

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

This document has been formulated following a systematic review of the existing policy (2012). A number of amendments have been made to ensure that the current policy meets the present day needs of our school. The review was undertaken by staff members, parents and the Board of Management.

Rationale

The review of the Code of Behaviour was undertaken to strengthen and refine the 2012 code and to ensure it continues to fulfil the specific needs of the school and the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000)23(1). It seeks to foster an orderly and harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The Code of Behaviour for St. Patrick's Junior School has been formulated to create a positive learning environment for our pupils, which promotes effort, motivation and achievement. We wish to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a disruptive-free environment.

We encourage positive behaviour by motivating our pupils to show respect for themselves, teachers and school staff, their peers and the school environment. Reciprocally, teachers, parents and adults in the school community will model the same respectful attitude in their dealings with pupils.

We wish to develop a strong sense of community and encourage high levels of co-operation among pupils, teachers, ancillary staff, parents, guardians and the Board of Management.

Aims

Our Code aims to achieve the following:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and guardians/parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- 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 ensure the health & safety of all pupils and staff
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

In St. Patrick's Junior School, we use a whole-school approach to discipline. One of our main aims is to create a sense of belonging and to build a strong sense of community.

This is how we behave in this school:

- We listen to instructions and follow them straight away
- We walk in the school at all times
- We stay in the classroom / school building at all times unless told to do otherwise
- We remain seated especially while eating lunch and during playtime on wet days, unless instructed to do otherwise by school staff
- We never stop other people enjoying activities or working in school. Always do your best and allow others to do the same

We promote positive behaviour:

We promote positive behaviour and we place greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. We do this in a variety of ways outlined below;

- By discrete teaching of the SPHE curriculum
- By modelling good practice
- A quiet word or gesture of praise to show approval
- A sticker or similar acknowledgement of good behaviour
- A visit to another class or to the Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Use of various rewards e.g. class awards pizza party, baking time etc.
- Written or verbal communication with parents /guardians

Specific guidelines for class and yard behaviour are in place, and they are differentiated in the classroom according to age group. They may include the following:

Class Rules

1. Follow instructions straight away.
2. Listen while teacher or other pupils are speaking.
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same.
4. Raise your hand when you want to speak during a lesson.
5. Walk while in the classroom.
6. Be kind and mannerly.

Yard Rules

1. Follow instructions straight away.
2. Play safely, no rough play.
3. We walk and talk at little break.
4. When the first whistle rings we freeze, when the second whistle rings we walk to our line.
5. Line up carefully. Respect everyone's space.
6. Stay in school yard at all times

We recognise that there may be some pupils who will struggle to comply with the standards for behaviour set out in this Code. Where pupil behaviour does not meet the standards expected, we aim to intervene early and positively, this may include the use of an Individual Behaviour plan. In compliance with the Education Welfare Act, Section 23(4), prior to registering a pupil, the parents of the child are provided with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and are required to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school. All partners in education, Board of Management, teachers, SNAs, parents and pupils, will work together to ensure the implementation of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school.

Board of Managements' Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in the school;</i> • <i>ensures that the code of behaviour reflects the school's ethos;</i> • <i>should formally record the adoption of the code of behaviour, the commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed.</i>
Staff Responsibilities <i>Staff is expected to:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and implement the school's code of behaviour; • create a safe, welcoming learning environment for each pupil; • Recognise and affirm good work • Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils • be cognisant of their duty of care; • deal appropriately with misbehaviour; • ensure serious or repeated instances of misbehaviour is recorded; • provide appropriate support for colleagues; • support, collaborate and communicate with parents; • model respectful interactions with all members of the school community; • to accommodate pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
Parents' Responsibilities <i>Parents are expected to:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage their child to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property & that of others; • Be interested in, encourage and support their child in school; • Ensure that their child is adequately prepared for the school day; • Be familiar with & supportive of the code of behaviour and other school policies; • Co-operate, support and collaborate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties; • Communicate to the school, any problems which may affect their child's behaviour; • Model respectful interactions with all members of the school community; • Ensure that their child attends regularly and punctually at school.
Pupils' Responsibilities <i>Pupils are expected to:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show respect for all members of the school community; • Follow school, classroom and yard rules; • Work quietly, safely and to the best of their ability at all times; • Respect the right of other pupils to learn; • Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/ advice; • Care for their own property, school property and the property of others; • Stay on school premises and within designated areas during school times.

Systematic Approach to Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

A systematic approach to responding to behaviour will be used, including the following:

- Teacher attention and praise.
- Planned ignoring of minor non-disruptive and attention-seeking behaviour.
- Using incentives and rewards to encourage positive behaviour and motivation.
- Explicit teaching of rules using a variety of teaching methodologies.
- Formulation of individual behaviour plan, where appropriate.

See Appendix 1 for further suggestions:

Unacceptable Behaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies 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

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Loss of merits
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work.
- Loss of privileges.
- Standing on line during break
- Communication with parents/guardians
- Referral to Principal.
- Principal communicating with parents/guardians
- 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).

