Code of Good Behaviour

Introduction:

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.

Rationale:

Why is it necessary to devise a Code of Behaviour at this time?

We have decided to review our Code of Behaviour because we feel that it is necessary in relation to implementing Bí Cinealta.

Aims:
The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St Mary's National School is as follows.

- To provide a place where pupils can feel safe to learn, play and be themselves.
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

Implementation

The overall responsibility for discipline in the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline/ behaviour within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Good Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

We would ask parents to co-operate with the school with regard to the implementation of its policy on discipline and to communicate regularly with the school about circumstances that might affect the behaviour of their children in school.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

1. Behaviour is learned.
2. People are responsible for their own behaviour.
3. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
4. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
5. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, wear their full uniform, have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.

6. Pupils are expected to obey a staff member's / teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
7. Pupils are expected to attend every day and on time unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.
Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Bí Cinealta policy.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Incentives to encourage Positive Behaviour

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

<u>Positive Behaviour Rewards:</u>

During our monthly assembly we award positive behaviours by handing out certificates. These certificates are given to the pupils when we notice positive behaviour.

Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include

Strategies used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour may be applied: (Circular 20/90)

(a) Reasoning with the pupil
(b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
(c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others (within class/ different class)

(d) Prescribing extra work.
(e) Loss of privileges – which may include golden time, library, ICT etc.
(f) Detention during a break or break at a separate time to peers (SNA dependant)
(g) Prescribing additional work
(h) Referral to Principal Teacher
(i) Communication with parents - Note Home
(j) Suspension

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is one approach that is utilised by our school. Restorative practice provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it, so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did? In what way have they been affected?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next [1]to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions
1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Whole school approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

An effective code of behaviour requires the co-operation of all stakeholders in the school. To this end there are specific roles and responsibilities in achieving high standards of behaviour in our school.

Board of Management

· Members of the Board of Management were involved in drafting this policy and the board will be involved in any future review of the policy.
· The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis.
· The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and supports professional development in behaviour management education and training where necessary.
· The Board of Management gives authorisation for particular sanctions in the case of serious breaches of behaviour.

Responsibility of Adults
The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

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As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind *Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'.* A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

The school code of behaviour covers:
The classroom
The playground
The school environment
Activities away from the school environment

Behaviour in class

- ***Courtesy*** and ***respect*** are fundamental requirements in the classroom.
- Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards a teacher e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence or disobedience cannot be tolerated.
- Behaviour problems are to some extent situation specific and because of this teachers and parents do not always "see" the same child.
- Children with a specific diagnosis must have a *specific* Behaviour Plan in place to deal with issues in the classroom.
- Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn.
- Discipline is a matter for every pupil.
- A minority of disruptive pupils can adversely affect the educational progress of an entire class.

Any behaviour that interferes with this **right** e.g. ***constant disruption of the class, persistent distracting of others, disrespectful answers towards teacher or classmates is considered unacceptable behaviour.***

- In order that pupils may derive benefit from the work in class, full co-operation is required from pupils at all times.
- Pupils must co-operate with the instructions given by the class teacher.
- Pupils must remain seated in the classroom
- Pupils must remain seated during recreational periods on days when outdoor play is not possible.

Sanctions specific to constant unacceptable behaviour. The class teacher will inform the principal of consistent unacceptable behaviour. The principal will speak to the child- if there is no improvement- parents will be contacted by the class teacher)

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- Removal to a neighbouring classroom for an appropriate time in order to resolve a situation, giving all involved a chance to reflect and remain calm. Removal may/may not involve assigned work for pupil (to be decided by teacher depending on the misdemeanour)
- If regular removal (**THIRD REMOVAL)** is necessary the child will be sent to the **principal's office.** The class teacher will inform the parent.

- **A constant recurring removal third removal to the principal's office** within a **four week rolling period**-principal will contact the parents/guardian.
- Should there be no improvement ie the child be has been sent to the Principal's office on a fourth occasion within a short period of speaking with the parents,a meeting will be called including parents, class teacher, principal and pupil.
- The parents will be made aware that the Board of Management will be informed if behaviour does not improve.
- If the issues with the pupil persist, a meeting between the parents and the Board of Management will take place. A decision to suspend the pupil for a period of time may be considered.

Behaviour in the playground

- Any behaviour which endangers oneself or others is not permitted.
- Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing, shoving, name calling is forbidden
- Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without the expressed permission of the supervising teachers. This includes re entering the building.
- Children must obey the instruction of Supervising Teacher
- Children must go to their line when the school bell rings.
- Complete silence while standing in an orderly line is expected when the lunch bell rings. (No bouncing or kicking footballs)
- The children must cross the school yard and enter the building in silent, single file.

Sanction for playground misbehaviour

- Child/children may asked to stand at the wall for a timed period
- Supervising teacher will inform the class teacher who will deal with the issue as is appropriate to the level of misdemeanour.
- For some children, the principal may be involved ie pupil goes to the principal's office and the matter is dealt with according to the level of misdemeanour.

Behaviour in the school environment

- Respect for others is the basic rule
- Verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is strictly forbidden
- Use of bad language- A child will be given one warning- if the use of bad language occurs again within a short period of time- the child's parents will be informed by the child himself over the phone.
- Bullying or intimidation of other pupils will not be tolerated and is always regarded as a serious matter (see Anti-bullying policy)
- Pupils must show respect for school property
- Pupils must walk quietly and in an orderly manner in corridors
- Chewing gum is forbidden.
- Pupils must walk in an orderly fashion (with no pushing/pulling) to the front of the school at 2pm for infants and 3pm for 1st-6th Class
- Pupils are expected to use the pedestrian crossing in a safe manner at all times coming and going from school
- Pupils must stand back and allow an adult to pass or to enter/exit the building
- Pupils must not loiter or interfere with children waiting in the drop off area (For H&S reasons pupils who engage in this behaviour will be spoken to. If this behaviour continues the principal will speak with the child's parents and make a local arrangement for them).

