



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Board of Management – Chairperson: Canon David Mungavin

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



school policy

REVISED: 2020

1. Introduction

Introductory statement

This policy is based on the principles of consideration and respect for self, each other, the school and its environment.

The school's *Code of Behaviour* emphasises prevention of poor behaviour with the establishment of good behaviour management skills, rather than responding to negative behaviour and is not a sanctions-led policy.

This policy was reviewed and revised in 2019 following the ratification of a new *Anti-Bullying Policy* in 2019 (ref Department of Education and Skills' publication of *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, 2013), which is incorporated into the *Code of Behaviour* and also reflects the positive approach therein.

Rationale

The specific objectives in the development of this policy are to attain

- clearly defined responsibilities for all partners in the school – Board of Management, staff, parents and children;
- a clear presentation of expectations for standards of behaviour within each classroom, and throughout the school and wider community;
- consistency in approach to discipline throughout the school, from class to class and teacher to teacher;
- procedures for positive recognition of good effort/behaviour;
- ways of recording of pupil/class behaviour/effort;
- a means of review of pupil progress over term/year(s).

The policy takes account of requirements under the *Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)* which refers to 'the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school', and of *Section 23(2)*, which required the code of behaviour to address matters relating to suspension and expulsion.

Relationship to the school's characteristic spirit / ethos

St Patrick's National School aims

- to provide a safe, caring, happy and secure environment where children's self-esteem, self-confidence, initiative and innovation can be nurtured within an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation, at all times valuing and celebrating the uniqueness of all individuals;
- to actively encourage children to care for themselves, their families and friends and their environment;
- to provide an environment where the children feel secure, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect, and their concerns will be addressed;
- to foster an understanding and cultural appreciation of the moral, spiritual, religious, social and cultural values which shape our society; and
- to nurture respect for such values.

2. Aims

This *Code of Behaviour* aims

- to ensure an educational environment that is guided by our school's ethos and characteristic spirit;
- to allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development ;
- to create and develop 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 parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form the *Code of Behaviour*, through the *Behaviour Policy*, and to ensure a spirit of 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 present clearly defined responsibilities for all partners in the school – Board of Management, staff, parents and children.

3. Content of policy

Roles, responsibilities and guidelines

High standards of behaviour have an important effect on all aspects of school life. They allow children to learn in a calm and tolerant environment, while offering opportunities for development of self-confidence and awareness of the feelings and needs of others through interaction with staff and peers. The *School Behaviour Policy* operated at St Patrick's NS is based on the principles of consideration and respect for self, each other, the school and its environment – working toward the open, friendly atmosphere that we encourage throughout the school.

The school endeavours to treat all pupils in a consistent manner, while always taking special circumstances into consideration. From their arrival at school, pupils are guided as to how they are expected to behave and they are made aware of the rewards (or sanctions) that they should expect as a result of their behaviour. Most activity in this regard is through praise and encouragement, both of which are given on an on-going basis.

The Policy supports the theory that children make a choice with regard to their behaviour (apart from recognised exceptional situations). Pupils learn that good behaviour brings desirable consequences. The school's rules, rewards and sanctions are revised and explained to pupils during the first weeks of each new school year, and each class develops its own set of classroom rules – with appropriate tailoring for the junior classes.

As with all school policies, the Board of Management relies on parents' support for the successful implementation of the Policy. The *School Behaviour Policy* is given to all staff, and to families on joining the school. Parents are asked to discuss the general expectations with their children, as they consider appropriate to each child's age. It is a condition of enrolment, that the school's *Code of Behaviour* will be supported.

Whole-school approach

(ref 4. Curriculum)

'A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between all members of staff and the ways in which pupils, teachers, SNA's and all members of staff treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school, and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school' (ref *Circular 20/90*). Our children's chances of success and happiness in life, here and hereafter, depend considerably upon their ability to make responsible choices. To assist in fostering maturity in our pupils, a whole-school approach to behaviour management has been developed by the partners in our school community - the Board of Management, teachers and other staff, parents, and the pupils themselves – all of whom make a commitment to support the school's *Behaviour Policy*.

The implementation of the Policy has three chief elements, all of which are reflected in posters displayed throughout the school:

Rules Pupils are presented with a set of whole-school guidelines for behaviour, reflecting the above principles. From 1st Class onwards, following a consultation process led by the Class Teacher, every class agrees their own classroom rules at the beginning of each year;

Rewards A system of rewards is in place that is implemented across all classes throughout the school such as stamp books with rewards at the end of each completed page, fuzzy jars and our school Golden Book initiatives are implemented across all classes.

Behaviour checks: Pupils are aware of the rules and consequences/sanctions for breaking them.

At St Patrick's NS, all children are treated with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils, parents and management, and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour (ref DES *Circular 20/90*). The Board of Management has primary responsibility for the care and welfare of pupils. All members of staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to encourage the highest standards of behaviour, while the Principal has particular responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the school's *Code of Behaviour* and associated *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Child Protection Policy*.

The Board of Management

The school's *Behaviour Policy* specifies the commitments of the Board of Management as being:

- to protect and promote the ethos of the school;
- to ensure effective educational management and provision in the school;
- to provide a management and support structure which will facilitate the Principal and staff in the fulfilment of the school's aims and objectives;

- to ensure that
 - the needs of pupils are identified and responded to;
 - school plans are developed, implemented and regularly evaluated;
 - the curriculum, assessment and general education provisions within the school are of a high quality and meet the requirements prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES);
 - management and staff development needs are identified and provided for, within available resources;
 - procedures are in place through which parents can receive full information on all aspects of their children's educational progress;
 - the school complies with all the rules and regulations prescribed by the DES;
- to be responsible for all staff at the school;
- to implement the school's *Behaviour Policy*.

Staff

All staff members are required to support the *Behaviour Policy* and its implementation throughout the school. At the beginning of each school year, Class Teachers are responsible for the revision of general whole-school behaviour guidelines as well as the development of class-based rules. The in-class recording system for behaviour and the related sliding scale of behaviour checks are displayed in each classroom and are revised with the children. The *Code of Behaviour* is included in the briefing for newly-appointed teachers.

Code of Behaviour commitments for staff include:

- to endeavour to ensure pupils' safety and to support their well-being;
- to create a positive environment conducive to teaching and learning ;
- to be fair, courteous and approachable;
- to maintain positive home/school links;
- to be punctual, well-prepared and organised;
- to implement the school's *Behaviour Policy*.

Parents

'Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.'... 'Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.' (DES, *Circular 20/90*).

Parents of pupils attending the school are encouraged to contact the Class Teacher if they have concerns regarding behaviour. They should arrange a mutually agreeable time to meet with the Class Teacher or the Principal, as appropriate. These procedures are outlined at the annual class-based home/school meetings held at the beginning of the school year. Co-operation between teachers and parents is encouraged at all times and this is practised on an ongoing basis, both informally and formally, through phone-calls, e-mails and meetings etc. (ref *Home-School Communication Policy*).

In supporting the school's *Code of Behaviour*, parents make commitments

- to ensure that their children come to school on time, refreshed, appropriately dressed, equipped and prepared for the day, and ready to start work;
- to inform the school in writing of absences, illnesses, etc.;
- to supervise homework and sign homework notebooks nightly;
- to implement and support all school policies, e.g. uniform, healthy lunch, etc.;
- to support the school authorities and staff as they work in the best interests of the children in their care;
- to actively support the implementation of the school's *Behaviour Policy*.

Pupils

The *Pupils' Policy* applies in classrooms, the playground and other common areas, as well as in the wider community. It states

- be respectful of yourself, your school and others
- keep your school tidy
- be kind
- be safe
- be on time
- be organised
- be positive
- follow instructions from all staff.

These commitments are complemented by the class-based rules that are agreed at the beginning of every school year by the pupils of each class from 1st onwards, under the guidance of the Class Teacher, having regard to the needs of the class, the teacher, and the wider school community. Short, clear policies are prepared for the Infant classes by their Class Teachers, to be used for reference and to familiarise the children with the concept of class-based rules and responsibilities.

Each Policy should be

- classroom specific;
- worked out in consultation with the pupils;
- include no more than 6 rules;
- contain positive language;
- clear and positive in recognising good behaviour;
- fair, reasonable and consistent;
- supported by the school community;
- culture and gender neutral.

Recognised 'rewards' for good behaviour and sanctions for poor behaviour should be age-appropriate and should be implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

Infant classes age-appropriate modifications

The general school rules will be introduced in Junior Infants. In Senior Infants these will be discussed again, and at this stage the children should be able to formulate their own class rules,

with a suggested maximum of 4 rules. It is important that parents of Senior Infants pupils are reminded of the responsibilities to which they signed up when they first registered their children in the school (ref *Enrolment Policy*). In these classes, the emphasis is on the promotion of positive behaviour rather than on the sanctioning of negative behaviour. Emphasis should be placed on a class spirit/climate of good behaviour in which each individual is valued for the contribution he/she makes to the happiness and well-being of the whole group.

SEN / Differentiation

As with all policies, it is acknowledged that, in certain circumstances, there must be accommodation for differentiation in behaviour management. Strategies for these situations are agreed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with parents, staff, and the Board of Management, as appropriate. In such situations, an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will include behavioural targets and specific strategies agreed in consultation with the relevant parties, as appropriate (i.e. Principal, Class Teacher, SEN teacher, SNA, parents, and external professional support).

Staff are made aware situations where special circumstances apply on a need-to-know basis. This may be included within the staff briefing session at the start of the school year (ref *Child Protection Policy*). It is particularly important that staff know of special supervision requirements in the playground. Raising of staff awareness of behaviour-related concerns is done through the school's database (*Aladdin*), where a *Behaviour Report Form* available on the Home Page may be completed and made available to colleagues in this confidential forum.

In special circumstances where it is considered in the best interest of all the children, it may be considered appropriate to explain a child's differentiated behaviour management programme to classmates. As broad differentiation is an accepted element of school life, this is only done in exceptional circumstances, in consultation with parents and relevant staff.

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).

As noted previously, the school's *Behaviour Policy* is based on the principles of consideration and respect for self, each other, the school and its environment. A range of positive behaviour management strategies are employed throughout the school, based on age-appropriateness, class dynamics, SEN considerations, etc. There is a general sense of expectation of a high standard of behaviour, e.g. good manners and courtesy are expected and reciprocated by staff at all times, whether in the classroom, playground or elsewhere in the school.

Infant classes

Opportunities to discuss "What should you do?" in certain situations occur frequently throughout the day in the Infants classes, particularly during RE, story time, and SPHE lessons. Particular behaviours, such as saying "Please", "Thank you" and "Excuse me, please"; turn-taking; listening to others; waiting one's own turn to speak; asking for adult intervention in conflict situations etc. could

be the focus of Circle Time and/or of a Drama class.

Other classes

Whilst the class teacher generally gives stamps in the classroom, other adults in charge (SEN teachers, SNAs, or teachers on playground duty, etc.) may request a further stamp be awarded. Class teachers also employ a group award scheme which is the fuzzy jar in their classrooms. Parents are aware of the merit system in use in their child's class, as this is explained at the class-based meetings at start of each school year.

Classroom

Approaches to behaviour management aim to:

- prevent adverse consequences resulting from poor social skills and peer friendships;
- improve the social skills and peer friendships of children who already have problems;
- develop cooperative classrooms and school;
- develop emotional intelligence, self-esteem and confidence through increased awareness, skills training and goal achievement;
- empower students by teaching self-control, decision making and positive actions;
- develop group skills including active participation, cooperation, organisation and leadership improve relationships through the use of a common language, problem-solving process, shared goals and regular feedback.

Positive strategies used by the staff to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom include

- 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 and implied 'ownership' of them thereafter;
- teachers ensuring that pupils understand, and are frequently reminded of, how they are expected to behave;
- a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour as well as sanctions for misbehaviour;
- classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

Playground

The fundamental principle of the school's *Code of Behaviour* - respect for others, oneself and property - applies in the playground at all times. Positive strategies are implemented by staff to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties, and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour (ref *Supervision Policy*).

Activities

Activities that are permitted in the playground vary depending on the time of year as well as health and safety considerations. Pupils' suggestions are welcomed.

