

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR RATIONALE

This code of behaviour has been developed for the following reasons:

- ✚ To facilitate delivery of the curriculum to the students
- ✚ To put in place structures to enable staff to deal with incidents of misbehaviour and indiscipline that may arise
- ✚ To deal with students who may be disruptive of the work of the school, are uncooperative with their teachers and who may interfere with the delivery of the education that other students have a right to receive
- ✚ To conform to the statutory obligation in section 23 of the Education(welfare) Act 2000 which obliges schools to prepare, for the information of students and their parents, a code of behaviour in respect of students registered at the school
- ✚ To inform students and their parents of the procedures used by the school to address issues of discipline in the school, to define standards of behaviour for students, to inform students and their parents of the measures that the school may take to address student misbehaviour, to inform parents of school procedures that will be followed before a student is suspended or expelled, to explain the grounds and conditions under which a suspension may be lifted and to inform parents of their legal responsibilities relating to occasions when their child is absent from school.
- ✚ To ensure the safety of all members of the school community both on the school premises and on school activities
- ✚ To help students acquire good habits of discipline and behaviour
- ✚ To create structures to ensure safety and to facilitate efficient learning in the school.

STATEMENT OF ETHOS

St. Mary's is a mixed, vertical primary school. We operate with Catholic ethos, under the patronage of the bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. We operate within the guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

This policy, has been constructed to conform to relevant legislation. Such legislation includes:

- ✚ The Constitution of Ireland
- ✚ The European convention on human rights 1950
- ✚ The UN convention on the rights of the child 1989
 - ✚ The Education act of 1998
 - ✚ Education (Welfare) act of 2000
- ✚ Education (Miscellaneous provisions) act 2007
 - ✚ Equal status acts 2000-2004
 - ✚ Disability act 2005
- ✚ Non-fatal offences against the person act 1997
 - ✚ Recent health and safety legislation
 - ✚ Data protection act 1988
- ✚ Data protection amendment act 2003

STATEMENT OF ADOPTION

This statement has been born of a thorough consultative process which included input from the following:

Board of Management, Parent representatives, Students of the school (represented by a focus group from the senior classes), Principal, Teaching staff, Special needs assistants, other staff. This consultative process was initiated and progressed by the Principal. The school is also conscious of the role of the Education welfare officer and may refer to them for guidance or input if necessary.

STATEMENT OF STANDARDS

The following standards of behaviour are expected in St Mary's NS

- ✚ Students will follow the direction of Teachers and others adults charged with their care. *Reason: to ensure delivery of curriculum, to ensure safety of all*
- ✚ Children must be respectful in speech and demeanour at all times to Teachers and other adults charged with their care. *reason: to help children develop good habits of discipline and behaviour*
- ✚ Children must play in their designated play areas and with their own class mates. *reason: to ensure safety of all*

- ✚ Bullying or intimidation of any type will not be tolerated. *Reason: to ensure the safety of students*
- ✚ Any item or instruments deemed to be a danger to pupils will not be allowed and shall be confiscated. Such items may include elastic bands, penknives and sharp instruments. *Reason: health and safety*
- ✚ Children must move quietly through the school at all times, in single file and this procedure must also be followed on the corridors. *Reason: health and safety*
- ✚ Children will be given access to the toilet facilities at all break times and as needs must.
- ✚ Chewing gum is not permitted in the school. *Reason: litter and associated problems*
- ✚ Children should not bring items of value to school. The school authorities cannot be responsible for items of value which are lost or mislaid. *Reason: to prevent theft and to ensure safety of items*
- ✚ Children will not be permitted to leave the school grounds at any time without permission. *Reason: The school's duty of care to the child*
- ✚ Uniform needs to worn at all times, in good condition. *Reason: to alleviate peer pressure and to further a sense of positive identity*
- ✚ Threatening, aggressive, violent or offensive behaviour, including name calling will not be allowed. *Reason: to ensure the safety of all*
- ✚ Students should make a reasonable attempt to complete assigned homework. *Reason: to enable the student to progress academically*

School Rules can be summarised as follows:

- I keep my hands and feet to myself
- I am polite
- I walk in the classroom
- I call you by your first name
- I follow the instruction the first time given

SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE

Overall responsibility for school discipline rests with the school Principal.

In the absence of the Principal, responsibility will lie with the Deputy Principal.

However, we recognise that all Teachers have a disciplinary role.

Our Special Needs assistant may also refer matters of concern of a disciplinary nature to the relevant class Teacher, who may take appropriate action.

Should a Teacher wish, they may refer matters of a disciplinary nature to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. The relevant class Teacher will be kept informed of disciplinary matters pertaining to pupils in their class.

APPLICATION OF SCHOOL RULES AND STANDARDS

We envisage that the standards outlined above pertain to school hours, currently 9.20-3.00p.m.

However, we also envisage that these standards will apply in the following situations:

- ✚ On any school excursions
- ✚ On any extra-curricular activities
- ✚ On school busses (if applicable)
- ✚ Whilst wearing the school uniform-en route to or from school.

RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

We recommend that this policy be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- ✚ St Mary's Health and safety statement
- ✚ St Mary's Anti-bullying policy
- ✚ St. Mary's Substance use policy.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The following is a list of sanctions available to the school in instances of failure to adhere to the code of behaviour.

- ✚ Reasoning with the child.
- ✚ Reprimand.
- ✚ Meeting with parents.
- ✚ Withdrawal of privilege. Privilege may include school tours and trips.

- ✚ Written communication with Parents in the school journal.
- ✚ Detention
- ✚ Withdrawal from class on a temporary basis.
- ✚ Behavioural contract.
- ✚ Recording of any serious incidents in Serious Incident book.
- ✚ Contact by phone with parents and collection of child if necessary.
- ✚ Garda contact.
- ✚ Suspension.
- ✚ Expulsion.

REWARDS

The following rewards may be used in the school to encourage adherence to standards.

- ✚ Pupil of the week
- ✚ Golden time
- ✚ Treats
- ✚ Other rewards as decided by Teacher and pupils, appropriate to class level.

CLASSIFICATION

The following offences will be considered to be 'serious offences'

- ✚ Failure to follow direction of an adult
- ✚ Violent verbal or physical behaviour
- ✚ Threatening behaviour towards adults and/or children
- ✚ Bullying/intimidatory behaviour
- ✚ Physical harm or intent to harm another child or adult
- ✚ Stealing
- ✚ Substance use or abuse
- ✚ Defacement of property

RECORDKEEPING AND MISBEHAVIOUR

A record of all serious incidents is to be kept by the Principal in the school. This is to be kept in a secure location. The serious incident book will record only serious incidents as defined above. The purpose of the serious incident book is to keep a formal record of incidents of a serious nature. A new serious incident book will be opened on an annual basis.

The information in this book shall:

- ✚ Be accurate
- ✚ Be used in a manner consistent with it's purpose
- ✚ Not be kept longer than is necessary.
- ✚ Kept securely.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION/ EXPULSION **SUSPENSION**

Suspension shall be defined as: 'requiring the student to absent himself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'

The board of management has the authority to suspend a student.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Generally, however, other interventions, as outlined above, will have been tried.

Grounds for suspension:

The decision to suspend a student will be taken on such grounds as the following:

- ✚ The students behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- ✚ The students continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to safety
- ✚ The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The school management is aware of the risks associated with suspension, such as an increased sense of alienation from school which could lead to a cycle of behavioural and academic problems. School management has been, and will continue to be proactive in avoidance of suspension of any student. Whilst suspended, the student shall continue to retain a place in the school.

Suspension Procedures:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that warrants a suspension, the school shall:

- Inform the student and their Parent(s) about the complaint. Parents may be informed by phone or in written format. The obvious advantage of the written format is that it presents a formal and permanent record. Written notification will include:
 - the period of suspension and the end date of suspension
 - the reasons for the suspension
 - arrangements for return to the school (parents will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
 - the provision of an appeal to the Board of Management
 - the right to appeal to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science

-Allow Parents and child the opportunity to respond. A meeting shall be arranged with the Parents. Should the Parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal shall write, advising of the gravity of the matter and the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. These invitations shall be recorded.

In case of immediate suspension, parents will be immediately notified, and arrangements will be made with them regarding collection of the child. The school will always have regard to its duty of care for the child.

The period of suspension

A suspension will last one, two or three days. A student will not be suspended in excess of three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a longer suspension is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. This will require Board of Management approval.

The Board of Management will place a ceiling of ten days on any one suspension, in these exceptional circumstances.

Section 29 appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student is suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the decision under section 29 their right to appeal, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

It is envisaged that suspension be part of an agreed plan to address the students behaviour.

Suspension shall allow:

- the school to set behavioural goals for the student
- school staff to plan for interventions
- the school to impress upon Parents and student the seriousness of their behaviour.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management 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.

Reintegrating the student

A member of staff will be appointed to support the student and to facilitate his re-integration into the school following a suspension.

