



## **St. Vincent's National School, Coolarne**

### **Code of Behaviour**

This policy has been revised in accordance with the guidelines produced by The National Education Welfare Board as per The Education Welfare Act 2000 – Section 23.

The Code of Behaviour of St Vincent's NS, Coolarne has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

### **POLICY FORMULATION**

In formulating this Policy, the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
- ii. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal.
- iii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- iv. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE**

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can 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, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist school staff, 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.

## **WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH**

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by the Principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review, and operation of the Code.

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school understands that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. There will be close Home-School links with regard to supporting these pupils.

## **Introduction and Rationale:**

Our school aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly learning environment. Children, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian environment.

We have begun our Restorative Practice journey. Following staff training in 2022/23 we are implementing it in each classroom using a restorative approach in dealing with arising issues.

## **Responsibility of Stakeholders:**

### **Teachers:**

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Model the good behaviour we expect from the children.
- Provide a caring and effective teaching and learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, religion, race, ability or disability.
- Show appreciation for the efforts and contributions of all.

### **SNA:**

The SNA is a valuable resource to the school and works closely with the teaching staff. The SNA will be made aware of the code of behaviour and discipline of the school. The SNA is present both in class and on the yard but is not at any time solely responsible for the pupils. The SNA will monitor behaviour, both positive and negative, corrects when necessary, and report any incidents to the class teacher or Principal. The SNA is not responsible for sanctioning pupils but may refer any serious incidents

witnessed to the principal. All pupils should be aware that the SNA is monitoring behaviour and should be treated with respect.

### **Parents and Guardians:**

- Read the Code of Behaviour and discuss the rules with their child.
- Ensure punctuality every day.
- Encourage full attendance.
- Use the “drop and go” system in the car park.
- Label your child’s belongings.
- Support your child with homework.
- Submit, in accordance with Tusla guidelines, an explanation for all school absences.
- Ensure your child is wearing their correct school uniform/tracksuit.
- Ensure your child is eating a healthy lunch.
- Encourage good behaviour and respect for others at all times.
- Communicate with your child’s teacher if you have concerns regarding their learning and behaviour and feelings in school.
- Make an appointment to speak to a teacher through the school Secretary.
- Ensure the Sign In / Sign Out system is adhered to when dropping your child late or leaving school early.

### **Children:**

- Respect for self, others and property both of others and the school.
- Follow classroom instructions and school rules.
- Be kind and show a willingness to help others.
- Show courtesy and good manners at all times.
- Wear the correct school uniform.
- Wearing make-up and long/salon nails is forbidden.
- Wearing stud earrings is permissible.

- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Using mobile phones, cameras, smart watches with camera/recording devices is forbidden in school or while representing the school.
- Follow school rules is essential during school activities off campus.

## **Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board of Management was consulted in reviewing of the code of behaviour at a Board of Management meeting. The Board will play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities. The Board of Management will support the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and provide training for the staff if required. The Board of Management are responsible for dealing with gross breaches of behaviour as deemed by the staff. If any gross discipline incidents arise the Chairperson of the Board will be notified immediately.

## **Classroom Rules:**

- Work respectfully with your Teachers / SNA.
- Complete your work to the best of your ability.
- Do not interfere with the learning of others.
- Enter and leave your classroom quietly.
- Ask permission before leaving your classroom.
- Tidy up your desk and classroom every day.
- Participate respectfully in group work.
- Use kind words; *if you have nothing nice to say, say nothing at all*

The following are the **Golden Rules** which the school will use to maintain good behaviour and promote good order and effective teaching and learning throughout the school.

