



# **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

**Mercy Convent Primary School,  
Naas, Co. Kildare**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CODE OF BEHAVIOUR</b> <b>Mercy Convent Primary School, Naas, Co. Kildare.</b></p>
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**Introductory Statement:**

The review of our original Code of Behaviour was initiated in September 2008. The review process continued through the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 academic year to evaluate the effectiveness of our Code of Behaviour and to ensure compliance with the Guidelines for Code of Behaviour issued by the National Educational Welfare Board. The Code of Behaviour Committee members were:-

**Parent Council Representatives:**

Mary O'Shea, Fiona Bergin, Celine Burke, Deirdre McNamee

**Board of Management Representatives:**

Jacqueline O'Reilly, Principal  
Tony O'Sullivan, Chairperson

**Staff Representation:**

Meetings were held throughout the 2008/2009 year and a Primary Professional Development Service Advisor was consulted. The conclusions drawn and recommendations made were taken into consideration in drafting this updated policy. The School Planning Day on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 was devoted exclusively to discussion/planning on the topic. The School Planning Day on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009 was also used to facilitate discussion and planning on the topic. Various aspects of the Code of Behaviour were discussed at Staff Meetings during this time.

**Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents/guardians, pupils and other relevant persons on how we ensure an orderly climate for learning in our school. The policy will:-

- A. Outline standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
- B. Detail measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- C. Set out procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed;
- D. Set out the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school;
- E. Ensure our policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

## *Mercy Convent Primary School, Naas.*

### *Ethos Statement*

*Mercy Convent Primary School, Naas was founded in 1839. It is a national school under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and presently under the trusteeship of the Mercy Order. It is linked to the Catholic parish of Naas and Two Mile House. The school is co-educational in Junior and Senior Infants and single sex (girls) from First Class to Sixth Class.*

*The ethos of Mercy Convent Primary School encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practices which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school ethos, the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive ethos.*

**In Mercy Convent Primary School, where the ethos is that of a Christian Catholic school, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church. We have at our hearts, the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. As a formal agent of education within the Catholic community, the school models and transmits a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are inspired by Gospel values.**

**The pupils are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese. The liturgical seasons are part of the rhythm of the school year and the children are given opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school. Prayer is a feature of the school day.**

**The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his / her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment. A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.**

**Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents / guardians and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages. The school's Code of Behaviour reflects the Christian values promoted within the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils.**

**The school identifies itself with its parish, working closely with the local priest / priests who visit the school frequently. The school aims at fostering a sense of community between management, teachers, parents and pupils and a sense of insertion into the wider community of the parish. Gradually, pupils acquire a sense of the Universal Church whose concern extends to all peoples.**

**The school recognises the dignity and value of each person made in the image and likeness of God. This is reflected in the organisation of the school (including our Admissions and Participation Policy). We aim to build an environment of care and concern for others.**

**The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment. Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents through which they glorify God and serve those young people in whose education they play such a significant role.**

**The school celebrates the unique contribution of each student and seeks to facilitate and encourage the development of a wide range of skills and interests. This is achieved through the dedicated provision of various extra curricular activities including sport and music.**

**Those who share our values and ethos are invited to be part of our school community.**

**(2010 – 2015)**

## **Mission Statement**

Our School is a Catholic School and so we aim to fulfil the aspirations of Catholic education.

We therefore aim:

- ❖ to affirm the pupils' basic goodness, to promote their dignity, to honour their fundamental rights and to develop their gifts to the fullest
- ❖ to educate the children to live responsibly, with God's help, for the fullness of life that God wills for them and for others
- ❖ to convince and train the children to live knowing that their lives are worthwhile and have historical significance, that their every good effort advances the good of all.

Through our Code of Behaviour we hope to create a school ethos which:

- encourages pupils to respect themselves, others and our school;
- fosters pride in our school and its community;
- creates an environment which is safe, supportive and conducive to learning.

