



St. Mary's Star of the Sea Primary School

Positive Behaviour Policy

*"...Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights..."
Article 28 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Ratified by Governors	6-11-2025
Date for Review	11-2026
Signed – Chair of Governors	C Mc Williams
Signed - Principal	G Barrett

Introduction

St Mary's Star of the Sea Primary School has a key responsibility for the development, welfare and safety of the pupils in our care.

Through our Positive Behaviour Policy we aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment. We value each person for their unique talents and abilities and aim to develop a culture in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential.

This policy document has been designed to inform and reassure you, our parents/guardians, that your children are being educated in a safe and caring environment.

Mission Statement

St Mary's Star of the Sea P.S is a welcoming school which promotes strong links with parents, church and community. Our Catholic values are at the heart of all relationships. Our ethos of trust, tolerance and inclusion enables each individual to be happy, secure and respected.

We strive to ensure that everyone can achieve their full potential and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to have a positive role in their home, school and society.

Our Mission Statement seeks:

Learning and caring together, with consideration of others and the development of a positive self-image.

And is underpinned by developing the values of Respect; Friendship; Compassion; Empathy; Kindness; Determination; Ownership; Tolerance; Equality & Honesty.

Legislation and Guidance

The school's Positive Behaviour Policy is informed by:

Current Legislation:

- Health and Safety At Work NI Order (1978)
- The Children (NI) Order (1995)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Education (NI) Order (1998)
- Welfare and Protection Of Pupil's Education and Libraries (NI) Order (2003)
- The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No. 2) Order (NI) (2007)
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) (2010)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016
- Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (NI) (2016)

DE Guidance:

- Pastoral Care In Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection In Schools – A Guide For Schools (2017)
- Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework 2017

Rationale

This policy sets shared expectations about positive behaviour in St Mary's Star of the Sea P.S with an understanding that pupils, staff and parents all have their part to play. We are committed to a whole school approach to positive behaviour management within a framework of agreed rights, responsibilities, rewards and sanctions.

The policy helps us to create a friendly, encouraging, secure, supportive, orderly and positive environment based on RESPECT. We encourage values which are explicitly shared with the children, which then allow the children to fulfil their potential and develop confidence and self-esteem.

The staff of St Mary's Star of the Sea are committed to maintaining high levels of good behaviour as it is the foundation of pupil's educational achievement, their happiness and well-being while in school.

We know that it is vital to strike a balance between recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and having appropriate sanctions which are seen by all to be fair and just and applied consistently.

This policy will ensure that children, parents, staff and governors are clear about the standards of behaviour expected, the rewards which are achieved as a recognition and celebration of adhering to these behaviours and the sanctions applied and how they will be imposed for deviating from these agreed rules.

To ensure that those children who find it difficult to behave in a desirable way, have early intervention and adequate support this policy will work alongside and complementary to the Special Educational Needs Policy.

The guiding principles of this policy are:

- An acceptance of everyone's right to learn
- We take responsibility for our own behaviour
- We apply standards and follow rules consistently
- We strive to establish an appropriate ethos, acknowledging it depends upon trusting relationships
- We value the process of co-operative teamwork involving all pupils, staff, parents, carers and members of the wider community who support us

We are aware that some children have additional needs in terms of their behaviour, particularly if they have a Statement of Educational Need or particular as yet undiagnosed

SEBD. We will provide additional levels of assistance to help these children adhere to this Policy by working closely with their parent, class teacher, SENCO and the child themselves. We must however, ensure that procedures are in place for unmitigated negative behaviours.

Policy Statement

It is our intention that the positive behaviour policy at St Mary's Star of the Sea will ensure harmonious relationships between staff, pupils and parents. We wish to create a safe, caring Christian environment where children will have the opportunity to develop their individual talents to the full.

By establishing and maintaining acceptable standards of behaviour we wish to foster in our pupils self-respect and respect for others, and to encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour. St Mary's Star of the Sea positive behaviour policy is seen as the development of a fair, firm and caring code of conduct that is applied consistently by all staff and accepted by pupils and supported by parents. Parental awareness and co-operation is essential if our behaviour policy is to succeed.

Aims

The main aim of our Positive Behaviour Policy is to maintain an orderly school environment based on Catholic principles and values so that the school, in close co-operation with parents can fulfil its mission of promoting the spiritual, social, emotional, academic and physical development of all our pupils. In order to achieve this, we promote self-discipline, responsibility for an individual's actions and respect for others, their property and the environment.

Only in an orderly and supportive environment can effective learning take place. This orderly environment is effective when there is an appropriate balance between an individual's rights and respect for the rights of others.