1. I will be gentle – I will not hurt anyone
2. I will be kind and helpful – I will not hurt people's feelings
3. I will be honest – I will not hide the truth
4. I will listen – I will not interrupt
5. I will look after property – I will not waste or damage things
6. I will work hard – I will not waste time

### **Break Time Rules & Procedures:**

- Pupils are not permitted on yard without a teacher present in yard.
- Pupils are asked to leave and return to the classroom in single file.
- The school playground is divided into sections and children are expected to stay in the section assigned to them. Children play in their assigned areas.
- When the bell rings, children stop playing and walk quietly and immediately in an orderly fashion to their line.
- The Class Teacher collects the class from the designated area.
- On wet days children remain in their classroom for the duration of the break.
- Children who feel left out of games, or have other concerns are asked to report the matter to the teacher on duty.
- Children with injuries will be treated on site.
- Serious injuries will be recorded in the Incident Book, dated and signed by teacher on duty. Parents will always be contacted by phone.
- Children are encouraged to be fair and inclusive when setting up their games.
- Rough play, bad language and name calling are not allowed at any time.
- Pupils are not allowed to climb or leave the school grounds except under the supervision of a teacher.
- Stay off the grass when it is wet and off tarmac on icy conditions.
- Use equipment such as skipping ropes for their intended purpose.

- Refrain from aggressive games which may involve dragging, slapping, shooting, etc.
- Inform teacher on duty when a toilet break is required.

## **Sanctions and Rewards**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- Helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Helping students to recognise the effect their actions and behaviour has on others.
- Helping students to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- Helping students to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Rewards systems are part of the overall school strategy for promoting good behaviour. They may form part of a planned intervention to help a student manage their own behaviour.

## **Promoting, encouraging and acknowledging good behaviour underpins this Code of Behaviour**

<b>Rewards:</b>	<b>Sanctions:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework Pass</li> <li>• In-class group/individual Reward System</li> <li>• Outdoor Trips</li> <li>• Free play</li> <li>• Movie</li> <li>• Baking activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal correction</li> <li>• Loss of playtime (according to class level) This must be suggested by yard duty staff.</li> <li>• Reflection time determined by offence.</li> <li>• Time Out</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer games based on educational concepts.</li> <li>• Additional movement break</li> <li>• Extended break time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with the Principal in Principal's office to discuss unacceptable behaviour and/or continuous misbehaviour.</li> <li>• Contact with parents.</li> </ul>
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**Restorative Practice (RP)**

St Vincent's NS Code of Behaviour is supported by a desire to integrate Restorative Practice into all our interactions with each other.

Staff are trained in RP which is the foundation of the school's Code of Behaviour. This practice involves children reflecting on their behaviour and on a given incident. Staff will use the 5 questions for restorative practice:

- What happened?
- How did you feel?
- How do you feel now?
- What could you have done differently?
- What can we do now?

**PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff ensure that routines and structures are communicated in class to ensure clarity for all children on expectations. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that improvements in behaviour are acknowledged.

Strategies which may be employed to promote positive behaviour.

Examples can include:

- Circle time
- Incredible Years strategies
- Restorative Practice (whole staff training with PDST 2022/23)
- ‘Congratulations’ and ‘Good News’ sent in email or on social media

**Procedure for dealing with unacceptable or negative behaviour:**

(The nature of the behaviour and the age of the pupil will determine the action.)

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Take note of the behaviour in class record
- Apply an age-appropriate sanction.
- Discuss behaviour and action taken with the Principal.

The degree of the misdemeanour i.e. Minor, serious or gross will be judged by the Teachers, the SNA and Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity and frequency of the behaviour.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of serious and gross unacceptable behaviour.

1. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
2. Loss of privileges.
3. Detention during a break.
4. Prescribing additional work.
5. Referral to Principal.
6. Communication with parents.
7. Suspension (temporary). Three days initially, 10 days for subsequent or more serious offences

8. In extreme cases of serious misbehaviour, expulsion is an option.

When sanctions have been applied the teacher will identify the misdemeanour to help the child to understand the expected behaviour. To ensure consistency in the application of sanctions regular discussions will take place formally and informally between staff.