## **Aims and Objectives**

By implementing this policy we hope:

- ❖ To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.

- ❖ To assist parents/guardians and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek and engage 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.

## **PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

### **GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL – Positive Strategies**

The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for Teachers – INTO 2004:5).

Mercy Convent Primary School places great emphasis on a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour. Teamwork is of crucial importance to ensure the effective implementation of the code. It is the intention of this school, Principal, staff and parents/guardians alike, to promote positive behaviour and attitudes that the children will adopt and actively use through their lives. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to positive self-image and better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. The school's curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

Children will be praised and rewarded for good behaviour and for setting example to their peers. Reward system/Strategies/Incentives may include:-

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on a child's exercise book
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Individual/class merit awards, points awards or award stamps
- Homework passes, Golden Time or Pupil of the Week
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege

### **Long Term Strategies:**

Ongoing work in the areas of:-

- Social Personal and Health Education (Social Skills)
- Religion
- Drama
- General class discussions on topics such as relating to others, self-esteem, feelings, caring for others

### **Modelling and praising behaviours which promote teamwork:-**

- Fair play
- Respect for others
- Co-operation
- Turn taking
- Inclusivity

Regular reminders on what is acceptable class behaviour/lunch-time behaviour/play-time behaviour (both by class teacher and on public address system).

Regular visits by Principal/Deputy Principal to praise good behaviour.

Formulating simple class rules (after whole class discussion) on:-

1. Lunch time behaviour
2. Play time behaviour
3. Moving around school

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES/EXPECTATIONS**

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the partners in education i.e. Board of Management, Principal, Staff, pupils and parents/guardians of pupils at Mercy Convent Primary School.

#### **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

- To ensure that all policies and practices in school create an ethos that supports good behaviour
- To endeavour to provide a comfortable and safe environment
- To provide an environment that supports and encourages professional development of staff
- To ensure the school has the necessary resources as available from the Department of Education and Skills or as identified and provided by the Board of Management
- To support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code
- Ratify the code and arrange for regular evaluation and review
- Ensure that procedures are in place for Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour

#### **PRINCIPAL**

- Responsible for the day to day discipline in the school
- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure parents/guardians are regularly made aware of the Code of Behaviour and that new parents/guardians and staff are made aware of its contents
- Ensure that parents are informed of any amendments that have been made to the Code of Behaviour
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner

- Encourage a commitment of collective responsibility by staff, parents/guardians and pupils in creating a positive school environment
- Encourage parents/guardians to become involved in the life of the school in a meaningful way. Ensure they have opportunities to contribute to policy and practice
- Arrange for review of the Code of Behaviour as required
- To liaise in areas of conflict where resolution is required

## **TEACHER**

- Create a safe learning environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave. Teach children the school rules and remind them of the rules regularly
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of continuous misbehaviour
- To support the concept of positive discipline.
- To use the classroom as a place where positive self image is promoted
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents/guardians when necessary on matters of mutual concern
- To participate in reviews and updates of the Code of Behaviour

## **CHILD**

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Follow the school and class rules. (Pupils will be involved in drafting class rules)
- Each child is to do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Listen to teacher and act on instructions and advice
- Each child is to be well behaved and to show respect to all members of the school community. This would include listening to and respecting others' views and opinions
- Respect all school property and the property of others
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Running on corridors is not permitted
- Children must walk while in school building
- While in their classrooms children should remain seated unless instructed to do otherwise by their teacher
- Good manners are to be practised at all times. The words "*please*", "*thank you*" and "*excuse me*" are to be used as part of their every day vocabulary. Stand back and let an adult pass when entering and exiting from doorway
- Walk on the right hand side when going up and down the stairs and along corridors. Push in chairs under tables and keep bags tidy and under tables at all times

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN**

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Help with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Ensure they have necessary materials for school
- Attend meetings if requested
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support the school and its staff in the implementation of the Code.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/behaviour
- To positively embrace interventions where they are deemed necessary

All parents / guardians will be made aware of the Code of Behaviour when enrolling a child. Parents/guardians will be required to sign the Code of Behaviour to confirm that they have read the Code, that the Code is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the Code by the child. The homework diary contains a summary of the school rules – parents/guardians of children in other classes will be required to sign this diary at the start of each academic year.