To facilitate this balance, it is essential that pupils, parents and school staff are aware of the contents of this policy and collectively promote it.

Therefore, when a child is admitted to St Mary's Star of the Sea his/her parents should recognise that acceptance of admission to the school includes acceptance of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

The overarching aims of our Positive Behaviour Policy are to:

- Create an ethos and caring environment within the school that encourages positive behaviour, promotes learning for all of the pupils and is based on Catholic values and principles
- Create a learning environment in which children are encouraged to develop their talents to the full

- Enhance every pupil's self-esteem and foster self-respect for others
- Encourage the pupils to develop independence by accepting the need for self-discipline and self-control and taking responsibility for their own behaviour
- Develop the pupils' interpersonal skills and their ability to work co-operatively with others to resolve problems from potential or actual conflict
- Promote a high standard of behaviour so that effective learning can take place
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children within the school community
- Motivate children to become better citizens in our community
- Have the endorsement and active support of parents, teachers, support staff and Governors

Whenever possible, staff will encourage pupils to try to resolve disputes themselves using our PATHS strategies. ***Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)*** is our school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum that aims to help primary aged children to manage their behaviour, understand their emotions and work well with others. We are currently working with Barnardo's to implement this programme and it has been very effective in developing a calm, stable environment in our school. The principles are well embedded well and we have attained our PATHS accreditation.

Outcomes of Aims

- Pupils will respond positively in class working successfully through a planned curriculum
- Pupils will take pride in their work and surroundings
- Pupils will show mutual respect for others
- Staff will act as appropriate role models
- To use positive classroom management by delivering well prepared differentiated lessons
- To use a fair and consistent approach in all aspects of classroom practice
- To reward and give positive feedback to enhance self-esteem
- To encourage independence of thought and action and develop an appreciation of responsibility
- To apply appropriate sanctions in accordance with agreed school policy

System of Awards

At St Mary's Star of the Sea we continually strive to promote positive attitudes through individual and public acknowledgement for good work, effort and behaviour. A system of rewards and incentives, applied with consistency by all of the staff, helps to establish and maintain a climate in which pupils come to appreciate what constitutes acceptable behaviour and positive attitudes. The fact that behaviour and attitudes of this nature are regularly celebrated within our school reinforces this point. All of our pupils have a need for positive affirmation, and we do not take the positive behaviour of the majority for granted. Similarly, it is important that our pupils realise that their good behaviour is noted and acknowledged, just as instances of poor behaviour are challenged and responded to by sanctions.

There are a number of rewards, which we have found to be acceptable endorsements of good behaviour and positive attitudes. These include:

- Positive oral and written comments
- Caught Being Good Award
- Display of work
- Pupil of the Day
- Messages shared to parents via Seesaw
- Highlighting of exemplary work (for example, to year group colleagues, Vice-Principal or Principal)
- Pupil of the Month Awards
- 'Good News Notices' shared with the child's parent and the school Principal
- Praise, awareness raising of anti-bullying and positive behaviour through assemblies and circle time
- Class Dojo Points where appropriate
- Golden Time every Friday for all children where appropriate

Desirable Behaviour

Children will:

- Carry out the PATHs principles, and in so doing they will:
 - ✓ Apply themselves to the task and work to the best of their ability
 - ✓ Respond positively to opportunities, act independently of the teacher and show initiative
 - ✓ Listen carefully to staff/peers/visitors when they are speaking
 - ✓ Show respect for the views, ideas and property of others
 - ✓ Make positive contributions to the lesson; co-operate with the teacher and with their peers on shared activities
 - ✓ Recognise the importance of taking turns and sharing
 - ✓ Adhere to the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners
 - ✓ Be considerate towards other people and property
 - ✓ Respond politely to all requests
 - ✓ Accept responsibility for the things they do

Undesirable Behaviours

- Being unkind to their peers, including engaging in any form of bullying
- Calling out in class, interrupting others and being inattentive when others are contributing to the lesson
- Displaying a lack of interest in learning and preventing others from learning
- Being unable or unwilling to abide by the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners
- Defacing or destroying other pupils' belongings or school property
- Directing abusive language at other pupils or the teacher
- Acting aggressively or with violence towards other pupils or the teacher
- Using Social Media in any negative way including taking or distributing images and/or videos inside or outside school

Maintaining Good Order

We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment for your child. We ask all our parents for full co-operation and support which includes:

