

# St. Mary's College Junior School



## Code of Behaviour

### Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of St. Mary's College Junior School is required by legislation to prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Education Welfare Act 2000 stipulates that the school's Code of Behaviour must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

St. Mary's College Junior School aims to treat each child, irrespective of ability, creed, race or gender with dignity, fairness and respect. Our school aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Management work in partnership, where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian atmosphere.

Implementation of this Code of Behaviour reflects our school ethos and is central to the provision of effective teaching and learning.

### A Code that reflects our Ethos as a Spiritan School

Our aim in St. Mary's College Junior School is to generate and maintain an inclusive climate of learning within which every student is enabled to develop and fulfil his own potential. Care, Courtesy, Respect and Tolerance are at the heart of our Spiritan ethos.

*'Fidelitus in Ardius'* (Faith in difficult times) is our motto and central to the St. Mary's College Junior School ethos. Providing a stimulating education within a supportive community requires a proactive approach to bullying. The active essence of our Spiritan ethos promotes the positive reinforcement of civil and courteous behaviour.

The school's BÍ Cineálta Policy is adopted under, and consistent with, the Code of Behaviour.

### Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St. Mary's College Junior School are:

- To provide guidance for students, teachers and parents/guardians on behavioural expectations
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school
- To develop students' self-esteem and to promote and encourage positive behaviour

- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in Students based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To engender proper behaviour when engaging in or attending sporting activities and other school related activities
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and for the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To support parents/guardians in rearing their children to become respectful, courteous, and civil young men

## **Implementation**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasising positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the students and to individual differences. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents/guardians will be contacted at an early stage.

## **General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour**

- Students are expected to treat all adults and fellow students with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Students are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free
- Students are expected to take pride in their appearance, to dress in full school uniform, to have all books and required materials for class and to be in the right place at the right time
- Students are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly
- Students are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the teacher must be informed on Aladdin, stating the reason for absence
- Students are expected to have the proper attire for sporting activities and behave courteously at all times both in the school and while representing the school at sporting events/tours/school activities.

## **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and St. Mary's College Junior School places a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. Families play a key role in influencing their child's behaviour and a courteous, structured and caring home is central to a boy's civilised behaviour both in the home, at school and elsewhere. Responsible behaviour needs to be constantly affirmed.

## **Strategies/Incentives**

Strategies may involve:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on a child's copybook/homework journal/assessment sheets and reports
- A visit to another class teacher for commendation
- A visit to the Deputy Principal and/or Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group/team

- Individual class merit awards, award points/award stamps (as designated by the class teacher)
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Written or verbal communication with parents/guardians

### **Discouraging Misbehaviour**

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Reasoning with student
- Verbal reprimand
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class (Students will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of Health or Safety)
- Prescribing extra work
- Loss of privileges
- Loss of yard time
- Teacher communicating with parents/guardians
- Referral to the Deputy Principal and/or Principal
- Deputy Principal or Principal communicating with parents/guardians
- Detention
- Suspension from school
- Exclusion from school

*Developing Codes of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB, 2008) has informed this Code of Behaviour. These Guidelines acknowledge a child's right to education but also the occasional need for a school to suspend or expel students where serious misbehaviour occurs.

### **Fair Procedures**

In the investigation of alleged misbehaviour and in decision making around what, if any sanction should be imposed, it should be clear that fair procedures are adopted. These fair procedures have two essential parts:

1. The right to be heard
2. The right to impartiality

The principles of fair procedure always apply but the degree of formality required will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and the seriousness of the possible sanction. Procedures in St. Mary's College Junior School must be fair and be seen to be fair. The need for confidentiality and timeliness in dealing with suspension or expulsion is of the essence.

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a student during school-time (during breaktime) for more than two consecutive days, the parents/guardians will be notified by the class-teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter/email depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents/Guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or student will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested to attend the school to meet the Principal. If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the student will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the student may be suspended for a period.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of all students, the Board of Management may authorise the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days.

## **Suspension**

The Board of Management of St. Mary's College Junior School has the authority to suspend. Where this authority is delegated to the Principal, it should be done formally and in writing. Suspension will always be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension. However, a single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

A decision to suspend a student requires that:

- The student and parents/guardians are informed of the complaint and
- Parents/Guardians and students are given an opportunity to respond

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances, where the Principal considers that it is warranted to achieve a particular objective. Where a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. Students will not be suspended for an indefinite period.

The Principal will notify the parents/guardians and the student of a decision to suspend in writing. Before returning to school from suspension, parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended student will behave in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and the Principal must be satisfied that the student's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the student's own safety or that of the other students and/or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a 'behaviour plan' for the student if required and will re-admit the student to the class.

## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management of St. Mary's College Junior School has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion will be proportionate to the student's behaviour and will only be invoked in extreme cases of

unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and will be satisfied that it has exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that the student should be expelled for a first offence:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- sexual assault

St. Mary's College Junior School will follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

## **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.

## **Bullying – Bí Cineálta Policy**

This Code of Behaviour incorporates the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. All bullying, as defined under the Bí Cineálta procedures, will be managed through the processes and supports set out in the Bí Cineálta Policy, which operates within this Code's overall behaviour framework.

### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression (physical, verbal, relational, cyber) that intentionally hurts another student, involving an imbalance of power. A single incident may also be considered bullying in certain circumstances as outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures.

### **Reporting and Investigation**

All members of the school community have a responsibility to report suspected bullying to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The school follows clear procedures for investigating, recording and responding to bullying, as detailed in the school's Bí Cineálta Policy. Support and intervention strategies will be implemented for both those affected by and engaged in bullying behaviour.

## Sanctions and Support

Where bullying is confirmed, sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion may be applied as outlined in this Code of Behaviour. The school will provide appropriate supports to all students involved, following the holistic approaches mandated in BÍ Cineálta.

## Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe and stimulating environment
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code
- Adopt the Code of Behaviour and BÍ Cineálta Policy
- Review the Code of Behaviour and BÍ Cineálta Policy

## Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school community
- Arrange for the annual review of the Code of Behaviour

## Teachers' Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour
- Create a safe working environment for each student
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by students
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among students
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents/guardians when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern
- Keep the Principal and Deputy Principal informed of misbehaviour

## Students' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other Students
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other Students in games and activities
- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules
- Dress in full school uniform

## **Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour

## **Code Review**

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed in December 2025 and will be reviewed on an annual basis (or sooner if deemed necessary).