St. Philomena’s

Girls’ National School

Tullamore



Code of Behaviour

Policy

**Code Of Behaviour**

**Rationale:**

Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective teaching and learning to take place and an important outcome of education which society expects. Like any other complex social organisation, a school requires generally accepted codes of conduct and rules of procedure by which the school community abides. However, schools are not places set aside from the world. Teachers and pupils live their daily lives in the community, and are influenced by its standards and values.

This policy has been drawn up

* in accordance with the guidelines “Developing a Code of Behaviour” published by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB, 2008).
* in consultation with, pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management.

The Code of Behaviour also conforms with legislation as required by Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

**The Guiding Principles of our Policy are as follows:**

Our policy is based on respect between all people in the school community and a clear statement that everyone is expected to behave in a responsible manner to both themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people at all times.

* In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of every child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of everychild to education in a relatively disruption free environment. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist betweenchildren and the need to accommodate these differences.
* One of the aims of education is to develop self-discipline in the child and this aspect of the pupils’ development will continue to be encouraged as much as possible having regard to the varying discipline practices of the homeand the pupil-teacher ratio.
* Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement areutilized by teachers.

The code not only applies everywhere on the school premises and playground, but also applies at any school related activity whether on or off the premises such as school tours, swimming, sports activities, religious ceremonies etc.

**Aims of the code**

* to create a positive learning environment which encourages and reinforces good behaviour
* to define standards of behaviour for pupils, teachers and parents
* to help pupils acquire good habits of discipline and behaviour
* to maintain our high standards of behaviour.
* to create structures to facilitate efficient learning and delivery of the curriculum to the pupils
* to ensure the safety of all members of the school community both on the school premises and on school activities
* to put in place structures to enable staff to deal with incidents of misbehaviour that may arise.
* to inform pupils and parents/guardians of the procedures which may be taken when a pupil refuses to observe the standards of discipline in the school.
* to inform parents/guardians, of procedures that will be followed regarding suspension or expulsion

A copy of the code is given to all parent/s guardian/s of new entrants to the school. It is also available on the school website; and extracts from our school’s Code of Behaviour is at the front of every child’s homework journal. From time to time minor modifications may need to be made. Such modifications may be necessary due to new technologies, new Department of Education and Skills circulars, unforeseen events, etc. The Board of Management reserves the right to make such minor modifications if and when they should arise. These modifications shall then be communicated to all families within the school.

**Communications procedure and signing requirements**

It is a fundamental requirement that this code is both read and understood in its entirety by the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the new entrant. They must then sign that they have read and understood the code. This declaration/signing page will be included with the enrolment form.

The maintenance of the standards will involve praise and rewards, sound relationships between teachers and pupils and stimulating and effective teaching and learning and a healthy respect for authority. It will also involve in some instances the application of sanctions.

School rules are devised with regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

**All staff is expected to**

* support and implement the school’s Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.
* be familiar with and follow the school's policy on "Child Protection".
* create a safe, welcoming environment for each pupil
* recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
* recognise and affirm good work/effort
* praise desirable behaviour
* be courteous, consistent and fair
* deal appropriately with misbehaviour
* keep a record of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
* communicate with parents and staff when necessary, always with courtesy and respect
* provide support for colleagues
* provide reports on matters of concern

**Parents / Guardians are expected to**

* nurture in their children a positive attitude towards school and try not to pass on any negative experiences parents may have had themselves while at school.
* ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually in full school uniform
* sign the ‘Explanation for Absence’ (in accordance with Education Welfare Act 2000,) at the back of your child’s homework journal
* ensure the school has up-to-date phone numbers of family/friends to be contacted in case of an emergency.
* arrange and ensure that a family member/friend is contactable and available to attend the school in the event of an emergency.
* ensure their child attends school clean and with a good level of hygiene; to check their child's head regularly for head lice and treat as necessary.
* ensure their child has a healthy lunch in school every day, if not availing of the free lunch scheme
* arrange meetings with the class teacher and/or principal when they are concerned about any issue relating to their child;
* communicate with staff when necessary, always with courtesy and respect and to model good behaviour in their relationship with teachers;
* encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property and that of others;
* be interested in, support and encourage their child's school work and home work
* ensure that their child has the correct books and other materials.
* support your child in the implementation of all school policies and procedures
* co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
* follow the school's "Complaints Procedure” if they have a complaint about a staff member.
* communicate to the school problems which may affect a child's behaviour.

Parents/guardians are also expected to be familiar with all the contents of the ***“Information Booklet for Parents/Guardians/Pupils”***

**Pupils**

Pupils are expected to know and respect the following procedures/policies from the ***“Information Booklet “***

* + School Rules
  + School Procedures
  + Classroom Rules
  + Dress Code
  + Acceptable Use Policy
  + Homework Policy
  + Health/Safety/Hygiene. (Wet Days… Rule while teacher may be out of the classroom etc.)

In the classroom, every child is expected to be attentive and to engage in the learning process. The rights of every child to beeducated shall be respected by all.

**Pupils are also expected to**

* listen to the class teacher, work hard, do their best and make best use of their time in school
* bring correct materials/books to school
* treat all staff members, themselves and each other with due respect and courtesy;
* stand back for an adult, to welcome visitors and to show respect to all
* move quietly through the school and corridors at all times
* line up in their designated line in an orderly manner
* never bully any person. Fighting, rough play or any physical force is never allowed or tolerated.
* never use abusive language; Inappropriate language if used towards anyone within the school or while on a school activity is considered a serious breach of the code.
* never bring chewing gum, glass bottles, matches/lighters, cigarettes/vapes, alcohol or drugs to school either on the premises or to a school related activity
* respect the school building and property
* value our school environment; the playground is a litter-free zone. Waste paper and cardboard are collected for recycling. All other empty carton drink containers and wrapping papers are considered household waste and are taken home.