Attendance at School

- Pupils are required to attend school regularly and to be on time for school each day.
- St. Mary's National School is open to receive pupils at 9:10am.
- When a child is absent for all or part of a school day the parent must notify the class teacher/principal by phone/e-mail/filling in Aladdin-the reasons for the child's absence (See Attendance Policy)

School Related Activities off the School Premises:

- Children taking part in school related activities off the premises, such as educational outings, sports events, school tours etc are expected to act responsibly, to listen and to obey the instructions of teachers, supervisors and guides, to be courteous to others and to respect property.
- If there is a serious discipline issue with a child he/she will be sanctioned in accordance with the external organisation's/venue's code of conduct. Parents will be contacted/ informed
- If necessary (and feasible) the child in question will be collected by the principal and brought back to the school. Parents will be contacted/ informed.
- The school's Code of Behaviour will be applied in all cases.

Homework

- It is the policy of this school to assign homework on a regular basis.
- All homework must be done promptly and completely.
- Parents should sign the Homework Journal to confirm that all homework has been completed.
- Homework may include memorization, written assignments, online work (seesaw, google classroom) or reading.
- If for some reason homework, or any part of it, cannot be completed parents are asked to note this in the Homework Journal
- Written work must be done neatly and carefully.
- Graffiti on text books and copy books is discouraged (See Homework Policy)

Sanction

Detention (we are implementing Restorative Practices and have decided to suspend Detention for the moment)

- Homework not being completed- the class teacher will contact the parent to discuss same

General School Rules

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for others property
- Respect other students and their learning
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Wear school uniform while at school and on school related activities.
- Bleaching/dyeing of hair is not permitted. Tight haircuts with designs not permitted.
- Make up not permitted
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission to leave the classroom

- Do your best in class
- Take responsibility for your own work

These can be summed up as 6 main rules;

- Respect/ Be nice
- Do your best
- Be tidy
- Be Safe
- Walk
- Listen

Class Rules

- At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children so that the children take ownership
- Teachers will introduce Restorative Practice to their class
- In the senior classes the class teacher will go through the Code of Behaviour Policy with the children.
- These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children.
- Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.
- Class rules should emphasise positive behaviour
- Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences.
- Teachers will initially and if necessary, arrange to meet with a parent if they have a concern about a child's behaviour.

Incentives

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school will include the use of praise and reward for good behaviour. It will entail matching the curriculum to the aptitude of the pupils, the use of effective techniques for motivating pupils and the promotion of sound relationships between pupils and teachers. It will also involve, in some instances, the application of sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. When sanctions are involved pupils should understand that what they have done is not acceptable and that it is the *misbehaviou*r that is rejected and **not** the *person*

All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers-ie Best Listener
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents, written/email or verbal communication.
- Award at Monthly Assembly

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross.

Minor Misbehaviour.
Are behaviours that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviours that are included in level 1 Minor. Please note the list is not exhaustive

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers including non completion of homework
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone or manner towards each other and/or staff (once off)
- ignoring staff requests (once off)
- Non wearing of the school uniform
- Chewing Gum
- inappropriate dress/styles not part of school uniform

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher

Serious misbehaviour

Examples:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning of other children
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Behaviour of a sexual nature
- Theft of other children's property-lunch, clothing, books

Gross misbehaviour

Examples:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Serious theft- Money, items of expense-ie laptop
- Serious damage to property
- Behaviour of a sexual nature
- Cyberbullying, Bullying using social media
- Gross Insubordination
- Leaving the school grounds without permission (unaccompanied by a responsible adult)- automatic one day suspension
- **Assaulting a teacher or another child** - Immediate 1 day suspension

In cases of repeated minor, serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher, Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss their child's behaviour and possible sanctions.

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment

- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil (use of restorative practice strategies)
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Partial loss of participation in a particular curricular area e.g. tag rugby (-10 mins)
7. Partial detention during break
8. Communication with parents
9. Referral to Principal
10. Principal communicating with parents
11. Referral to the Board of Management-which may result in Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal by phone or email depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.
Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of ***serious misbehaviour***, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.
In the case of ***gross misbehaviour***, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act .Where a student is suspended from a school for a period of not less than 6 days the principal concerned shall forthwith inform by notice in writing an educational welfare officer. (no need to report a suspension of 5 days or less to the welfare officer)

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)
Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Children with Special Needs
All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs, adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.
Irrespective of a child's diagnosis, if their behaviour causes a Health and Safety risk, physically or emotionally to another child(ren) or staff member then process for Suspension- Expulsion as outlined above is followed.

Methods of Communicating with Parents
Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- E-mails from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Texting an agreed mobile number through text-a-parent.
- Appointment arranged through the office.
- Phone contact initiated by class teacher
- Email contact in specific situations.
- The school website, where parents can read copies of all of the school policies.

Appeals Process

The Board of Management authorise the principal the right to issue suspension up to 3 days without consulting the Board

A parent has the right to appeal the principal's decision to the chairperson of the Board of Management

If the Board of Management issues a suspension they will inform the parents of their right to appeal the Board's decision under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Timetable for Review

This Policy is scheduled for review in 2 years

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on _____

Chairperson's signature_____

Principal signature_____

Date: