

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

This policy was reviewed and formulated on 16th March 2010 at staff meeting initially, discussed with the pupils in class and at assembly and Board of Management. It was distributed to the parent body for their opinion.

Rationale

This policy comes about as a result review of the school's existing Code of Discipline which is existence in the school for some years. A commitment to review current practice here will ensure the culture of care, concern, friendliness and support which permeates our school will be carried forward in the years ahead.

According to Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) there is an obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school and also to ensure that the policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*. This policy follows the guidelines as laid down by NEWB

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the School

The policy closely relates to the school ethos which values each child equally in a safe harmonious environment where the child is nurtured to develop to his/her full potential with co-operation between parents, pupils and the school.

Aims

The aims of this Code of Behaviour and the appended School Rules are:

- 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 to develop pupils' self-esteem
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- 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
- To develop in pupils and understanding of the necessity and benefits of boundaries
- To ensure children are safe and protected while attending school.

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

In St. Bernard's N.S.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved at all times and to treat all fellow pupils, staff and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy
- 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
- Behaviour that interferes with the rights of pupils to learn, or the rights of teachers to educate, is unacceptable
- Teachers and other staff members are expected to be respectful in their dealings with all members of the school community

Good behaviour is summarised in St. Bernard's N.S. with three simple rules

Respect ourselves. Respect each other. Respect our school

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

Everybody in the school is aware of Code of Behaviour, its contents, its implications for the various partners, parents, pupils, Board of Management, teachers, ancillary staff and how the Code works from day to day. The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standard of behaviour in their dealings both with students and with each other. Parents should be expected to model the standards that students are expected to respect. The ways in which parents interact, will provide students with a model of a good working relationship.

The Principal

The Principal will promote a positive climate in the school in line with the ethos of the school.

- He/ She will ensure that the Code is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- A review of the Code will be arranged or facilitated by the Principal as required
- The Principal will ensure that all visiting teachers, coaches etc. are familiar with the Code
- All parents will be given a copy of the Code on enrolment of their child

The Teacher

All staff members are expected to be vigilant in their supervision of the children in their care. They must support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour. Each year the code of behaviour is discussed at staff meetings and practices are reviewed accordingly. New staff members are provided with the Code of Behaviour document.

- The teacher will be courteous, consistent, respectful and fair.
- Good work or good behaviour will be affirmed and acknowledged by the teacher.
- The teacher will deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- The teacher will keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- The class teacher and resource teacher will work individually with any child who presents with behavioural difficulties arising from their own special educational needs using behavioural targets through IEP.
- The teacher will rely heavily on the SPHE curriculum to support the code of behaviour through developing communication skills, conflict resolution skills and fostering self-esteem, citizenship and tolerance of others.
- Through use of circle time, buddy system where a senior pupil is paired with a pupil from Junior Infants, good behaviour is fostered and encouraged.

Board of Management

The Board of Management had discussed the code of behaviour and has been involved in its initial drafting and its review.

- The Board will provide a secure, safe and comfortable environment for the staff and pupils to work in.
- The Board will support the Principal and staff to implement the Code.
- The Board will encourage and facilitate the school staff to avail of any support available which might help with the development of the code through accessing PPDS or SDP or local Education Centre.
- The Board undertake to follow all procedures as laid down by Education Act in order to deal with serious breaches of behaviour.

Parents

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour in a variety of ways. Parents will be familiar with the code and support its implementation. The code of behaviour communicated to parents on the enrolment of their child as part of Enrolment Pack

- Parents will encourage their children to have a sense of respect for themselves and others and their property.
- Parents will encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work.
- They will attend meetings at the school if requested
- They will help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- They will ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents will ensure that their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty for others, parents will co-operate with and support the school.
- Parents will communicate respectfully with the school in relation to any problems which may affect the child's progress or behaviour. Such information will be treated in a confidential manner
- They will co-operate with all arrangements the school may have in place, for effective operation eg. parking arrangements, signing of absence notes, collection of children on time, adhering to school calendar/timetable etc.

