

Title

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This policy is an amendment to the previous Code of Behaviour policy. Amendments were deemed necessary by the staff to ensure safety for staff and pupils; to facilitate structure and consistency of approach while also helping with predictability for children when it comes to behaviour.

This revised policy was formulated in Spring/Summer 2014 with input from all staff members.

Rationale

The decision to revise the Code of Behaviour was taken for the reasons articulated above, while it also allowed newer staff members be part of the decision making process with regard to discipline and structures in our school.

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act (Government of Ireland, 2000) that schools prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. Section 23 (2) details what the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from the school.

Relationship to the Characteristics Spirit of the School

As a school community, we wish to promote positive behaviour and to facilitate the orderly functioning of our school in a harmonious way. We want to enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

St. John's National School, Ballisodare, County Sligo is under the patronage of the Diocese of Achonry. Our school aims to create a positive climate that is welcoming to all faiths and none; where each individual is valued. Every effort is made to enhance children's self-esteem and to foster a friendly, supportive atmosphere conducive to learning.

Aims

General Aim: To nurture each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. *This can only be achieved when there is a high level of respect and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.*

Specific Aims:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where all children are enabled to make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline;
- To ensure safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school;
- To assist with the moral development of our pupils – we want to help pupils appreciate societal expectations with regard to behaviour and conduct.

Content of the Policy

This policy will be addressed under the following headings. This format is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

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*”.

In general terms:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and their right to learn and to safety; and to adults
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

We recognise that there may be factors that could influence some children's behaviour and that these might need to be considered and accommodated. At our school, we believe we have a moral and ethical responsibility to help children conduct themselves as society would expect and so will provide flexibility of approach to children experiencing difficulties with their behaviour; this will take the form of positive behaviour plans that we hope will encourage the establishment and generalisation of the targeted behaviour. We would deem the support of individual children's parent(s) essential to the realisation of this.

This is in compliance with Section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act which 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 behaviour 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 to Promoting Positive Behaviour

At St. John's National School we will endeavour to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in school. This code offers a framework and structure within which positive reinforcement techniques and behaviour modification strategies can be used by teachers.

It is acknowledged that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and consistency among staff, pupils and parents.

- Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies.

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for behaviour in the school.

The Board will make sure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in work and decisions as a result of this code of behaviour.

The Board of Management will formally record the adoption of the code of behaviour, the commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed.

- Staff

The teaching staff have played a significant role in the review and updating of this code. Each staff member has completed a survey (questionnaire) with their thoughts and ideas with regard to this policy document. They brought to this work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community.

As a teaching staff, we recognise the need for structure, consistency and predictability as our school endeavours to uphold the ideals of this policy; we encourage parents to do the same as together we strive towards a safe and ordered learning environment for all children.

Should the need arise; Ms C. Elliott has responsibility to communicate aspects of this code of behaviour to new and/or temporary staff in our school.

Staff members will be made aware should behavioural targets and/or specific strategies be present on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for individual children.

The school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) 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.

Individual class teachers plan SPHE according to their own curricular planning documents and will use strategies that they feel, through their professional judgement, will be beneficial.

The parents of newly enrolled children at Junior Infant level will be informed about the curriculum and their part in supporting it at an induction meeting in the June prior to starting school.

- Parents

The code of behaviour will be more likely to work well where parents have meaningful ways of contributing to the development or review of the code. Their involvement will draw on their expectations, insights and experience. It will help to underline their responsibilities for their children's behaviour. (p. 16 Guidelines)

Parents have been invited by text message to access this policy in draft format on our school website. Using an optional survey approach, parents have been invited to leave feedback on aspects of the code. *Please note, final authority rests with the Board of Management in accepting or rejecting any amendments.*

A version of this code of behaviour – school rules, rewards and sanctions, will be issued in hard copy to parents on enrolment of their child.

Parents are encouraged to support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of acceptable standards of behaviour. To that end we ask that:

- Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed

- Pupils

Students are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and students can grow stronger through the process (p. 16 Guidelines)

- Our pupils have contributed to this policy by taking part in class discussions on what constitutes a Yellow/Red Card
- Electing/choosing a member of the class to be a member of the Student Council; the Student Council will meet with the Principal and Deputy Principal to provide feedback on class discussions and in the future to contribute to possible policy amendments
- Participating in school assemblies
- Take part in formulation of class rules

3. Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

Classroom

Below are some of the positive strategies which, as a staff, will be used to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom. e.g.

- “Ground rules”/ behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- Timetabling.

Playground

- Playgrounds are zoned so that each class has its own space and the children in that class play with each other
- Two teachers are on duty at each break – one on the Junior Yard and one on the Senior Yard; 2 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are present on the yard at each break also
- Playground Buddy System in place; pupils from the senior classes organise playground equipment and/or playground games with the junior classes

- Pupil generated contracts are in place for team games – these contracts clearly state the behaviours children expect from each other and the rules that are to be followed during games
- If there is a need to supervise more closely the behaviour of certain age groups, certain areas of the playground and/or certain individual pupils the principal will do so.
- Playground incidents – accidents or confrontations are recorded in Junior or Senior Yard book by the teacher on duty. Children may be asked to “go to the wall” if it is deemed they have misbehaved on yard
- There are two bells at the end of each break – the first bell signals that the end of break is approaching; at the second bell the children should line up in an orderly fashion
- Silver tickets are available for class groups to receive as merit award for lining up; one for the Junior Yard and one for the Senior Yard. On Fridays the Junior and Senior Class with the most Silver tickets will receive a Golden ticket that gives them extra playtime on the yard (to be taken at their teachers’ discretion)
- On wet days, the children remain in their classrooms – Children from the senior classes go to each room to be an additional presence in each class. Class teachers may organise a video to be played on the Interactive Whiteboard and/or games (board or card). The on-duty teachers patrol the corridors; SNAs remain with the child they are assisting.

Other areas in the school

Pupils are reminded regularly of the school rules regarding expectations of behaviour in the school corridor, entering and exiting the building and conduct at whole-school activities (General Purpose Room) etc. To assist with this teaching time will be devoted to the school rules for all aspects of school life when necessary.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Thus this code will be a reference to standards of behaviour expected during school trips/tours, games and any other extracurricular activity that takes place outside of the school grounds.

School Rules

General

- School Hours
 - 09.20 - School bell rings to commence the school day
 - 14.00 - School ends for Junior and Senior Infants classes
 - 15.00 - School ends for 1st – 6th classes
- The Board of Management will not accept responsibility for pupils either side of the times articulated above except in instances of school-based activities.
- The school bell is to be responded to promptly at all times
- Each pupil is expected to be punctual and to attend school daily
- Notification from parents/guardians is required when a pupil is required/wishes to leave during school hours and/or a child is late for school
- Absences: a written note is necessary in the case of any absence from school. Please note: any pupil who is absent for 20 days or more in any school year will be reported to the National Education Welfare Board.
- Healthy lunches and snacks are advised; advice on this matter can be found in our **Healthy Eating Policy**.
- The use of Mobile phones and other electronic equipment is not allowed in school. Please refer to our policy on **Mobile Phone** usage in school.
- All children are obliged to wear the full school uniform. On designated P.E. days the school uniform tracksuit is required.

Our School Uniform

- Royal blue jumper/cardigan; grey trousers/skirt/pinafore; grey or white socks/tights and black shoes
- **Tracksuit:** Navy tracksuit bottoms; grey crested tracksuit top; white polo shirt and predominantly white or black runners

*Children may wear a watch to school – no other jewellery is allowed.

* No nail polish

Behaviour

- Refined, respectful behaviour is expected at all times, e.g. speaking politely, using greetings appropriately, saying “Please”, “Thank you”, “Sorry”, “Excuse Me” etc.
- Showing good manners towards other children and adults
- Honesty is encouraged at all times
- Inappropriate/foul language, particularly when it is directed at someone, will not be tolerated
- Bullying of any kind will be viewed as a serious matter – please see our Anti-Bullying Policy
- Children must respect their teachers and be attentive and co-operative in class and on the yard or anywhere else when under the care of a teacher – this will ensure the safe, structured environment required to enhance learning for all. Good manners, courtesy and politeness are essential at all times towards teachers, visitors and fellow pupils

- Behaviour that results in disruptions/interruptions to the normal function of the class is not allowed – this type of behaviour means the learning environment for the other children of that class is impacted
- School property – buildings, P.E. equipment, technical equipment, furniture, books etc must be treated with due respect. If deliberate damage is caused to any aspect of school property by a pupil the Board of Management may seek repair or replacement costs from the parent(s)/guardians of that pupil.
- Pupils must not damage, take without consent or steal the property of another pupil or of the school
- Pupils are expected to co-operate with and take correction from all members of the school staff
- Children are encouraged to walk in single file on the corridors and to proceed in an orderly fashion around the school building
- Physically aggressive or violent behaviour towards another is wrong and will not be tolerated
- Children must not throw litter either in the school building or in the playground
- Children must obey the bell promptly and proceed to their class line when required

4. Rewards and Sanctions

The staff in St. John's National School place substantial value on behaviour modification techniques that praise positive behaviour. Positive reinforcements and verbal commendations for acts of good behaviour will form part of our approach to behaviour in our school. Members of the teaching staff have used Croke Park hours to complete "The Incredible Years" programme and individual teachers use aspects of it to enhance positive classroom climate and motivate their pupils.

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

The "Principal's Award" is given to a child from each class every Friday in recognition of hard work and application to school life. The last Friday of each month our school holds a Whole School Assembly. At assembly time concerns and/or commendations about behaviour in general can be voiced by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. There will also be merit awards – "Golden Cards" for students from each class who have made particular effort in aspects of their school life. We consider it important that positive performances in school are publicly acknowledged.

Individual class teachers can structure their own in-class systems of reward and motivation. Many of these are visual and appealing to the children. These include,

- Stamps
- Raffle tickets
- Tick sheets
- Behaviour plan (if necessary)

Sanctions

Our school has developed a Yellow/Black and Red Card system for classifying behaviours. The table below lists rule-breaking behaviours and categorises them into Yellow and Red. Children can be issued with a Yellow or Red card by any teacher if they are seen to have

broken a rule. Observed misbehaviours can be sanctioned by teachers; reported misbehaviours can be investigated. This system, we believe, is transparent, structured and predictable for children and adults alike.

Yellow Card	Red Card
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Littering • Not responding to the school bell in a timely manner • Talking in the line (mornings and after breaks) • Misuse of playground equipment • Running in the corridor • Shouting in the corridor • Time delaying/chatting in the toilets • Excluding someone from a game • Disrespect towards adults or peers, e.g. rolling of eyes; talking under breath.... • Disruptive and interruptive behaviour in class • Not completing homework (without a valid reason communicated by a parent to a child's teacher) • Being in possession of a mobile phone/electronic device without adhering to the rules for mobile phones in school. • Persistent uniform infringements* • Persistently late for school* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad/foul/inappropriate language to any child or adult • Aggressive/threatening or violent behaviour towards any pupil or staff member • Verbal abuse, discriminating and/or racial remarks towards anybody • Disregard for teachers' authority – not following instructions • Leaving the school grounds without permission • Stealing • Wilful destruction of property (school's, teacher's, or another pupil's) <p>*Should a pupil be issued with a Red Card up to one week (5 school days) before being expected to represent the school at a football match, sports event, school tour, class trip or any other occasion outside of normal school procedures, they will be not allowed to do so. Children will be reminded of this by the teaching staff and/or principal.</p>

*Initial uniform infringements/being late for school will result in a note home clearly indicating the aspects of this policy relating to same – persistent uniform infringements/being persistently late for school will result in a Yellow Card.

Consequences

1 yellow card = "Time out", extra homework and the card to be brought home, signed by parent(s) and returned to child's teacher

4th yellow card = **Black card**

Black Card = Card brought home to be signed, parent(s) asked to meet with class teacher and/or Principal (the child may be present for part of that meeting if it is considered relevant) and Behaviour Plan initiated to correct and maintain desired behaviour

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Red Cards

1st Red Card = Upon issue of a Red Card, the child will have to leave his/her classroom and complete work, independently in another room. The Red Card will be brought home, with extra homework, to be signed, parent(s) asked to meet with class teacher and/or Principal and **detention** the next day in school, i.e. the child will stay in another classroom to complete classwork independently and remain inside (supervised) for both breaks with behaviour reflection sheet and/or work

2nd Red Card = In-House Suspension

In-House Suspension = Board of Management to be notified of behaviour(s). The child to spend two school days in another room with work to be completed independently and remain inside at breaks. If child is un-cooperative – automatic suspension

3rd Red Card = Suspension

Suspension

The Board of Management and/or principal will decide upon suspension of up to three days away from school for incidents of serious misbehaviour or consistent red cards. The Board of Management have delegated authority to the principal to suspend a pupil(s) if the need arises. A single incident of gross misbehaviour (Principal or teaching staff members' perception of the seriousness of an incident is the determinant here) can result in automatic suspension. Persistent serious incidents where a pupil's behaviour has a detrimental impact on the education of other pupils: [the child's presence would be inconsistent with] **"The**

effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.” (Section 2: EPSEN Act, Government of Ireland, 2004). If the pupil's continued presence in school constitutes a threat to safety suspension of that pupil will also need to be considered.

- Rules for National Schools

Rule 130 (5)

“Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil and or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.”

Expulsion

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, ‘*A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer*’ (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take ‘*...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.*’ (Section 24(5))

A proposal to expel a pupil requires most serious grounds such that:

The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others and to the teaching process and/or the pupil's continued presence in school constitutes a significant threat to safety.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent

exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, we are advising parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

In such case, the Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science? (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

The Role of Parents in the Management of Problem Behaviour

- Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with this code of behaviour.
- Parents are asked to attend any meeting that is called in relation to their child. The work of the school, in relation to discipline and the procedures articulated above will be seriously undermined, to the possible detriment of their child and the other children in our school, if parents do not attend as requested. Parents will be encouraged to attend such meetings with another adult. Two teaching staff members will be present on behalf of the school.
- During such meetings, parents are asked to conduct themselves and use language that is appropriate to the situation. The purpose of such a meeting is to make parents aware of their child/ren's conduct and to try to help the child/ren concerned – The Board of Management request that parents engage in this process in order to help their child/ren.
- Parents are asked to proactively support the school in whatever rewards and/or sanctions the school has given, in accordance with this Code of Discipline. Parental support is deemed most important to the success of this plan in relation to individual children.

5. Keeping records

Record keeping in relation to incidents that happen in class or on the yard are considered important evidence gathering technique.

Class level

- o Teachers will record any incidents of misbehaviour that happen in the classroom. Individual teachers can format their own template or record-keeping book/copy to do this. Records of yellow/black and red cards are sent to the principal for tracking purposes. Records of Yellow Cards are wiped clean at the end of each term so as to start the new term on a clean slate.
- o The principal shall be notified of serious misbehaviours as soon as is practically possible. This is most important if the behaviour is such that the education and/or safety of the other children in the class is in any way compromised.

Playground

- o Supervising staff keep a record of misbehaviour in the “Yard Book” – Junior Yard Book and Senior Yard Book. Class teachers and principal will be informed of incidents after the break; as teachers come to collect their class from the yard.
- o Our Yellow/Black and Red card system facilitates consistency in the interpretation and application of our school rules; it allows predictability for pupils also as they know misbehaviours determine consequences that are the same for everyone.

6. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, “*the procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.*” Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence.

- In our school parents/guardians are asked to send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child’s absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes are kept by the class teacher in individual children’s folders.

- The school will use the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board? (See forms on www.newb.ie)

Success Criteria

Success or otherwise of this policy will be determined through:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy have been articulated throughout. The Board of Management have ultimate responsibility for the safety of all the children in our school.

The principal and the teaching staff together have responsibility in the day-to-day implementation of the policy.

The role of parents cannot be underestimated – their co-operation is most important if this policy is to help bring changes to their child/ren's behaviour.

Timeframe for Implementation

Teaching for this policy will begin in June 2014 with opportunities afforded the children to learn about the rules and consequences if the rules are broken. Yellow/Black and Red Cards will be issued during June 2014 in order for the children to familiarise themselves with expectations.

The policy will formally commence in September 2014.

Timetable for Review

This policy for be reviewed for it effectiveness in June 2016.

Ratification and Communication

The Board have ratified this policy on 12th June, 2014. It is available to view on our school website.