

Towards Positive Behaviour: Code of Behaviour/Discipline Code of Scoil San Treasa.



Aims, Introductory Statement and Rationale

At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe Christian environment. Our Code of Behaviour is designed to:

- promote the school ethos and relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of our pupils and of all persons in the school
- create and maintain an efficient and stimulating learning environment
- develop integrity and self-discipline in pupils based on consideration, respect and courtesy towards others
- create clarity around expectations and procedures relating to behaviour in our school.

This policy was formulated in the school year 2012-2013 when it was considered timely to revise the existing Code of Behaviour. Parents, teachers and non-teaching staff, children and Board of Management were consulted during this review. In line with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Code of Behaviour was prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The Board of Management ratified the policy on 15th April 2013 and clarified it further on 27th February 2017.

Implementation & Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour.

- Development of clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children.
- Emphasis on consistency and firmness, yet fairness and understanding in relation to discipline.
- A positive attitude permeates the code and its implementation - Greater emphasis is placed on encouragement and rewards than on sanctions so that pupils may develop self-discipline and will be prompted to be their best and to do their best. Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded.
- The varying needs of different children, including children with special educational needs (SEN) will be taken into account.
- Appropriate behaviour will be promoted on a formal and informal basis and incidentally, including through Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE), Religious Education, assemblies, group/individual instruction and coaching, liaison with parents, talks and positive behaviour plans as deemed appropriate.

General Guidelines for Good Behaviour

1. Politeness, respect for others and good manners are expected of each pupil.
2. Pupils should respect school property and the property of others and should keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils' possessions should be kept clean, neat and tidy.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance. This includes wearing the correct uniform and keeping neat and tidy.
4. Pupils are expected to adhere to school rules.

Rules: Around the School

1. Pupils should treat others with respect at all times. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards adults is unacceptable.

2. Pupils must walk in a calm and orderly fashion in corridors, going to and from yard, hall, church etc. When moving around the school during class time, children should do so quietly so that the work of the school can proceed smoothly.
3. Pupils must follow the “two bell” instructions at break-times.
4. Pupils must stay within the boundaries in the yard/designated play areas.
They may not leave the play areas for any reason during breaks without the permission of the supervising teacher - this includes re-entering the school building.
5. Safety in the yards is important. Pupils must play safely and treat others fairly at all times. Anti-social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited. Pupils must not bring any sharp or dangerous items to the yard or to the school.
6. Pupils must aim to keep the yard and school environment litter free and tidy and show respect for both the natural and manmade environment.
7. Pupils must respect all school property and should use it with care.
8. Pupils should walk to the gates at going-home time and leave the school premises in an orderly fashion.
9. Use of mobile phones, iPods and electronic games during school hours is not allowed. All phones/electronic communication devices must be switched off and kept in school bags at all times. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment - this will only be returned to the parent of the pupil. Pupils are strongly discouraged from bringing any valuable personal property to school as the school cannot take responsibility for it if lost or damaged.

Rules: In the Classroom

Each class will have agreed rules that are in keeping with the spirit of our Code of Behaviour and that are age appropriate and relevant to the needs of the class. (Follow the class rules).

1. Pupils must co-operate with instructions given by the teacher (Do what teacher says).
2. Pupils should work to the best of their ability and present exercises neatly. (Work hard – do your best).
3. Pupils must stay seated in their places or in agreed work areas unless told otherwise. This is particularly important when the teacher’s attention may be diverted to another need. (Sit in your place).
4. Pupils should keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to themselves. (Be caring towards others).

Bullying

- Bullying is defined as “repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others”.
- The most common forms of this type of behaviour are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting.
- Bullying, under, any guise, will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in this matter.

Travel to and from School and when on School Outings.

- While the school has no legal responsibility or control over pupils travelling to or from school, they are nonetheless expected to behave in a manner that is in keeping with school standards, especially when wearing the school uniform.
- The staff/Board of Management of the school cannot accept responsibility for pupils before the official opening time of 8.40 a.m. from which time all pupils should go to their classrooms.
- Parents should observe the one-way system which operates in the car park in the morning and afternoon, and any signage/markings in car parks around the school. This is very important in terms of the safety of pupils.
- All those travelling to/from the school should respect and obey the traffic warden.
- Pupils with bicycles and scooters etc. must not cycle/ride scooter until they are outside the school grounds.

- When on school outings or at school-related events outside the school, pupils are expected to behave in an orderly and courteous manner and to show respect for others and for public property. They should always co-operate fully with their teachers and designated staff/helpers. They must strive to always represent the school well.

Substance Abuse

Children must not bring illegal drugs, cigarettes or alcohol to school.

Interventions and Support

- At the start of each school year, the class teacher will discuss and agree the class rules with the pupils and ensure that there is clarity around them. This will be done in an age-appropriate fashion. The school rules will also be revised with each class on an intermittent basis.
- Praise and encouragement for good behaviour – on an ongoing basis.
- Teaching and learning around behaviour is a natural part of the routine of the day. It is also a core element of the Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme and of Religious Education.
- Where necessary and appropriate, additional supports may be sought e.g. through school advisory/support services.
- Utilising a behaviour plan for individual children may be considered, if for example, a child consistently exhibits challenging or disruptive behaviour.

Rewards

Greater emphasis is placed on rewards than on sanctions. Rewards may include the following:

- Homework Passes.
- Stamps and stickers on copies.
- Recognition for good behaviour and kind deeds.
- Class pupil of the week award. Merit Points/Merit Awards. Gold Cards/Certificates. Prizes.
- Praise and encouragement for improvement in behaviour, effort and work.
- Golden time at teachers' discretion.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Sanctions

Where sanctions are deemed necessary, they will be imposed with three objectives in mind:

- To re-establish positive behaviour.
- To protect the common good (e.g. the safety, respect and education) of the pupils as a whole and others.
- To prevent recurrence of unacceptable behaviour.

The following forms of sanctions may be imposed, taking due account of the gravity of the misbehaviour, and individual/contextual factors such as the age of the child concerned. The degree of misbehaviour, i.e. minor, serious or gross, is decided by the teachers on the basis of their professional judgement and a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of the misbehaviour and age and understanding of the child. This list is not exhaustive – and it is not necessarily drawn on sequentially.

1. Reprimand in the appropriate forum, including advice on how to improve.
2. Temporary separation from peers, friends and others e.g. time-out.
3. Loss of privileges.
4. Debit points.
5. Prescribing extra homework/tasks to be completed at home or during the school day.

6. Restorative practice – whereby the child will actively engage in some activity that will help redress the wrongdoing.
7. Referral to Principal.
8. Communication with parents.
9. In-school (internal) suspension. *Internal Suspension is when a pupil is formally removed from his/her own base class and is placed in another class/other area in the school for up to three school days. This may be carried out in response to serious misbehaviour.*
10. Exclusion from the school premises at break and/or lunch times.

“Access to education shapes the life chances of children and young people in a fundamental way. For this reason, a proposal to exclude a student, through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by very serious misbehaviour” (*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, NEWB, 2008).

11. Suspension by the Board of Management for a fixed period – in line with NEWB guidelines (It is important to note that in the event of any child being suspended, this suspension will be notified to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), as appropriate, in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines. Where a student is suspended for a period of not less than six days, the principal shall notify an educational welfare officer). Suspension will be for a period not exceeding three days, except in exceptional circumstances when it is considered by the Board that a longer period of suspension is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective. In the event of a suspension of up to three days being warranted, the Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the Principal. Procedures governing suspension, as per NEWB guidelines, will be applied. Note: The decision to suspend is not one which is taken lightly.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- Inform the pupil and his/her parents about the complaint
- Give parents and pupil an opportunity to respond.
- In the case of an immediate suspension (e.g. for reasons of safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others) parents must be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The formal investigation will then follow the imposition of the suspension.
- The Principal will notify the parents and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:
 1. The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
 2. The reasons for the suspension
 3. Any study/homework programme to be followed, if applicable
 4. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (e.g. the parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
 5. The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
 6. The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, section 29).

It is worthwhile to reiterate that a decision to suspend is not one which is taken lightly. Fairness in procedures and decision-making will be a central principle. The Principal and/or another member delegated by the Principal will offer to meet with the parents to emphasise the importance of helping the pupil to behave well when the pupil returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

12. Expulsion. The Board of Management of the school has the authority to expel a student. It is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:
 - A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
 - A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Recording Incidents of Misbehaviour

Teachers will record all incidents of serious misbehaviour by pupils. These records are shared with the principal/parents as appropriate.

Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Scoil San Treasa prides itself in the high level of attendance and engagement with the curriculum. This is reflected in the overall attainment level of pupils and in the strong positive atmosphere among the school community. Nevertheless, it is important that all parents are aware of our obligations in terms of attendance.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note, signed by the parent, sent to the school (via the class teacher). Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). Any child wishing to leave school early must, on that day, bring a note signed by their parent, advising the teacher of the need to leave early and the time the child will be collected. For reasons of safety and security, parents are requested not to arrange to collect their children during break times (i.e. 10:30-10:40am and 12:10-12:40pm). The parent must collect the child and liaise directly with the class teacher at time of collection. Please remember that all visitors to the school, including parents, must first report to the secretary's office (entering the school by the front door). This helps to ensure the safety of all children, and minimises interruptions to the children's learning. Children are expected to attend school each day and on time. Again, this is in their own interest in terms of their overall wellbeing and their educational development. Of course, when children are unwell, it is not appropriate for them to attend school. School opens to receive pupils at 8:40am each morning. The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for pupils before this time.

The support and trust of parents is essential to the implementation of the school plan to foster your child's development into responsible young adults.

Appendix A – Code of Engagement with our School - Adults

The adults in the school environment (including staff, parents and visitors) have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils.

Parents and staff have a very important role in supporting the school's Code of Behaviour. The ways in which parents and teacher interact will provide pupils with a model of good working relationships. Parents and staff are expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting pupils to behave according to these standards. Relevant concerns are dealt with in line with our Code of Behaviour. The school's Code of Behaviour is a point of reference for all visitors to the school.

A courteous and respectful atmosphere throughout the school serves to both lay down the foundations of good life skills for our pupils and facilitate the smooth running of the school.

This code has been drawn up after a process, which involved consultation with teachers, parents, and pupils and Board of Management. It was endorsed by the Board of Management in April 2013 and was further clarified by the Board of Management on 27th February 2017.

This policy will be implemented with immediate effect. It will be reviewed regularly, in line with DES guidelines and in the light of experience. A full review of this policy will occur before or during the school year 2017-2018.