

# Polasaí ar Dhea-Iompar

*Positive Behaviour Policy*

## Gaelscoil Uí Néill



*'Fonn a dhéanann foghlaim'*

## **Mission Statement**

The staff of Gaelscoil Uí Néill aims to provide a safe, caring environment in which pupils have the opportunity to reach their full potential, within an Irish-medium context.

The staff wishes to create a stimulating atmosphere in which both pupils and staff are happy and secure and in which they have every opportunity to grow and develop and to get the very best from their abilities.

## **Aims of a Positive Behaviour Policy**

The aims of the Positive Behaviour Policy are to:

1. to promote learning and teaching;
2. to enhance the pupils' self-esteem and encourage self-respect and respect for other;
3. to encourage pupils to develop independence by accepting responsibility for their own behaviour;
4. to promote self-discipline and self-control;
5. to develop interpersonal skills that will help pupils to work cooperatively, solve problems, develop relationships and resolve conflict appropriately;
6. to acknowledge and reward good behaviour.

## **Pupils' Rights and Responsibilities**

### Rights

Pupils have the right to:

- feel safe
- benefit from learning opportunities
- work in a calm, positive environment
- be listened to, to clarify a point, at an appropriate time

### Responsibilities

To gain these rights, pupils have certain responsibilities, these include:

- the responsibility to arrive in class punctually and prepared for work
- the responsibility to be well-organised for every lesson
- the responsibility to be well-mannered
- the responsibility to show respect for every child, every person and school property
- the responsibility to take care of each book and resource that they use in school

## **Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities**

### Rights

Teachers have the right to be able to teach effectively, free from unnecessary hindrance and with the co-operation of everyone involved.

### Responsibilities

To gain these rights, teachers have a responsibility to:

- be well-prepared
- be punctual
- be neat and tidy in appearance
- be well-mannered
- be enthusiastic
- be calm
- be suitably prepared before all outings/trips

Teachers should refrain from using a mobile phone during teaching time.

### **Parents' Rights and Responsibilities**

#### Rights

Parents have a right to:

- a safe, caring environment for their child
- a broad and balanced curriculum for their child
- receive regularly updated information on their child's academic progress and behaviour
- have their child's work planned, corrected and assessed on an ongoing basis

#### Responsibilities

To gain these rights, parents have a responsibility to:

- ensure that their child wears a school uniform and a coat when appropriate
- make all reasonable attempts to ensure punctuality, attendance, good sleep patterns, hygiene and good behaviour
- ensure that homework is monitored and completed and signed
- read with their child on a regular basis, this is particularly important in Irish-medium education
- avail of information about the school
- share information about their child – medical, illness, confidentiality, access to child, changes in family circumstances, concerns about a child
- attend meetings to discuss their child's progress and behaviour
- attend curriculum meetings

### **General Rules**

- Pupils must wear school uniform every day.
- Mobile phones are not permitted.
- Pupils are only allowed to wear watches and stud earrings.
- Pupils should walk quickly from one area to another during transition periods.
- Only fruit/water is permitted at break time
- Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to drink during the day.

## **Rules in Key Stage 1**

In the classroom, pupils must:

- be quiet when asked;
- do their best to work independently;
- put up their hand when they have a problem;
- have respect for school equipment.

In the playground, pupils must:

- wear a coat in cold weather;
- not leave the playground without permission;
- play gently with other pupils;
- keep away from the fence and steps.

In the lunch hall, pupils must:

- sit quietly when the bell is rung;
- put rubbish in the bin;
- listen to and obey the supervisors;
- not run.

In the toilet, pupils must:

- flush the toilet, wash and dry their hands;
- keep the toilets clean;
- report any problem to the teacher.

On the bus, pupils must:

- wait in line with the teacher who is on duty;
- sit quietly and fasten the seat belt;
- keep bags and boxes closed;
- not speak to the driver without a good reason.

At the swimming pool, pupils must:

- wait in line;
- always walk, one behind the other;
- change clothes as quickly as possible;
- always follow the teacher's/coach's instructions.

On a school trip, pupils must:

- always stay with the guide
- obey all rules/instructions given by teacher/supervisor/instructor
- not bring valuable items without permission.

## **Rules in Key Stage 2**

In the classroom, pupils must:

- have respect for schoolbooks and equipment;
- keep their own places neat, their tables clear with the chair placed on the table at the end of the day;
- place books and equipment in the correct places;
- be well-organised for every lesson, with necessary books and sharpened pencil;
- be independent, mature and well-mannered when working.

In the yard, pupils must:

- wear a coat when it is cold;
- think about others in the class, be friendly and kind
- not leave without permission;
- always avoid rough behaviour;
- always show a good example to younger children;
- keep away from the fence and steps;
- ask a teacher/supervisor to stand at the gate when getting the ball;
- ask permission from supervisor before coming to office.

In the lunch hall, pupils must:

- listen to, respect and obey the supervisors;
- be quiet when the bell is rung;
- keep their place as clean as possible;
- always ask permission to leave the hall;
- not run or misbehave;
- show good example to younger children.

In the toilets, pupils must:

- flush the toilet;
- wash and dry hands;
- return to the classroom quickly;
- keep the toilets clean and put wet towels in the bin;
- tell a teacher if there is no soap or towels.

After school and on the bus, pupils must:

- wait in line after school with their teacher;
- wait in line until their parent/carer arrives;
- walk to the bus or to their parents when given permission;
- respect the driver and the supervisor;
- put on the seatbelt before the bus starts;

- think about safety.

At the swimming pool, pupils must:

- line up in the correct place when waiting to go to an returning from the swimming pool;
- bring the correct equipment;
- form a line at the bus and enter the bus one at a time;
- change clothes as quickly as possible;
- listen carefully to the teacher's/coach's instructions;
- show a good example outside school.

On a school trip, pupils must:

- be aware of the dangers on a journey e.g. traffic, water, strangers, stairs, animals
- ensure that parents are informed and permission slips returned;
- stay with the person leading the group;
- listen carefully to all rules and instructions;
- behave on the bus;
- show a good example.

### **Rewards and Privileges**

In Gaelscoil Uí Néill, we use a variety of strategies to promote positive behaviour. There are two types of rewards; material/non-material and group/individual.

To be effective, rewards must:

- follow immediately;
- be realistic;
- be applied consistently;
- be awarded by a person who carries prestige.

Social rewards:

- a quiet, encouraging word;
- a public word of praise in class or assembly, giving reason for praise;
- sign (thumb up);
- display of work;
- award from another teacher/Principal;
- oral/written communication with parents.

Material Rewards

- special prize (e.g. pencil)
- stickers/stars
- happy face

- if sweets are to be given as rewards, permission must be sought from the parents and Principal.

#### Honour Rewards

- positive marking comments in the exercise book;
- certificates/pen for different aspects of school life (Scoláire / Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine)
- Medals on Prize Day

#### Privileges

- extra time on a preferred activity
- position of responsibility

### **Sanctions**

In Gaelscoil Uí Néill, we avoid sanctions when support strategies will suffice. When considering or applying sanctions, the teacher must:

- ensure that the pupil understands what he / she is in trouble for;
- establish that he/she understands that the behaviour is unacceptable;
- help the pupil understand the effect his/her behaviour has on others;
- discuss and provide strategies for the child to avoid the same situation in the future;
- not threaten the child with punishments that cannot be carried out;
- not punish a class or a group because of the actions of an individual.

The range of sanctions include:

- praising another child who is obeying the rules when a child is disobeying them, ensuring that he/she understands why the other child is being praised;
- changes in seating arrangements;
- a calm, verbal reprimand;
- asking a child to apologise/write a short note of apology;
- asking a child to stand aside for a time while an adult finds out what has happened or diffuses the situation;
- withdrawal of privileges – play at break time (swimming, music and PE are not privileges but aspects of the curriculum)
- writing activities to be done at home or in school during a time when the rest of the class is engaging in an activity that is perceived to be enjoyable;
- behaviour/report book
- referral to the Principal
- when a child's behaviour is making unreasonable demands on the teacher's time and affecting the learning environment, a child may be sent to the Principal's class or the class of another teacher;

- removal of the privilege to take part in after-school activities;
- contacting parents to inform of the pupil's behaviour, establishing a plan of action to resolve the difficulties;
- suspension (according to ELB Procedures)
- expulsion (according to ELB Procedures)

## **Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties**

*SEBD is a condition in which behavioural or emotional responses of an individual are so different from his/her generally accepted, age-appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in such areas as self-care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behaviour or work adjustment*

*According to Guidance for Schools – Recording children with SEN (2006):*

- *Pupils with SEBD cover the full range of ability and continuum of severity*
- *Their behaviours present as a barrier to learning and persist despite the implementation of an effective school behaviour policy and personal/social curriculum and as such are considered to be long-term*
- *At the milder end of the continuum, pupils may have difficulties with social interaction, and difficulties working within a group or during unstructured times. They may have poor concentration, temper outbursts and be verbally aggressive towards peers and adults. Other pupils may experience similar signs of low self-esteem, underachievement and inappropriate social interaction but without outwardly challenging behavioural outbursts. They may be withdrawn, quiet and find it difficult to communicate.*

Where a pupil has been identified with persistent social, emotional or behavioural problems, it may be deemed necessary and appropriate to record the pupil on the Special Educational Needs Register and follow the five-stage approach on the identification and assessment of special educational needs. With regard to specific behavioural difficulties, advice can be sought from the Behaviour Support Team on an anonymous basis at stages 1 and 2, while stages 3 – 5 may result in a specific referral to the Behaviour Support Team. All staff are aware of the Good Practice Guidelines (for schools to meet the Special Educational Needs of pupils at the school based stages of the code of practice) and the Special Educational Need Resource File (to support children with Special Educational Needs).

## **Use of Reasonable Force and Safe Handling**

### **Defusion and De-escalation**

Reasonable force and the safe handling of pupils are only ever used as a last resort. All efforts are made to deal with incidents involving aggressive or



confrontational behaviour without recourse to the use of force. Defusion and de-escalation strategies are used to prevent or reduce the impact of confrontations or aggression. They are most useful as soon as the teacher identifies early warning signs or triggers which indicate that a problem is likely to develop. Examples of such defusion strategies include:

- Interruption: the teacher interrupts the undesirable behaviour;
- Redirection: the teacher redirects the pupil to an acceptable task;
- Distraction: the teacher tries to distract the pupil's attention to something else;
- Humour; the teacher tries to lighten the situation by introducing humour;
- Ignoring; the teacher chooses to tactically ignore the behaviour;
- Slow Down approaches: the teacher talks in a slow, deliberate voice using calming gestures to manipulate the responses of the individual and to slow down the pace of the interaction.

In general terms, staff will seek to interrupt, re-direct and praise appropriate behaviour.

If, however, these strategies do not succeed in defusing the situation, the teacher will seek to de-escalate the situation and will draw from the following approaches:

- keep the emotional temperature as low as possible and address the pupils calmly and quietly;
- use the pupil's first name frequently;
- maintain eye contact with the pupil, but avoiding staring as this may be perceived as being confrontational;
- avoid any sudden gestures or movements which might be interpreted as aggressive;
- do not humiliate or exact public retribution from the pupil and, if possible, enable him/her to withdraw graciously without losing face;
- identify in advance reliable members of the class who may be sent to summon help;
- Assertive 'I' messages – speak in terms of 'I' or 'me' to describe how the behaviour is having an impact and describe the unacceptable behaviour in a non-blameful way, assigning concrete, tangible effects of the behaviour. For example: "If you shout at me or keep interrupting me, I can't do my job properly, and that is unfair to the other pupils in the class, and we all get annoyed."
- Broken Record Technique – continually repeat the initial instruction/request;
- Active Listening – listen specifically to what the pupil is saying and respond in a way that shows that his concerns are being taken seriously; and
- Acknowledge the Anger – try to empathise with the pupil and show that genuine efforts are being made to resolve the problem.

### Reasonable Force and Safe Handling

The responsibility of staff in dealing with a potentially aggressive pupil is always to safeguard the other pupils and themselves, and also to consider the safety of the offending pupil. It may be necessary to use reasonable force/safe handling on a pupil, in order to protect all concerned, including the pupil himself/herself, and to avoid damage to school property.

All members of staff are aware of the *Regional Policy on Reasonable Force and Safe Handling* and comply with its guidelines and are aware that reasonable force is only ever used as a last resort in order to safeguard all involved. Parents will be informed immediately in the event that Reasonable Force is deemed necessary and appropriate and that all other strategies have been exhausted.

In the event that Reasonable Force is used, the details are will be recorded effectively by all involved and both pupil and staff will have the opportunity to be de-briefed.

### Links with Other Policies

Our policy for positive behaviour is closely linked with other policies:

- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection
- Ant-Bullying
- Special Needs
- DENI guidelines on the Use of Reasonable Force in Schools

### Involvement with Outside Agencies

Gaelscoil Uí Néill works closely with the following organisations:

- Education Welfare Office;
- Educational Psychology Service;
- Behaviour Support Team; and
- Children Order Team

### Working with Parents

To ensure effective learning in a bilingual setting, we depend on parental co-operation and on-going support. We enlist parents' help regularly and offer different strategies to promote good behaviour at regular meetings and when necessary. Parents will be contacted at an early stage if there are serious concerns about their child's behaviour.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored on a continual basis, was last reviewed during 2013/14 school year and is reviewed as and when necessary.