

## Code of Behaviour

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 clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

**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 relatively disruption free environment.**

### Aims of the Code

- To create a **positive learning environment** that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote **self-esteem and positive relationships**
- To encourage **consistency** of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of **responsibility and self-discipline** in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on **consideration and respect** for the rights of others
- To facilitate the **education and development of every child**
- To foster **caring attitudes to one another and to the environment**
- To **enable teachers to teach** without disruption
- To ensure that the **school's expectations and strategies are widely known** and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of **open communication**
- To encourage the **involvement of both home and school** in the implementation of this policy

### Responsibility of Adults

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.

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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
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'. A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

**Content of Policy**

- 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**
- 2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**
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- 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**
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- 4. Reward and Sanctions**
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  - c) Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
- 5. Defining behaviours**
  - a) Defining behaviour
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  - d) Gross misconduct
  - e) Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
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- 6. Suspension/Expulsion**
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- 7. Behaviour of other stakeholders in the school**
- 8. Keeping records**

**1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

The education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school."

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Our Code of Behaviour for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

School Rules:

- We show respect for self and others
- We show respect for our own property and the property of others
- We show respect for other pupils learning
- We are kind and willing to help others
- We follow instructions from staff immediately
- We show courtesy and good manners
- We try use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- We ask permission to leave the classroom
- We do our best in class
- We take responsibility for our own work
- We wear the appropriate uniform

Holy Trinity NS sums these up as six "main/golden rules" to ensure that standard of behaviour are observed by each student. They are:

- **We are respectful:** we don't hurt others, we respect ourselves and others in school and in the yard, respect for other's property, respect other students and their learning, readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict, show kindness and willingness to help others, show courtesy and good manners
- **We work hard:** we don't waste time.
- **We are honest:** we tell the truth.
- **We are kind.**
- **We look after property:** we don't damage things.
- **We listen:** we don't interrupt.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and that the principal "*may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the Code of behavior so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such Code by the child.*"

### 2. **Whole school approach in promoting positive behavior**

By following the school rules above, the school can reach its vision as a place that is happy and safe and is a positive learning environment. All partners in education are expected to follow the school rules above. Some examples of how partners can achieve this:

#### **Staff:**

- At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of **class rules** with the children.
- These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children.

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- Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise **positive behaviour** (e.g. ' We walk in the classroom' and not 'Don't run', 'We use kind hands/feet' and not 'no hitting').
- Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference.
- Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.
- The school's SPHE and RE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. IT aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
- Our school staff is undergoing professional developing in the Incredible Years programme.

### **Board of Management:**

*'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behavior in a school. It should be supportive to the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behavior and discipline within the school.'* (Circular 20/90)

- The BoM supports the code of behavior in the school on an ongoing basis.
- The BoM supports the staff in implementing the code of behavior. The BoM facilitates staff training in the Incredible Years programme.
- Serious breaches of behavior in the school will involve the BoM. This requires them to have a sound knowledge of procedures.

### **Parents:**

*'Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behavior and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.'* *'Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behavior and discipline.'* (Circular 20/90)

- As is our ethos, parental involvement is essential in the development of the school.
- The code of behavior is communicated to parents/guardians on the enrolment of their child through a Parent/Guardian/School Information booklet.
- It would be helpful if:
  - Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
  - Parents ensure that their child/children is/are in school on time
  - Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
  - Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
  - Parents ensure that children have all the necessary books and materials for school

### **Pupils:**

- At the beginning of each school year and frequently throughout the year children draw up and are reminded of the class and school rules.
- Pupils are active in the ongoing implementation of the code of behavior by:

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- Signing a charter for rules for the classroom
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on and with the Student council
- Buddy system
- Pupils monitor and review the code of behavior by adding their suggestions. These can be discussed at class meeting and at Student Council meetings.

### **3. Postive strategies for managing behaviour**

#### **Classroom**

##### **Incentives**

Part of the vision of Holy Trinity N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially.

- Star charts
- Stickers
- Happygram sent home
- Phonecall home to share positive news
- Special Class reward – homework pass, move seat for the day, lucky dip box
- ICT tools for rewarding positive behavior – Class Dojo
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit rewards – extra time on the computer/iPad
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

#### **Playgrounds**

Rules of the playground are the same as in the classroom and also these rules for

##### **Health and Safety reasons:**

- Stay within yard boundaries
- Feet on the ground – no climbing walls, interfering with fencing (wooden, chain fencing)
- Moving to the class line in an orderly manner to avoid serious accidents occurring with numerous classes moving at one time in the two yards.
- There will always be at least one teacher on the yard at all times. The SNA will also be on duty. Every member of staff must be respected by pupils, parents and staff.
- On wet days, children remain indoors. The school/golden rules still apply.
- In the case of misbehavior in the yard, any member of staff can follow the procedure for sanctions (see below).

