

# **Code of Behaviour**

## Title

Code of Behaviour

## Introductory Statement

Work began on this policy during the school year 2008/2009 leading to its completion and ratification in November 2009. It was formulated following discussion and consultation between teachers, S.N.A.s, board of management, parents and pupils.

## Rationale

Our code of behaviour was devised for the following reasons:

- It is an area of concern identified by the school community
  - To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
  - It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

St. John the Evangelist is a Catholic co-educational primary school, which operates under the auspices of the D.E.S. and under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. We strive to create and provide a safe, secure and happy environment where Christian values of respect and understanding are promoted. We endeavour to nurture each child to develop his/her potential in a setting where he/she feels valued. We believe that in creating a setting where there is a high level of respect and cooperation between management, staff, parents and pupils, the overall holistic development of each child will be promoted.

## Aims

By introducing this policy our school hope to achieve the following:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision 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 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 throughout the school

## Content of this policy

This policy is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour
  - Staff
  - Board of Management
  - Parents
  - Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
  - Classroom
  - Playground
  - Other areas in the school
  - School related activities
4. Rewards and sanctions
  - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
  - Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
  - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion
  - Suspension
  - Expulsion
  - Appeals
6. Keeping records
  - Class
  - Playground
  - School records
7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school
8. Reference to other policies

## 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

In general the pupils are expected to behave as follows:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults

- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

See appendix A "What behaviour do we expect from the children?" for more specific guidelines.

- All children are expected to behave as stated in appendix A. However we recognise that we will at times, need to consider factors influencing some children's behaviour, and make special accommodation and allowances to help them to comply with our expectations.

## 2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

### Staff

- In St. John the Evangelist N.S. we recognise importance of taking a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour. Our teachers and other staff members have played important roles in the development of this code bringing to it their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning, their experience of what works to help students to behave well, and their knowledge of the school and of the school community. A number of our teachers and S.N.A.s participated in the "Incredible Years" classroom management training programme. Key elements of this training were shared with staff and have informed much of the decision making process. Teaching staff discussed the specific discipline needs of our school at staff and in-service planning meetings. S.N.A.s were consulted, their input sought and amendments made where appropriate.
- We have discussed at length and published the behaviours we expect from the children (see Appendix A) as well as how we hope to promote this behaviour at all times throughout the school day (see Appendix B). We have devised a system to deal with misbehaviour that is used in all classrooms (see Appendix C). We also have in place agreed approaches to managing behaviour in the yard (see Appendix D). Our expectations and approaches have been discussed and agreed with all members of our school community. Discussion on aspects of our code of behaviour is at the forefront of many staff meetings. We plan to review our code of behaviour informally on an ongoing basis and more formally as necessary.
- Proactive strategies to prevent discipline problems have been discussed at length by staff and there is a strong awareness throughout the school of the importance of creating a positive environment where children are engaged and motivated to learn.
- The school's SPHE and oral language curricula are used to support the code of behaviour. They aim to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. They also aim to foster self-esteem, to help children accommodate differences and to develop citizenship.
- Our code of behaviour is communicated to new and temporary staff by the teacher with responsibility for the coordination of the development of the code as well as during time allocated to the topic at staff and in-school planning meetings.
- Children who present behavioural difficulties arising from their special education needs will have an individual behaviour plan as part of their IEP. An individual

behaviour plan may also be necessary for other children who are consistently not responding to the systems in place.

## Board of Management

- The B.O.M. was consulted at various stages of the planning process. Drafts of work to date were presented for comment, suggestion and approval. The board supports the code of behaviour by keeping discipline to the forefront of meetings as well as by facilitating meetings in school between staff members for consultation and collaboration. "Incredible Years" classroom management training was approved of and facilitated by the board for members of teaching staff and S.N.A.s. It also approved and paid for a summer in-service training week during which a significant amount of time was allocated to working on our code of behaviour.
- The Board of Management follows the procedures outlined in the section on suspension and expulsion in dealing with serious breaches of behaviour.

## Parents

- Parents are informed of their child's behaviour on a daily basis through the "Rainbow Gauge" system.
- All parents were invited to a meeting to discuss the draft policy where their opinions and suggestions were sought and presented to the B.O.M.
- Prior to the launch of the code of behaviour, parents were given an opportunity to read the code of behaviour. At its launch parents were given a document to sign indicating that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code by their child.
- Prior to registering a pupil, parents are provided with a copy of the school's code of behaviour which they are asked to read, sign and return indicating that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.
- Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:
  - o Ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
  - o Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
  - o Being aware of and cooperating with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
  - o Attending meetings at the school if requested
  - o Helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed
  - o Ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
  - o Informing the class teacher of any concerns they have regarding their child

## Pupils

- Our "Golden Rules" were devised last year following consultation with the children. The children were asked to consider:

what should children do?.....

how can teachers help?.....

how can parents help?.....to make our school a place where everyone:

- o feels safe
- o is able to learn
- o belongs
- o is respected
- o respects others

The following rules were devised as a result of these discussions. They have been printed and are displayed around the main areas of the school.

