

Code of Behaviour-St. Mary's NS, Knockbridge

Introduction/Rationale

St. Mary's N.S. seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. Our code of behaviour reflects the vision of the child at the centre of the learning process and we hope to ensure that each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to his/her needs in a disruptive free environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Aims of the Code

- create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- enable teachers to teach without disruption
- promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- facilitate the education and development of every child
- encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- provide a caring and effective learning environment including setting and correcting pupils work
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all

Each staff member should ensure a high level of supervision at all times

Our 'Super' School Rules

Safety-We take care in all we do to ensure our own safety and the safety of others.

Uniform-We wear our school uniform with pride. Tracksuits are worn on P.E. days.

Punctuality/Property-We come to school on time every day. We take care of our own personal property and of school property.

Effort-We try our best at everything we do.

Respect-We respect ourselves and everyone in our school community.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage. The following list is not exhaustive:

- Respect for self and others in all areas and facets of school life
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Being punctual and regular in attendance - absences must be explained in writing
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Courtesy and good manners at all times
- Observance of the school policy on Uniform
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission when necessary
- Do your best in class to reach your maximum potential
- Completion of homework including oral/written assignments
- Take responsibility for your own work and actions
- Respect for school property and the property of others

Incentives

Part of the vision of St. Mary's NS is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. It is important that reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals should not only apply to a limited number of high achieving children. But rather should respect the abilities and individuality of all children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given-

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Assembly Awards
- Student of the Week Awards
- Compliment on class door from other member of staff
- A system of in-class merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised:

1. Minor
2. Serious
3. Gross.

Examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Disruptive in class
- Talking out of turn
- Running in the school building
- Littering
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework (without a note)
- Not wearing appropriate school uniform (without a note)
- Not cooperating with good hygiene practice
- Name calling
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Inappropriate gestures

(this list is not exhaustive)

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the *class teacher*.

In cases of repeated minor misbehavior or single serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and requested to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Repeated instances of minor misbehaviour
- Endangering fellow pupil
- Refusing to follow good hygiene practices
- Use of unacceptable language
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that continually interferes with teaching and learning
- Spitting or deliberately coughing at pupils or staff
- Damage to property

- Inappropriate use of the internet
- Telling lies
- Deliberate/continued disobedience
- Theft

(this list is not exhaustive)

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Repeated instances of serious misbehaviour
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Smoking
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a pupil or member of staff
- Deliberately injuring a member of the school community
- Arson
- Vandalism
- Deliberate activation of fire alarm
- Serious inappropriate behaviour

(this list is not exhaustive)

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features. It must be clear why the sanction is being applied. The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions. Group/Class punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment.

There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences. It should be the behaviour rather than the child that is the focus.

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this-

- Reasoning with pupil
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Loss of privileges-jobs, duties, important responsibilities
- Temporary separation from peers within class
- Prescribing extra work, writing out the story of what happened, note in homework diary.
- Detention during break in designated areas of the school.
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with parents
- 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)

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Break time detention or separation from peers does not require prior notice to parents as it is an acceptable method of sanction.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in school at that time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested to attend at the school to meet the principal and the Chairperson if necessary. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. The Board authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction further periods of suspension of no more than 3 days to the same child subject to an overall maximum of 20 school days.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. A meeting of the Board should be convened in order to sanction an expulsion. In the case of suspension/expulsion of a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension as well as the parents' right to appeal the decision under Section 29, Education Act 1998.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and, if necessary or applicable, engage with the psychological/counselling services of the HSE and NEPS. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the school's Code of Behaviour. However, we recognise that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special education teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school. A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings
- Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Aladdin Connect
- Homework Diary/Journal
- Behaviour Diary
- Textaparent
- Email
- Facebook Page
- School notice board
- School Newsletter

Covid-19 Addendum

It is vital that children, staff and parents of St. Marys N.S. act in a manner that fully supports the necessary safety measures that have been put into place during the COVID-19 pandemic. These adjustments are set out below:

Arrivals, Departures and Moving round the school.

- Children will enter school through their designated entrance.
- Children will enter individually and will go straight to their designated classroom, keeping a distance from any other individual where possible.
- There will be markers on the floors to support children with social distancing.
- At their designated home time, children will leave the building from their designated exit.
- Movement around the school will be limited. When the children leave their designated area to go outside for break, lunch or outdoor learning, they will follow the markers on the floor to ensure they keep their distance from peers and adults.

Handwashing and Hygiene

- Children will be expected to follow all handwashing and hygiene routines while in school.
- Children will sanitise hands on entering the school building.
- Children will wash their hands before and after eating and at regular intervals during the day.
- Hand drying paper towels to be disposed in the bins provided. We ask children to follow the 'catch it, bin it, kill it, mantra' when in school.
- When coughing or sneezing, children should use a tissue or cough into their elbow.
- Children will be reminded not to touch their face, mouth, nose or eyes while at school.

Social Distancing

- Children will be arranged in class bubbles and pods (groups of children seated together) within the classroom.
- 3rd to 6th class pupils will be seated 1 metre apart and in pods where it is feasible
- When children enter their classrooms, they will be expected to go straight to their table and nowhere else in the room.
- Children will put their hand up if they need an adult's support, and movement around the classroom will be limited.
- Teachers will ensure that pupils adhere to social distancing measures.

We understand social distancing may be more difficult for younger children, they will be encouraged wherever possible to keep a distance from peers and adults, however, we understand this may not always be possible.

Break and Lunch times

- Breaks and lunch time will be staggered each day.
- Lunch will be eaten in the classroom and children will eat at their table or in their own space. They will not get out of their seats.

- Children must have a responsibility for their own equipment e.g. water bottles and ensure that these are *not* shared with other pupils. If children forget spoons or other cutlery, they are not permitted to borrow these from classmates or the staffroom.
- When the children leave the classroom to go outside for break, they will follow the markers on the floor to ensure distance from peers and adults.
- Children will have a designated place to play during break and lunch times.

Equipment/Resources

- Children must not share any equipment or other item or deliberately touch or tamper with another child's equipment or belongings.

Ratification

This policy was updated and adopted by the Board of Management on **06.10.20**

Signed: ***Helen King***
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: ***Brian McDonnell***
Principal

Date: **06.10.20**

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