Pupils

Pupils play a very important role in drafting of rules in the classroom, through discussion, analysing various events either real or imaginary which may have occurred.

- They listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- They show respect for themselves, respect to each other and respect to all members of the school community
- They show respect to their own property, the property of other pupils and respect to all school property
- They avoid behaving in a way that would endanger others
- They avoid any behaviour which might result in offending or upsetting others
- They include other pupils in games and activities
- They bring the correct materials/books to school
- They follow school rules, playground rules and class rules.
- Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually

Pupils are encouraged to be responsible for themselves and senior pupils are praised for 'looking out' for the younger pupil. This is done in a formal way through Buddy system but all pupils are encouraged to take care and look out for each other.

Following discussion, the children's views in the Senior classroom was sought and slogans with appropriate drawings were created. These will be displayed prominently for impact.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Many positive strategies are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour. These strategies are used within the classroom setting, the playground and the general school environs. These strategies and the expectation of good behaviour extend to school tours, trips to swimming or matches etc.

Classroom

Within the classroom the following positive strategies are used effectively to manage behaviour in the classroom.

- "Ground rules"/ behavioural expectations in each class are always consistent with the code to create a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils have an input in devising the class rules which are clearly displayed.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- A quiet word or gesture is used to show approval and to affirm good behaviour
- Positive comments, 'homework card passes', stars or stamps are used regularly as a means of affirming good work or good behaviour.
- Children are praised in front of the class or at Assembly.
- A child is sent to another class or to the Principal for commendation.
- Parents are made aware of commendation
- A privilege or responsibility may be awarded

Playground(s)

The following positive strategies are used by the staff to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour.

- Teacher on yard duty stands where he/she has all children in sight. The children are visible at all times
- SNAs supervise the child/children in their care closely.
- Play areas are designated to certain classes/groups in ways that will minimise misbehaviour
- Creation of zones within the playground, providing sections for specific age groups, quiet activities etc.
- SNAs assist the supervisor in the playground and bring anything that they notice to the attention of the teacher on duty
- On wet days IWB is used with dvd along with board games
- Children stop playing when bell rings at end of break time. They go to their line and all balls are placed in class ball buckets.
- Children who leave the playground to use the toilets must ask permission from teacher and uses toilets at main entrance.
- If any child has to remain inside for break time they stay in Senior Classroom at Staff Room door with teachers not on yard, duty aware of their presence.
- Incidents of misbehaviour are noted by the teacher on duty and such incidents are recorded in Incident Book which is kept in Staff Room. A system of Red/Yellow Cards is used.
- A minor breach of misbehaviour results in a Yellow Card. Any pupil who received two Yellow cards within one week is required to complete a Time Out Yard reflection or to do lines of writing/transcription. If behaviour is deemed serious a Time Out Reflection or lines can be given after this first serious breach.

4. Bullying

In dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour, teachers have regard to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, which is distributed to parents on the first day of each school year.

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal (including cyber bullying), psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which are not condoned cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The Department of Education & Science has identified a number of different types of bullying, and the school accepts and concurs with this elaboration of what constitutes bullying. This includes physical aggression, damage to property, demands for things, intimidation, isolation, name-calling and slugging.

It is well recognised that bullying can have a very serious effect on individuals and, for this reason, any incidents of bullying that arise are brought to the teachers' attention and are always dealt with promptly without delay.

As many young children may be unaware that the behaviour they engage in may be described as bullying, measures are taken both in school assembly and in classrooms to ensure that children understand the types of behaviour that are not tolerated.

5. 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 such as school tours, swimming, matches etc.

6. Strategies deployed to deal with minor issues and more serious issues.

The following strategies, indicating a ladder of intervention, may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
- Prescribing extra work
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or class (to another classroom).
- Loss - withdrawal of privileges.
- Carrying out a useful task in the school.
- Detention during a break period.
- Communication with parents.
- Formal report to the Board of Management.
- Suspension or Expulsion from school (in accordance Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

If deemed necessary by a teacher, a pupil will be placed in detention for a behaviour issue for lunch break from 12.30 p.m. to 1p.m. On occasion, a pupil may be placed in detention during mid-morning breaks, if judged necessary by a teacher. Detention will be carried out in Senior Room with child seated at table at Staff Room door in view of teachers.

7. Suspension

As required under the *Education Welfare Act 2000*, Section 23 (2), the following procedures will apply in the case of suspension.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances will suspension be considered. Having regard to the Christian values of this school, attempts will always be made to bring out the best in pupils and to discriminate between disapproval or wrongful actions, and the value of each individual in the school community.

In cases where suspension is being considered, and before any form of suspension is imposed, parents will be invited to attend at the school to discuss their child's behaviour.

If the Principal and the Chairman of the Board of Management are satisfied with any undertaking given by the parents of the child and of the child concerned, then any suspension being contemplated may be deferred or dropped.

Any suspension to be imposed will be notified to parents in advance, and a return time and date specified.

The Principal will reintroduce any suspended pupil to his or her class as specified. At the time of return from suspension, it will be necessary for a child and his or her parents to give a formal undertaking that the behaviour which led to suspension will not be repeated.

The Principal and, in his or her absence, the Deputy Principal or the Chairman of the Board of Management have been authorised by the Board of Management to impose suspension, when necessary.

In the most exceptional of circumstances, and only in the case of very serious or gross misbehaviour, the Board of Management has authorised the Chairman of the Board of Management and the Principal, acting together, to sanction an immediate suspension, pending discussion of the matter with parents. Additionally, the Principal and Chairman acting together may, at their joint discretion, remove a suspension already imposed in light of changed circumstances or representations which, in the opinion of the Principal and Chairman, warrant such removal.

Procedures for suspension

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil and may do so for up to 10 consecutive school days at one time or for 20 days in a school year (page 75/76 Section 11.6). The authority to suspend a pupil for up to 3 consecutive school days (page 75 Section 11.6 first and second paragraphs) has been delegated by the Board of Management in writing to the principal on (date). (p.70). A single incident of misbehaviour may be grounds for automatic suspension.

Procedures for suspension other than for an automatic suspension

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the principal will:

- Inform the student and his/her parents about the complaint either by 'phone or in writing.
- Give the pupil and the parents an opportunity to respond
- Place the pupil in detention until a determination is made about suspension (WS).

Parents will be given an opportunity to respond (p.75), to make their case for lessening the sanction and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the pupil's behaviour.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal recommends to the Board of Management that a period of suspension longer than 3 days is needed to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management considers the following circumstances are ones where the principal would consider recommending 5 days rather than 3 days as an appropriate suspension. Any one of the following on its own may be considered appropriate to warrant a recommendation of 5 day's suspension:

- When the pupil fails to recognise or acknowledge the seriousness of the events leading to a proposed suspension
- Where injury has been inflicted on another person to such a degree of severity as to warrant medical attention and/or a visit to a doctor
- Where the pupil continues to display belligerence, hostility or aggression

If a suspension longer than 3 days is being recommended by the principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. The Board of Management has authorised the principal in writing, with the approval of the Chairman of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board of Management cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance already provided to the principal concerning such suspensions. (p.75).

The Board of Management will not impose a suspension of more than 10 consecutive school days on a pupil at any one time.

The Board of Management will offer an opportunity to appeal a principal's decision to suspend a pupil for 3 days before the suspension takes effect or within 21 days after the suspension has finished (p. 76 Section 11.7). If an appeal is to be entertained before a suspension is to take place, then the pupil will automatically be placed in detention until the appeal is complete and the appeal decision is relayed to parents. If the appeal against the decision to suspend is not upheld or if the period of suspension is altered but not set aside, the suspension will begin as soon as practicable after the decision on the appeal is relayed to parents, normally starting the next school day. This applies to suspensions up to 20 days in total for one or more separate periods of suspension in any given school year. The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more. (p.76 Section 11.6).

Where the total number of days for which a 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 1998**, as amended by the **Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007** (p. 76 Section 29 Appeal in Section 11.7).

