

ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Saint Mary's Primary School Code of Behaviour is the result of the ongoing consultation and collaboration between the Principal, staff, parents, and Board of Management. It was reviewed and reformulated in January 2010 in the light of "Developing a Code of Behaviour - Guidelines for Schools", issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (TUSLA). The revised code was drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents and in discussion with the Pupils. This will ensure a whole school approach to behaviour in our school.

In drawing up the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and the circumstances of the school and our pupils. The aim of the Code is to ensure that the individuality of each pupil is respected, while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a relatively disruption free and safe environment.

In the code, "the Principal" refers to the Principal of Saint Mary's Primary School and the "Board of Management" refers to the Board of Management of said school. When the term "parents" is used it denotes the parents or legal guardians of the child.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL ETHOS

Our Code of Behaviour relates to the mission statement of Saint Mary's Primary School in that it will nurture a caring environment in which each child can develop his/her full potential and grow in the knowledge that his/her individual talents are valued.

AIMS

- To promote good behaviour in our school.
- To enhance the learning environment 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 and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek 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

Attendance

- When a child is absent, a written note explaining the reason for the child's absence must be given to the class teacher when the child returns to school. Parents of pupils from 1st to 6th classes must use the absence notes at the back of the homework diaries. Parents of junior and senior infants should write a note to the child's teacher.
- Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of the school term due to holidays.
- If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the TUSLA. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school, parents will be informed of this in writing.

Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour

- Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code. All staff actively support our school ethos which emphasises care, respect and responsibility.
- There are good relationships between teachers, parents and pupils and a happy school atmosphere.
- Good school and class routines are in operation. Core routines necessary for the smooth running of classroom learning are clearly established - e.g. entry to the classroom, settling down after break times, noise level for pair/group work. etc.
- Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children. Each class will agree five to seven rules stated in terms of observable behaviours.
- Teachers use a classroom management plan to promote positive behaviour. This includes the class rules as mentioned above, the agreed reward system and the consequences that apply when a child fails to adhere to the rules.
- Parents are welcome in our school and staff will consult with them where necessary. We request that parents ring the school secretary and make an appointment to see the class-teacher or the Principal if they have concerns about their child's behaviour or progress.
- Children are aware that misbehaviour and failure to adhere to school and class rules will incur clear, consistent consequences.
- SPHE is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem and respect and care for others

Approaches to Rewards and Praise

Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results. Our approach to rewards and praise include the following:

- A quiet word of praise or gesture to show approval;
- Stickers, smiley faces, ink-stamps and/or stars on pupils work
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- Informing parent - written/verbal communication. This could include a note in the pupil's homework journal or a note home.
- Points, treats or stickers are awarded to individuals/teams/class for good behaviour and effort put into school and homework;
- Extra privileges like extended computer time; extra story time; extended PE
- Special Class treats - golden-time; raffle; extra break/PE; watch a DVD; Homework passes;
- Positive comments to the Principal.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Adults in our School Community

It is expected that all staff, parents and visitors will interact in a polite, respectful and friendly manner. They are expected to model high standards as their example has an important influence on the children.

Pupils

In order to create a happy school environment in which pupils can feel secure and make progress every pupil is expected to:

- Show respect for self and others
- Show kindness and willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners
- Show fairness and forgiveness
- Do their best in class
- Keep the rules
- Help create a safe, positive environment
- Attend school regularly and punctually

Our school rules reflect these standards:

SCHOOL RULES

Our School Rules – Pupils' Responsibilities

For my own safety and that of others-

- I will come into school grounds through the main gate and walk to the back of the school.
- If I come to school on my bicycle I will get off my bike at the school gate and walk with my bike to the shed.
- I should remain seated in class when requested.
- I will not climb the wall, hedge or trees around the school.
- I should always obey the yard rules.
- I should leave my mobile phone on silent.
- I should never run in the school building.
- I should never leave the school building or yard during school times without permission.

School Rules: Caring for Myself

- I should keep my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- I should be in school when the bell rings at 9.20a.m.
- I may wear one small pair of stud earrings and a watch.
- I may not bring aerosols to school or wear make-up.
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- I should always wash and dry my hands after going to the bathroom.
- I should bring a healthy lunch to school. I may not bring chewing gum, crisps, or glass bottles to school.
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework to the best of my ability.

School Rules: Caring for Others

- I should be polite and mannerly.
- I should be kind and respectful to staff, other pupils and visitors.
- I should remain quiet and orderly in my class line.
- I should behave well in class and always follow the class rules.
- I should always keep my school clean by bringing home unfinished food.
- I should show respect for the property of other pupils, the school building and grounds.
- I should be truthful and honest at all times.
- I should never make nasty, hurtful or racist remarks to or about other pupils.
- I should always include other pupils in all our games and activities.
- I should apologise when I am in the wrong.

The standards and rules expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school tours, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games and concerts.

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour

- Interrupting class work (e.g. walking around the classroom without permission; talking at the wrong time; making noise; fiddling; eating at the wrong time)
- Running in the school building.
- Placing unfinished food or drink cartons in the class bin.
- Leaving litter around the school.
- Not responding to the school bell in a timely manner.
- Disruptive behavior in the bathroom.
- Being discourteous, unmannerly or answering back.
- Not completing homework without good reason.

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and these are examples only. Other types of misbehaviour will also incur sanctions.

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour

- Persistent less serious misbehaviour.
- Telling lies (Interpreting what is a 'lie' will relate to age of the child).
- Stealing - intentional taking of items. (Interpreting 'stealing' will relate to age of the child).
- Endangering self/other pupils in the schoolyard at break time.
- Malicious damage to school/other pupil's property.
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Using bad or suggestive language, or continuously making hurtful or racist remarks.
- Deliberately injuring another pupil or staff member.
- Bullying (See separate Policy Document).
- Using a Mobile phone during school hours.

Strategies for dealing with misbehaviour.

Teachers will use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the child and the particular circumstances of the behaviour or incident in selecting the appropriate sanction. The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question.

Parents will be informed as soon as it is perceived that difficulties are developing with regard to their child's behaviour. Teachers may write a note in the homework notebook to be signed by parents. Parents may also be informed by phone.

- The teacher will remind the child of the rule or emphasise the behaviour expected.
- If the behaviour is repeated, the student is reminded of the behaviour required and informed of the consequence associated with continued misbehaviour.
- The student may be separated from other pupils in the classroom ("time-out") - either by changing places with another student or moving to an isolated desk. During this time they still partake in class work.
- Loss of privileges - (e.g. classroom jobs, group leader)
- The child may be asked to discuss their behaviour with the teacher.
- The child may also be asked to meet with the Principal.
- The child may be asked to write an account of their behaviour to be signed by his/her parents.

- The pupil's behaviour will be recorded in the teacher's record book or in the yard incident book as appropriate.
- If misbehaviour continues, the student may be removed to another classroom for a 'cool down' period. The student is given an assignment/classwork to complete during this time and will be encouraged to reflect on their behaviour.
- Pupils may be given time-out on the yard if misbehaviour occurs at break times.
- If the misbehaviour continues or in the case of a serious incident, the parents will be requested to meet the class teacher.
- In the event of ongoing incidents of serious misbehaviour, the parents will be invited to a meeting with the Principal. A meeting may also be arranged with the parents, Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- In the case of serious misbehaviour the pupil may be kept in detention at all/some breaks for a specified period.
- Pupils may be excluded from tours, field trips or after-school activities in the event of the pupil being engaged in very serious misbehaviour or if the pupil's presence at the activity constitutes a threat to safety.
- In the event of a very serious incident of misbehaviour or where a pupil is continuously disruptive he/she may be suspended by the Principal/Board of Management for a minor fixed period of one to three school days. The procedures for suspension are outlined below.

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR

Staff at Saint Mary's Primary School are also aware of the factors that affect behaviour. 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, social skills deficit, personality and temperament, physical and medical characteristics and ability to learn). The staff also believe that students' behaviour can change and will endeavour to assist pupils to modify their behaviour. Examples of support and intervention for pupils are outlined below.

INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT - list of options

- Classroom management plan as agreed with all students at the start of the school year (see attached)
- Social skills programme, promotion of friendship and self esteem as part of S.P.H.E.
- Yard games/activities may be organised if the behaviour is taking place on the yard.
- Use a behavioural check-list (e.g. the learning environment checklist from the NEPS booklet "Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support") to evaluate whether any modifications could be made to the learning environment.
- A Behaviour Plan may be considered when a child consistently exhibits challenging and disruptive behaviour. A Behaviour Plan will focus on a limited number of behavioural targets. It is envisaged that the child will be involved in the setting of targets. If a child is entitled to a support teacher on the basis of his behavioural needs, the support teacher may set targets in consultation with the child, the class teacher and the parents.

For pupils who exhibit particularly challenging behaviour, support services may be requested to assist in responding to the needs of the pupils. Sources of support may include, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Special Education Support Service (SESS), HSE Community Psychology Services and the National Council for Special Education.

SUSPENSION

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious misbehaviour:

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

The Board of Management and Staff of Saint Mary's Primary School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the *Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour* (Chapters 10 - 12). Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. In this regard, no person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

In Determining the appropriateness of suspending a pupil the Staff and the BOM will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to suspend a student. These factors include, 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 and the possible impact of suspension.

Immediate Suspension: In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when following a preliminary investigation, the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person.

The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the Principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted. The suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the misbehaviour. If a suspension longer than three days is proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However, the Board has also authorised the Principal to impose a suspension of up to five days with the approval of the chairperson of the Board in the event that a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

Parents will be informed of an immediate suspension by telephone, and arrangements made for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a pupil be sent home from school prior to his/her parents being notified. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension and parents will also be sent written notification. The Principal and/or the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parents to a meeting to discuss the circumstances surrounding the suspension and any interventions necessary to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in very serious misbehaviour. The Board of Management has determined that the following named behaviours will incur automatic suspension as a sanction -

- Physical assault/violence resulting in serious bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

The procedures in relation to suspension will apply.

PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO SUSPENSION:

- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.

- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- If parents fail to attend the meeting, the Principal/Chairperson will write to the parents inviting them to a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the Board of Management will consider the proposed suspension and make a decision.
- Where parents 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, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective. The letter will confirm:
 - the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 - the reasons for the suspension
 - any programme of study to be followed
 - the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents 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).
- The suspension will be recorded on the TUSLA 'Student Absence Report Form' (when applicable).
- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the class teacher or Principal.
- 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.
- If a pupil continues to misbehave s/he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents to address the issues.
- 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 student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
- **Section 29 Appeal** - when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION. (Guidelines p80 - 87).

- Subsequent to the above 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 pupils 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 student 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 BOM will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student. These factors are similar to those mentioned above in relation to suspension.
- **In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence.** This may apply in the event of
 - A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
 - Actual violence or physical assault
 - Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
 - Sexual assault
- **Procedures in respect of expulsion – six steps.**
 - 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
 - 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

Note: A detailed outline of each of these is available in Chapter 12 of the *Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour*. This is available in the school office or can be accessed on the Tusla Website - www.Tusla.ie

- **Section 29 Appeals** (p86). A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (DES). A form for such an appeal is available from the DES.

12. KEEPING RECORDS

Class Level

- Teachers keep an individual behaviour and progress record for each child. The class teacher will place this record in the child's file at the end of each school year. Good behaviour as well as misbehaviour is recorded. This will enable teachers to track a child's behaviour and will be used to inform parents of their child's behaviour and progress at the parent-teacher meetings and the annual school report,
- The school has devised a record sheet for documenting problem behaviour. This includes the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the context of the behaviour, the impact of the behaviour and the interventions tried to date (See Appendix). Incidents of bullying or sexual harassment will also be recorded on this form.

Playground

- Serious incidents of misbehaviour on the playground are recorded on the school record sheet.
- The staff on yard duty will inform the class teachers and/or the Principal of incidents of misbehaviour on the yard.

School Records

- A record will be kept of letters or phone calls to parents in relation to pupil's behaviour. A record will also be kept of communication with outside agencies and with the Board of Management. These records will be stored in the pupil's individual file.

- Documentation pertaining to Section 29 appeals will be kept and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office.

Records of Suspension (p78).

- Records will be kept of investigation and decision-making (including notes of all investigation, 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 school office.
- Report to the Board of Management - The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board with reasons for and the duration of each suspension
- A report will be made to the TUSLA in accordance with the TUSLA reporting guidelines.

Records in respect of expulsion - all data, letters, etc. will be kept as above.

PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to regularity and level of sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanors, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning/behavioural/emotional difficulties. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to improve his/her behaviour. This may involve agreeing a behaviour plan or contract or working and co-operating with the Resource Teacher and a Special Needs Assistant(SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

Procedure for the Resolution of Complaints:

Complaints are taken under guidelines laid down in agreement between CPSMA and INTO. Guidelines available in school or on the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) Web Site.

COMMUNICATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE CODE

- All parents will be issued with a copy of the Code of Behaviour.
- The staff will endeavour to ensure that all parents can access and understand the code.
- Special effort will be made to ensure that pupils with special educational needs understand the school rules, the reward systems and the consequences of misbehaviour. SPHE lessons, DVD's and role-play may be used to ensure these pupils understand cause and effects of behaviour. Teachers will teach the Code of Behaviour pupils in an age appropriate manner.

Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from the whole school community
- Observations of behaviour in the class, yard, toilets and corridors.
- Happy and caring school atmosphere
- The number of recordings of misbehaviour on the school record sheet.

Roles and Responsibility:

A. The school Staff

- To co-ordinate, monitor and the implementation of the policy and in partnership with parents.
- To model positive behaviour
- To manage the classroom in such a way that children are positively engaged.
- To involve the pupils in drawing up rules for class-room.
- To teach the school rules in a way that is appropriate to each class level.
- To display rules in classroom.

- B. Ancillary Staff operating under the guidance of the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- To model positive behaviour
 - To co-operate with Principal and teachers in the implementation of the code.
- C. Parents/Guardians
- To encourage their children to keep the school rules
 - To co-operate with the school in the implementation of this and other policies.
 - To model positive behaviour

Implementation Date: 1st September, 2015.

Timetable for Review: Reviewed on April 2018 school year and every two years thereafter.

Ratification and Communication:

- Ratified by the Board of Management
- Circulated to ancillary staff
- Circulated to all parents/guardians via internet and Newsletter
- Published on school website.
- Class meetings with parents at beginning of school year.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by:

Date: 28th November 2018