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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin  
*Galway and Roscommon  
Education and Training Board*

**CUAN NA GAILLIMHE CNS**

**- A STEINER EDUCATION**



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## FOREST SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The code of conduct policy is based on a constructivist and humanist approach to learning. Each learner is recognised as an individual and is valued as such. Observing the rights and corresponding responsibilities of both learners and facilitators will be paramount to ensuring that a community of shared understanding and learning is achieved and that every member of the forest school holds a place of worth within that community.

The four-part nonviolent communication process (observations, feelings, needs, requests) will be used at all times when speaking with a learner about their behaviour or a specific incident. Behaviour should be acknowledged rather than praised or criticised. Communication with all learners and adults will always be conducted with empathy.

### 1 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

#### 1.1 EXPECTED CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR LEADERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:

- To create a positive space.
- To only have realistic expectations.
- To teach by example.
- To act appropriately with honesty, kindness and fairness.
- To understand and to act out all legal legislation regarding child protection.
- To actively continue learning and better themselves.
- To encourage relationships based on kindness and compassion.
- To have fun and enjoy being with the children.
- To be aware of all codes of conducts and policies.
- To allow the children/ participants freedom of speech.

## 1.2 EXPECTED CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- To treat each other and leaders with respect and kindness.
- To respect and be aware of the woodland space and all the plants, animals and trees that live there.
- To use correctly and respect the tools and equipment.
- To leave the woods as they found it.
- Kind hands, feet and words towards each other.
- To follow instructions.
- To come back to the centre when called.
- To be aware of the boundaries and to respect them.
- To report any dangerous behaviour observed.

## 1.3 PROCEDURES TO REDUCE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR:

- Separate the behaviour from the participant (possibly take child to the side and remind them of the expected behaviour/rules).
- Set achievable goals.
- Allow plenty of opportunities to achieve goals.
- Procedures, rules and sanctions are clear and open.
- Clear communication.
- Clear instructions and opportunities to ask questions.
- Instructions are suitable for different abilities.

If at any time the Forest School Leader feels that the behaviour of an individual or the group is detrimental to their own or other's safety the session will be terminated immediately and the group will return to the school.

## 2 TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR

### 2.1 MISCONDUCT

Behaviours that are considered to be misconduct include:

- Not listening or following instructions.
- Not including others.
- Speaking unkindly to others.
- Not stopping when called to wait.
- Leaving the boundaries.

### 2.2 SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Behaviours that are considered to be misconduct include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)

- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property

In areas of misconduct the approach of the adult is to range from tactical ignoring, to support, to de-escalation. Use of eye contact and close physical presence may be enough to encourage a child whose behaviour is classified as misconduct, to correct their behaviour.

If an adult is aware of a situation arising between children the first reaction is to tactically ignore the situation while monitoring it from a distance. If it appears that the children cannot work through the problem for themselves support may be offered, ask the day's problem solvers to identify the problem and offer solutions. If the situation continues to escalate the adult uses the nonviolent communication approach to work through the situation with the child/children involved. Only as a last resort is physical handling to be used, if the child is a danger to him/herself or to others.

### 2.3 GROSS MISCONDUCT

Behaviours that are considered to be gross misconduct include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Damage to property
- Leaving the boundaries and continuing to distance themselves from the group.

If a child physically assaults another person the school and their parent/caregiver are contacted immediately and the child will leave the woods. While waiting for the child to be collected use the nonviolent communication approach to speak with the child. Only as a last resort is physical handling to be used, if the child is a danger to him/herself or to others. See procedure below re runners and aggressive behaviour.

## 3 PROCEDURES

### 3.1 RUNNERS

If a child runs from the group and leaves the boundaries **do not** call them by name.

- Alert another adult to the situation, communicating that you are going to follow.
- Allow them a moment to freely move but keep them in your sights at all times.
- Begin to follow them silently staying as close as possible, our priority is to make them comfortable so that we can then come along side them.
- Let the child know that you are there. Ask if they have found something of interest, or suggest looking together for something of interest.
- Once you are in a position to talk with them let them know that they have left the boundaries and discuss with them why we have boundaries –for our safety.
- Return to the rest of the group.

### 3.2 AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- In a firm and controlled voice tell the child/children to stop.
- Use touch and eye contact to create connection with the child.
- Speak to the child/children using the four-part nonviolent communication approach.
- Ask what happened, what do you need, rather than why did you do it.
- Always attempt to de-escalate a situation.
- If another child is at risk of being physically hurt then restraint may be used.
- The school will be called and the child will leave the woods once appropriate adult has arrived.

## 4 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

In class groups where there are additional needs among the children, those children will be assigned an SNA or school volunteer to be their go to person. All staff members will receive a sticker carrying the information of which adult is working with which child at the start of each session. In the case of one of these children leaving the group or carrying out inappropriate behaviour any adult witnessing this can call to the child's go to adult (if they are not already observing the situation) rather than calling to the child his/herself. Those children who have difficulty remaining with the group will be followed by their go to adult, their name will not be called from distance, and once the adult is alongside the child then the matter can be addressed using eye contact and touch as required.

## 5 STAFF SUPPORT

All staff and volunteers are briefed at the beginning of each term by the forest school leader regarding their role, daily routine and relevant policy and procedure.

Staff debrief at the end of each session.

The forest school leader carries the school mobile phone.

## 6 INCIDENT REPORT

The forest school leader will write an incident report which will be emailed to the school principal following any session where there has been behaviour that is classified as gross misconduct. A follow up meeting will be arranged with the child/children and their parent(s)/caregiver(s) at a later date, but before the next forest school session.