

# **St. Mary's National School**

## **Code of Behaviour**

### **Introduction**

This policy was reviewed in consultation with the staff, pupils, Parents Association and Board of Management of St. Mary's NS during the school year 2015/2016.

The purpose of the Code of Behaviour is to enable our staff, pupils and parents to work together to maintain a happy, effective and safe school. We hope to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported. The Code of Behaviour for St. Mary's N.S. places emphasis on the encouragement of positive behaviour and on respecting all members of the school community and the school environment.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Code of Behaviour**

- To create a positive learning environment which promotes contentment, motivation and achievement and which encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote positive behaviour
- To provide guidance for the pupils, staff and parents, on behavioural expectations in St. Mary's N.S.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of our school.
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes towards one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- 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.

### **Implementation**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. As a school community we are responsible for working towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect and consideration. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher is responsible for discipline in his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for the maintenance of order within the school premises. The teacher will draft his/her own classroom rules through consultation and collaboration with the pupils in the class. Each teacher will be responsible for keeping records of misdemeanours. Children are encouraged to follow the rules and accept responsibility for their actions. Breaches of discipline are dealt with by the class teacher in a caring, supportive and fair manner. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

## **Guidelines for Behaviour**

All members of the school community have a responsibility to model high standards of behaviour in their interaction with children and each other. The expected standards of behaviour should reflect positive values such as:

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Willingness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

### **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline. We place greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

### **Strategies/Incentives to Affirm Positive Behaviour**

*'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'* (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 20014).

The delivery of a broad curriculum by quality teachers using varied teaching approaches contributes to a safe and stimulating learning environment. Positive behaviour is fostered and promoted by;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.
- Praise is given for maintaining good standards as well as for particularly noteworthy personal achievements.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour is categorised under Minor Breaches of Discipline and Serious Breaches of Discipline. Teachers will use their professional judgement to respond appropriately to the breaches of discipline.

### **Examples of Minor Breaches of Discipline:**

- Distracting or disruptive behaviour.
- Being unmannerly and/or discourteous.
- Name calling and/or use of inappropriate language.
- Running on corridors and stairs.
- Eating in classroom other than at designated times.
- Use of mobile phones on the school premises.

### **Examples of Serious Breaches of Discipline:**

- Persistent disruption of teaching and learning.
- Behaviour that is hurtful, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Incidents of alleged bullying will be dealt with in accordance with our school's Anti-bullying Policy.
- Threats or physical hurt to another person.
- Damage to and/or theft of property.
- Use of inappropriate language towards a staff member.
- Possession or display of unsuitable/inappropriate materials.
- Leaving school premises or going beyond the school boundaries of St Mary's.
- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Possession, use or supplying illegal substances to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault or harassment.

*Please note the above lists are not intended to be exhaustive.*

### **Sanctions for Inappropriate Behaviour**

Each teacher is primarily responsible for the maintenance of discipline in her/his classroom. Inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with swiftly by the teacher. The teacher will be sensitive to the language used in describing inappropriate behaviour and she/he will make every effort to understand the context and factors which may be affecting behaviour.

- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Student Teacher conferencing.
- Temporary separation from group or temporary placing in another class.
- Prescribing extra work or writing out the narrative of the events leading to the misbehaviour.
- Withdrawal of jobs of privilege/responsibilities e.g. messenger for the week etc.
- Communication with parents – initially this may be a verbal/written communication
- Referral of child to Principal.
- Should the inappropriate behaviour continue, the parents will be invited to meet the teacher to discuss the matter.
- Should the child's behaviour continue to be an issue, the parents will then be invited to meet with the principal to discuss the matter.
- In the case of a serious/gross misdemeanour, the parents may be invited to meet the principal first, rather than the class teacher.
- The principal will use her professional judgement in regard to making a Formal Report to the Board of Management.
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school in accordance with the procedures in the NEWB *Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines, 2008 10.3 and 10.4* and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act.

The Standards and Rules contained in the Code of Behaviour will apply in any situation where the student, although not on the school premises, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include swimming, school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school and supervised by school personnel.

## **Recording Behaviour**

### **Classroom**

Each teacher will use her/his professional judgement in deciding if a record should be made of a particular misbehavior. This record will be made in the teacher's *Behaviour Record Book*. This record will include notes on the investigation and the sanctions imposed. This *Behaviour Record Book* will be passed on to the next class teacher at the end of the school year. Should a child be referred to the principal for an incident of gross misbehavior, the incident will be recorded in the principal's *Incident Report Book*.

### **Playground**

The teacher on supervision duty at break time and lunch time has an *Incident Report Sheet* where he/she records repeated minor and major misbehaviours. Ms. Murphy (B Post Holder) has responsibility for filing the incident reports in the principal's office and monitoring the records.

## **Attendance/Education Welfare Act**

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 18, absences or lateness must be notified and explained to the school. In the case of a child being absent, the school secretary should be contacted by phone call on the first day of absence. On the child's return to school, the parent/guardian must furnish a note to the class teacher explaining the child's absence from school. There is a statutory obligation to notify the Education Welfare Board of absences of 20 days or more. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. Any child wishing to leave school early must have a note signed by the parent/guardian and the parent/guardian must sign the child out in the designated book in the secretary's office. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues.

## **Suspension/ Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student but it may delegate this authority to the principal. Normally other interventions will have been tried before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are invoked. The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

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

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. The school will ensure that it follows fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The school will inform the student and their parents about the complaint and the parents and pupils will be given an opportunity to respond before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour.

- In exceptional circumstances the principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff or any other persons. Where an immediate suspension is considered to be warranted by the Principal, a preliminary investigation will be conducted and a formal investigation will follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension including an immediate suspension should be open-ended.
- Procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion will be in accordance with the NEWB *Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines, 2008*.
- Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Section 23 of 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.

Suspension allows the pupil time with her/his parent/guardian, to reflect on the behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour and to address what needs to happen in order to change the behaviour. It affords the staff time to plan and seek appropriate support for the pupil. Depending on the nature and extent of the misbehaviour, support will be sought from other agencies e.g. National Council for Special Education, National Education Welfare Board, the National Educational Psychological Service, HSE Community Services and Child Guidance Services or Adolescent Mental Health Services.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason.
- Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.
- Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Dept. of Education and Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

## **School Rules**

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly. The following Rules have been formulated to ensure the well-being and safety of children in our school and around the school environment. The school and classroom rules translate standards into practical guidance about the behaviour expected of students.

## **Rules for Behaviour in the classroom and the school building**

Pupils are expected to:

- Be respectful at all times and courteous towards all members of the school community, their peers, teachers, school staff and visitors.
- Bring correct materials/books to school and keep their copy books neat and tidy.
- Push their chairs under the table and position school bags when going out at break times to ensure the safety of others
- Act in such a way as to not cause constant interruptions to another child or teacher during the school day.
- Look after their personal property and show respect for the property of other children and the property of the school as well as the school environment.
- Provide a note from a parent/guardian to explain incomplete homework, late attendance, lack of school uniform and absence from school. Parents should provide a note of explanation if a pupil needs to leave school early and sign their child out on collection at the office.
- Wear their school uniforms every day except on their designated P.E Day. Parents should send a note of explanation if a child does not wear uniform to school.
- Eat healthy lunches. Chewing gum, sweets, crisps, or bars of chocolate should not be included in lunch boxes. Drinks should be in a non-glass container. Children should bring home any waste from their lunches. We encourage the use of reusable containers.
- To attend school regularly and be punctual for school. Doors open at 9a.m. When the bell rings the children are expected to line up correctly to be directed into the school.
- Walk within the school environs. Running or pushing is absolutely forbidden within the school.

## **Rules for Behaviour in the Yard and on the School Grounds**

Pupils are expected to:

- Play fairly and safely at all times. Anti-social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden, (e.g. wrestling, headlocks, jockey-backs, bullying, intimidation, teasing, jeering, fighting, spitting, kicking, charging in groups, bad language, exclusion.
- Walk to their designated lines when the bell rings at the end of break and lunch times.
- Walk through the school gates and exit the site promptly and in an orderly manner at the end of the school day. Children being collected should be accompanied off site promptly.
- Respect their environment and place their litter in the appropriate bin.

## **Rules for Behaviour Before/After School**

The official school day in St. Mary's Belmont Avenue is from 9:00 am to 1:40 pm for children in Infants and from 9:00 a.m. to 2:40 pm for children in 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

The school day in Milltown Park will begin and end 10 minutes earlier than Belmont Avenue, 8:50 am to 2:30 pm, to facilitate parents who have to travel between the two buildings.

- Parents are reminded that the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening and after official closing unless the pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by school personnel and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

- Scooting and cycling are not allowed inside the school gates or in the playground. We have limited facilities for scooter and bicycle parking in the school yard. We cannot accept responsibility for scooters or bicycles damaged or stolen from the school yard.
- CARS – Parents are requested not to drive into the school yard or park in the school yard. Parents should consider the safety of the children and access for residents when parking in the vicinity of the school. Please adhere to all road markings in the vicinity of the school to ensure the safety of all members of our school community.

### **Children with Special Needs**

The Code of Behaviour applies to all children in St. Mary's NS. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require support in recognising inappropriate behaviours. Specialised behaviour plans will be devised in consultation with the parents, class teacher, SEN team, the Principal and NEPS to ensure that the child receives optimal support.

### **Expectations and Responsibilities of Members of our School Community**

#### **Students can expect to:**

- Be treated fairly and with respect
- Have their individual differences recognised and respected
- Feel safe
- Have positive behaviour affirmed
- Have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately

#### **Students are expected to:**

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Wear the correct uniform
- Do their best in class
- Take responsibility for their work
- Keep the rules of the school
- Help to create a safe positive environment
- Respect all members of our school community
- Respect other students and their learning
- Respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings
- Keep the school environment neat and tidy
- Play fairly, respectfully and safely
- Participate in school activities
- Do their homework to the best of their ability

#### **Staff members can expect to:**

- Be treated with respect.
- Receive support from colleagues and the Board of Management.
- Have grievances dealt with according to the agreed procedures as set out in the CPSMA handbook.

**Staff members are expected to:**

- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Create a safe working environment for all members of the school community.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct pupils' work.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of concern.

**Parents can expect to:**

- Be treated with respect
- Have a safe and welcoming environment for their child
- Receive progress reports in accordance with whole school procedures (P.T. meetings and end of year reports)

**Parents are expected to:**

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time and that they are collected from school on time.
- Encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Ensure their children wear the school uniform.
- Have their children's belongings clearly labelled.
- Help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed.
- Read communications from the school and respond appropriately,
- Report to the office if calling to the school during the school day for any reason.
- Make an appointment beforehand if they wish to see a teacher.
- Provide notes to explain absences, lateness, early collection, incomplete homework and lack of uniform.
- Inform the class teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children.
- Encourage a positive attitude in their children to school and all members of the school community.
- Cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others.
- Communicate to the school changes in practice or problems which may affect their child's behaviour.
- Attend meetings at the school if requested.

Parents should provide the school with all necessary background information regarding their children. It is important that any concerns about school be communicated to the class teacher as promptly as possible. Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to the class teacher and/or principal about any significant changes in the child's life or home circumstances.

## **Communicating with the school**

The accepted means of communicating with the school are:

- A phone call to the school to request a face to face meeting.
- A phone call to the school to discuss an issue in a phone conversation.
- An email to the school to request a meeting.
- A note in the child's homework journal requesting a meeting.
- A note in the child's lunch box in the case of the Infants who do not have a Homework journal.

## **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

## **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- Ratify the code.

## **Related Policies**

1. Anti-bullying Policy
2. Health and Safety Statement
3. Enrolment Policy
4. Child Protection Policy
5. Supervision Policy
6. SEN Policy

## **Review**

The success of the policy will be discussed on a regular basis at staff meetings. The policy will be reviewed in the 2016/17 school year in recognition of the dual location of St. Mary's NS from September 2016.

## **Ratification**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Hennessy  
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_