems.

The goal is not to require a particular form of communication, but to ensure that each student has access to the most effective and accessible means available to them to express themselves and influence what happens around them.

12. Promoting Positive Behaviour and Engagement

Positive behaviour and engagement are most effectively promoted through prevention, positive relationships, appropriate communication and good teaching.

Strategies used throughout the school may include:

- warm and trusting relationships;
- predictable routines;
- visual schedules and timetables;
- clear and accessible communication;
- Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Lámh;
- structured teaching approaches;
- sensory regulation opportunities;
- movement breaks;
- access to appropriate calm or regulation spaces;
- choice and student agency;
- preparation for transitions;
- social narratives;
- modelling;
- co-regulation;
- explicit teaching of emotional regulation where appropriate;
- teaching functional communication;
- meaningful positive reinforcement;
- opportunities for success;

- adapting tasks and environments;
- reducing unnecessary demands;
- recognising early signs of stress;
- providing adequate processing time;
- access to preferred or regulating activities;
- individualised supports; and
- consistent approaches across the class team.

Praise and reinforcement will be meaningful, age-appropriate and individualised.

13. Behaviours of Concern

For the purposes of the Code of Behaviour, a behaviour of concern is behaviour which, because of its intensity, frequency, duration or impact, may significantly interfere with the student's or others' safety, wellbeing, participation, learning or quality of life.

Examples may include:

- physical aggression;
- self-injurious behaviour;
- significant property destruction;
- behaviours presenting an immediate safety risk;
- unsafe attempts to leave a supervised area;
- serious verbal threats;
- harmful sexualised behaviour; or
- other behaviour presenting a significant risk to the student or others.

The presence of a behaviour of concern does not mean that the student is a "challenging", "bad" or "difficult" student.

The behaviour and the student are always considered separately.

14. Understanding Behaviours of Concern

Where behaviours of concern occur repeatedly, the school will seek to understand the factors contributing to them.

Depending upon the student's needs, this may include:

- careful observation;
- seeking the student's perspective in an accessible way;
- consultation with parents/guardians;
- review of communication needs;
- review of sensory and environmental factors;
- identification of potential stressors;
- consideration of health or medical factors;
- review of curriculum and task demands;
- examination of patterns surrounding incidents;
- collection and analysis of appropriate behavioural data;
- consultation with NCSE and/or relevant professionals; and
- review of the student's existing supports.

Where appropriate, a functional approach may be used to consider the factors which precede, maintain or influence a behaviour.

The purpose of collecting information is to understand and support the student, not simply to record incidents.

15. Individual Behaviour Support Planning

Where a student requires additional support, an individual Behaviour Support Plan or equivalent individualised plan may be developed.

This will normally form part of, or operate alongside, the student's Student Support Plan.

A Behaviour Support Plan should identify, as appropriate:

- the student's strengths and interests;
- communication profile;
- known stressors;
- early signs of dysregulation;
- proactive supports;
- environmental adaptations;

- regulation strategies;
- communication supports;
- skills to be explicitly taught;
- appropriate replacement skills or behaviours;
- strategies for responding to increasing dysregulation;
- approaches during crisis;
- recovery and re-engagement strategies;
- student voice and preferences;
- parent/guardian input; and
- arrangements for monitoring and review.

Plans will focus not only on reducing behaviours of concern but on increasing skills, participation, communication, independence, regulation and wellbeing.

Plans will be developed collaboratively by the class team, with parents/guardians and, where appropriate, the student and relevant professionals.

16. Responding to Dysregulation

Staff will seek to recognise early signs of dysregulation and intervene calmly and proactively.

Depending upon the individual student, responses may include:

- reducing verbal language;
- adjusting tone and body language;
- providing additional processing time;
- reducing environmental stimulation;
- reducing or temporarily removing demands;
- offering or facilitating a break;
- using familiar visuals or communication supports;
- offering regulating sensory input;
- providing movement;
- redirecting;
- changing the activity or environment;

- supporting functional communication;
- giving appropriate space;
- co-regulation;
- removing unnecessary audiences;
- moving other students where necessary for safety; and
- implementing strategies contained in the student's individual plan.

Staff will avoid escalating interactions through unnecessary confrontation, repeated verbal demands or punitive responses to dysregulation.

17. Crisis Situations

A crisis situation may arise where a student's behaviour presents an imminent risk of serious physical harm or injury to the student or to another person.

Edel Quinn School recognises that crisis situations should, wherever possible, be prevented through positive relationships, appropriate communication supports, regulation-focused practice, environmental adaptation, early intervention and de-escalation.