Zones

The children of the junior section of the school play in the courtyard, while pupils from 3rd to 6th Class use the playground towards the front of the school. Arrangements for specific areas for each class are reviewed by staff on a regular basis, depending on weather conditions, etc.

Supervision

During each break, there are 5 teachers on duty, 2 based in each of the junior and senior playgrounds, and 1 on 'indoor duty'. A rota, prepared by the Deputy Principal, is distributed to all teachers and is displayed in the Staff Room, where there is also a book for any incidents that may occur during break-time.

All adult supervisors wear a high-visibility jacket to help to ensure that they are visible to the children in their care at all times. The children should be encouraged to play sensibly and fairly. However, should an incident of misbehaviour occur the teacher must intervene and decide on an appropriate course of action. Arguments can sometimes be sorted out amicably, but serious incidents of aggression require sanctions. Children may be asked to stand to one side of the play area for a specified number of minutes or, if the Teacher-on-Duty deems it necessary, a child may be sent indoors for the remainder of the break time.

Playground supervisors (SNAs)

SNAs are required to assist with playground supervision during all break times. The SNA's role as a playground supervisor is very similar to that of the teacher supervisor, but does not carry the same weight of responsibility. They wear a high-visibility jacket, and ensure that the children in their care are visible to them at all times. SNAs may sometimes be asked to observe the behaviour of individual children in the playground, should such observation be deemed helpful in supporting those children or others.

Other areas in the school

All staff work to create and develop an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others. Emphasis is placed on good mannerly behaviour and awareness of others. To allow the school to function in an orderly way and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community, Class Teachers administer procedures concerning the manner in which

- groups move around the school, i.e. lining up in an orderly way before going to the playground / when break time ends / when walking to the Church etc.;
- children access the bathrooms / cloakrooms i.e. number of children at time etc.;
- children using the school hall, library / ICT room etc.

Rewards, sanctions and managing challenging behaviour

Acknowledgements of, and rewards for, good behaviour and a positive attitude to all aspects of school life are standard procedure throughout the school. These include individual and class-based merits/rewards. Pupils who misbehave are aware that there will be consequences, and they know what those consequences will be.

Acknowledgement of, and rewards for, good behaviour

As always we are praising and encouraging positive behaviour where possible. Following our recent staff meetings, as a school we have decided to implement a few things in order to further promote this. Please support us by asking your child about these initiatives and encouraging them. Acknowledgement of, and rewards for, good behaviour are usually given to pupils by the Class Teacher. This may be done on an individual, group or class basis.

Stamp Book

Children in Junior Infant – 6th Class have a Stamp Book used to record good behaviour – They will receive a stamp each day for positive behaviour. When they complete a page with 20 stamps, their teacher will give them a reward which has been carefully decided between teachers to ensure these are age appropriate. Merit stamps are never removed/taken away as a sanction.

- Junior/Senior infants rewards per 20 stamps:
 - Teddy Pass
 - Show and Tell opportunity
 - Raffle tickets in a pot: name pulled gets a prize
- First/Second class rewards chosen per 20 stamps:
 - Teddy Pass
 - Seating privilege
 - HW Pass
 - Certificate
 - Computer Pass/Tablet Time
 - Teacher's chair
- Third/Fourth rewards chosen per 20 stamps:
 - Homework Pass
 - Subject Pass
 - Teddy/Toy Pass
 - Sit beside a friend for the day
 - Tablet time
 - Junior playground helper (bring a friend and wear high-vis jacket)
- Fifth/Sixth rewards chosen per 20 stamps:
 - 20 stamps: one subject off homework
 - 40 stamps: two subjects off homework
 - 60 stamps: three subjects off homework
 - 80 stamps: full night homework
 - 100 stamps: miss a Friday test

Fuzzy Jars

Every class will start off the term with an empty jar. Each time a child in the class shows an act of kindness they will place a fuzzy ball in the jar. The important thing is that each member of the class has to put a fuzzy ball in the jar before it is full – this is to promote team work. Once the jar is full, the teacher will give the children a whole class reward e.g. watch a movie or extra P.E.

Our Golden Book

This is a book to celebrate star work, acts of kindness, achievements etc. It is read out at Friday Assembly. The children are sent to the Principal to get their name & achievement in the Golden Book.

Rewards in the classroom may include:

- praise
- sticker / badge / ink stamp
- merit stamp in Stamp Book – stamp books on chair at start of each day. No negative behaviour that day, then they get their book stamped. Principal can review on request.
- fuzzy jar
- Golden Book
- certificate
- homework pass
- privilege for child / group / class (eg special book loan / extra computer access time / favourite lesson / story time / film / tour / end-of-term treat).

3 Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline 'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined'. The degree of misdemeanours are judged by teachers and/or the Principal, based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

School / classroom behaviour checks are:

- Warm fuzzy jar
- Stamp Books
- Bonus stamps can be given for exceptional behaviour.

Principal, Deputy Principal and teachers can regularly check and monitor how these initiatives are going with individual children should needs be.

Dealing with more challenging behaviour

- If a child acts out they get a warning which is recorded in the teacher's personal notes. A Behaviour Reflection Sheet is also given out at this point which the child completes in school, it is signed by the teacher and sent home to be signed by both parents.
- On the 3rd warning, followed by the 3rd Reflection Sheet, a meeting will be called with the parents by the class teacher. Sanctions decided between parents and teacher at this meeting will be recorded.
- If bad behaviour continues and following two more serious warnings, a meeting will be organised with parents, class teacher and principal. Sanctions decided between parents, teacher and principal at this meeting will be recorded.
- A follow up meeting will be called if necessary.

Bypass all of the above for serious misdemeanours.

Criteria for very serious misbehaviour:

- deliberate continued defiance
- bullying, to include verbal or physical abuse
- deliberate damage to property
- continued fighting when asked to stop
- use of any prohibited substances.

If an incident occurs that is considered of a sexualised nature, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) will be informed, record it, and respond to it appropriately (ref school's *Child Protection Policy*).

Action to be taken following very serious misbehaviour

1. referral to the Principal or deputy principal who will consult with parents/guardians repair or undo damage caused.
2. referral to the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management who will both meet with parents/guardians
3. referral to the Board of Management with view to possible suspension, and or expulsion.

Parents involvement in the management of challenging behaviour

Parents are made aware of the *Code of Behaviour* as part of the enrolment process and agreement to support the policy is a condition for enrolment. The policy can be accessed through the school's website, and a copy is available through the school office.

Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children (DES, *Circular 20/90*). Class Teachers contact the parents in cases of minor behaviour issues. Usually this is done by telephone. In the case of more serious misdemeanours, the Principal contacts the parents directly.

Parents are invited to meet with school personnel in the spirit of co-operation, with the best interests of the child in mind. Meetings may involve a number of parties ie the Principal, Class Teacher, Special Education Needs (SEN) teacher, SNA, and a member of the Board of Management, as appropriate. Meetings may be convened in the child's classroom, the Quiet Room, or the Principal's office. The child may participate for part or all of the meeting, if appropriate.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

A number of strategies are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems. If children present as being emotionally disturbed, their parents are encouraged to seek a psychological assessment, and every support is offered to the family throughout the process. Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), appropriate support is sought from services available, e.g. Health Service Executive (HSE), Túsla (Child Support Agency), National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), etc.

In this situation an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with behavioural targets and specific strategies may be drawn up in consultation with the relevant parties, i.e. the Principal, Class Teacher, SEN Teacher, SNA, parents, and professional support from an external agency (as appropriate). SEN personnel may facilitate teachers in supporting the management of challenging behaviour. As appropriate, other staff members are briefed on the behaviour management strategies to employ when they are required to engage with the pupil, e.g. while on playground supervision.

For many organisational and curricular activities in school, classes are grouped together: Junior and Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd Class, 3rd and 4th Class, 5th and 6th Class. Class Teachers work closely with their 'partner teacher'. Newly qualified teachers may go to their 'partner teacher' for advice / support in managing challenging behaviour. The Principal and SEN teachers may assist in creating individual behaviour plans for specific children.

Professional development is available to staff through a range of courses provided by Colleges of Education, Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP) courses, Education Centres etc. In addition, SEN teachers and others attend conferences on relevant issues as they become available, within the constraints of resources. Teachers are encouraged to feedback to other teachers as appropriate, individually or through the forum of a staff meeting.

In the event of it becoming necessary to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, this will form part of the IEP drawn up in consultation with the relevant parties, with reference to *Managing Challenging Behaviour - Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11*, The Board of Management should also consult competent legal advice.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the Board of Management will seek temporary exclusion/separation from the endangered pupil(s)/staff while a workable solution is put in place. This may involve redeploying staff, consulting with SENO and/or Education Welfare Officer (EWO) about putting appropriate support and resources in place, or arrange an alternative placement.

Suspension and expulsion procedures

The *Education Welfare Act, 2000*, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify... 'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned' and 'the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.' (*Sections 23(2), c and d*)

Suspension

Suspension is extremely rare at St Patrick's NS where pupils are generally well behaved and steps undertaken by staff, with the support of parents, result in positive outcomes. However, suspension will be considered in cases where a child's behaviour poses a threat to the safety, welfare, and/or education of others. This sanction demonstrates the seriousness of the misbehaviour to the pupil and to his/her parents, while working towards agreeing steps to modify the behaviour(s) concerned.

A student will not be suspended for more than 3 days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that this is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective following discussion with, and approval by, the Board of Management.

During the period of suspension, the school will afford an opportunity to the parents and child to meet with the Principal, relevant school staff and a representative from the BOM with a view to agreeing procedures/strategies to be implemented on the child's return to school. This should be formalised in writing.

The Principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days. (ref Sections 21 (4) a)

Expulsion (permanent exclusion)

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))

Procedures

Circular 20/90 states that 'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the Class Teacher'.

1. The child is informed about the complaint made against him/her and is afforded an opportunity to respond.
2. The manner of investigation is explained and a possible outcome, ie suspension, conveyed.
3. The matter is investigated by the relevant school staff and detailed records are kept of this.
4. Parents of the child(ren) concerned are requested to attend a meeting with relevant school staff where they are provided with details of the complaint/s.
5. Following the investigation and discussion with parents, the Principal then addresses the issue at a Board of Management meeting.
6. Parents of the child(ren) are requested to attend a meeting with representatives of the Board of Management where they are afforded an opportunity to respond. In cases where parents/guardians do not agree to attend such a meeting, a formal letter will be issued by the Principal advising parents of the gravity of the matter and the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting. Failing that, it is the duty of the Board of Management to arrive at a decision in response to the pupil's negative behaviour.
7. The parents are informed by letter of the decision reached and, where possible, by phone.

To ensure openness and accountability records must be kept of serious and gross misbehaviour outlining

- a description of the behaviour,
- where and when it occurred,
- the attempted interventions by school staff,
- meetings held with parents/guardians and outside agencies (where appropriate).

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal (or in his/her absence, the Deputy Principal) to sanction an immediate suspension of a pupil for up to three school days following a preliminary investigation by the Principal/Deputy Principal to establish the case for suspension. A formal investigation will follow the imposition of the suspension.

Appeals process

Under *Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998*, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (i) permanent exclusion from a school and (ii) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

Accordingly, schools should advise 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. (ref Circular 22/02)

The Principal and designated Board member will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Department of Education and Skills (ref *Circular 22/02*, Section 12 – processing of an appeal).

Record keeping

(ref school's *Record-keeping and data protection policy*)

In line with the school's practice on record keeping and data protection legislation, notes from parent-teacher consultations of a sensitive nature are stored in confidential file in Principal's office with restricted access, and normally retained in archive until the pupil has reached age of 25. Highly sensitive confidential files should be kept in perpetuity.

School records

(ref *Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy*)

All accidents and incidents are recorded using standard *Incident Report* forms and *Accident Report* forms. They are filed in the Principal's office, with limited access to staff and Board of Management, through the Principal.

Records of parent:teacher consultations, home:school communications, and correspondence with outside agencies, Board of Management, etc. are kept in individual confidential pupil files and securely stored in the Principal's office.

Pupil records

In line with the school's practice on record keeping, and data protection legislation, factual records in relation to pupils' behaviour (*Incident Report* forms) and meetings with parents (*parent:teacher consultation* forms) are initially made by the Class Teacher, and transferred to the Principal for secure storage within the school. Teachers have access on a need-to-know basis only.

