



# *St. Helen's Senior National School*



## **Code of Behaviour**

Ratified by Board of Management

**2020**

# St. Helen's S.N.S.

## Code of Behaviour

### Introduction

The aim of the school is to achieve a happy, secure environment in which children can develop to their full potential, and in order to do this it is necessary to provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption free environment. The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, and the ideal is that pupils will acquire self-discipline. We recognise the importance of a strong sense of community within the school and the existence of a high level of co-operation among teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents, the Board of Management and the Parents Association.

### Aims

Our Code of Behaviour aims to achieve the following:

- **Harmony:** Good behaviour among our pupils means that learning can take place in an atmosphere of harmony in our School, where co-operation exists between pupils, teachers and parents.
- **Respect:** In line with the ethos of our School, we inculcate in our pupils good behaviour patterns based on consideration, respect, courtesy, tolerance and forgiveness of others.
- **Trust:** We expect to be able to trust our pupils with regard to their behaviour.
- **Understanding:** Our pupils are helped to understand the need and reason for rules of behaviour – namely, to foster an environment conducive to learning and development and for their own safety and well-being and that of all in the school community.
- **Responsibility:** Our pupils are helped to gain a sense of responsibility in terms of their own behaviour. Staff, parents and the Board of Management also have responsibility for upholding the Code of Behaviour.
- **Community Awareness:** We help our pupils to become aware of their individual importance as part of their class and as part of the whole school community. Individual good behaviour has a positive effect on that community, just as individual misbehaviour can have a negative effect on all.
- **Parental Support:** We rely on our parents to support the school's Code of Behaviour and to help their children to uphold good standards of behaviour at school, just as at home.
- **Consistency:** We will aim to ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

**The following strategies will be used to show approval for acceptable behaviour and disapproval for unacceptable behaviour:**

- Affirmation of good behaviour.
- Pupil of the Month
- Whole class/school incentive programmes to promote positive behaviour. These incentives are reviewed and adapted periodically.
- A comment in a pupil’s copy
- A visit to another member of staff or the principal for commendation
- A word of praise and encouragement in front of a group or class
- Stars, stickers, prizes and certificates
- Homework passes
- Special responsibilities
- Reasoning with pupil
- Reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Referral to another teacher/adult who can work with the pupil
- Temporary separation from peers or friends
- Loss of privileges. e.g., tours, trips, representing our school at events
- Setting targets, behaviour contracts, discipline sheets
- Detention during a break
- In the case of constant disruption of class- removal from the class with the parents being contacted. The parent may be asked to take the child home from school immediately.
- Prescribed appropriate additional work
- Referral to Principal
- Communication with parents
- Conference between parents and Principal
- Referral and formal report to the Board of Management.
- Anticipated use of suspension
- Suspension
- Expulsion

**Note:** the final 3 points proceed in line with relevant governmental / Department of Education procedures. Misbehaviour can be deemed minor, serious or gross and will be dealt with as appropriate. The following are examples of various kinds of misbehaviour. This list is not exhaustive:

<b>Minor</b>	<b>Serious</b>	<b>Gross</b>
Inattentiveness	Homework regularly not done	Persistent bullying
Talking during class time	Stealing	Vandalism
Lack of effort	Verbal abuse of pupils	Verbal and / or physical abuse / assault of staff / pupils
Homework not signed	Physical abuse of children	Leaving school without permission
Failure to follow teacher’s instructions	Constant defiance	Inappropriate / sexualised behaviour
Distracting behaviour	Rudeness	
Not wearing uniform	Persistent distracting behaviour	

## **General Rules**

- Each pupil is expected to treat every other person he/she meets in the school premises with courtesy and respect, (no fighting, no bad language, no bullying).
- Each pupil is expected to be neatly dressed in appropriate school uniform, to be punctual and to attend school regularly.
- A high standard of loyalty and personal behaviour is expected from pupils at all times.
- When moving through the school each pupil is expected to do so quietly and in an orderly fashion.
- If late or absent from school each pupil is expected to provide a written explanation from his or her parents.
- No pupil is allowed to leave the school premises during school hours unless he/she has a written request from a parent/guardian and the permission of the teacher or Principal.
- During playtime pupils are expected to avoid games of unnecessary roughness and which could lead to injuries.
- A high standard of class-work and homework is expected from all pupils in the school.
- Each pupil is expected to uphold the school's code of behaviour while on school tours and representing the school at various out-of-school activities.
- Pupils must show respect for property (no litter, no vandalism, belongings kept neat and tidy). Pupils must not interfere with other pupil's property.
- Mobile phones and electronic devices that can send or receive messages, take photographs or record are not allowed in school. \*

\*In the case of mobile phones exceptions may be made on receipt of a written request from parents. Pupils who have been given permission to have a mobile phone must keep it in their school bags, switched off at all times, until they leave the school premises. The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to these phones.

## **Yard Rules**

- Fighting is strictly forbidden.
- Pupils may not leave the yard without permission.
- Eating and drinking is not permitted in the yard.
- Pupils will play on the tarmac unless they have been designated to play on the grass.
- Ball games are not permitted on the yard.
- Pupils will line up promptly when the bell rings.
- Pupils must play fairly and safely at all times.

Pupils must tell the teacher on yard if they are aware of fighting or bullying behaviour.

## **Communication between parents and teachers:**

The school recognises that a good open relationship with mutual respect between parents and teachers is of vital importance in promoting the proper development of each child in the school. To promote this relationship in a positive and professional way, this policy sets out the following procedure. It is important that parents and teachers communicate in a friendly and open manner and always in an

atmosphere of mutual respect. There is a formal parent/teacher meeting each year, usually in October. Informal contact between parents and teachers is welcomed but if a parent wishes to speak to a teacher about a specific issue, an appointment must be made by writing a note in the child's journal or by phoning the office, so that a mutually suitable time can be arranged. If a child forgets lunch, copies etc. they can be left in the office and will be passed to the child.

### **Expected Behaviour**

Expected behaviour can vary with circumstances and is set out in Appendix A at the end of this policy. This may change from time to time as new issues arise.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions will initially be class based as outlined below. If these prove insufficient, school based sanctions will be used. Referral to the Board of Management will be invoked for serious problems.

### **Role of the School Community**

#### **Teacher's Role**

The teacher will work to create a happy, inclusive and respectful atmosphere in each class. All classes will be taught the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes. Circle time will be incorporated into methodologies. Teachers will record all serious incidents of misbehaviour. Pupils who appear to have difficulties will be monitored. Teachers will liaise regularly with parents. Surveys may be carried out periodically.

#### **Pupil's Role**

Pupils will be expected to behave in a manner which respects themselves, others and property at all times. Pupils will be encouraged to report problems when the situation warrants it.

#### **Parents' Role**

Parents are expected to fully co-operate and engage with the school's Code of behaviour and support the school in this. They will educate their children to behave in an acceptable manner. They will impress on their children the need to respect the person and property of others. Parents will emphasise to their children the hurt caused by disrespectful behaviour. Parents will liaise with teachers and staff to help improve behaviour.

#### **Role of the Board of Management**

The board will work to ensure that an atmosphere of trust, respect and happiness pervades the school. The Board will ensure that a clearly understood strategy to deal with the perpetrators of unacceptable behaviour will be put in place. The Board will support staff in dealing with the pastoral care of children. A staged system of sanctions to change inappropriate behaviour will be put in place. A system of record keeping will be put in place.

## **Prevention**

### **Preventative Class Based Strategies**

In order to maximise the teaching and learning in a classroom all children are expected to co-operate with their teacher and their classmates. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour will be emphasised at all times, and will be the focus in behaviour management. Rewards and sanctions will be used by teachers to promote good behaviour. Time out and reflection will be used to help a child understand what they need to change. Teachers will continue to work with parents if problems persist. Emphasis may change to a more sanction based system, with the aim of modifying unacceptable behaviour. Reminders to the child, time out, reflection sheets, extra work and removal of rewards will all be used as strategies to improve behaviour. Children will be excluded from the yard for persistent rule-breaking in the yard. Parents and Principal will be informed if serious incidents occur. Formal procedures may be instigated if necessary.

### **Sanctions - School Based**

Teachers will initiate meetings with parents; outlining difficulties. The Principal will become involved in meetings and in monitoring children if behaviour persists. Sanctions will be imposed which may include withdrawal from yard, extra work or detention. Behaviour modification strategies will be introduced by parents and teachers. Social skills groups may be introduced to help children change behaviours.

### **Record Keeping**

Teachers will record all incidents of a potentially serious nature. When a pattern of inappropriate misbehaviour is noted the Principal is informed. The records of these incidents will be kept in a secure location in the classroom / in the office. These records may be used when liaising with parents and if matters proceed to Board of Management level. Records will not be used outside the school.

### **Incident report**

An incident report of serious misbehaviour will include the following:

- Names, class and teacher
- Date of Incident
- Description of event
- Witnesses
- Action Taken
- Pupil Reaction

### **Formal Procedures**

Formal procedures will only be invoked when other strategies have failed to produce a change in behaviour or in cases of serious misbehaviour.

Stage 1: A meeting will be held between the Teacher, the Principal and the parent/s of the child whose behaviour is causing concern. Its purpose will be to inform the parent/s that the school is initiating the formal procedure and the reasons for this.

Stage 2: A meeting will be held with parent/s and Principal together with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with the intention of seeking a resolution to the issues. If the Chairperson is unable to attend a designated member of the Board will deputise.

Stage 3: A referral to the Board of Management will be made to discuss the option of suspension. All stages will be preceded and followed up by a letter explaining the current stage in the process.

### **Involvement of the Board of Management**

When a matter comes before the Board, it will consider all behaviour records, notes from informal meetings and records from the formal procedure. The Board may seek further meetings to clarify any issues. The Board can impose further sanctions.

### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as “requiring the pupil to absent him/her self from the school for a specified, limited period of school days”. It will be used to

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupil and parents.
- give the staff time to plan other interventions.
- impress upon the pupil and parents the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

The authority to suspend a pupil has been delegated by the Board of Management to the principal. The suspension will be for a maximum of three days. Further suspension will require the authorisation of the Board. Where a board meeting cannot be convened, the principal, in consultation with the Chairperson, may impose a suspension of 5 days.

#### **Grounds for suspension:**

1. The child’s behaviour has had a serious and continued detrimental effect on the education of the other children.
2. The child’s continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to the health/safety of themselves and or others.
3. The child is responsible for serious damage to property.
4. The child continues to break school rules

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

#### **Procedures:**

Parents will be informed about the misbehaviour by phone, followed by a letter/email.

A meeting will be held with parents to give them an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and the sanction is imposed.

Parents will then be informed in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will include

- the period of suspension and the date on which the suspension will begin and end.
- the reason for the suspension.
- work that has been assigned.
- the arrangements for returning to school including commitments by the pupil and parents to comply with the Code of Behaviour.
- the procedure for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- the right to appeal to The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

In exceptional circumstances the principal may consider an immediate suspension where the child becomes a danger to themselves or other children or staff. Where this is considered warranted, following a preliminary investigation, parents will be notified and requested to collect their child immediately. A formal investigation will take place immediately after the suspension is imposed.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances.

Following a period of suspension, the parents must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code. The Principal must also be satisfied that the pupil's re-instatement will not constitute a risk to the pupils own safety or the safety of other pupils or staff.

**Records and Reports:** Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process.
- The decision and the rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management and TUSLA. Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour.

## **Expulsion**

Expulsion of a pupil is a very serious step and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. Expulsion will only be used after the school has taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour.

### **Grounds for expulsion**

- The pupils behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupils continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- A pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

In exceptional circumstances the Board may expel a student for a first offence including

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils.
- Sexual assault

### **Procedures**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following steps will then be taken:

- 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 this recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
- Board of Management deliberation and action following the hearing.



- Consultations arranged by TUSLA.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- Informing the parents of their right to appeal.

## **Bullying**

Bullying will not be tolerated in this school and parents are expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying, in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying Policy. Sanctions from the above list will be imposed.

The school also has a Harassment and Adult Bullying Policy.

## **Home School Communication**

It is in the interests of pupils, parents and teachers that good relations should prevail between school and home. Our school prides itself on the high level of co-operation that exists between us. Parents support the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules. The staff of our school always welcome the opportunity to discuss behavioural problems that may arise from time to time. Parents should contact their child's teacher if they have a concern. With mutual respect, trust and goodwill these occasional problems are readily solved.

A brief overview of our Code of Behaviour is discussed at an induction meeting of new parents to the school. Parents are requested to sign their agreement to support our code. Our Code of Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies can be accessed via the school website [www.helens.ie](http://www.helens.ie).

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in January 2020.

## **Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed by the staff and the Board of Management on an annual basis.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Enda Rice, Chairperson,  
Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A – Expected Behaviour**

### **Absence**

If a pupil is absent from school a note of explanation must be brought to the teacher upon returning to school. If for any reason a pupil knows they are not going to be in school a note should be provided before the absence.

### **Arrival at School and Punctuality**

School begins at 8.45 a.m. and children should arrive on time each day. If a child is very late a written explanation should be provided. Children should line up at the school entrance point each morning. Children are not allowed leave the school premises without permission.

### **Bathrooms**

Pupils should use the bathroom in a careful and hygienic manner. Toilet paper is for toilet use only.

### **Books, copies etc.**

Children should have all books and stationery every day. Books and copies should be clean and well cared for. Written work should be neat and of a high standard. Covers of copies should be kept free from graffiti and other defacement.

### **Classroom behaviour**

Children should remain seated whenever the teacher has to leave the room. Respectful behaviour is expected towards others at all times. Classroom rules should be obeyed at all times. Good listening skills are encouraged. Tables and floor area should be kept tidy at all times. The green bin is to be used for paper only and all other refuse items placed in the ordinary bin.

### **IT/Computer room**

Computer equipment should be carefully handled. Using any technology in school should be in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Policy agreed by parents, pupils and teachers. No food or drink is allowed near computer equipment.

### **Good Manners**

Children should show respect for other children and adults by use of good manners. When meeting others on corridors greet them politely, possibly in Irish e.g. ‘Dia Duit, Gabh mo leithséal,’ and ‘Go raibh maith agat’. When meeting an adult at a doorway, stand back and allow them to pass first.

### **Home time**

At the end of the day pupils should ensure they have everything they need to bring home with them. Pupils should walk quietly in single file to the exit door. Pupils should meet parents or minders outside the school.

### **Homework**

It is recommended that homework be done as soon as possible after school. Homework should be neat and legible. If any homework is not done a note must be given to the teacher explaining the reasons why it is not completed. (See homework policy)

### **Jewelry**

Only a limited amount of jewelry is permitted, as it can cause distraction and can be a health and safety hazard during playtime and P.E. class. Permitted items include a wrist watch, one finger ring and one pair of stud earrings.

### **Lunch**

Children should have a healthy and nutritious lunch each day. (See Healthy Eating Policy) Crisps, popcorn, chewing gum, fizzy drinks and sweets are not allowed. Glass bottles are not allowed for safety reasons. Unfinished lunches and refuse from lunch should be put in the lunchbox and brought home.

### **Mobile phones**

Mobile phones are permitted in school but must be powered off when inside the school premises and between 8.45 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Mobile phones may not be brought to the yard. Emergency phone calls can be made from the office.

### **Outside of class and hallways**

Everybody should walk within the school building. Class groups should walk quietly and in single file in the corridors. When bringing a message to another classroom knock on the door and then enter the classroom. Do not wait for the door to be answered.

### **Tours or outings**

Respectful behaviour is expected from all pupils. Pupils must remain seated while the bus is in motion.

### **Uniform School**

Uniform should be worn each day. Uniform tracksuit should be worn on P.E. days. Names should be put clearly on all items of uniform, coats etc.

### **Wet day Procedure**

When the weather is inclement the children will not go to the yard. They will be supervised by the designated teachers in their classroom while participating in appropriate activities. During breaks children will not be permitted to leave their place unless directed to do so by the supervising teacher.

### **Yard**

Children should play only in designated areas, and obey instructions of supervising teachers. Rough games or dangerous play is not permitted. Nobody should need to go into the school during yard-time. If a child needs to enter the school he/she must get permission from the teacher on duty, and report back to the teacher once he/she has returned to yard. On hearing the bell children should walk quietly to their class line and stand quietly until the teacher arrives. Walk in single file and quietly to the classroom at the end of yard-time.