Where a crisis situation occurs, the immediate priority is the safety and wellbeing of the student and others.

Staff will respond in accordance with the Department of Education's *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations – Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students*, Circular 0081/2024, Circular 0042/2026, and any subsequent Department of Education or NCSE guidance.

Wherever possible, staff will:

- recognise and respond to early signs of distress or dysregulation;
- reduce unnecessary demands and environmental stressors;
- use the student's known communication, sensory and regulation supports;
- use calm and appropriate communication;
- allow appropriate processing time and space;
- use de-escalation strategies;
- support co-regulation;
- reduce risk within the environment; and

- follow the student's individual Behaviour Support Plan, Student Support Plan and/or risk assessment where applicable.

The least restrictive response appropriate to the circumstances will always be prioritised.

The Department's guidance places a strong emphasis on prevention, early intervention and de-escalation, with physical restraint only considered as a measure of last resort.

18. Physical Restraint

Edel Quinn School recognises physical restraint as an act of care and a measure of last resort.

Physical restraint is not a behaviour-management strategy, teaching strategy or sanction and will never be used as a punitive response to a student's behaviour.

Physical restraint may only be used in an emergency or crisis situation where there is an imminent risk of serious physical harm or injury to the student or another person, and where less restrictive approaches have been unsuccessful or are not practicable in the circumstances.

Where physical restraint is necessary, it must:

- be used solely for reasons of safety;
- never be punitive;
- never be used as a teaching strategy;
- be proportionate to the level of risk;
- involve the least amount of force necessary to maintain safety;
- be used for the shortest amount of time necessary;
- preserve the dignity of the student;
- take account of the student's individual needs and vulnerabilities; and
- cease as soon as the immediate risk has passed.

The school recognises that physical restraint can result in injury and can increase physical and emotional stress for both students and adults. It may also provoke a more intense physical response. For these reasons, prevention, early intervention, regulation and de-escalation will always be prioritised.

Physical restraint will only be used in accordance with current Department of Education guidance and the school's associated procedures.

The Department describes restraint as strictly a last-resort measure where there is an imminent risk of serious physical harm or injury; it is not to be used for discipline.

19. Recording, Reporting and Review of Physical Restraint

Every incident involving the use of physical restraint will be appropriately recorded, reported, reviewed and monitored. Edel Quinn School will comply with the recording and reporting requirements contained in the Department of Education's *Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations – Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students* and Circular 0081/2024, together with the updated monitoring and oversight arrangements contained in Circular 0042/2026 and any subsequent Department of Education or NCSE requirements.

Circular 0081/2024 specifically addresses the process for recording and reporting physical restraint in schools. Circular 0042/2026 subsequently provides updated arrangements relating to training, monitoring and oversight.

Following an incident involving physical restraint:

- the incident will be reported to the Principal;
- an appropriate record of the incident will be completed;
- parents/guardians will be informed in accordance with Department of Education and Youth guidance and school procedures;
- the incident will be reported through the appropriate school governance and oversight arrangements;
- incidents of physical restraint will be reported to the NCSE in accordance with current reporting requirements;
- the student's immediate physical and emotional wellbeing will be considered;
- staff involved will have an appropriate opportunity to debrief and review the incident;
- consideration will be given to what preceded and contributed to the crisis;
- preventative and de-escalation strategies will be reviewed;
- consideration will be given to whether the student's Student Support Plan, Behaviour Support Plan, risk assessment or other relevant supports require review; and
- any learning arising from the incident will inform future planning and support for the student.

Since September 2025, schools are required to report instances of physical restraint to the NCSE, in addition to reporting through school management/governance arrangements.

The purpose of recording and reviewing an incident is not simply administrative. It is to support accountability, transparency, learning and the prevention of future crisis situations, while ensuring the safety, dignity and wellbeing of the student and others.

20. Seclusion

Seclusion will not be used in Edel Quinn School.

A student will not be involuntarily placed alone in a room or area from which they are physically prevented from leaving.

This does not prevent a student from independently choosing, or being supported, to access an appropriate calm, quiet or sensory space for regulation, provided that the student is not prevented from leaving and is appropriately supervised in accordance with their individual needs.

21. Following a Significant Incident

Following a significant incident, the focus will be on recovery, reconnection, learning and prevention.

The student's readiness and ability to engage will always be considered.

Depending upon the circumstances, this may involve:

- providing the student with time to recover;
- attending to medical or care needs;
- supporting other students affected;
- supporting staff affected;
- staff debriefing;
- informing parents/guardians;
- objectively recording the incident;
- reviewing potential triggers or stressors;
- reviewing environmental factors;
- reviewing the student's support plan;
- considering whether additional supports are required;
- supporting repair of relationships where appropriate; and
- identifying learning which may reduce the likelihood or impact of future incidents.

A student returning to learning following dysregulation will be supported without shame or unnecessary re-punishment.

22. Responses to Inappropriate Behaviour

Responses to inappropriate behaviour will be:

- individualised;
- proportionate;
- respectful;
- developmentally appropriate;
- consistent with the student's communication and cognitive abilities;
- focused wherever possible on teaching rather than punishment; and
- mindful of the factors underlying the behaviour.

Possible responses may include:

- redirection;
- reminders or visual prompts;
- re-teaching expectations;
- restorative conversation where appropriate;
- supporting the student to repair harm where they have the capacity to do so;
- temporary change of activity or environment;
- additional regulation support;
- increased supervision;
- review of environmental or communication supports;
- parent/guardian consultation;
- review or development of an individual Behaviour Support Plan;
- consultation with school management;
- seeking additional professional or NCSE support; and
- in exceptional circumstances, suspension or expulsion in accordance with statutory procedures.

23. Restorative Approaches

Where developmentally and communicatively appropriate, students will be supported to understand the impact of their actions and to repair relationships.

Restorative approaches may include:

- acknowledging what happened;
- checking that everyone is safe;
- communicating feelings or needs;
- repairing or replacing something damaged;
- practising an alternative response;
- making an apology where meaningful and understood;
- reconnecting with another person; and
- considering what may help next time.

Restorative practice will not be used to force a student to apologise for behaviour which occurred when they did not have the developmental, cognitive, communicative or regulatory capacity to understand or control their actions.

24. Partnership with Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are essential partners in supporting students.

The school recognises that families hold valuable knowledge regarding their child's communication, regulation, health, sensory profile, interests, preferences and behaviour.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- share relevant information with the school;
- communicate significant changes which may affect their child;
- participate in Student Support Plan and Behaviour Support Plan meetings;
- share strategies which are successful at home;
- engage collaboratively with the school where concerns arise; and
- support agreed approaches where appropriate.

The school will endeavour to maintain open, respectful and solution-focused communication with families.

Where significant or ongoing behaviours of concern arise, home-school communication will form an important part of planning and review.

25. Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- ensure that an appropriate Code of Behaviour is developed and implemented;
- ensure compliance with relevant legislation and national guidance;
- support the principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour;
- ensure appropriate oversight of practices relating to behaviours of concern;
- support access to relevant professional learning and training;
- monitor matters relating to health and safety; and
- exercise its statutory functions in relation to suspension and expulsion.

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and will:

- promote a whole-school regulation-first approach;
- ensure staff are aware of relevant policies and procedures;
- support staff in responding to behaviours of concern;
- promote appropriate professional learning;
- oversee responses to serious incidents;
- liaise with parents and external agencies where necessary;
- ensure appropriate recording and reporting;
- monitor individual support planning where required; and
- implement suspension procedures where warranted and within the authority delegated by the Board of Management.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal will support the Principal in implementing the Code of Behaviour and, in accordance with assigned duties, may:

- support staff and class teams in responding to behaviours of concern;
- support the monitoring and review of behaviour-related records;
- assist with individual planning and review meetings;
- promote consistency of whole-school approaches;
- support communication with families; and

- support staff following significant incidents.

Teachers

Teachers have primary responsibility for educational planning and classroom management.

Teachers will:

- create safe, supportive and predictable learning environments;
- develop positive relationships with students;
- explicitly teach communication, regulation and appropriate behaviour where appropriate;
- identify and respond to students' individual needs;
- lead class-team planning;
- communicate with parents/guardians;
- develop and review individual plans where required;
- maintain appropriate records;
- seek support where necessary; and
- ensure agreed strategies are consistently implemented.

Special Needs Assistants

SNAs will:

- support the care, safety, regulation and participation needs of students in accordance with their role;
- build respectful and positive relationships;
- implement agreed strategies under the direction of the teacher;
- support students' communication and regulation;
- observe and share relevant information with the teacher and class team;
- report incidents appropriately;
- contribute to consistent class-team approaches; and
- participate in relevant training.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are asked to:

- work in partnership with the school;
- share information relevant to their child's wellbeing and education;
- engage with individual planning where required;
- support regular school attendance;
- communicate respectfully with school staff; and
- make reasonable efforts to support their child in engaging with the Code, taking account of their child's individual ability and needs.

Students

Students will be supported, to the greatest extent possible according to their individual ability, to:

- participate safely in school;
- develop positive relationships;
- communicate their preferences and needs in whatever way is accessible to them;
- engage in learning;
- develop regulation skills;
- seek or accept help where they are able; and
- develop increasing independence and participation.

26. Suspension

Suspension is a serious sanction and will only be considered where warranted by the seriousness and circumstances of the behaviour. It will not be an automatic response to a behaviour of concern.

In considering suspension, particular regard will be given to the individual needs of students attending Edel Quinn School, including the student's autism, communication, cognitive and developmental profile, sensory and regulation needs, health and capacity to understand their actions.

A student will not be suspended simply because they are unable to demonstrate a skill or behavioural expectation which is beyond their current developmental, communicative or regulatory capacity.

Grounds for Suspension

Suspension may be considered where:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education or welfare of others;
- the student's continued presence in school at that time presents a significant threat to safety;
- serious damage to property has occurred; or
- a single incident is sufficiently serious to warrant suspension.

Before deciding to suspend, the Principal will consider the seriousness, context and impact of the behaviour, the student's individual needs and capacity, supports and interventions already in place, possible alternatives to suspension and whether suspension is a reasonable and proportionate response.

Fair

Procedures

Fair procedures and the principles of natural justice will apply. Where suspension is being considered, the student and their parents/guardians will be informed of the alleged behaviour, how the matter will be investigated and that suspension may be considered. They will be given an appropriate opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed. The student will be involved insofar as this is appropriate and accessible to them.

Suspension At a Glance

Period	Authority / Requirement
Up to 3 school days	Principal, where authorised by the Board of Management
More than 3 days	Should ordinarily be referred to the Board of Management
Up to 5 school days	Principal, with approval of the Chairperson, where the Board cannot meet in a timely manner and this authority has been delegated
Up to 10 school days in one period	Board of Management

Period	Authority / Requirement
Indefinite suspension	Will not be imposed
Extension of a suspension	Requires consideration by the Board of Management
20 cumulative school days	Formal Board review required; Section 29 appeal provisions apply

These procedures will be implemented in accordance with the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* and applicable statutory requirements.

Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may impose an immediate suspension where this is necessary because of an immediate and serious risk to the safety of the student or others.

A preliminary investigation will establish the case for an immediate suspension, with the formal investigation following thereafter. Parents/guardians will be contacted and appropriate arrangements made for the student's collection.

An immediate suspension will never be open-ended.

Recording and Notification

All suspensions will be appropriately recorded. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the reason for, duration of and arrangements following the suspension, together with applicable appeal rights.

The school will comply with statutory reporting requirements to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS), including those relating to consecutive and cumulative periods of suspension.

Reintegration Following Suspension

Following suspension, the focus will be on a safe and positive return to school.

Where appropriate, the school will meet with parents/guardians and review the circumstances leading to the suspension and any necessary changes to the students:

- Student Support Plan or Behaviour Support Plan;
- communication, sensory and regulation supports;
- risk assessment;
- environment or supervision arrangements; and
- additional professional or school supports.

The student will be welcomed back positively. Reintegration will not be used to impose an additional sanction or require a student to demonstrate insight, remorse or make an apology where this is beyond their developmental or communicative capacity.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

A suspension may be removed where the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason, or where it is directed to be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended.

Where a suspension is removed, the school will support the student's return to school in a positive and appropriate manner.

Appeals

Parents/guardians may appeal a decision of the principal to suspend a student to the Board of Management. Where a student has been suspended for a total of 20 or more school days in any school year, the applicable statutory appeal provisions under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended, will apply.

27. Expulsion

Expulsion is the most serious sanction available to a school and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

The authority to expel rests with the Board of Management.

Any consideration of expulsion will comply fully with:

- Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- applicable Tusla/TESS guidance;
- fair procedures and natural justice; and
- relevant Department of Education procedures.

Before proposing expulsion, the school will normally have taken significant steps to address the student's needs and behaviour and will consider whether all reasonable alternatives have been explored.

This may include:

- meetings with the student, where appropriate, and parents/guardians;
- review of the Student Support Plan;
- review of the Behaviour Support Plan;
- consultation with relevant professionals;

- seeking NCSE support;
- environmental adaptations;
- additional communication and regulation support;
- teaching of appropriate alternative skills; and
- consideration of other reasonable supports.

In exceptional circumstances, the Board may consider that a single incident is sufficiently serious to warrant a proposal to expel.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion

Where expulsion is being considered, the school will follow the procedures set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* and the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

The following procedural steps will apply:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
2. The Principal will ensure that the matter is investigated fairly and that the student and their parents/guardians are informed of the concerns and given an appropriate opportunity to respond.
3. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
4. Where, following investigation, the principal considers that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management.
5. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
6. Parents/guardians will be notified of the hearing and provided with the relevant information. They will be given an opportunity to make representations to the Board. The student will be involved insofar as this is appropriate and accessible to them.
7. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing. Having heard the relevant parties, the Board will consider the matter impartially and determine whether expulsion is warranted and proportionate. The Board will take account of the student's individual needs, the seriousness and circumstances of the behaviour, the interventions and supports already provided, and whether reasonable alternatives to expulsion have been explored.
8. Consultation arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer. Where the Board forms the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The expulsion will not take effect before the statutory consultation process has been completed and the required period has elapsed.

9. Confirmation of the decision to expel. Following completion of the statutory process, where the Board remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm its decision. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing and informed of the applicable appeal procedures, including the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended.

28. Attendance

Regular attendance is important to students' learning, wellbeing and progress. Parents/guardians must notify the school of the reason for a student's absence, preferably through Aladdin or, where necessary, by contacting the school office.

The school will maintain appropriate attendance records and fulfil its statutory reporting obligations to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS). Attendance concerns will be approached supportively and collaboratively, taking account of the individual needs and circumstances of students attending Edel Quinn Special School.

29. Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under the school's Bí Cineálta Policy and Procedures.

The school recognises that disability, communication differences and social vulnerability may increase the risk of students experiencing bullying behaviour.

Teaching relating to kindness, consent, relationships, personal boundaries, appropriate communication and seeking help will therefore be differentiated according to students' individual learning and communication needs.

30. Recording and Monitoring

Appropriate records will be maintained where behaviours of concern require monitoring or where a serious incident occurs.

Records may include:

- incident reports;
- observations;
- behaviour/regulation monitoring;
- Student Support Plans;
- Behaviour Support Plans;
- parent/guardian communications;

- risk assessments; and
- records required under Department of Education and Youth guidance relating to crisis situations and physical restraint.

Information will be recorded objectively, respectfully and in accordance with data-protection requirements. Language which labels, blames or demeans a student will not be used. Recording will have a clear purpose: to support understanding, planning, safety, accountability and improved outcomes for the student.

31. Staff Support and Professional Learning

The Board of Management recognises that supporting students with autism and complex needs requires appropriate staff knowledge, teamwork and ongoing professional learning.

The school will seek to provide relevant professional learning in areas including:

- NCSE Relate;
- Autism Good Practice;
- communication and Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC);
- Lámh;
- regulation and co-regulation;
- sensory processing;
- trauma-informed practice;
- understanding behaviours of concern;
- preventative and de-escalation approaches;
- crisis response; and
- other areas identified through the needs of students and staff.

Following significant incidents, staff will be supported through appropriate debriefing and review procedures.

32. Communication of the Code

The Code of Behaviour is published on the school website and communicated to all members of the staff, parents/guardians and students.

Confirmation of acceptance of the Code of Behaviour by parent(s)/guardian(s) is a requirement of admission. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, parents must confirm acceptance of the Code of Behaviour.

The school recognises that many students will not be able to access a conventional written Code of Behaviour.

Accordingly, the school's core expectations and relevant elements of the Code of Behaviour may be communicated to students through:

- photographs;
- symbols;
- visuals;
- objects of reference;
- social narratives;
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC);
- Lámh;
- modelling;
- repetition and routine; and
- other individualised communication approaches.

33. Review of the Code

This Code of Behaviour is a living document and will be reviewed in light of:

- the needs and profiles of students attending Edel Quinn School;
- experience gained through implementation;
- feedback from students, parents/guardians and staff;
- changes in legislation;
- updated Department of Education, Tusla/TESS or NCSE guidance; and
- developments in evidence-informed and neurodiversity-affirming practice.

34. Conclusion

Edel Quinn School is committed to creating a safe, compassionate and supportive school environment in which every student is valued as an individual.

We recognise that behaviour must be understood within the context of each student's communication, regulation, sensory, developmental and individual needs.

Through positive relationships, appropriate communication, preventative supports, careful observation, individualised planning and partnership with families, we aim to support every student to participate meaningfully in school life and achieve their potential.

Our approach is based upon the principle:

When a student is struggling, our first task is to seek to understand what is happening and identify what support is needed.

35. Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Management Committee on 7th September 2026. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years, or earlier if legislative other factors recommend an earlier review.



Signed:

On behalf of the Management Committee

Date: 07.09.2026

Review Date: September 2028