A written record of instances of serious misbehaviour will be kept. Improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils will also be noted. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. Exclusion, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

Suspension

Before a serious sanction such as suspension is considered, all other procedures in the code of behaviour up to this point will normally have been adhered to. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow on from persistent incidents or a serious incident of misbehaviour such as:

- The pupil's behaviour is a danger to him/herself.
- The pupil's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils.
- The pupil's continuous presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

The Board of Management and staff of St. Patrick's Junior School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools for Developing a Code of Behaviour published by The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB 2008).

Fair procedures, such as the right to be heard and the right to 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. They will also be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. Special care will be taken to ensure that fair procedures are accessible to people with disabilities or those from different language or cultural backgrounds.

The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of a pupil in the school at the time would represent/pose a serious threat to their own safety or the safety of pupils, school staff or any other person. Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a pupil engaging in very serious misbehaviour.

In determining the appropriateness of suspending a pupil, the relevant staff, the Principal and the Board of Management will consider the following factors.

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions put in place to date.
- The possible impact of suspension.
- Whether the suspension is a proportionate response.

Procedures in relation to suspension

- Communication with parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be carried out by phone or in writing. All copies of correspondence will be retained.
- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the Principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted and for not more than three days. The parents/guardians and pupil will normally be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- Where parents/guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, 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 parents/guardians. A suspension will not be for more than three days, aside from in exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management meets and considers that a period longer than three days is necessary to achieve a particular objective. The letter(written statement) will confirm:

1. the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end;
2. the reason for the suspension;
3. any programme of study to be followed;
4. the arrangement for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents/guardians. (e.g. the pupil and parents/guardians may be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour);
5. the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management and the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act, 1998, Section 29).

- The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB 'Pupil Absence Report Form' where applicable.
- When the period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the Principal following an undertaking to commit to the school's code of behaviour and parents/guardians. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- 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 Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a pupil has been suspended for six or more days cumulatively.
- The Education Welfare Officer will also be informed when a pupil reaches 20 days suspension over a school year.
- **Section 29 Appeal:** When the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the pupil's parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) and will be given information about how to do so.

Expulsion

Grounds for Expulsion:

Subsequent to the aforementioned suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. The grounds for expulsion include the following:

- The pupil's behaviour is an on-going, persistent danger to him/herself.
- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management. In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil, the Board of Management will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to expel a pupil. These factors are similar to those mentioned above in relation to suspension. In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be expelled for a first offence. This may apply in the event of:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.

Procedures for Expulsion

Step 1:	• A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
Step 2:	• A recommendation to the Board of Management.
Step 3:	• Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing with parents/guardians and other relevant personnel.
Step 4:	• Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
Step 5:	• Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
Step 6:	• Confirmation of the decision to expel.
Section 29 Appeal:	• A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. A form for such an appeal is available from the Department of Education and Skills.

This policy will be reviewed in 2021

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified, by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's Junior National School, at its Meeting on 10TH Oct 2018

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Pat O'Connor
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Teachers and parents may obtain a copy of this policy from the Principal. It may also be viewed at any time on the school website.

Appendix 1

Positive behaviour management strategies

Circle Time

Circle-Time is a democratic and creative approach used to consider a wide range of issues affecting the whole school community – teachers, pupils, ancillary staff, parents and Board of Management. The Circle-Time model involves all participants sitting in a circle and taking an equal responsibility for the solving of problems and issues. There are clear and established guidelines where participants must take turns to speak. The teacher acts as facilitator.

Circle-Time may take place once a week in each classroom. It is an opportunity to discuss behavioural issues in the classroom or yard. Other staff may be invited to join a class meeting – an SNA, Year Head or teacher on yard duty, to share experiences or opinions. All participants are encouraged to be honest and open in a trusting space where they feel they belong.

Circle-Time promotes a problem-solving approach, involving speaking and listening activities and group work. It builds friendships, creates trust, and encourages self-discipline and assertiveness while promoting positive behaviours and responsibility.

Typical Circle-Time structure

1. Warm-up game
2. Warm-up round with speaking object – to encourage speaking and listening
3. Open Forum – discussion of a rule, pair work, brainstorming, role play, trigger questions, discussion of a problem – with time for each participant to speak if they wish.
4. Golden round – share a positive story about a classmate.
5. Cool down game.

Incentives and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in individual classrooms and school-wide through:

- Oral and written praise
- Stars, stamps, stickers
- Awards for attendance
- Awards for improved yard behaviour
- Letter from teacher to acknowledge good behaviour
- Extra privileges – e.g. special responsibility, messenger, etc., Golden Time
- Certificates – Pupil of the Week, improved work, participation or effort.

We communicate 'good news' to parents and the school community by:

- Stickers and stamps awarded to children.
- Certificates for improved work, good behaviour, etc.
- Showing good work to another class or teacher
- Positive verbal comments - Infants
- Positive news in notes in homework journal – 1st and 2nd Class
- Inviting parents in to see work
- Whole-school Assemblies.

Strategies to ensure calm, peaceful and enjoyable playtimes:

- Clearly stated rules with incentives and sanctions. See
- Playground friends – a group of 2nd Class children trained in playground games who will work with their peers and younger children to promote positive play.
- The Friendship Stop – a place to find a friend to play with.
- Explicit teaching of playground games in P.E. lessons and Assemblies