## **PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

Promoting positive behaviour is the main goal of the Code of Behaviour. Within our school community we encourage and promote good behaviour, both within the classroom and the general school environment.

### **Classroom**

1. Each classroom has a set of rules and a reward system which is devised by the children and class teacher together.
2. Positive behaviour is encouraged within the classroom using incentives, some of which include the following: praise in front of class group for behaviour and work, a visit from Principal or other staff member, individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps, written or verbal communication with parent/guardian.
3. Reward system will be part of an overall school strategy. Every Friday children may be rewarded with Golden Time - this is acknowledged and reinforced by the school Principal/Deputy Principal.
4. Reward systems may also be part of a planned intervention between pupil, teacher and parent/guardian to help an individual pupil manage his/her own behaviour.
5. Children who are seen to work on and improve their individual behaviour will be acknowledged by the teacher, by being given individual tasks and responsibilities within the classroom. It is hoped that this strategy would encourage positive behaviour and foster a sense of independence within the child.

6. Circle time may be used within the classroom to develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills.

### **Playground and school environment:**

- ❖ There are clear sets of playground rules displayed on notice boards around the school environment which make it clear what activities are permitted.
- ❖ Prefects organise activities for children and act as role models for the younger children, modelling good behaviour and manners for the children.
- ❖ Positive praise or reward system at lining up time (e.g. 5 minutes extra Golden Time for best line).

## **SCHOOL RULES**

Our Code of Behaviour focuses on promoting good behaviour, which is built on respect – for ourselves, for each other and for our school. There are a number of specific rules regarding punctuality etc. which are included in this policy, but in general our rules can be expressed very simply as follows:-

### **OUR SCHOOL RULES ARE:**

- **Have respect for yourself**
- **Have respect for others**
- **Have respect for your school**

Within each rule we have certain expectations:

#### **Have respect for yourself:-**

- ◆ Take pride in your appearance, full uniform to be worn at all times, tracksuits worn only on P.E. days
- ◆ Behave in a safe way at all times
- ◆ Take pride in your own work and have confidence in your own ability
- ◆ Allow others the freedom to work without interruption
- ◆ Work cheerfully and willingly
- ◆ Be punctual at all times – Children must assemble at their classroom in their lines at 9.00 a.m. (School ends at 1.40 p.m. for Junior Infants and 2.40 p.m. for all other pupils).

#### **Have respect for others:-**

- ◆ Care for all members of our community
- ◆ Value and respect our differences
- ◆ Value and respect the right of all children to an education
- ◆ Value the staff that teach you, who look after you, who clean your school, who take care of the office work

- ◆ Share with others
- ◆ Listen to others without interrupting
- ◆ Be polite, pleasant and gentle to everyone
- ◆ Work and move around the school mindful of others
- ◆ Value and respect the work and opinions of others
- ◆ Take care that you do not harm one another – either accidentally or intentionally

## **Have respect for our school:-**

### **Follow the Green Code -**

- ◆ Put all general waste in a bin – lunch litter. Bring home wrappers. Lunch to be eaten in classroom
- ◆ Chewing gum, nuts, fizzy drinks, hot drinks, popcorn, crisps are not allowed on the school premises or on any school related activity.
- ◆ Glass bottles / containers are not allowed and pupils are encouraged to use recyclable containers
- ◆ Items for composting to be placed in compost bins
- ◆ Always return property
- ◆ Look after displays
- ◆ Use equipment properly
- ◆ Help tidy up
- ◆ Walk quietly around the school – show consideration for others
- ◆ Take pride in our school by being polite and pleasant to each other and to visitors
- ◆ Take pride in our school by remembering that people judge our school by our behaviour inside and outside of school
- ◆ Have respect for school property