Behaviour Report forms are used for sharing behaviour-related concerns with staff, as and when such a need arises. They are stored within the school's password-protected data management system (Aladdin).

4. Curriculum

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the *Code of Behaviour*. It aims to help our pupils 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. As noted in 3.4.2, the *Stop Think Do* programme is used in a number of classes as part of the SPHE curriculum.

Throughout the school, the strategies used to create a positive school climate which is open, inclusive, respectful, fair, democratic and tolerant and which seeks to support and encourage the holistic development of all children and all adults working with our children are detailed in our SPHE plan and involve:

- creating a health-promoting physical environment
- enhancing self-esteem
- fostering respect for diversity
- building effective communication within the school
- developing appropriate home-school communication
- catering for individual needs
- developing democratic process
- fostering inclusive and respectful language.

We strive to ensure that our school will be physically and emotionally safe and we will deliver the curricular content of our SPHE programme with a view to giving the children the protective skills of self-esteem and assertiveness. The *Circle Time* and *Bubble Time* methodologies are used on a whole-school basis. Co-operative interpersonal skills will be developed through working in pairs and working in groups, while older children will be encouraged to work positively with conflict, as negotiation and consensus building skills are developed.

5. Pupil attendance at 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.

High standards of school attendance are encouraged by

- creating a stimulating and attractive school environment;
- acknowledgement of good or improved attendance;
- adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils;
- adapting the school timetables to make it as attractive as possible for families to attend and to be on time.

Parents are made aware of the terms of the *Education Welfare Act* and its implications through in-school correspondence, class meetings, and one:one consultations, as required.

A standardised *Absence from school* form is used to record pupil absences. It includes all information that is required for completion of National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) records. Such forms should be returned to the Class Teacher on the first day following an absence, and should be accompanied by a medical certificate, if applicable. All such records are kept on file in safe storage. The information is uploaded to the on-line database, as required by the DES and Tusla. While parents may have received communication from the school regarding attendance-related concerns, parents of all children who have been absent for 15 days receive a text from the school, noting this serious level of absenteeism. A summary of the whole-school attendance is included with the school's Attendance Policy and is part of the annual SSE SIP record.

The school uses the standard procedures to report pupil absences to the NEWB (ref www.newb.ie)

6. Reference

6.1 Reference to other school policies

The following school policies cross-reference with the *Code of Behaviour*:

- *Absence from School Policy*
- *Administration of Medication Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Arrival and Dismissal Policy*
- *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*
- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Enrolment Policy*
- *Equality of Access and Participation Policy*
- *Home / School Communication Policy*
- *Parents as Partners Policy*
- *Promotion of Healthy Living Policy*
- *Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy*
- *Safety Statement*
- *Special Educational Needs Policy*
- *SPHE plan..*

7. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Management is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school's *Code of Behaviour* is implemented. The Principal and the Deputy Principal are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy and for informing staff, parents and pupils of the policy and their respective roles in its implementation.

8. Success criteria

Practical indicators of the success of the policy include

- 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.

9. Ratification and communication

This policy was reviewed in 2019, and ratified by the Board of Management in September 2019. It became official policy from that date. It is available to all the school's education partners on the school's website and in hard copy through the school office.

10. Implementation

This policy is officially implemented throughout the school, from the date of its ratification by the Board of Management.

11. Policy review

This policy is scheduled for review in 2024, unless the Board of Management considers that a review is required at an earlier date. Co-ordination of the review is the responsibility of the SDP co-ordinator, in consultation with the Principal. Those involved in review will include the Board of Management, the Principal, SDP co-ordinator, staff/ISM team, and parent representatives, and may include pupil input.

Signed: _____

Canon D Mungavin
Chairperson
Board of Management

Signed: _____

R Harper
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

This poem reflects the principles behind the school's *Behaviour Policy*.

Children learn what they live

If a child lives with criticism
he learns to condemn.



If a child lives with hostility
he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule
he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame
he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance
he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement
he learns with confidence.



If a child lives with praise
he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness
he learns justice.

If a child lives with security
he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval
he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
he learns to find love in the world.