

## Code of Behaviour

### Rationale

The Board of Management of St Anne's N.S. decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*. It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

### Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of our school

St Anne's NS seeks to enable each child to develop his / her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. Our code of behaviour reflects the vision of the child at the centre of the learning process and we hope to ensure that each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to his/her needs in a disruptive free environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

### Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of our school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning.

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement; **Mól an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí** (*praise the child and she/he will grow*)
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community;
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code 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.

### **Guidelines for Behaviour in the School**

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and their property.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and 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.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules" (see Appendix 1), each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

**We strongly believe that no pupil has the right to deny any other pupil to reap the full benefit from his / her education.**

### **Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour**

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play in modelling good behaviour and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code and development of positive behaviour strategies. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

Our vision statement is *Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí*

We use the following strategies to promote Positive Behaviour:

- Praise & recognition
- RESPECT Approach
- Positive play in the playground
- Buddy systems
- Golden Rules
- Stamp & sticker systems
- Assembly - reinforcement lessons and acknowledgement of positive behaviour

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- Whole school acknowledgement of positive behaviour
- Reward systems in the class for positive behaviour (additional yard time, Golden time, Homework Passes, etc)
- Behaviour contracts
- Visit to another teacher or the Principal for praise of good behaviour or neat work
- Variation motivational strategies & reward systems within each classroom

To facilitate new members of staff in becoming familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers' documents. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

## REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The following strategies will be used by all teachers:

### Praise

- Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system - student of the week / occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly with written praise note
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication

### Disapproval

The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed.

The following stages may be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Time out (Age appropriate including advising child about reflecting on their behaviour);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class);
- Prescribing extra work (kept on file by teacher);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Reflection sheet (signed by parent and kept on file by teacher);
- Withdrawal from class and sent to another teacher / classroom during privileged activity
- Verbal communication with parents / guardians;
- Withdrawal of privileges;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
- Formal written communication with parents / guardians;
- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;
- Formal meeting with between Principal and / or Chairperson of the Board of Management and parents / guardians;
- Suspension;

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Teachers can use a problem solving approach in

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generating solutions & strategies with the pupil. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to "catch" repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents / guardians and the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies.

### **Classification of Misbehaviours**

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories - minor, serious or gross. Teachers and / or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

#### **Minor Misbehaviour**

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

*Interrupting class work / Running in the school building / Littering around the school / Being discourteous or unmannerly / Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian) / Inappropriate behaviour or gestures / Name calling / Minor infringement of the school rules / Talking out of turn / Not wearing appropriate uniform*

(This list is not exhaustive)

Teachers will take some or all of the following age appropriate steps, at their discretion, when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal reprimand;
- Time out (classroom or yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Instances of yard misbehaviour in the incident book and informing class teacher.

**Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows, using one or more strategy:**

#### **Phase 1**

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);
- Referral to another teacher / classroom with specific work when privileges are withdrawn
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents / teacher / student (kept on file by teacher)

#### **Phase 2**

- Child will be sent to the Principal in office
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour;
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour;
- Class teacher and / or Principal will meet with one / both parents;
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

### **Serious Misbehaviour**

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

*Constantly disruptive in class / Telling lies / Blackmail / Stealing / Persistently not working to full potential /*

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*Damaging others' property / Bullying / Answering back a teacher / Continuously not completing homework / Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard / Using unacceptable language / Inappropriate use of the internet/ Deliberate, continual disobedience/ Spitting / name calling*

(This list is not exhaustive)

**All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)**

**Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour:**

- Child will be sent to the Principal;
- An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of misbehaviour;
- Class teacher or Yard duty teacher and Principal will meet with one / both parents;
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal;

**Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:**

- Parents will be invited to meet class teacher, the Principal and / or the chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour;
- Suspension will be used as a sanction where attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

### **Gross Misbehaviour**

**The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:**

*Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school / Smoking / Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate / Leaving school premises without permission / Deliberately injuring any member of the school community / Setting fire to school property / Purposely activating school fire alarm/ Deliberately leaving taps (fire hose) etc. turned on / Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting) / Vandalism / serious inappropriate behaviour / assault*

**Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.**

**Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour**

- Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned. The Board of Management has deferred responsibility to the Principal to impose an initial sanction of up to three days. Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.
- When a student is suspended, the parents / guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents / guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

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

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 in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the student (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the board and the Principal.

### **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case (see p.81, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension / expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

### **Misbehaviour on the Yard**

To pre-empt incidents of misbehaviour on yard, our whole school approach focuses on **RESPECT** - respect for yourself, respect for others, respect for the environment. We encourage pupils to take responsibility should they accidentally hurt another child, thus showing respect for that individual. This ties in with the Juniors Golden Rules of 'Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words'.

### **Incidents of yard misbehaviour or verbal abuse of staff will be dealt with as follows:**

#### **The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will do the following:**

- Impose a period of "time out" where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
- Teacher Reports in Time Out incident book.
- Inform the class teacher.
- 3 Time Out reports and the child is removed from the yard for a full breaktime. The principal will speak with the child and the parents will be informed.

### **Involving Parents / Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour**

Parents / guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's Homework journal which parents / guardians are requested to sign each evening.

In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents / guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents / guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and / or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour.

The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity. In

specific cases a shorter school day may be implemented where a pupil is having severe difficulties coping with a full day. This would be agreed between the Principal teacher and parents / guardians and BOM.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may telephone or write to parents / guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Others who may also attend these meetings include; class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty and Chairperson of the Board of Management. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

### **Managing aggressive or violent behaviour**

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour, because of educational need. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

### **Appeals**

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 Department of Education and Science 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. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

### **Keeping records**

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of all communications with parents / guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific journal and are retained until students reach 21 years. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

### **Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 12+ days of school. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

### **Reference to other Policies**

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- SPHE plan; Anti-bullying; Enrolment; Record keeping; Health & Safety; Equality; Special Educational Needs & Child Protection

### **Success Criteria**

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2019.

**John Fingleton**

**Justin Kilcullen**

**Principal**

**Chairperson**

**Review Date: April 2020 or as necessary to the school needs**



## Appendix 1

### School Rules

#### Safety: For my own safety and the safety of others -

- I should be careful coming to and going from school;
- I should always walk while in the school building;
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils;
- I should bring a note of explanation following every absence;
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher.

#### Caring for Myself:

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order;
- I should always endeavour to have my uniform clean and tidy;
- I should be in school by 9.20am each day;
- I should always line up at the start of the day and after play when I hear the school bell;
- I should always try to bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum, fizzy drinks and crisps are not permitted;
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

#### Caring for Others:

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers, other school staff, fellow pupils and visitors to the school by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining orderly in my class and in the line;
- I should listen and behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn;
- I should obey my specific class rules and all rules or policies agreed by the school community;
- I should always show respect for my school by being careful not to damage furniture or any part of the building or the school grounds. I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks etc. home and by placing litter in the appropriate bin;
- I should show respect for the property of the teachers and of my fellow pupils;
- I should be truthful and honest at all times.

#### Bullying:

I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens I should tell my parents and my teacher. Bullying is always unacceptable.

## Appendix 2 School Policy on Bullying (Short Version)

Bullying is repeated aggression, (verbal, psychological or physical) conducted by an individual or group, against another individual or group.

### Indications of Bullying

- Anxiety about going to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school;
- Deterioration in school performance;
- Pattern of physical illnesses;
- Unexplained changes in mood/behaviour;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress;
- Possessions missing;
- Increased requests for money;
- Unexplained bruising;
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him / her.

### Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents

- All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A special "Incident Book" will be kept in the Office for this purpose only.
- Parents who have a concern for their child should at all times contact the class teacher who will then process the complaint in the school.
- Individual teachers should record and take appropriate action in accordance with policy.
- All cases should be reported to the Principal.
- Parents may be informed by the Principal following investigation.
- Pupils must understand that reporting is not "telling tales".
- Non-teaching staff must report incidents they have noticed to class teacher or to one of the teachers on yard duty. Discretion is important.
- Serious incidents will be reported to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

### Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

- Staff will employ a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- Incidents will generally be investigated outside of the classroom situation.
- Those investigating (generally a teacher and the Principal) will speak to individual pupils.
- Answers will be sought to questions of What?, When?, How?, Where?, Who? and Why?
- Members of a gang will be met individually and as a group.
- Parents may be called to a meeting with teacher and the Principal and in some circumstances the Chairperson of Board of Management. Pupils may also attend these meetings.

### Programme for Work with Pupils

Learning strategies will allow for the enhancement of each pupil's self-worth - "Stay Safe", Circle Time and "Walk Tall" lessons as part of S.P.H.E. across all classes; drama, role play and problem solving strategies in the middle and upper classes