*Toys, skate-boards, roller blades, balls and scooters are not allowed on the school premises.*

*Cycling is not allowed in the school grounds and bicycles must be left in specified areas.*

*Hand-held electronic / computer games / devices are not allowed.*

*Valuable items or money should not be brought to school. We cannot accept responsibility for items lost or stolen.*

### **Positive Recognition/Rewards**

When you choose to keep these rules you may receive

- Verbal praise
- Note home affirming good behaviour

Teachers when on yard duty visit different classes to outline and reaffirm the school rules. Principal and Deputy Principal occasionally visit each class affirming good behaviour within the class.

## **Classroom rules**

Within the school the above are our core rules and will be displayed in each classroom. However each teacher can develop their own set of rules in their class in consultation with their pupils based on the above.

Example of Classroom Rules:

- Instructions given by teacher must be obeyed
- Pupils should work to the best of their ability and present exercises neatly (work hard)
- Pupils should work quietly and let others do the same
- Pupils must stay seated in their places unless told otherwise
- Pupils should keep unhelpful/unkind hands, feet and comments to themselves
- Stop, look and listen when teacher is speaking

### **On Wet Days:**

- All children remain seated in their places in their classrooms and play or talk quietly
- Keep activities on your table at all times

Behaviour that does not conform to one or more of these rules can be considered unacceptable and will lead to intervention by the class teacher.

We include the following positive strategies to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom.

- “Ground rules”/behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning. (Classroom management plan)
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour – reward system operating in classrooms
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- Timetabling

## **Playground rules/expectations**

Playground rules are taught to the children in each class.

1. Leave wrappers in lunch box and leave in classroom
2. At break / lunchtime, leave classrooms promptly when bell goes. Do not re-enter the classrooms without permission
3. Walk quietly and carefully in corridors, going to and from yard
4. Hold handrail on the stairs at all times

5. Stay on designated yard AT ALL TIMES unless given permission by teacher on duty
6. Activity games have been painted on the yard for use by the children at break times  
Teachers will teach the children how to play these games during P.E. lesson
7. The areas which are out of bounds are indicated by yellow lines – class teacher will bring these areas to the attention of the children
8. Use designated toilets, with permission from teacher on duty
9. Have respect:      Play gently and be kind and courteous to each other  
                                  Listen to and accept instruction from yard teacher
  
10. After break / lunch time follow the two bell instruction and line up quickly and quietly when bell goes. “Freeze” - stop playing and stand still when the first bell rings. When second bell rings walk quietly to line and wait for teacher

### **Mobile Phones**

See Appendix A

### **School Uniform**

See Appendix B

### **Homework**

See Appendix C

### **Supervision Policy:**

See Appendix D

### **School related activities**

Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school – school tours, games, extra-curricular activities – other school linked events.

## **GRADED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

### **Understanding Behaviour**

At Mercy Convent Primary School, we strive to promote positive behaviour by rewarding pupils for positive behaviour. To encourage improvements, a pupil’s behaviour may be monitored and noted, so that parents/guardians can be involved in this positive reinforcement. While continually promoting positive behaviour, we do have to respond to unacceptable behaviour. There is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The following represents a graded sequence of sanctions which will be implemented in cases of minor misbehaviours, serious misbehaviours and extreme / very serious misbehaviours. The staff are aware of the factors that affect behaviour and our system contains a degree of flexibility to take account of these factors. These factors include external and interpersonal

factors (such as parent and family patterns and relationships, peer groups / friends and neighbourhood and community factors) and within-person factors (including age and stage of development, personality and temperament, physical and medical characteristics and ability to learn). Staff also believe that students' behaviour can change and will endeavour to assist pupils to modify their behaviour. The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or extremely serious will be judged by the teachers and / or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity / frequency of such misdemeanours.