#### **4. Rewards and Sanctions:**

##### **a) Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour:**

- It is envisaged that rewards will be given out during assembly times. These will be in the form of rewarding children for keeping the class/school rules.
- When possible, it is encouraged that parents and staff are made aware of good behaviour from a child – Happygram sent home, note in journal, certificates etc..
- Other reward systems can be used by staff to encourage positive behaviour in the class – groups rewards, whole class rewards, individual rewards, special privileges etc..

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**b) Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behavior:**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline "the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behavior that the school has outlined."

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with (a) being for a minor misbehaviour and (i) being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. The school and Board of Management may need to skip steps if the behaviour is serious and impacting on the teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again hand if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

- a) Reasoning with pupil, may include a verbal warning and advice to improve ( a positive re-direct)
- b) A second verbal warning which outlines the consequence of breaking the rule again.
- c) Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class – Time Out
- d) Loss of privileges
- e) Communication with parents
- f) Referral to Principal (ie. the need for a behaviour plan) and discussion with parents/guardians and the child about a Behaviour Plan and its implementation.
- g) Principal communicating with parents
- h) In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to place a student on a contract of good behaviour. If the student breaks the contract the parent/guardian may be required to remove her from the school premises for part of the school day.
- i) Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

However sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child, who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety..

**c) Involving Parents in the Management of Problem Behaviour:**

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- As is our ethos, parental involvement is essential in the development of the school.
- The code of behavior is communicated to parents/guardians on the enrolment of their child through a Parent/Guardian/School Information booklet.
- It would be helpful if:
  - Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
  - Parents ensure that their child/children is/are in school on time
  - Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
  - Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
  - Parents ensure that children have all the necessary books and materials for school

**5. Defining Behaviours:**

**a)**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher to discuss their child's behaviour.

**b)**

**Minor Misbehaviour** are simply defined as any breakage of the class or school rules and may include bringing in electronic equipment or mobile phones to school, not following instructions etc... These behaviours are dealt with by staff in the school and parents are generally not informed of these sanction. The rules apply at all times in the school, including yard breaks. All staff can implement sanctions. While generally these behaviours warrant warnings, a "cooling-off" period may also be implemented, such as time out of yard (yard detention) or time in the "Time-Out" space of the classroom, yard or similar.

**c)**

**Serious misbehaviour** is difficult to define. It is more serious than minor misbehavior but not in the realm of gross misbehavior. It would include persistently breaking the rules in the school but is not limited to this. Examples may include: behaviour that is hurtful, behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning, threats or physical hurt to another person, spitting, throwing things, bad language, derogatory language, damaging property, leavin a school activity without permission and persistently not following directions though this list is not exhaustive. The school has the right to define a behaviour as "serious" based on the individual child. However, serious misbehavior will always involve a meeting or a talk with parents. In some cases a child may require a behaviour plan.

**d)**

**Gross misbehaviour** may be defined as extremely serious behaviour. Gross misbehaviour may warrant immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the school. The principal of the school will be involved in any behaviour considered gross misbehaviour and it will be at her discretion what sanction must be implemented. In some cases, the school's BOM must be involved.

The following list of behaviours are considered gross misbehaviour and may warrant immediate suspension/expulsion. However, the list is not exhaustive and it is the right of the principal to define any behaviour not listed below as gross misbehaviour.

- Acts of grievous bodily harm (an assault) to a staff member and/or child. It is important to note that the school will decide whether an incident comes under this definition. This behaviour goes far beyond jostling on the yard.

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- Intentional theft of items eg. money, jewellery, items of a highly personal nature etc..
- Intimidation of a staff member by a child
- Possession of a weapon on school property. A weapon is defined as any implement or tool that is utilized or intended to utilize harm to another individual. Examples include knives (including pen knives), guns, screwdrivers etc. However, any item can be used as a weapon and it is generally the intention that will be examined when considering this behaviour.
- Any form of intentional sexual harassment.
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or any dangerous substance
- Wilful destruction of school property.
- Serious bullying - where a second parent, pupil, teacher, principal promise has been signed and the pupil fails to stop the bullying behaviour.

This list is not exhaustive and other incidents may be considered as gross misconducts at the discretion of the principal and BOM.

**Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour:**

**Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil 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 will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil 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.

While the BoM has the authority to suspend, they have delegated this authority to the Principal together with either the chairperson of the BOM or the Deputy Principal for periods of up to three days. Where the cumulative total of days suspension reaches 6, the NEWB will be notified. The following procedures as outlined in the current NEWB guidelines will apply:

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.
- If suspension is still decided upon the Principal notifies parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm. a) The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end. b) The reasons for the suspension. c) Any study programme to be followed. d) The

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arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents. e) The provision for appeal to the Board of management or secretary general of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)

Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### **1.1.1 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 will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### **Children with Special Needs**

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 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.

### **Methods of Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

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Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings
- Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal
- Communication Journal
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Text-a-Parent

Ratified by: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_