

Code of Behaviour

Dec 2017

Limerick Educate Together

Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

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 in promoting positive behaviour
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of Limerick East Educate Together has been developed in accordance with *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.*

POLICY FORMULATION

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

- I. Our existing Code of Behaviour was audited in January 2017
- II. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available for viewing in the school office, and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe
- III. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal
- IV. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received
- V. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- 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 and respect for the school environment (physical)
- 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

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- 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.

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, and parents in the review and operation of the code. Co-operation between home and school is very important as together we try to provide clear guidelines and pointers as to what is expected of those who attend our school.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Pupils

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Be honest at all times
- Wear appropriate clothes in school and on school trips.

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- **Listen** to the 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 and all staff
- **Obtain** his/her teacher's permission to leave the classroom
- **Respect** the staff, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- **Play** safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- **Follow** the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- **Remain** on school grounds at all times
- **Respect** the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- **Avoid** swearing, fighting or name calling

Behaviour in other School Areas

Each pupil is expected to:

- **Walk** in the school corridors and stairs
- **Speak** at an appropriate volume
- **Knock** when entering another room
- **Greet** students, staff and visitors in a friendly manner
- **Enter** and exit the building in a safe and orderly way.

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities

The school's Code of Behaviour applies to all school related activities and trips e.g. swimming, sports trips, class outings etc.

Each pupil is expected to:

- **Follow** his/her teacher's and/or staff directions at all times
- **Remain** with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- **Behave** politely towards those they meet on such trips
- **Observe** the rules of general good behaviour.

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 specifically 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 displayed in the classroom
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour
- Ensure there is supervision at all times
- Use rewards/sanctions in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record (on Aladdin) 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 instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal and the parent/guardian.

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.

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

Parents/guardians must make themselves available to visit the school when invited.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

'KIND WORDS, KIND HANDS, KIND FEET.'

In our school, we will always try to affirm the positive and praise children for using kind words, kind hands and kind feet.

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.

School Assembly

The whole school will meet as often as is practicable in the school hall. During this assembly time children will be praised for positive behaviour and reminded of the standards of behaviour expected in the school community.

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 through 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 the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers including non-completion of homework
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner towards each other and/or staff
- Ignoring staff requests

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- Unwanted negative behaviour
 - Chewing gum.

The use of mobile phones, handheld computer games or any technology capable of sms or photos is completely forbidden. This includes the use of i-pods, smart phones or similar mp3 players capable of taking pictures or recording video footage. Please refer to the school's student phone policy.

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: Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- When incidents of misbehaviour occur staff will try to engage the student by calmly saying "The rule in our school is..." (Quote relevant rule)
- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s) followed by written record in classroom/yard incident notebook
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others – Student takes time out in another designated classroom for a set length of time (using a visual aid if necessary). If this occurs on the yard the pupil will be sent to a designated area on the yard for a set length of time.
- Prescribing additional work
- Loss of privileges for example: Free Time in class/computer time
- Parent contact 1st - Homework Journal 2nd - Phone call 3rd - Parental Meeting with teacher
- Behaviour contract – pupils sign up to this and it is reviewed periodically

Repeated Minor Breaches: Repeated instances of the above. Referral to the Principal.

Level 1 Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as extra computer time/stickers/stamps/certs with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members)
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. These notes to include the frequency, nature and intensity of the incidents. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

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 well-being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous/disrespectful to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting, spitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Use of mobile phone without permission
- Possession of cigarettes and/or other prohibited substances
- Use of profanity
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
- Disrespectful/derogatory language or behaviour toward a member of staff/visitors or another pupil
- Repeated unwanted negative behaviour.

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. Disciplinary actions include:

- Phone call to or meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Implementation of behaviour management plan in consultation with the pupil, teacher, Principal and parents perhaps using a marking scheme for each part of the day
- Agreed sanction determined by the class teacher and principal.

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Staff conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff and Principal.
- Parent (guardian)/principal meeting
- Referral of a Child displaying continuous behavioural problems for relevant assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(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 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/guardian 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.

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- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
 - Continuous disruption of a class by a student
 - Leaving school grounds without permission
 - Leaving designated classroom / class activity under false pretences to meet other pupils doing something similar within the schools grounds
 - Gross discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin
 - Gross disrespect to any staff member, any other pupil or visitor to the school
 - Smoking within the school environment
 - Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others
 - Behaviour deemed inappropriate or liable to endanger in any manner a member of the school community
 - Possession / Supply and / or use of alcohol, cigarettes , illegal drugs and / or other harmful substances- Refer to schools substance use policy
 - Wilful damage or attempted wilful damage of school property, property of teachers, fellow pupils or school visitors
 - Possession or use of dangerous equipment that would inflict harm on any member of the school community
 - Setting fires
 - Intentional possession or use of weapons or harmful implements
 - Deliberate recording of school activities which is likely to embarrass or undermine any member of the school community
 - Gross insubordination: resistance to, or defiance of, authority or a disobedience, refusal or failure to obey reasonable instructions.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

As Level 3 behaviour is considered very serious, the school will take note of any additional factors which may be relevant to determining a suitable response. Factors to be considered include the student's behavioural record to date, the student's understanding of his / her action, the degree of intent involved and the health and safety of the school community. Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Contract of behaviour:**

The school may employ a contract of behaviour, involving pupil, parents/guardians and school, outlining agreed procedures and what may happen in the event of a behavioural issue arising

- **Voluntary Removal:**

Where necessary, due to extenuating circumstances, parents/guardians will agree to voluntary withdraw the student from school for a fixed period of time agreed by both parents/guardians and school. This will happen, where a suspension would not be deemed appropriate or of any benefit

- **Shortened Day**

Where deemed appropriate and in consultation with parents, the child may be placed on a shortened school day

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**

This response may occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour. 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 incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management

- **Expulsion:**

Gross misbehaviour repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled

A detailed account of the circumstances of the voluntary removal or suspension will be kept by the school. Upon return to school, the student along with the parents / guardian will undertake not to repeat the specific misbehaviour to the best of the student's ability.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

As part of Limerick East Educate Together National School's Code of Behaviour, The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together has ensured that the school's policy on, and procedures for, the use of suspension are in line with guidelines for Developing A Code of Behaviour as outlined by The National Educational Welfare Board.

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

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together 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 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 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 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 well-being of pupils or staff of the school or that the action of the pupil warrants a suspension. 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 will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Any behaviour outlined in this or other policies which is likely to endanger or has endangered the health and safety of the student/s responsible or the school population.
- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- 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 specific Behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but 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, where possible. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school before the end of the school day 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 that the decision to impose either 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 may 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 Limerick East Educate Together acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is 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 if feasible.

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 School will initiate a formal investigation of the matter. Such behaviour may well be ongoing and as a result of a certified disability. The use of suspension will only be considered if all alternatives have been exhausted and if no extra provision is granted in the care of the student. The Health and Safety of the entire school community will be paramount in any such issue.

The following procedures will be observed;

- A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);
- i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
 - ii. 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 imposed.

The Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- ii. 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 if feasible.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(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.

Where 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)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal. The school will take due cognisance of the number of days the student/s has also not been in school for other reasons.

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 Educational Welfare 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);

- iii. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
 - iv. 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 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:

- i. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. Ensure that parent(s)/guardians 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
- iii. 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 & 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 by another adult 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 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 a lesser sanction if they so choose

d) Board of Management Deliberations & 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 Educational 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 school 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 Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational 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 or staff.

e) 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 Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

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

The Board of Management of Limerick Educate Together National School 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 process 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

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

- In line with good practice, parents are encouraged to inform the school by phone on the day a student is absent (or before if feasible).
- The school should at least be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school in writing by *letter / using the school journal*
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason, should be provided
- Significant absences cause by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.
- The school is obliged to maintain all records of attendance in line with the Rules for National School and the National Educational Welfare Board.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended, 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.

RECORDS

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's Behaviour. Such a system will include;

- A class journal for each teacher to record incidents of misbehaviour or bullying in the classroom and resulting contact with parents / guardians
- The school will use a yard journal for the supervising teacher to record incidents of misbehaviour or bullying on the yard.
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- The principal will maintain a record of any voluntary withdrawals, suspensions and expulsions, outlining the details of each, including dates and reasons.
- The Board of Management will maintain proper minutes of meeting in relation to longer suspensions and expulsions in line with Department of Education practice and policy.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Limerick East Educate Together at its meeting held on *05.12.17*

Signed: *Jane Harris*

Chairperson, Board of Management