The use of sanctions or consequences will be characterised by certain features:

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must be timely and relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- Group punishment will not be used as it breeds resentment.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences.
- It is the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus of the sanction.
- The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question.

### **Misbehaviour**

Examples of misbehaviour include – chatting in class, disrupting class – interruptions during whole class teaching/distracting others, speaking out of turn, being inattentive, nuisance behaviour, displaying a lack of interest in learning and preventing others from learning, forgetting to do homework or failure to bring in note, coming to school without books/pencils etc., not wearing proper uniform in accordance with policy, disregard for general school rules, failure to follow instructions, spitting/fighting, deliberate exclusion of other children from groups/activities, negative/hurtful comments and actions/name calling/bad language. Being unable or unwilling to abide by the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners.

### **Strategies for dealing with minor misbehaviour as per school rules**

- A. Discussion/Reasoning with the pupil – teacher will advise pupil regarding appropriate behaviour, and how to improve behaviour.
- B. First time a pupil breaks a rule the teacher gives a verbal warning/correction/reprimand.  
Second time a pupil breaks a rule child receives another warning from teacher.  
Third time a pupil breaks a rule a note in teacher's records and a note home informing parents/guardians. Pupil fills in Pupil Behaviour/Reflection Form to be signed by parents/guardians – Second to Sixth Class. Teacher seeks appointment with parents/guardian if considered necessary when Reflection Form is sent home (to discuss all issues and to plan future interventions).  
Fourth time a pupil breaks a rule they are referred to the Principal.
- C. Sanctions – which may be used:  
Temporary separation from peers within class.

Temporary removal to another class.

Temporary removal from activity/game/playtime if endangering self or others, in order to allow a situation or an individual to calm down (Time Out).

Loss of privileges.

Extra work.

Misbehaviour recorded.

If a child consistently misbehaves in school, privileges such as school tour/extra curricular activities/outings may be withdrawn.

- D. Principal/Deputy Principal will be kept informed about the behaviour and that parent/guardian has been informed.

### **Serious Misbehaviour - Persistent** misbehaviour as above/repetitive breaking of school rules

Examples of serious misbehaviour are – constant interruption of the class/teacher, physical hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, dangerous behaviour, theft, damaging or interfering with another person's property/school property, bullying, insolence, defiance, back answering to a teacher or any other adult in the school, bad attitude, refusing to co-operate with peers/teachers or other staff members, verbal abuse or abusive behaviour towards another child, teacher or other member of staff, leaving the school premises during the day without permission, truancy, using or writing unacceptable language/name calling, racist remarks, bringing in glass bottles, tipp-ex, solvents, using mobile phones. (This list is not exhaustive).

### **In The Cases of Serious Misbehaviour**

1. Pupil will be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
2. Pupil may be kept in at break time and / or part of lunch time
3. A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours – fill out Incident Report Sheet
4. Talk to the pupil
5. Pupil will complete Pupil Behaviour/Reflection Form
6. Pupil sent to Principal/Deputy Principal
7. Parents/guardians informed by way of phone call or letter and asked to come to the school to discuss pupil's behaviour
8. Letter of apology signed by parents/guardians and pupil
9. Suspension procedures may follow (in accordance with Education Welfare Act 2000)

### **Extreme/Very Serious Misbehaviour** – Persistent Misbehaviour as above

To deliberately injure another child, teacher or someone working in the school or partaking in any activity which would put themselves or others in danger. Deliberately vandalizing school property, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil or any other person working in the school, endangering safety or any child/adult on the premises, to bring drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, matches or weapons to school, smoking. Gross insolence, verbal abuse of members of staff. Use of camera phones. Blatant disobedience, disregard for school rules, anti-social dangerous or hurtful behaviour. Serious cases of bullying. (This list is not exhaustive).

### **In The Case of Extreme/Very Serious Misbehaviour**

- Pupil will be removed from activity if endangering self or others
- Mobile phone or weapon, solvent, cigarettes, matches, drugs or alcohol will be confiscated
- A record is kept of all extreme/very serious misbehaviours – fill out Incident Report Sheet
- Pupil will complete Pupil Behaviour/Reflection form
- Pupil sent to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Parents/guardians informed by way of phone call or letter and asked to come to the school as a matter of urgency to discuss pupil's behaviour
- Suspension/Expulsion procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the School Board (in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000)

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

All children must follow Code of Behaviour including children with special needs. Class teachers and specialist personnel (such as the Learning Support, Resource Teacher, Special Needs Assistant) should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that pupils with special educational needs can understand. It will be helpful to check for understanding from time to time, especially where a pupil with special needs is acting in a way that would be seen as being in breach of the rules. Teachers may need support in understanding how best to help a pupil with special educational needs to conform to the behavioural standard and expectation. For some pupils, visual prompts or pictures may be needed. Some children may need opportunities to practise observing the rules, with feed back on their progress. (*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*).

### **Support and intervention for children with ongoing challenging emotional / behavioural problems**

- Children with ongoing challenging behaviour are immediately referred for Psychological assessment subject to parent/guardian approval.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Officers, appropriate support is sought from services available, to assist in responding to the needs of the child - e.g. Health Service Executive (Community Psychology Services), National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education.
- Special Educational Needs personnel may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- Some teachers may act as mentors for particular children – learning support, resource, Deputy Principal. (One to one support / advice / teaching).
- Class teachers are assisted in the creation of individual Behaviour Plans for specific children, by learning support teachers. In some instances help may be sought from Special Educational Support Services/National Educational Psychological Services. The Behaviour Plan will focus on a limited number of behavioural targets.

- Use of Behaviour Monitoring Card / Plan / Chart for particularly disruptive pupils – the pupil must get behaviour comments / stickers / smiley faces (age appropriate) from relevant teachers throughout the day.
- There is a mentoring system for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area.
- The school supports professional development for teachers e.g. Special Education Support Services, Colleges of Education, Educational Centres.
- The School will deal with violent and threatening behaviour as laid out in Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004 pg. 11.

### **Managing Aggressive or Violent Misbehaviour – (Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers INTO - 2004)**

Aggressive and violent behaviour is not a regular occurrence in most primary schools. However, when such incidents occur, they are serious and cause a great deal of stress for those involved. When faced with a potentially violent situation the following steps may prove useful in de-escalating the situation. Teachers should call for assistance if faced with a potentially dangerous situation.

- ❖ Where possible a child should be isolated. This may involve the child being removed from the classroom, perhaps with a Special Needs Assistant, or with the assistance of another teacher. An alternative is that the rest of the class is removed from a potentially violent situation.
- ❖ The child should be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully.
- ❖ The teacher should stay at a safe distance.
- ❖ It should be made clear that you are listening to the child. In this way it may be possible to find out how the situation has developed, or how it may be resolved.
- ❖ The child should be asked to consider possible positive outcomes and behaviours.
- ❖ The child should be given space and time to cool off and to respond to requests.

It is important that any violent incident is recorded. It may also be analysed using the Antecedent – Behaviour – Consequences approach (Managing Challenging Behaviour INTO 2004 pg. 9).

The most serious form of misbehaviour is an assault. Circular 40/97 sets out the procedures which should be followed in the case of an assault by a pupil (Appendix E).

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. It will not be tolerated in our school. Parents/guardians will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with according to the procedures set out in our Anti-Bullying Policy (See Appendix F).

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

The Board of Management will enact suspension/expulsion in line with Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for schools (Chapters 10 – 12 ) and the Education Act , S29 1998.

A detailed outline of procedures for Suspension and Expulsion is available in Chapters 11 and 12 of Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools. This is available at the school office or can be accessed on the National Educational Welfare Board Website – [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

Normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be used before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used. Communications with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

The school will follow fair procedures at all times, based on the principles of natural justice when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. Fair procedures have two essential parts:-

- ❖ The right to be heard
- ❖ The right to impartiality

In the school fair procedures apply to:-

- ❖ The investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and
- ❖ The process of decision making as
  - a) Whether pupil did engage in the misbehaviour
  - b) What sanction to impose

The way in which fair procedures are applied will take account of the seriousness of the alleged misbehaviour and will have regard to what is reasonable in the context of our school.

### **SUSPENSION**

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour or incidents of extreme/very serious misbehaviour a pupil may be suspended.

During the period of suspension the pupil retains their place in the school.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. The authority to suspend a pupil for a period of up to three days had been delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management. The Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for her use of that authority.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Other interventions will have been tried before suspension and school staff will have documented and reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. (In a sufficiently serious case, suspension will be applied even though no other interventions will have been tried before suspension.)

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as that

- ❖ The pupil's behaviour has had a serious detrimental affect on the education of other pupils
- ❖ The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to health and safety
- ❖ The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

### **Factors to be considered before suspending a pupil**

- + The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- + The context of the behaviour
- + The impact of the behaviour
- + The interventions tried to date
- + Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- + The possible impact of suspension
- + Personal family circumstances of the child

### **Procedures in respect of suspension**

#### **Inform the pupil and parents/guardians**

Parents/guardians may be informed by phone and in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

#### **Give an opportunity to respond**

Parents/guardians and pupil should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed unless the circumstances warrant suspension with immediate effect.

A meeting with the pupil and his/her parents/guardians will be arranged.

### **Procedure in relation to immediate suspension**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the pupil.

### **The period of suspension**

A pupil should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

### **Appeals**

#### **Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under *Section 29 of the Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the pupil will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal.

### **Implementing the suspension**

#### **Written notification**

The Principal should notify the parents/guardians of the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period 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 parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the 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 Science (*Education Act 1998, Section 29*).

## **Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under *Section 29 of the Education Act 1998*.

## **After the suspension ends**

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension.

## **Re-integrating the pupil**

The school will have a plan to help the pupil to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. Where possible, the school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the pupil during the re-integration process.

## **Clean slate**

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school should expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

## **Expulsion**

### **Authority to expel**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is reserved to the Board of Management.

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour.

### **The grounds for expulsion**

Expulsion of a pupil is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. With the exception of sufficiently serious cases, the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupils including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parent/guardians and the pupils to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
- making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies

A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

- 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

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- sexual assault

### **Factors to consider before proposing to expel a pupil**

- **The age and state of health of the pupil**
- **The pupil's previous record at the school**
- **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour- the frequency of its occurrence and the likelihood of it recurring**
- **The context of the behaviour**
- **Any particular circumstances unique to the pupil which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour, e.g. strained or traumatic domestic situations**
- **The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour**
- **The degree to which the behaviour was a violation of one or more rules contained in the school's Code of Behaviour**
- **Whether the incident was perpetrated by the pupil on his or her own or as part of a group**
- **The impact of the behaviour – whether or not the behaviour impaired the normal functioning of the pupil or other pupils in the school**
- **The interventions tried to date**
- **Whether expulsion is a proportionate response**
- **The possible impact of expulsion**

**Procedures in respect of expulsion** – See Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a formal hearing
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

### **Appeals**

A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998 Section 29*). An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a pupil.

### **The appeals process**

The appeals process under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirements for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current Department of Education and Skills guidance. (Information available from the school).

### **Parents/Guardians/Teacher Contact**

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes, which produce good behaviour in school. Parents/guardians are always welcome in the school and are encouraged to take full advantage of all formal channels of communication made available in the school. Individual parents/guardians/teacher meetings are organised once a year. However, it is possible to meet a teacher at any other time during the year provided an appointment has been arranged in advance through the school secretary. When an appointment is sought to meet a teacher, Principal or parent/guardian, the reason for this appointment must be stated in writing or verbally.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Section 28 of the Education Act, 1998 – outlines the procedures involved when making a complaint:

The following steps must be adhered to:

- Resolve the matter with the teacher.
- If matter is not resolved with the class teacher, it should be resolved with the Principal.
- If the matter remains unresolved, it may then be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

(For procedures outlined under Section 28 of the Education Act 1998 – please see Appendix G)

The Board of Management reserves the right to amend the school rules should they deem it necessary and parents/guardians will be duly informed.