EXPULSION

The Board of Management reserves the authority to expel a student.

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to a students' behaviour and will be only taken in response to extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of the student.

These steps will normally include:

- Meeting the Parents and the student to try to find ways to help the student to change their behaviour

- Making sure that the student understands the consequences of their behaviour if it should persist
- ensuring that all other options have been tried
- seeking the help of support agencies e.g. N.E.P.S., N.C.S.E, H.S.E community services,N.B.S.S.

Grounds for expulsion

A proposal to suspend a student will involve serious grounds such as that:

- the students behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the students presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property

Expulsion for a first offence

In extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Management may form the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The following such behaviour may warrant this sanction:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supply of illegal drugs to another student or students
- sexual assault

Procedures in respect of expulsion

The following steps will preface any expulsion.

(1)-Preliminary assessment of the facts.

(2)A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

In investigating an incident, the Principal shall inform the Parents and student about the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. This shall be in written format. He shall also give parents and the student the opportunity to respond to the complaint. If a student or Parents refuse to attend a meeting, the principal shall write to them advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of school authorities to make a decision to respond to this inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation to parents and their response.

(3)A recommendation by the Principal to the Board of Management

Where the Principal forms a view, based on investigation of the alleged misbehaviour that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal shall make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal shall:

- inform the Parents that the Board of Management has been asked to consider expulsion
- Ensure that the Parents have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the Board of Management with the records as listed above
- notify the Parents of the date of the hearing and invite them to that hearing
- advise the Parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that the Parents have sufficient notice of the hearing.

(4)Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principals recommendation and holding of a hearing

The board shall review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board shall undertake its own review of all documentation and circumstances of the case. No party with direct involvement in the circumstances of the case shall be part of the Boards deliberations.

The Board, if satisfied as outlined above, shall hold a hearing. At the hearing , both Principal and parents shall put their case in each others presence. The board shall be, and shall be seen to be, impartial. Parents may wish to be accompanied to this meeting. The Board shall facilitate this.

(5) Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from both parties, the Board shall decide whether expulsion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board decides that expulsion is the appropriate sanction, the Board shall notify the Educational welfare officer in writing, giving reasons for its opinion. The student shall not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this notification, in line with the Education (Miscellaneous provisions act 2007,s24)

(6) Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

The Education officer must:

-make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.

- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

The purpose of these consultations is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. Pending these consultations, the board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured,(in accordance with Educational welfare act 2000, s24). The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this time. Suspension shall be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

(7) Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Where the twenty day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student be expelled, the Board of Management shall formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents shall be notified immediately.

Parents shall be informed of the right to an appeal and be supplied a standard form on which to lodge this appeal. A formal record shall be kept of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

The Board of Management recognises that a Parent may appeal a decision to expel the student to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. (Education Act 1998, section 29) An appeal may also be brought on behalf of the student by the Education Welfare Officer.

HOME SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

The Principal and Board of Management will always endeavour to work closely with Parents in a spirit of cooperation and partnership. The school shall contact Parents at the earliest stages of any disciplinary process. Should the school have concerns about a child's progress in school, the child's Parents will be made aware of this at an early stage. A database of all contact numbers is kept on a secured file on the school's database.

POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS UNIQUE TO ST MARY'S

- ⚠ Children will not be permitted onto the road
- ⚠ No child or adult shall be permitted to cycle in the school yard.
- ⚠ Climbing of trees is not permitted for reasons of health and safety.
- ⚠ Children will not be allowed into the council yard or neighbouring house.
- ⚠ Children will not be allowed onto the shed roof.

MINOR MODIFICATION STATEMENT

It may be necessary to revisit this policy in the future, as minor modifications may need to be made. Such modifications may be necessary due to new technologies, unforeseen events etc. The Board of Management reserves the right to make such minor modifications if and when they should arise. These minor modifications shall then be communicated to all families within the school.

COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE AND SIGNING REQUIREMENTS

This code will be issued to all new entrants to the school. It shall also be distributed to all families of the school when ratified. It is a fundamental requirement that this code is both read and understood by the parent(s) of the new entrant. The Parent(s) must then sign that they have read and understand the code. If the Parent does not understand the code, then all reasonable efforts will be made to enable them to do so, including translation if necessary.

In an instance where a Parent refuses to sign the code, enrolment in the school cannot proceed.

School Rules can be summarised as follows:

- I keep my hands and feet to myself
- I am polite
- I walk in the classroom
- I call you by your first name
- I follow the instruction the first time given