The following are categories of unacceptable behaviour. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

### **Minor Misdemeanours:**

#### **Examples of Minor Misdemeanours :**

- Interrupting classwork
- Running in the school building
- Littering
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Playing roughly on the playground

#### **Procedure for dealing with Minor Misdemeanours: (all class levels)**

Verbal reprimand followed by an explanation as to why the reprimand is being given, and a positive comment afterward (such as 'I know you can work quietly'.)

#### **Infant Level:**

- Modelling good behaviour and highlighting of pupils behaving well.
- Quiet discussion with class teacher as to why the behaviour is unacceptable and positively reinforcing the high standard of behaviour expected of the pupil.

- Support team to assist class teacher.
- Meeting with parents if behaviours persist.
- Note the behaviour in the class record book.

### **First class - Sixth class:**

- Temporary separation from peers within the classroom.
- Sending to another teacher to work for period of no longer than 10 minutes.
- Referral to Principal.
- Detention from a short portion of break- according to class level.
- Write school's Golden Rules or draw a picture of being kind.
- Note the behaviour in the class record book.

### **Serious Misdemeanours:**

#### **Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:**

- Being constantly disruptive in class and on the yard
- Telling lies/back answering or speaking with disrespect to school personnel
- Shouting or yelling at school personnel/using inappropriate language
- Not working to full potential - presenting consistently untidy class & homework
- Damaging the property of other pupils, staff or visitors to the school
- Damaging school property inside or outside
- Bullying other pupils / deliberately hurting another pupil in class
- Aggressive & violent behaviour towards others on the playground i.e. hitting & kicking
- Using mobile phones on the school grounds/ accessing the internet without the expressed permission of the Teacher

- Not reflecting our school ethos both on and off school campus i.e. at matches, walking over to pitch, etc.
- Failure to follow instructions from school personnel during external school activities i.e. swimming & tours etc.
- Leaving school grounds without permission/bringing unsuitable objects or weapons to school
- Frequenting school property after school hours without permission from the Principal.

### **Procedure for dealing with Serious Misdemeanours**

All class levels.

- Record the negative behaviour, the date and time it occurred, and any witness accounts to the incident in the school behaviour record book.
- Loss of privileges appropriate on the day.
- Write an account of behaviour (Restorative Practice questions)
- Removal of the pupil to another room for a period of time.
- Loss of pitch time for pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class, student will be supervised in another Classroom.
- Discuss the incident with the Principal.
- Send the pupil to the Principal
- Principal/Class Teacher will call parents
- Principal meets one or both parents to discuss the incident and agree an age appropriate sanction.
- Repeated or case depending actions will lead to parents contacted and pupil leaving school early.
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed, and depending on the severity of the misdemeanour the parents may be requested to meet with the Chairperson and the Principal.

## **Gross Misdemeanours:**

### **Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:**

- Repeated bullying and harassment of another pupil or staff member
- Threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member of pupil
- Deliberate vandalism of school property
- Using mobile phones to take grossly inappropriate pictures of other pupils changing or in toilets.
- Bringing inappropriate written or visual materials to school / use of dangerous weapons or chemicals on school property.
- Inappropriate touching of body parts or remarking on appearance causing discomfort, confusion and embarrassment.

(This is not an exhaustive list). It is noted that these lists are only examples of negative behaviours that may occur. Each misdemeanour must be treated individually. These are not totally comprehensive lists.

## Procedures for dealing with Gross Misdemeanours

- Follow steps from Serious misdemeanours.

### Also

- Chairperson/ Principal can sanction an immediate suspension of the pupil pending a full discussion with the Parents.
- Expulsion to be considered in extreme cases in accordance with rule 130(6) *“no pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of the discipline code without prior consent of the patron and until alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school in the locality”*.

## Suspension

Suspension is defined as requiring the child to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The Board of Management of St. Vincent’s NS has the authority to suspend a child.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such as that:

- the child’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education, development or wellbeing of other children
- the child’s continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Suspensions can give the child time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the child to change unacceptable behaviour.

However, suspension can be counter-productive if used without a clear rationale or without measuring its impact and value. School management will consider the risk of any unwanted outcomes from suspension.

**The Factors to be considered before suspending a child as per NEWB guidelines (pg.72) will be used. See attached in appendix 1.**

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the child's behaviour. The suspension will:

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the child and their parents
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a child and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

## **Forms of suspension**

### ***Immediate suspension***

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the child in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of children or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- inform the child and their parents about the complaint/issue; how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents will be informed by phone and in writing.
- give parents and child an opportunity to respond.
- Parents and child will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension also.

### **Period of suspension**

A child will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the school considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective – up to a maximum of 10 days.

### **Appeals**

Parents can appeal a suspension through an appeals process provided by the patron.

## **Section 29 Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which the child has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. (Please see school's complaints procedure)

### **Written notification**

The Principal will notify the parents and the child in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the child and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

### **Engaging with child and parents**

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal and/or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the child to behave well when the child returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

## **Grounds for removing a suspension**

A suspension may be removed if the patron decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

### **After the suspension ends:**

The school will make every effort to re-integrate the child successfully into the school. The child will be asked to recommit to the school's Code of Behaviour. The child will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

## **Records and reports**

### **Records of investigation and decision-making**

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.

**Report to TUSLA** - The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

The school will review the use of suspension as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

## **EXPULSION**

A child is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school. The Board of Management has the authority to expel a child.

The BOM will only expel a child in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a child.

A proposal to expel a child requires serious grounds such as that:

1. the child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
2. the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
3. the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the child's behaviour.

### **Expulsion for a first offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a child will be expelled for a first offence.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another child or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other children in the school
- sexual assault.

**The Factors to be considered before expelling a child as per NEWB / TUSLA guidelines pg. 82 will be used. See attached in appendix 2.**

### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a child. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The school will refer to the NEWB guidelines pg. 83-86 for specific procedures in relation to expulsion.

## **Appeals**

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by TUSLA (formerly the National Educational Welfare Board) on behalf of a child.

The school will review the use of expulsion as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

## **Keeping records**

Teachers shall keep a written record in the school incident book or classroom incident book, of all instances of serious or gross misbehaviour in the classroom as well as the playground. A record will also be kept, by the class teacher, of continuous minor misdemeanours and/or disruptive behaviour. Improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils shall also be recorded. Communication with parents will be utilised at an early stage rather than as a last resort. In this regard we encourage regular contact with parents about their child's progress. Attendance at parent teacher meetings is **essential**. On the end of year school report a comment may be made regarding the child's behaviour.

## **7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 the school must notify TUSLA if a child has missed a total of 20 days in the school year. Very often there will be good reasons for the absences e.g. illness, family difficulty etc. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. An Educational Welfare Officer may then visit the child's home to discuss the matter.

The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

Parents should write a note explaining the reason for a pupil absence and asked to return them to the school directly after the absence. The date, reason and signature of the parent are required. Aladdin has been introduced to the school in September 2018. From September 2019 the reasons for absence will be recorded on 'Aladdin'.

The school will also use 'Aladdin' to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board (TUSLA) through the on-line system from September 2019.

## **Success Criteria**

The following are indicators of the success of the policy:

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

## **Roles and Responsibility**

The staff have responsibility for implementation of the Code in the school and playground. The Board of Management and the parents have responsibility for supporting the school staff in the implementation of the Code. The parents have responsibility in reinforcing the Code of Behaviour with their children at home. The children have a role in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.





All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988, the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003, and the schools Data Protection Policy.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St Vincent's NS has its own Anti-Bullying Policy – in full compliance with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools, which were published by the Department of Education & Skills in September 2013. The Code of Conduct Policy works in tandem with this.

### **Policy Adoption**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on .....

### **Communication**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

### **Implementation Review**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

## **POLICY RATIFICATION**

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Vincent's NS Coolarne at its meeting held May 2024.

Signed:

Anne Boland  
Chairperson BOM

Roisin Reilly  
Principal