

Introductory Statement

The school's Code of Behaviour was revised in 2019 by members of staff and members of the Board of Management 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 towards one another and towards the environment

Implementation

Every member of our school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. We acknowledge the right to respect and dignity of every member of our school community. Rules will be kept to a minimum 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 punctually every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.
- Parents will be advised that the Code of Behaviour is on the school website. Parents will also be advised that a hard copy of the Code of Behaviour is available from the office upon request.

Strategies which will be used to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour:

- Children will be praised verbally to reinforce good behaviour.
- Regular assemblies will be held for fourth to sixth classes during which recognition of good behaviour will be given to individual children and groups. Assembly time will also be used to reinforce school rules.
- Class rules will be devised in every class in early September so that pupils understand the rationale behind each rule and thereby claim ownership of them. Class rules will be displayed in each classroom.
- A summary of the main points of our Code of Behaviour (one sheet) will go out to all parents in early September each year. Parents will sign and date this sheet and return it to the class teacher pledging their compliance to our code. Pupils in classes from 3rd class upwards will also be asked to this sheet.

- The Principal or Deputy Principal will present a weekly award or certificate to the pupil of the week in each class from junior infants to third class. Children in classes from fourth to sixth will receive a monthly award or certificate at assembly.
- Attendance awards for each term will be organised.
- 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 which may be used to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour in addition to those mentioned above:

- A welcoming letter may be given to parents by the class teacher in September.
- A welcoming strategy may be used by staff where each child is welcomed by their name in the morning.
- As part of general classroom organisation a class rota may exist and be displayed for leader's jobs.
- A help card may be used in the class with a picture of a hand on it signifying that the child needs help.
- Non-material awards may be given e.g. favourite job, sit beside a friend token, a favourite story read to the class ...
- A class reward system may be used where a paper chain is formed in the classroom. Every time the class is praised by another member of staff or visitor another link is added to the chain. When the chain has reached its target length the whole class receives an award e.g. DVD, treasure hunt, toy hour ...
- A class might keep a Book of Merit / Class Diary of the good things that have happened in their class e.g. awards won, matches won, prize winners in any area... These could be read out at assembly or on class occasions.
- A pupil might be given a raffle ticket for a lucky dip or a homework voucher.
- Rhyme could be used in infant classes to facilitate easy transition from one lesson to another e.g. '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!'

Strategies / Sanctions for Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour in the Classroom

The purpose of the following strategies and sanctions is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. The following steps are followed when dealing with a pupil's inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. Steps are followed consecutively except in the circumstance of an incident of serious misbehaviour in the classroom. This would result in immediate referral to the principal.

1. A non-verbal warning is given to the child.
2. A verbal warning is given to the child. The classroom rule being broken is cited and the consequence of the behaviour is outlined clearly for the child. The teacher has a conversation with the child and advice is given on how to improve behaviour.
3. The child is temporarily separated from peers within the classroom.
4. The child loses a *privilege.
5. Informal contact will be made with parents. At this stage the teacher will communicate with parents either by seeing them before or after school or by sending a note home. In the case where a note is sent home it should be returned signed by a parent / guardian. The teacher will inform the parents of the strategies which have already been put in place in order to combat the inappropriate behaviour in the classroom. A behavioural plan is agreed upon.
6. A referral to the principal is made by the class teacher.
7. The child is made aware that the principal is now aware of the situation.
8. The child is removed from the classroom to another classroom for a period of time. The child is given an assigned piece of work to complete during this time.
9. The principal speaks with the child.
10. The principal communicates with the parents and a meeting is arranged for the parents, principal, class teacher and other school staff who may be involved with the pupil. The inappropriate behaviour and the strategies which have been taken to date are outlined. Discussion will follow on the necessary steps to be taken. A review meeting is scheduled to re-assess the situation.

A copy of these strategies / sanctions will be visible in each classroom from 3rd upwards. These strategies will be outlined regularly at assemblies so that children are aware of the steps.

*The following is a list of privileges which may be drawn upon. It is not an exhaustive list. A class teacher may decide to compile a list of three privileges in consultation with his / her class.

- Golden Time
- Game Time
- Sit with a friend
- Trip
- First in the line
- Extra time on a preferred activity
- Helping the teacher
- Watering the [plants / caring for animals / feeding birds
- Sitting in a special seat
- Working on a hobby
- Choosing a PE game
- A responsibility in class
- Listening to a CD
- Reading a favourite book
- Playing a game
- Writing on the board
- Extra computer time
- Tutoring younger pupils
- Working on a special project
- Choosing a Circle Time game
- Extra play time
- Choosing a favourite video for the class

Disrespectful Behaviour:

With regard to disrespectful behaviour in the classroom, directed either towards the teacher or other children in the group, we will operate a card system. On the first occasion

that a pupil is disrespectful he / she will be shown a yellow card by their teacher. On the second occasion of disrespectful behaviour the pupil will be shown a second yellow card. Parents will be made aware through a standardised note that their child is now on a second yellow card for disrespectful behaviour. On the third occasion of disrespectful behaviour the pupil will be shown a red card. As a consequence of being shown the red card the child will be sent to detention during lunchtime either on the day of the third offence or on the following day if the third offence should occur after lunchtime. A letter will be sent home alerting parents to the fact that their child has been sent to detention for disrespectful behaviour. If the pupil behaves disrespectfully in class following being sent to detention the principal will communicate with the parents and a meeting will be arranged for the parents, principal, class teacher and other school staff who may be involved with the pupil. The disrespectful behaviour and the strategies which have been taken to date will be outlined. Discussion will follow on the necessary steps to be taken. A review meeting will be scheduled to re-assess the situation.

The following is a list of examples of disrespectful behaviour. It is not an exhaustive list.

- answering back
- ignoring direction
- being directly disobedient
- interruptions
- negative body language
- bad / inappropriate language
- being deliberately disruptive

Disrespectful behaviour and its definition will be explained at assemblies so that children clearly understand the nature of this behaviour.

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 reason it is expected that the parent/guardian provide a written note of explanation for the teacher.

On the first occasion when a child submits incomplete or unsatisfactory homework the child will receive a verbal warning. On the next occasion the teacher will issue a standardised note to be signed and returned 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:

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

Positive behaviour is formally taught. The importance of good manners and courtesy and the theme of friendship are covered as part of the SPHE programme.

Yard rules are clearly explained and reminders given frequently.

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.

Routines for entry and exit to the school and classroom are established each year at the start of term.

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

Rules are consistently enforced by teachers on duty.

A child may be sent to a designated time-out area for a short period of time for minor incidents of misbehaviour which may take place during break-times.

Classes are expected to stand in line at the end of break-times and wait for their class teacher to collect them.

Organisation of Yard supervision:

Teachers are assigned to a class play area at break-times.

Teachers agree on rotas for play areas, what games can be played, use of skipping ropes, balls etc.

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 three day detention and then a five day detention on each subsequent time they are sent to detention. When a child is given his / her first five day detention the child's parents are asked to contact the Principal to arrange a meeting to discuss the challenging behaviour presented by the child.

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 the 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 misbehaviours 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
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Health and Safety
- Electronic Device Policy
- 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 at the last Board Meeting of the 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.

Timetable for Review: Last Board of Management Meeting each year

Ratification and Communication: The revised Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 26th February 2019.

Implementation Date: The revised Code of Behaviour will be implemented from 11th March 2019.

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.