The Principal will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend their child and the letter will confirm: (p.76)

- The period of 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 commitment to be entered into by the pupils and the parents
- 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. (P.77)

A suspension may be removed or altered either immediately or retrospectively if the Board of Management decides, or, if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs it to be removed under Section 29 of the **Education Act 1998** (P.77) as amended by the **Education (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 2007** (P.76, Section 29 Appeal in Section 11.7).

Procedures for automatic suspensions

The Principal has been authorised to impose an automatic suspension where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person or for any one of the named behaviours (bottom of page 73) listed below:

- The use of an offensive weapon or fake weapon or instrument or piece of equipment to inflict injury or harm on another person or to threaten to inflict injury or harm on another person.
- The defiant refusal to carry out the instruction of a teacher
- To protect the safety of the pupil or other pupils or staff
- The deliberate destruction of school property

In the circumstances of an automatic suspension, the parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. No pupil will ever be sent home alone.

In the circumstances where an automatic suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for one or more of the named behaviours, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of an automatic suspension during which the suspended pupil will be invited to the school to be interviewed by arrangement in the school, either in the presence of his/her parents or not.

(In a serious case, the offending pupil will need to come back to school during the investigation, so that (s)he will be able (a) to hear the allegations being made (b) to respond to the allegations (c) to ask questions of the other party or witness, if there is a dispute about the facts (d) to be heard by the decision making body. Page 67 Section 10.3).

Reintegrating the pupil and starting with a clean slate

The Principal will arrange for a member of staff to provide support for the pupil during the reintegration process. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Recording and reporting

A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be kept which will include:

- The investigation including notes of all interviews held
- The decision making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The School will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

The Principal, if acting on the written delegated authority to suspend, will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension (p.78).

The Principal will report all suspensions to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines (**Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 21 (4) (a). P.78.**)

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension 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 use of suspension is appropriate and effective. (p.78).

8. Procedures for expulsion

General

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the Principal (page 80).

Before expelling a pupil, the School will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

1. Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
2. Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of the behaviour, if it should persist.
3. Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
4. Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate.

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds, such that:

1. The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
2. The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
3. The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Procedures for expulsion other than for a first offence

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

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 hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer of the National Educational Welfare Board.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Expulsion for a first offence

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel pupils for a first offence for the following behaviours (page 81):

1. A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
2. Actual violence or physical assault.
3. The supply of illegal drugs to other students in the school.
4. Sexual assault.

9. Absence of pupils

The Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 18, requires parents to notify the Principal of a school of the reasons for a child's absence. Section 23 of the same Act requires the Code of Behaviour of a school to outline the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school. In compliance with these sections, the following procedures apply:

For absences of pupils from school for a period of up to 3 days, parents will send a letter or fill up a form for the class teacher upon the return of the child to school outlining the reason(s) for absence.

For periods of absence in excess of 3 school days, parents will 'phone the school on the third day to indicate that the child will be absent for a period of longer than 3 days and indicating the approximate length of absence. Upon return from absence, parents will send a letter or fill up a form for the class teacher outlining the reason(s) for absence.

The Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 21 (4) requires a School Principal to inform an Educational Welfare Officer in writing if the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more. Additionally, Section 21 (4) authorises the School Principal to notify an Educational Welfare Officer if, in the opinion of the Principal, a child "is not attending school regularly."

It is necessary on occasions, for a variety of reasons, for pupils to leave school early. Written notification of this, outlining the reason(s) must be given to the teacher in advance. Parents, or others acting on behalf of parents, who call to collect children early, will call to the child's classroom for this purpose. Under no circumstances are pupils allowed leave the school building unaccompanied to meet parents or others off-site.

10. The powerful impact of good example

It is difficult to underestimate the powerful impact of good example on children.

Parents and teachers are, to a lesser or greater extent, dominate influences in children's lives and, for this reason, the school holds as an ideal that parents and teachers model good example at all times.

11. Review

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed from time to time in light of experience.

- A draft of Code of Behaviour is circulated to all parents and parents are invited to make suggestions to the draft policy. The final authority rests with the Board of Management to accept or reject such amendments from the parent body.

Reference Section

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
 - (2) Suspension
 - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino