

ST. BRIGID'S S.G.N.S.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

Introduction Statement

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development, just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards, rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles. Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clearly agreed consequences.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a disruption-free environment.

This Policy was formulated following discussions at a number of Staff Meetings. It includes input from school staff, Student Council and a Parents' Focus Group. The code is drawn up in conjunction with the school's Enrolment Policy, Health & Safety Statement, Anti Bullying Policy, Mobile Phone and Electronic Games Policy and the Revised Curriculum.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Reflect the school's ethos, which states that,
"Each child in our school will be encouraged and facilitated to reach their full potential as individuals educationally and emotionally in all aspects of their lives. We promote a multi-cultural ethos and respect for difference."
- Enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their work and social development
- Promote positive behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way

Aims

- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- To encourage behaviours that are based on kindness, respect, courtesy, tolerance and forgiveness of others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- To seek the co-operation of the entire school community in the application of the procedures that form the Code of Behaviour and Discipline
- To encourage a strong sense of support and co-operation between the staff, parents, Board of Management and the pupils themselves
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner

School Rules

Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Notification of a child's absence from school

- School starts at 9.00 a.m. each morning and finishes at 2.40 p.m. Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a parent/guardian
- Roll is taken by 10.00 a.m. Pupils who arrive in school after this time will be marked absent, although a note of their arrival will be kept by the class teacher
- A note for the class teacher should be sent in with the child on their first day back at school after the absence (usually in the school journal)
- Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to the class teacher. If a child has significant absences due to illness, then a doctor's certificate might also be sent in with the child
- The school is obliged to report the pupil to the NEWB when they have been absent for 20 days. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues
- When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 2.40 p.m.) a note from parents should be given to the class teacher on that morning stating the time at which the pupil is to leave. This will ensure that homework has been assigned in time and will avoid interrupting the class. The parent/guardian must then collect the pupil from the classroom and sign out the pupils in the school secretary's office. Whenever possible, appointments should be made for times outside of school hours.
- All late arrivals/early finishes are noted in the pupil's school file. An attendance committee meets on a regular basis to review attendance. Please refer to School Attendance Policy.

School Dress Code (as outlined in *St. Brigid's Dress Code Policy*)

St. Brigid's S.G.N.S. has an official school uniform. It consists of a navy jumper/cardigan with school crest, blue check pleated skirt/pinafore, white blouse, shirt or polo shirt, school tie and appropriate footwear (low heeled shoes, etc.). The school uniform is worn on all school days (except P.E. days).

On P.E. days, children should wear the school tracksuit, white polo shirt and runners/trainers, which are suitable for sports, with high-grip soles. If a child has difficulty tying laces, they might have trainers with Velcro fasteners. Children may wear a watch and stud earrings. No other jewellery is permitted for health and safety reasons. No make-up, coloured nail polish/false nails or transfers allowed.

All clothing is clearly labelled. Jumpers, cardigans, tracksuits, ties, coats and jackets should be clearly marked. Other personal belongings should also be clearly labelled, e.g. lunchbox, pencil case and all items of stationery. The school cannot be held responsible for any missing personal belongings. For personal safety, children's schoolbags should be labelled on the inside.

Healthy Eating

St. Brigid's operates a Healthy Eating Policy. Parents/Guardians are requested to adhere to this policy and provide their child with a healthy lunch and drink, except on special occasions. Parents are also requested to inform the school of their child's allergies/food intolerances, as early as possible.

Homework (as outlined in *St. Brigid's Homework Policy*)

Our vision in St Brigid's S.G.N.S. is that pupils might be developed holistically. We would like to promote education as an ongoing aim, both in school and at home. We recognise the importance of homework as a tool in life-long learning and encourage the pupils to realise that learning is not confined to school.

Teachers

- Assign homework, review the tasks set and provide feedback to students
- Differentiate homework, where necessary or appropriate, according to interest or ability
- Monitor homework to maintain standards, provide response to pupils and identify pupils experiencing difficulties
- Keep parents up to date where there is, or has been, a problem with incomplete homework

Pupils

- Take care to write homework tasks clearly and accurately in homework journal
- Bring home whatever books, copies and workbooks are needed
- Complete homework assignments to the best of their ability
- Present clearly dated written work neatly

Parents

- Promote a positive attitude towards all aspects of homework
- Decide on a suitable time for homework, to develop good, regular, work habits
- Provide a quiet place, with a proper work surface (table, counter...). Where possible, keep free from distractions such as T.V.
- Encourage children to organise themselves well, with necessary books and materials
- Encourage independence, only assisting whenever necessary
- Promote good presentation and neatness *within a reasonable timeframe*
- Check tests / written quizzes regularly
- Sign written homework / tests / homework sheets
- Communicate any difficulties to the teacher in the school journal
- Time spent on homework should not be excessive. Where a parent/guardian considers that the child has made his/her best effort and is unable to continue, the parent/guardian should sign the child's work and note the time spent
- Check that your child has packed all the necessary books, journals, copies, pencils, P.E. equipment, etc. for the following school day

Standards of Behaviour

Standards of Behaviour for All Adults in St. Brigid's School

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults, we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- Discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Works, Kind Feet*'

Standards of Behaviour for Teachers

Teachers must adhere to the high standards of professional conduct, central to the role of teaching, as outlined by the Teaching Council in the published Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

Standards of Behaviour for Parents

- Ensure their children attend school and are punctual
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/the Principal through the office
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
- Label pupils' coats and other personal property
- Strictly supervise pre-school children, when in the school

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

Standards of Behaviour for Pupils

- Each child is encouraged to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Each child will show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings.
- Each child will attend school on a regular basis and be punctual. In the case of absence, school must be notified.
- Each child is expected to be courteous and mannerly at all times.
- Each child is encouraged to do her best both in school and with assigned homework.
- Each class teacher will, in co-operation with her/his pupils, work out acceptable rules within the classroom. Teachers will also teach the children rules of acceptable behaviour when playing in the yard, lining up at the end of playtime, walking on corridors etc.
- The children will be helped to understand the importance of good behaviour when going to / coming from school, when on school trips, travelling to matches / competitions organised by school etc.

The Essential Classroom Rules

1. Be ready for class
2. Good manners are expected at all times
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same
4. Raise your hand, wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property
6. Ensure that you are safe in class and make it safe for others

Behaviour Outside of Class

- Pupils walk into and out of the school building.
- At break times children are to follow the instructions given by the designated supervising teacher. Safety standards must be kept at all times.
- Children should respect the rights of others in the schoolyard. Rules of games should be followed and children should be encouraged to recognise the need for turn taking.
- Rough or dangerous play will not be allowed.
- When children are on a school trip or visit, they are expected to follow the same rules as in class, displaying good behaviour and following the instructions of the supervising adults.

The Essential Out of Class Rules

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
4. Respect all school property
5. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

Strategies to Encourage Good Behaviour

Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

A quiet word or gesture to show approval; a comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal; a visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation; a word of praise in front of a group or class; delegating some special responsibility or privilege; a mention to parent (written or verbal communication); 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly.

Other strategies include:

- SPHE/Circle Time will be used as opportunities for behaviour cultivation of positive behaviour
- Each teacher uses own system of rewards, points, stars for individuals/groups
- Extra time on favourite activity as a reward
- Class of the Month
- Stickers / prizes for continued good behaviour
- Reward Tokens / Reward Charts

- Special Charts / tokens for “kindness to others”
- Specific rules may need to be worked out in co-operation with the Learning Support / Resource Teacher for children who have difficulty understanding rules
- Anti-bullying Policy for St.Brigid’s SGNS addresses specific bullying issues in behavioural context
- Individual Behaviour Plans, with built-in reward systems

Unacceptable behaviour includes: -

- Behaviour that is hurtful
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching/learning
- Threats
- Physical hurt to others
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing inappropriate/dangerous objects to school

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where serious misbehaviour occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by others’ actions

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Strategies for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

- Reasoning with pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)

- Temporary separation from peers, friends and others
- Loss of privileges e.g. not allowed on school trips
- Detention during break once a week
- Prescribing additional work
- Referral to Principal teacher
- Communication with parents/guardians

In accordance with NEWB Guidelines, the class teacher will keep a record of serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour, interventions tried and the student's response to them. The school principal will be notified of all serious incidents. Children are aware that this record is being kept and that it will be available to the principal and parents/guardians. Targets for behaviour may be set, as may behaviour contracts.

Sanctions

Sanctions are a form of positive intervention. A sanction should be used in a respectful way, helping students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

Misbehaviour in Yard

When a pupil misbehaves in the yard, they are to be given a red card and asked to go to the designated "Time Out Area" for a certain period. Their name is also recorded in the *Yard Book*.

If a pupil's name has been recorded three times in the *Yard Book*, they will be given extra homework, to be completed at the weekend or some time of the class teacher's choosing.

The *Yard Book* will be renewed at the beginning of each term, and immediately after each mid-term break, so that pupils are given the opportunity to begin again with a clean slate.

Minor Misbehaviour in the Classroom

As recommended in the NEWB Handbook: Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, p. 54, "It is for individual schools to determine what sanctions to use, drawing on professional judgement and the knowledge of the particular context of the student and the behaviour." The severity of the sanction should correspond to the misdemeanour.

If a pupil misbehaves in school, sanctions used include:

A verbal reprimand/simple admonition, used fairly and sparingly.

Reasoning with the pupil: implementing a warning system.

Temporary separation from peers, i.e. removal from the group (within the classroom). For example, work at a separate desk for a short, specified period of time; withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group.

Finish incomplete work / complete a behaviour-related worksheet / write a note of apology. Occasionally it might be appropriate to assign extra work to pupils to complete, either in school or for homework, reminding the pupils that it was their choice to misbehave.

“Time Out” in another class, in order to preserve the health and safety of the other pupils or to prevent disruption of the learning of others. This strategy is part of a planned intervention, which includes the steps to be taken prior to exiting, the class to which the child is going, how she/he will be supervised, the work to be completed in the other room and when the child will be allowed back in to her/his own classroom.

Detention at breaks (morning or/and lunch), during which the pupil is supervised, is a strategy, which may be used. This gives the pupil an opportunity to reflect on the misbehaviour, provides an opportunity to reflect on the misbehaviour, provides an opportunity for negotiation and allows uninterrupted teaching and learning within the classroom.

Withdrawal of privileges

Formal report to the Board of Management

A pupil may be referred to the School Principal/Deputy Principal or other member of staff whose opinion they value. The most powerful sanction is the disapproval of those whose views the pupil respects, so it is very important that we create a climate of opinion in which the sanction has the greatest possible effect.

Communication with the child’s parents/guardians takes place at the earliest possible opportunity.

In applying any sanction, the duty of care is to be maintained

Differentiation

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 and 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 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.

Sometimes children may need additional support in managing their behaviour. Parents may request support also. Ideally parents, children and teachers will work together to promote and achieve positive outcomes for everyone in St. Brigid’s. Supports for children and their families may include HSCL, SCP, NEWB, NEPS CAMHS, Beechpark and other relevant services from voluntary and statutory agencies.

Suspension/Expulsion

The school's policies and procedures on suspension and expulsion have been drawn up in line with the National Education Welfare Board Code of Behaviour (2008). Fair procedures will be used at all times, ensuring the right to be heard and the right to impartiality in relation to any investigation or decision making. All matters will be dealt with in confidence, insofar as is possible.

Internal Suspension

Internal Suspension is when a pupil is removed from their own base class and is placed in another class for up to three school days. This will be activated when misbehaviour is recurring or when a serious case of misbehaviour occurs.

Suspension

Normally other interventions will be attempted before suspension and a decision to suspend a pupil will only be made on serious grounds but may, where appropriate, include a single incident. The Board delegates authority to the Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to deal with suspension issues. This procedure is used in the case of gross misbehaviour and or health & safety grounds.

Any suspension of a pupil will generally be part of a behaviour management plan. The pupil and his/her parents/guardian will be fully informed about the complaint and will be requested to attend at the school as a matter of urgency. Both the pupil and his/her parents/guardians will be allowed a full opportunity to respond before a decision is made. The school reserves its right to impose an immediate suspension in exceptional circumstances.

The Principal has permission from the Board of Management to suspend a pupil for up to three days in cases of serious misbehaviour. In certain circumstances the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the BOM, may suspend a pupil for five school days.

A meeting of the BOM may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days.

Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

APPEALS

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to Appeal such a suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion will only be invoked in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The Board of Management will make the decision to expel. Should recourse to such drastic measure be deemed necessary, Section 29 of Education Act 1998 will be adhered to.

Grounds for Expulsion

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- Pupil responsible for serious damage to property.

Automatic Expulsion

BoM may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Sexual Assault

2. Possession of illegal drugs
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
4. Actual violence or physical assault
5. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff

Procedures in Respect to Expulsion

1. Detail investigation by school principal
2. Recommendation by principal to BoM
3. BoM considers Principals recommendation and holds hearing
4. BoM decision, is expulsion appropriate? If BoM recommends expulsion, the BoM will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
5. Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
6. Parents of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
7. Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
8. Confirmation of decision.

Raising Concerns

Any parent/guardian or pupil who has a concern about behaviour matters should, in the first instance, make contact with the classroom teacher and, if that is not considered appropriate, with the Principal.

Success Criteria of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline

The essence of our code of behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self discipline.

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridor, yard etc.
- More effective teaching/learning

A Code of Behaviour and Conduct for adults and children ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

Roles / Responsibility

The School Principal, together with the In-School Management Team, will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy. Monitoring procedures will ensure uniformity of implementation.

All members of St. Brigid's S.G.N.S. School Community will be expected to adhere to the policy, delivering high standards of behaviour in class and generally throughout the school.

This Policy will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

Ratified by the Board of Management 7th October 2013