- **General Behaviour** –Desirable Behaviours of St Mary’s Star of the Sea are expected at all times. Good manners are also expected with respect shown to all members of the school community. Parents have an important and vital role in reinforcing good behaviour. Children are expected to walk in school at all times keeping to the pathways and dismounting from bikes etc. Chewing gum is not allowed and pupils are asked to put all litter in the bins. Fighting or aggressive behaviour is not permitted.
- **Homework** - all children are expected to complete homework. A high standard of work is expected and parents should regularly supervise and sign homework.
- **Punctuality/Attendance** - every child should be at school each day and on time. If a child is absent parents must inform the school.
- **School Uniform** - must be worn each day with all items clearly marked with your child’s name. Earrings i.e. small studs only, no hoops etc. Pupils with long hair must tie their hair up and extreme hairstyles/cuts/colours are not accepted.
- **Appointments** - with dentists/doctors should, where possible, be arranged outside school hours. Appointments with teaching staff should be arranged for after school, not drop off or pick up time.
- **Road Safety** - pupils crossing the Shore Road or Grey’s Lane do so with the Patrol Person(s) or at the traffic lights. If your child travels to school by taxi they should be seated and well behaved.
- **School Property** – please look after it...we have invested heavily in our school over the last number of years and we need your help to keep it in good condition.

Parents will appreciate that the general public will make judgements about a school on the basis of how pupils look and behave while in school uniform. The maintenance of high standards of dress and behaviour is expected.

Playground & Dinner Hall Rules

It is important the children follow these conventions in the playground and dinner hall:

- Play safely and include everybody
- Keep our playground litter free
- Line up quickly and quietly
- Be kind to everyone in the playground
- Respect all our supervisors
- Respect the calmness of the dinner hall
- Avoid wasting food

- Recycle unused food and tidily return cutlery and trays for washing

Discipline Procedures for Undesirable Behaviour

The following may be employed; however this is not a full list. Serious sanctions will be discussed with the child and the parent. The Board of Governors in conjunction with the Principal and SENCO may apply other sanctions which are deemed appropriate given the individual need of each case.

- A look/hand/verbal signal
- Adult calmly speaking to child
- Verbal apology from child
- Cool off/cool down time
- **Time Out (not outside classroom door)**
- Loss of some/all Golden Time
- Class teacher noting misconduct via Seesaw to his/her parent
- Behaviour targets on desk
- Temporary removal to another class or area to sit in a safe quiet environment for 5/10 minutes to settle down
- Withdrawal of privileges/responsibilities either at home/school or both
- Withdrawal from extra-curricular activities or treats within the class
- **A pupil may be sent to the VP or Principal, who will discuss the matter with the child and take appropriate action e.g. stern caution, weekly report, completion of Behaviour Sheet**
- Formal meeting with the child's parent(s)
- Individual Behaviour Plan
- Follow-up procedures are detailed in the Pastoral Care Policy e.g. weekly or daily reports to parents; input of SENCO; referral to educational psychologist with parental approval; other relevant support agency e.g. Social Services, Family Support Hub etc.
- Online Safety issues may require involvement of external agencies .
- If unacceptable behaviour continues, the matter will be referred to the Board of Governors as a suspension or expulsion may be required

The quality of education for all children in the school will be the over-riding consideration. Should this be jeopardised over a period of time, the Board of Governors will not hesitate to suspend or expel an offending pupil, following DENI/EA/CCMS set procedures for suspension and expulsion of pupils.

A one-off lapse in conduct will not be dealt with in the same manner as a continuation of persistent, unacceptable behaviour.

The school reserves the right to impose any sanction listed or not listed above if an incident is serious enough to warrant it.

Levels of Undesirable Behaviour

It is important to recognise that some misbehaviours are more serious than others. The frequency of occurrence also has a bearing on the sanctions imposed. 'Moderate' and 'Serious' Level behaviours should be recorded and placed in the child's file.

Low Level	Moderate Level	Serious Level
Fidgeting Telling tales Wilfully dropping litter Noisy e.g. shouting out Failing to keep on task Leaving seat without permission Unkind remarks Bad language (one off) Time wasting Telling lies (one off) Running in corridors Pushing in line Chewing Gum Borrowing without permission	Constantly shouting out Poor effort Distracting others Continuously unprepared for work Stealing Disregarding Staff Threatening/aggressive behaviour Scrapping Physical/verbal threats made to staff or peers Refusal to cooperate Telling lies (persistent) Bad language (persistent)	Hitting/punching/kicking Spitting Vandalism/Damaging property Use of or in possession of drugs/solvents Violent outbursts verbal or physical Leaving school without permission Presenting behaviour that makes one a danger to self or others Continuously disrupting the good order and functioning of the school so that others are unable to learn and provision is significantly disrupted

Restrictive Practices.