These “Golden Rules” apply to all children at all times while in school and t school related activities.

### **Golden Rules**

1. Always do as a teacher asks immediately.
  2. Be safe! Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
  3. Always show respect to yourself and others.
  4. Always try your best and allow others to do the same.
  5. Respect / take care of school property and your own belongings.
- Children discuss and devise classroom rules with their teacher at the beginning of the school year in order that they are stated explicitly in age appropriate language. They are revised and reviewed regularly in class.
  - The children participate in school assemblies at which outstanding classroom behaviour is acknowledged.

## 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

### Classroom

The following positive strategies are used by staff use 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
- pupils have 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
- classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- timetabling, to help children have predictable routines
- creating a positive physical environment

See Appendix B “What do we do to promote these (expected) behaviours?” for further detail

## Playground(s)

The following positive strategies are implemented by staff in the playground to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour:

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted exist and is communicated to the children by class teachers at the beginning of each school year and revised regularly throughout the year. Children are reminded regularly (by class teacher, by supervising teachers and at assemblies by the principal) of expected behaviour in the yard as well as of the sanctions that will apply for misbehaviour.
- The yard is supervised at lunchtimes by teachers on a rota basis and by S.N.A.s.
- Certain parts of the yard are allocated to specific activities for particular classes. E.g. football, basketball, skipping in various parts of the senior yard
- S.N.A.s assist the supervising teachers in the yard by observing and reporting incidents and accidents to the supervising teachers.
- Children remain in their classes, where they play with toys/activities/colour etc. on wet days. In the interests of safety they are expected to remain seated.
- Children are expected to walk silently in lines when outside of their classroom. Bonus yard time may be awarded for good lines. Staff members are aware of a collective responsibility for promoting and maintaining good behaviour and will encourage all children who are seen to be making an effort.
- Children who leave the yard to go to the toilet must obtain a "toilet pass" from one of the supervising teachers or SNAs. This should be given back to the same person when they return to the yard.
- Golden rules apply in the yard where applicable. Children who break rules in the yard will be put in one of two marked out areas in each yard called the "STOP AND THINK ZONES". Supervising teachers will report serious misbehaviour to the child's class teacher who will make a record in the class incident book. Children will be sent to the principal for particularly dangerous or defiant behaviour in the yard, the behaviour noted in the incident book and / or parents contacted.
- If children fail to freeze after the bell has rung, or to line up properly, they will be put in the "stop and think zone" and their class will be unable to win Bonus yard time. If this is noted to be happening on a regular basis they will be sent to the principal who may contact the child's parents.

## 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. Students are expected to maintain these standards during school tours, games and extracurricular activities and all other school-linked events.

## 4. Rewards and Sanctions

- A wide range of incentives and motivators are used throughout the school. These include ways of acknowledging good behaviour publicly in the school as well as

communicating “good News” to parents, other classes and principal. (See Appendix B for examples of systems in use)

- In general the following strategies are used in response to inappropriate behaviour:
  - o Ignore (where appropriate)
  - o Use proximity praise (praising children behaving as requested)
  - o Change task / focus
  - o Use the rainbow gauge system

See Appendix C, “What do we do when our expectations are not met” for further detail and for explanation of the “rainbow gauge” system.

See also our Anti-bullying policy.

## Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

- Through the use of the “Rainbow Gauge” System, parents will be constantly aware of how their child is behaving in class.
- If a child is persistently misbehaving, his/ her parents will be contacted by the class teacher or principal depending upon which step of the system the child is on. The purpose of such meetings will be to explain the problem, give parents a chance to discuss the issue and to talk about how it might be solved as well as to agree on way/times to review behaviour. At times it may be considered appropriate for the child to be present at part of the meeting.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns.

## Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological assessment.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, (Lucan Child and Family Clinic), NEPS.
- The school “Care Team” may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- Teachers are assisted in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children
- There is a mentoring system in place for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area as well as generally.
- Professional development is available to staff through courses organised through Dublin West Education Centre, SESS, NEPS, etc.
- If the school proposes to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, it is advised to seek expert advice, competent legal advice and to read Managing Challenging Behaviour - Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11



- Each teacher has a red card which can be sent to another teacher as a request for assistance in the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of a pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff.

## 5. Suspension / Expulsion

### Suspension

- Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are considered, the normal channels of communication between school and home are utilised. Communication between parent and school may be verbal or by letter.
- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or other pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. Parents will be invited to the school to discuss their child's case with a view to preventing a repetition of the misbehaviour.
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend a meeting with the Principal and the Chairperson. If parents fail to 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, the principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved. Due regard will be given to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any other medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules of National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Parents were made aware of our policy and procedures regarding suspension and expulsion during the consultative process. Prior to registering a pupil parents will be given a copy of our code of behaviour to read and state in writing that it is acceptable to them.
- Fair procedures are followed when proposing to suspend or expel a student:
  - the right to be heard
  - the right to impartiality
- Fair procedures apply to the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour and to the process of decision-making as to whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and what sanction to impose.
- Fair procedures are accessible to people with disabilities of those from different language or cultural backgrounds.
- Parents will be offered an opportunity to appeal a decision to suspend a student.
- The use of suspension in the school will be reviewed by the Board of Management at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies.

### Expulsion

- Expulsion of a pupil will only be considered in the most extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and only after all other sanctions, including repeated suspensions have been exhausted.
- Expulsion from school is a function of the Board of Management.
- Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- o A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal
  - o A recommendation to the Board of Management by the principal
  - o Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing
  - o Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
  - o Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
  - o Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- Fair procedures for investigation and decision-making will apply
  - Parents and students will be informed about their right to appeal the decision to expel
  - The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

## Appeals

- At the time when parents are being formally notified of a decision to suspend or expel a student, they will be told by the Board of Management about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and will be given information about how to appeal.
- The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science.

## 6. Keeping records

### Class level

- All records are written in a factual and impartial manner
- Teachers keep a record of the colour each child was on (rainbow gauge system) at the end of every day. This enables teachers to acknowledge and reward children who remain on green all week, month, term or year.
- Each teacher has a class incident book in which a record of when a child is on red or black is kept. If a child is on red frequently this is reported to the principal. When a child is on black, this is reported to the principal.
- Serious classroom misbehaviour is also recorded in the class incident book.
- There is a reference to behaviour in the end of year report.
- There is a reasonably consistent understanding among staff of what constitutes excellent – poor behaviour ( see appendix A)
- Parents are kept up to date regarding behaviour issues using the “Rainbow Gauge” system.

### Playground

- Supervising teachers will report serious misbehaviour to the child's class teacher who will make a record in the class incident book.
- Children will be sent to the principal for particularly dangerous or defiant behaviour in the yard, the behaviour noted in the incident book and / or parents contacted.
- If children fail to freeze after the bell has rung, or to line up properly, they will be put in the “stop and think zone” and their class will be unable to win Bonus Yard

Time. If this is noted to be happening on a regular basis they will be sent to the principal who may contact the child's parents.

- Children are reminded regularly (by class teacher and at assemblies by principal) of expected behaviour in the yard as well as of the sanctions that will apply for misbehaviour.

## School records

The following records are kept in the office:

- The incident book recording serious incidents of misbehaviour and any action taken
- Factual reports of accidents and their treatment
- Communication with Board of Management
- Documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29

## 7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment (see appendix B, Ensuring a positive environment by.....)
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- Parents/guardians are asked to send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes should be signed and dated.
- The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board (See forms on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie))

## 8. Reference to other Policies

The following school policies have a bearing on the code of behaviour:

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Harassment
- o Sexual harassment
- o Enrolment
- o Record keeping
- o Home / School links
- o Health & Safety
- o Equality
- o Special Educational Needs
- o English (Oral Language)
- o School tours

## Success Criteria

The following will be used as indicators of the success of the policy:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

## Roles and Responsibility

The B.O.M. must have overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared in the school and for ensuring it is in keeping with the ethos of the school. The B.O.M. ensures that all the members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in developing the code of behaviour. It formally records the adoption of the code, the commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed.

- It is the responsibility of the Principal, under the direction of the B.O.M. to lead the work on the code of behaviour.
- The teacher with responsibility for the coordination of our code of behaviour will direct the implementation of this policy.
- The principal, teachers and S.N.A.s bring to their work on the code of behaviour, their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning, their experience of what works to help students behave well and their knowledge of the school and of the school community.
- Pupils will
  - hear directly and also have an opportunity to discuss what is needed for teaching and learning
  - experience being part of a collective effort to make sure the school is a good place to teach and to learn
  - learn about taking responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's well-being and the wellbeing of the teachers
  - learn essential skills of listening, negotiating and managing differences
  - have their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used
- Joint work between parents and staff in the development of the code of behaviour can:
  - give parents insight into what teachers need in order to be able to teach effectively
  - equip parents to reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school
  - help parents have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work

- o help to ensure that parents give consistent messages to students about how to treat others

## Implementation Date

This policy will apply from its launch on 26/11/2009.

## Timetable for Review

The policy be informally monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis over the next few years and will be formally audited as necessary.

## Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy on 19/11/2009.

The ratified policy is available on the school website [stjohntheevangelistns.scoilnet.ie](http://stjohntheevangelistns.scoilnet.ie)