**Behaviour which will be praised and encouraged**

* Punctuality
* Working to the best of one’s ability
* Consideration for other pupils
* Treating staff and fellow students with respect, good manners and courtesy.
* Behaving well in class
* Helping others both in the classroom and in the yard.
* Self-confidence and initiative.
* Keeping the school and classroom rules.
* Willingness to apologise.
* Truthfulness and honesty.

**Incentives / Rewards**

Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by noteworthy personal achievements. Rate of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

Some examples of how praise might be given.

* A quiet word or gesture to show approval
* A comment in a pupils copy or homework journal
* A word of praise in front of a group or class or whole school
* A visit to another class or to the principal for commendation
* A ‘Bualadh Bos’

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher or a supervising teacher at break times. In case of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parent/s/guardian/s will be involved at an early stage

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:-

* Forgetting books, pens etc.
* Not wearing full, uniform
* Homework not done.
* Disturbing others at work.
* Interrupting class work.
* Unnecessary talking in class.
* Non completion of tasks set by teachers, including homework.
* Not responding to teachers when called.
* Inattentiveness.
* Hurtful remarks.
* Not lining up properly/promptly and misbehaviour in line.
* Playing in prohibited areas.
* Eating of chewing gum or crisps.
* Taking wrappers/sweet papers etc. to the yard.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:-

* Repeated acts of “Minor Misbehaviour”.
* Constantly disruptive in class.
* Behaviour that is hurtful (including \***bullying\*,** harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
* Disturbing others by not moving quietly through the school and corridors
* Not working to full potential.
* Fighting, kicking, hitting, biting or spitting at other children.
* Leaving the school yard/premises without permission.
* Use of mobile phone in school.
* Running, rough play/messing/misbehaving on the stairs.
* Writing on school property. / Deliberate defacing of books or property.
* Telling lies.
* Stealing.
* Entering, leaving or remaining in classroom at break times, without permission.
* Being disrespectful to teachers or other adults in the school.
* Disobeying school rules (see school journal) & teachers’ instructions. / Defiance
* Damaging property of others.
* Using unacceptable language.
* Forging parents’ signature.

**\*Bullying\*,** see Anti-Bullying Policy

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:-

* Repeated acts of “Serious Misbehaviour”.
* Leaving school premises without permission during school hours. (9:00 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.)
* Seriously disruptive behaviour while at school.
* Serious damage to or theft of property.
* Verbal abuse

While the list seems quite exhaustive, the school authorities reserve the right to include other types of misbehaviour. Pupils and parents will be advised of any amendments made from time to time.

The degree of misdemeanours will be judged by the teacher and/or principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours. The school recognises the variety of differences which exist between students. These differences will be taken into account when reprimanding a child.

Parents will be informed at an early stage if problems occur and not at the point where a crisis has arisen. At times, it has been suggested by parents that the matters to which their attention is being drawn are of a trivial nature and that there was no need to have informed them that their child had misbehaved. The response to this is that while the misbehaviour may appear to be of a trivial nature, it is the cumulative effect of such breaches of the rules that is important as it undermines the ethos of the school.

**Sanctions**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change of behaviour by:-

* Helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
* Helping students recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
* Helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction may also:

* Reinforce the boundaries set out in our code of behaviour
* Signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:-

* prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
* keep the student, or other students or adults safe

**The following strategies will be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.**

**They may be used in any order .**This list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary help the student devise strategies for this.

* Reason with pupils.
* Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
* Temporary separation from peers, friends or others within class and/or temporary removal to another class
* Prescribed additional work.
* Loss of privileges.
* Detention during break times
* An account of the misbehaviour to be written, signed and dated by the offender
* A Behaviour Reflective Form to be completed by the pupil and discussed with parents and teacher/s.
* Communication with parent/guardian.
* Referral to Principal.
* Principal communicating with parent/s/guardian/s.
* Suspension or Expulsion from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and the Education Welfare Act 2000)

**Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents/guardians will be notified. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/guardians 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.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. 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 may 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/guardians.

*Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.*

**Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s/guardian/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s/guardian/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil’s reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil’s own safety or to 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.

**Expulsion**

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.

A recommendation to the Board of Management by the principal

* Consideration by the B.o.M. of the principal’s recommendations and the holding of a hearing.
* B.o.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing.
* If B.o.M. is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion.
* The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification.  Consultations arranged by the EWO.
* Confirmation of the decision to expel.

**Appeals**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29)

**Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, and or Principal who 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 to 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 used within the school:

* Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
* Through children’s homework journal : sections *(“Explanation for absence” and Note to/from Parent/Guardian)*
* Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school.
* Arranging an appointment with a teacher and /or principal to discuss issues of concern.
* School notice board
* School web-site
* Text a Parent service

**SUCCESS CRITERIA:**(by which the policy will be judged)

* Atmosphere of discipline within the school
* Children are aware of school rules
* Growth in self-discipline
* Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.
* Comments or compliments on behaviour.
* Children working to the best of their ability
* Classes working to the best of their ability
* Improvements in behaviour

**MONITORING AND REVIEW:**

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Within the classroom the teacher monitors their class. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour policy is reviewed regularly as the need arises.

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Ratified by Board of Management on 28/9/23

Geraldine Gaffey (Principal0

Marie White (Chairperson)

Reviewed in consultation with staff / pupils /parents : September 23