We:

- Understand that behaviour of children and young people is a form of communication and this should be listened to and understood to meet their needs
- Understand the underlying causes of behaviours of concern and the times and situations when behaviours of concern are more likely to occur and the steps that should be taken to support pupils who display these behaviours
- Understand the requirements of supportive practices necessary for health or emotional well-being reasons which should be included in a pupil's health care and/or special educational needs plan as appropriate
- Understand when physical restraint/reasonable force can be used as a last resort and/or in exceptional circumstances
- Reduce the need for one off/last resort use of physical restraint/reasonable force through the development of strategies that promote a human rights based supportive approach
- Work with other adults, including parents/carers, to develop a plan that meets the individual needs of the child or young person, actively reduces restrictive practices and encourages good quality, safe supportive practices

- Ensure prior planning and training in place so that when situations arise where physical restraint/reasonable force are required in one-off crisis situations, harm is prevented to the individual or others and the safety of all concerned is secured
- Have measures in place to agree in advance and record incidents of physical restraint/reasonable force as part of an individual health care and/or education plan or occurring in one-off crisis situations (Pink Form)
- Have measures in place that require parents/carers to be informed of any incidents of physical restraint/reasonable force used, and follow up action to assess reasons for this occurring and any impact on pupils and staff

Methods of Promoting Positive Behaviour in St Mary's Star of the Sea

In St Mary's Star of the Sea we aim to create a happy and safe working environment where children develop through encouragement, example and discipline to become confident, independent and responsible young people. Here are some of the measures we take in school to promote a positive ethos and sustain good behaviour:

- School Council
- Well-developed pupil voice
- School Assemblies
- Pupil awards: daily/weekly in class, monthly and special events
- Religious Services
- Year Group and whole school Masses
- Circle Time
- Training for all staff on anti-bullying strategies
- **Value based ethos**
- Class Charter
- Positive supervision at all times
- Regular monitoring and reporting from Designated Teachers for Child Protection
- An open-door policy
- Planned parent/teacher meetings
- Reports to parents yearly
- Parent surveys to inform future practice
- Supervisory staff promoting positive play
- All pupils have the opportunity to perform in school plays, concerts, masses etc.
- Golden Time
- Internal class points system and subsequent rewards

Skills for Reinforcement of Positive Behaviour

- **Positive Feedback** - Identifying and reinforcing appropriate behaviour
- **Positive Repetition** - when you give a direction, ask someone who knows what to do to repeat it rather than focusing on the one who doesn't - praise the children who carry out the instruction
- **Non-verbal Cues** - hands up, finger on the lips, the "look"
- **Tell pupils in advance what you expect. Set them up to succeed.**
- **Modelling Behaviour** - show the pupils what you want to eliminate 'second-guessing'

- **Praise Appropriate Behaviour** - catch pupils being good and reinforce this
- **Use positive language as it is more likely to elicit the desired response**
- **Proximity Praise** - this relies on the 'ripple effect' where the positive feelings from praising individual students who are working hard or behaving well spread or 'ripple' around the room with other students getting the message that if they behave in a similar way, they too will receive praise
- **Find pupils in other classes behaving appropriately, praise them**
- **Give take-up time** - give a clear specific direction in a non-confrontational way, move away from the pupil with a clear expectation that the pupil will comply
- **Re-direction** - repeat direction without being side tracked. Use thanks and take-up time, do not stand over pupils in a confrontational way.
- **Tactically ignore** - ignore any secondary behaviour if the pupil is compliant with the primary behaviour request e.g. if the pupil begins the task (primary behaviour) when asked, ignore any annoying secondary behaviours such as huffing and muttering
- **Tactical Withdrawal** - defuse the situation and deal with it later. Defuse by distraction, speaking to another child/adult in the child's presence, use technology as distraction e.g. iPad - offer a way out for child. Remove one of the children if there is more than one child involved. This is not a back-down.
- **Distraction/ Diversion** - give an alternative task or activity to a disruptive pupil without highlighting the inappropriate behaviour
- **Calmness** - do not lose your temper. Calmness helps adults and children alike.
- **Prime Children** - prime children using Social Stories especially if the children have a special need, behaviour issue or are on the Autistic spectrum as social situations and unstructured time such as break and lunch times will be very difficult for these children
- **Pre-empt Situations** - if you know a child reacts to a certain stimulus in a negative manner be prepared for what will happen e.g. on a wet break; choir practice; playing a certain team game; a change to the original timetable etc. Have a plan B for those days and occasions and make sure everyone who needs to know, does know e.g. CA, other teachers, classmates and supervisors
- **Private Reprimand** - a quiet word rather than a public confrontation.
- **Repair & Rebuild** - as soon as possible after a reprimand, find an opportunity to say something positive about the pupil, "Catch them being good"
- **Depersonalise to Avoid Direct Conflict** - target the group with your request rather than the individual. Instead of saying, "John you are talking loudly again" say "I can hear a loud noise coming from this particular group. Please will you talk in softer voices?" and when done say, "Thank you" to reinforce the message. This is a useful strategy as it can prevent a child who struggles with fitting in with class routines being consistently mentioned and in some cases with children who have Emotional and Behavioural Special Needs it can prevent there being an outburst from a relatively minor behaviour modification request.
- **Choose your Battles and your Words Carefully** - there needs to be an awareness that some 'battles' are just not worth fighting over and that there is little value in making promises or demands that cannot be kept or backed up. This is especially relevant for the child with Emotional and Behavioural Special Needs. Some children because of their special needs or behavioural triggers struggle to sit on a carpet for a long duration/struggle to line up etc. just as some children struggle to read and write.

