

Introductory Statement

The school's Code of Behaviour was drawn up in 2010 by members of staff and members of the Board of Management in consultation with a school facilitator following an audit of our original policy in line with the NEWB publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools". **Parents in the school were given an opportunity to contribute to the policy.**

The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where the pupils are the responsibility of the school. This includes events such as school tours, swimming, going to the church, and all other fieldtrips.

Relationship to the School Ethos

The policy was drawn up in line with our school Mission Statement and reflects its values and beliefs. The primary responsibility for the development of good behaviour rests in the home with parents and guardians, where children spend most of their time. However in order to foster good behaviour in school every member of the school community has a role to play. We believe that positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Aims

- To promote good behaviour
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers, ancillary staff and parents on behavioural expectations
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.

Implementation

Every member of our school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour:

Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable

Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and other pupils' property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.

Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance and uniform, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.

Pupils are expected to obey instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

Pupils are expected to attend every day punctually unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour shall be provided to all parents prior to registering a pupil and a written confirmation that the code is acceptable to them and they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code will be required as a condition of registering. The code will be available translated into all required languages and key messages of the code will be displayed in pictorial form around the school. Pupils in the senior classes of the school will agree to abide by this code as part of school Friendship Week.

Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour

Welcome letter given to parents from the class teacher in September which will include a copy of the classroom rules. This will be signed by all the senior pupils in the school.

Children will be verbally praised especially when it can reinforce good behaviour.

Assembly- Reinforcing school rules. Recognise achievement of individual children in front of class.

A visit to another member of staff for commendation

Informing parent-written/verbal communication this could include a note in the pupil's homework journal or a note home

Class rules devised as part of Friendship Week in early September so pupils may understand the rationale behind each rule and thereby claim greater ownership of them. Rules will be clearly displayed in each classroom. If it is age appropriate pupils will sign their own class rules. Parents may also be asked to sing the class rules.

A welcoming strategy will be used by all school staff where each child is welcomed by their name in the morning at least once a week.

As part of general classroom organisation a class rota will exist and be clearly displayed for leader's jobs.

Help card for use in the class with a picture of a hand on it which signifies that the child needs help.

Non-material rewards given- favourite job, sit beside a friend token, teacher read class a favourite story

The Principal or Deputy Principal will present a weekly award or certificate to pupil of the week. This may be done on a less frequent basis in Senior Classes-monthly rather than weekly.

Work of high achievement or showing good effort from any class will be displayed on a Notice board near the Principal's Office.

Class teacher may select table of the week for a special treat each Friday.

Staff may in certain situations choose to ignore bad behaviour and instead reward good behaviour-praise the child who is working well nearest to the wrong-doer.

A class reward system may be used where a paper chain is formed in a classroom.

Every time the class is praised by any member of staff or visitor to the class another link is added to the chain. When the chain has reached its target length the whole class receive a class reward e.g. DVD, Treasure Hunt, and Toy Hour.

Each class keeps their own class diary(Book of Merit) of the good things that have happened in their class- awards won ,matches won, prize winners in any area –and this will be read at assemblies and class occasions,

A pupil of the week is given a raffle ticket for the class lucky dip or homework voucher.

Attendance award each term will also be organised.

Use the 5 Hand Signal as outlined in Incredible Years programme.

Rhyme which can be used for infants in order for easy transition from one lesson to another.
'Point to the ceiling, point to the floor, point to your nose, point to the door! Hands up high, hands down low, hands on the table ready to go!'

Our school believes that it is important to reward class groups as well as individuals because this encourages the development of co-operative behaviour.

Strategies /Sanctions for Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour in the Classroom

The purpose of the following strategies and other sanctions is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

A non-verbal warning will be given to the child.

A verbal warning - the classroom rule which is being broken is cited and the consequence of the behaviour is outlined clearly for the child. Advice is given on how to improve behaviour.

The child is temporarily separated from peers within the classroom-moved to a new table.

Loss of privilege.

Teacher contacts the parents and informs them of what strategies have already been put in place in order to combat the inappropriate behaviour in the classroom.

Teacher meets the parents.

The child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to another classroom with assigned work.

Referral to the Principal

The Principal communicates with the parents and a meeting may be arranged with the parents, class teacher, other school staff who may be involved with the pupil, and the Principal.

Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Homework

Homework is very important for a child's progress during their school years. It revises and consolidates the work taught in class. It helps develop the good habit of independent study. It enables parents to keep in touch and be involved with their child's school work. When a child cannot do their homework assignment or part of it for whatever reasons it is expected that the parent/guardian provide a written note of explanation for the teacher.

A child will receive a verbal warning regarding incomplete or unsatisfactory homework. On the next occasion the teacher will issue a standardised note to be signed by the parent/guardian. On all subsequent occasions the pupil will be sent to

the Assembly Hall at lunch time where homework will be completed under supervision. A record of pupils sent to the Assembly Hall to complete homework will be kept in the school.

Strategies for promoting positive behaviour in the yard and the school environment

Yard games are taught to each class in September as part of our P.E. Programme and also during Friendship Week. - HSE Games for Life and how to use the playground markings

Basketball rules are revised with the senior classes.

A buddy system may be used in cases where children are new to a class.

Positive behaviour is formally taught – good manners, courtesy and friendship themes to be covered as part of SPHE programme.

Yard rules clearly explained and reminders given frequently and displayed as positive images on a board close to the yard or on doors exiting the school.

Picture cards displaying the rules of the school, (no running, no eating on corridors, no talking in lines etc.), will be displayed around the school environment: on the corridors, in the assembly hall and the prefab areas.

Positive affirmation of good behaviour. Teachers in the school will make a conscious effort to praise and acknowledge when they see a pupil or class making a conscious effort to abide by the rules. This compliment will in turn lead to the class forming a new link on their paper-chain back in the class.

Routines for entry and exit to the school and classroom are established each year at the start of term.-always walk on the right-hand side in single file and class leader to be rotated.

Clear expectations and consequences for each yard area to be outlined to all classes regularly.

Consistent enforcement by teachers on duty.

Designated time-out area in each yard marked where child may be sent to for a short period of time for low-incidents of misbehaviour which take place during break-times.

Classes are expected to stand in line and wait for their class teacher to collect them

Organisation of Yard supervision:

Teachers assigned to their own class play area at break-times.

Group of teachers in a yard area to meet at the start of the year and agree on rotas for play areas, what games can be played, use of skipping ropes, balls etc.

Teachers at this meeting will agree on age appropriate enforcement of yard rules.

Teachers will agree if rotas take place at both break-times or just lunch-time.

Strategies /Sanctions for responding to inappropriate behaviour in the yard and the school environment

Detention Cards:

No. 1 child is being sent to detention for displaying aggressive behaviour in the yard.

No. 2 child is being sent to detention for using bad /abusive language or making a racist or derogatory remark.

No. 3 child is being sent to detention for showing disrespect to staff members/ adults around the school or to other children.

Pupils who are sent to Detention will be supervised during that time and will be issued with a standard letter for the parent/guardian to sign. A copy of this signed letter will be kept for record purposes. Children who reoffend will incur a 3 day detention and a 5 day detention for each new time they are in detention.

Our school recognises that all pupils are individuals. In applying any disciplinary procedures each child's individual needs and circumstances will be taken into consideration. The degree of a misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teacher and /or Principal, based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of the misdemeanour.

Suspension

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension is imposed. These interventions may include an individual behavioural plan, parental intervention, support services from NEPS, H.S.E. Community Psychology Services, National Council for Special Education. School staff will have reviewed the reasons why these interventions have been unsuccessful. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil .It may give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and it may give the staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from an act of serious/gross misbehaviour such as that:

The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students

The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to the health and safety of others

The pupil is responsible for serious damage to school property

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

Procedures for Suspension

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Primary School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10-12). Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right of impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/ Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73).

Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in gross misbehaviour.

The Board of Management will also follow the factors to consider before suspending a student (p72) and the factors to consider before proposing expelling a student.

Procedures in respect of suspension

Communication to parents regarding suspension of a pupil or the possibility of a suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained by the Principal in the school office. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone but a letter will follow on from this call.

The parents/guardians and the pupils will be invited to meet the Principal and /or the Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.

The principles of fair procedures will be applied at all times. The degree of formality required in implanting fair procedures will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and on the seriousness of the possible sanction.

Where parents/guardians do not agree to meet the Principal/Board, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to the parents/guardians. A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective.

The letter will confirm

- The period of the suspension –the dates on which suspension starts and ends
- The reason for the suspension
- Any programme of study to be covered at home during the suspension
- The arrangements for returning to school including a commitment to be entered into by the student and the parents/ guardians that they will abide by the school Code of Behaviour
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills-Section 29 Education Act 1988-if the appeal to the Board of Management is unsuccessful

The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB's Reporting Form.

When the period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the Principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on the work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the Principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73). Fair procedures will be applied.

If a pupil continues to misbehave they may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the parents/guardians to address the issues.

As outlined above parents/guardians and pupil will be given an opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.

The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.

Section 29 Appeal –when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re- admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and /or the Board of Management.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion-The procedures as outlined on pages 83-86 of the Guidelines will be followed

Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with the parents/guardians, if serious/ gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances-a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school or sexual assault- pupils may be expelled for a first offence.

Fair procedures will be followed when proposing to expel a pupil. The procedural steps will include:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer,

- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals:

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including permanent exclusion from school and suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or pupil. Parents will be informed of their right to appeal in the letter they receive confirming the suspension/expulsion. The Principal will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Department of Education and Skills.

Record Keeping:

A record will be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils. These records will be in writing and will be kept by the class teacher and if necessary by the Principal. The class teacher may use a School Incident Report or ask the pupil to write their own account of what happened. Parents/Guardians are asked to sign Incident Reports. The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour and a glossary of terms has been discussed so that staff has a consistent understanding of what constitutes excellent-poor behaviour. A detention book is also kept to record serious playground and pupils sent to detention always receive a note for home which must be returned signed. All serious

incident reports and those concerning suspension/ expulsion/Section 29 Appeals, are kept on file by the Principal.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school:

Regular attendance at school is very important and pupils are encouraged to attend school everyday unless there is a very good reason for not doing so. Good attendance is encouraged with initiatives outlined in our school attendance policy. If a pupil is absent from school parents/guardians must inform the school in writing of the reason for the absence. These notes are kept on file by the class teacher for the school year as an aid to completing National Education Welfare Board returns and are then stored for a further year in the school. Since the introduction of the Education Welfare Act all children who are absent for an aggregate of 20 days or more school days in any school year have to be reported to the Education Welfare Officer on standard forms provided. The school also has the right to notify the Educational Welfare Officer if, in the opinion of the Principal, a pupil is not attending regularly.

Reference to other Policies:

This policy has implications for many of our other school policies including-

SPHE Plan

Anti-bullying

Enrolment

Health and Safety

Learning Support and Special Needs Policy

School Attendance

Success Criteria:

Some practical indicators of the success of this policy will be-

Less low level interruption in class

More positive behaviour evident in classrooms, playground and school environment

Practices and procedures listed in this policy consistently implemented by school staff

Positive feedback from pupils, staff and parents/guardians

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is prepared in line with our school ethos and that it is reviewed in at the last Board Meeting of year.

A whole school approach will be used to implement this policy involving all school staff.

The implementation of this policy and its continued monitoring will be the duty of the Principal, Deputy Principal, and Assistant Principals.

Pupils will be involved in the policy through their work on class rules and positive reinforcement of good behaviour through previously listed activities. Pupils may also be involved in the review process of the Code of Behaviour.

Parents have a key role in the success of this policy by supporting the school in its work of promoting positive behaviour, by encouraging their children to do their best and expecting them to take responsibility for their work and their actions. They also ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

Implementation Date: Accepted by Board of Management Meeting September 13th 2011

Timetable for Review: Last Board of Management Meeting each year

Ratification and Communication:

The pages quoted in this policy are taken from Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools which can be viewed on the National Education Welfare Board website.