## **Record Keeping**

### **Class Level:**

Class teachers will maintain a standardised class record as outlined below:-

- Punctuality and attendance
- Homework
- Uniform
- Relationship with peers, class teacher, other school staff
- Peer's property and school property
- Class/yard behaviour
- Communications with parents/guardians/pupil/other staff
- Sanctions and interventions
- Responses to interventions

### **Playground**

Incidents in the playground will be brought to the attention of the class teacher (by the teacher on yard duty) who will record same on class record sheet. More serious incidents will be reported to the Principal and recorded by teacher on yard duty on Incident Report Sheet.

Discussion at staff meetings will encourage consistency in the application and interpretation of school/playground rules among the staff. It is crucial that there is consistent understanding of what constitutes good/poor behaviour.

### **All records will:-**

- Be of a standardised format
- Be recorded in a factual and impartial manner
- Be kept securely
- Be dated
- Facilitate the recording of positive and negative behaviour
- Be used to communicate with child, parent/guardians, other staff members and outside agencies where appropriate
- Be used to inform parents/guardians – teacher meetings, end of year reports
- Be used by all teaching staff
- Be sufficiently detailed as to allow the Board of Management and Principal to judge gravity of situation and sanction.

Parents/guardians will be kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues.

### **Records of Suspension**

- Records will be kept of investigation and decision-making (including notes of all investigations, the decision-making process, the decision and rationale for the decision, the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached). These records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office / Deputy Principal's office.
- Report to the Board of Management – Principal will report all suspensions to the Board with reasons for and the duration of each suspension.
- A report will be made to the National Educational Welfare Board in accordance with the N.E. W. B. guidelines.

**Records in respect of Expulsion** – all data, letters etc. will be kept as above.

### **School Level**

All formal school records will be kept in the Principal's Office / Deputy Principal's Office – factual reports of particular incidents, communication between home and school, with outside agencies and with Board of Management, documentation pertaining to suspension, expulsion and appeals under Section 29.

### **Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from School**

The Education Welfare Action, 2000, Section 18 stipulates that parents/guardians must notify the school of a pupil's absence and the reason for this absence.

- Parents/guardians are reminded of the importance of letting the school know of their child's absence for any reason.
- Class teacher should be informed on the child's return to school.
- Parents/guardians should inform the school by way of a written note to the class teacher –note in the school journal.
- Note should be signed and dated.
- Detailed information should be given in the note regarding the child's absence.
- If a parent/guardian fails to write a note explaining the child's absence, this will be recorded as "Unexplained Absence".
- Written notes from parents/guardians are kept for two years for inspection by the N.E.W.B.
- Standard forms are used to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.

*Late arrival at school to be explained by parent / guardian either verbally or in writing.*

*Pupils may not leave the school premises until dismissal time, unless they have the written consent of their parent / guardian and are accompanied by a parent / guardian. Pupil must be signed out at the secretary's office. (Pupil must be signed back in if returning to school).*

See Attendance Policy – Appendix H.

### **Other policies which have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour**

- Social Personal and Health Education
- Anti-Bullying
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment
- Admissions and Participation Policy
- Record Keeping
- Home-School Links
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs

### **Success Criteria**

The success of the policy will be evaluated following consultation with all the partners in the education of the children. It is only through observation and feedback from all the partners in our school community that the effectiveness of the policy can be evaluated. Practical indicators of the success of the policy:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classroom, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in the policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils.

### **Implementation and Review**

The policy will be implemented from September 2011.

It will be reviewed in June 2012 and amended if necessary.

Presented to the Board of Management and ratified on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011

### **Signed:**

**Chairperson, Board of Management.**

**Date:**