- **Know your Children** - staff may have to tailor their strategies to fit in with a particular child. This is not *letting the child win* or letting the child *get away with something* – it just means that further adaptations may need to be in place (additional pastoral work such as zones of regulation may be required to get them to a place where they can better control their feelings or anger). When we make expectations of children, we should consider their age, maturity, special need, mental health and ‘anxiety critical point’.
- **Staff Mindset: Our role is to help the individual and to ensure a culture of personal respect and safety for everybody** - above all, as staff, our role is to help nurture the children and consider each child as a vulnerable, developing person who needs guidance, clear and reasonable expectations and a calm caring environment in which to flourish. This should be our mind set. Each child needs to know that if they make mistakes, they can learn from them. However, these mistakes *must not be at the expense of other children*. There needs to be a balance between bespoke care and behavioural management of the individual in consideration of what is in the interests and safety of the wider class. If a child is a danger to self or others or is responsible for wilfully damaging school property then there is a duty of care for school staff to intervene and for the offending child to be withdrawn from the group/class/school as appropriate.

Bullying

Although Bullying is dealt with in a separate policy, it is necessary to highlight within this Positive Behaviour Policy, what bullying is, the measures taken to educate the children and how we promote an anti-bullying culture.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that intentionally causes distress to others. It may be physical (e.g. biting, kicking), verbal (e.g. name calling) non-verbal (e.g. ignoring or excluding) or emotional (e.g. talking behind backs, spiteful uncharitable actions). Bullying is a behaviour repeated over a period of time.

Bullies will often claim that they were having a joke or a game. They may not understand their actions may be classed as bullying.

IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

What to do?

- Don't suffer in silence and follow our school mantra "Tell! Tell! Tell!"
- Tell your teacher, or parent or any adult you can trust. Someone can always help you.
- Don't react
- Try not to show that you are upset, if you can just walk away
- Find a friend

- Use our Worry Boxes
- There is safety in numbers and also you will have a witness
- Avoid danger zones
- Avoid being alone in a place where the bully is likely to be
- Keep a note or diary of what is happening
- This helps you to remember exactly what happened and if there is a pattern

Drugs Statement

This school believes we should be a drug free community. Illegal substances should not be brought into school and the use of or supply of such drugs on the school premises will be regarded with the utmost seriousness.

Evidence of drug use by a pupil or possession of a substance will most probably result in a precautionary suspension pending a full investigation. Each case will be assessed and different levels of sanctions will be used according to the seriousness of the incident and the pupil's involvement.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Principal monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policy on an on-going basis.

Senior Staff record any concerns or worries raised by the children in the worry boxes and the action taken to address these concerns.

Individual Behaviour Plans are kept on the child's record and stored centrally by the SENCO.

The Principal/Vice Principal retain concerns raised by parents and the action taken.

An evaluation of the policy is presented to the Governors on a term-to-term basis under the inclusion of Safeguarding & Child Protection.

Staff who may have concerns about the inconsistent implementation of this policy may raise their concern with any member of the SLT.

Consultation

Our school community have been consulted in the development of this Policy. The pupils of the school, through work at Assemblies and with the School Council, are very aware of its content and the expectations placed on every child to undertake the positive behaviour aspect of this Policy.

This Policy, we believe, supports the ethos of our school. The Policy is embedded in the principles of Catholic education with a major emphasis on positive reinforcement. Every child is encouraged and motivated to strive to do their very best. Children are rewarded for their achievements and know what is expected of them.

We expect all members of our school community to fully support this policy and to work for the common good of the school and all who attend here. This collective responsibility is shared with the Governors of the school, the Principal, teaching and support staff, the parents and their children.