

St. Patrick's National School Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

The Code of Behaviour of St. Patrick's NS, reflects the vision and values of our school. The Code of Behaviour endeavours to create a caring and ordered environment based on respect and tolerance where each child can feel safe, secure and confident in an environment that is conducive to learning. The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences. The Code of Behaviour not only applies everywhere on the school premises but also applies at any school related activity or event such as school trips, swimming lessons, sports activities, religious ceremonies etc.

This code of behaviour was established, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000). This code of behaviour was developed in consultation with the staff, the Parent's Association and the Board of Management.

Aims of the Code

The Code of Behaviour of St. Patrick's NS aims to

- Provide guidance for pupils, staff and parents/guardians on behavioral expectations
- Provide for the effective and safe operation of the school
- Develop pupil's self-esteem and to promote positive behavior
- Foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others
- Facilitate the education and development of every child by enabling teachers to teach without disruption
- Foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment

Strategies to promote Positive Behaviour:

Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- Matching work with pupil's abilities; A prize/reward carefully noted by the teacher to ensure that **all** children at regular stages during the school year are rewarded for effort/behaviour/skill etc. *Teachers creating moments of success and then acknowledging them.*

- A comment in a pupil's exercise book;
- A visit to another member of staff or the Principal for commendation ;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- Delegating some responsibility or privilege ;
- A mention to a parent – written or verbal;

The above list is not exhaustive and consists of examples only.

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

We in St. Patrick's NS, believe that a positive school atmosphere are based on the following:

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for other's property
- Respect for other students and their learning
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Following instructions from staff immediately
- Walking quietly in the school building
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Doing your best in class
- Taking responsibility for your own work

These can be summed up as 6 main rules;

Be Gentle	Don't hurt anyone
Be kind and helpful	Don't hurt people's feelings
Be honest	Don't cover up the truth
Work hard	Don't waste time
Look after property	Don't waste or damage things or take things that don't belong to you.
Listen to people	Don't interrupt

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules 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. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Expectations and Implementation of Our Code of Behaviour

School rules are devised with regard to the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Every member of our school community has a role to play in implementing and upholding our Code of Behaviour. An effective Code of Behaviour requires the co-operation of all stakeholders in the school; Board of Management, staff, parents and pupils.

All members of the school community, Board of Management, staff, parents and pupils are expected to adhere to all Government and school guidelines for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19. Any breach of these guideline by pupils will be considered as a serious misbehaviour. Repeated breaches will be considered a gross misbehaviour.

Board of Management are expected to:

- Provide a safe and comfortable environment for pupils and staff.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- Arrange for a review of the Code of Behaviour, as required.
- Ratify the Code of Behaviour.

Staff are expected to:

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour & be cognisant of their duty of care.
- Be familiar with and follow the school's policy on "Child Protection".
- Create a safe, welcoming environment for each pupil;
- Praise desirable behaviour;
- Facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential;
- Be courteous, consistent and fair;
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum;
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour;
- Keep a record of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- Listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour;
- Provide support for colleagues;
- Communicate with parents and staff when necessary, always with courtesy and respect;
- Provide reports on matters of concern.

Parents are expected to:

- Nurture in their children a positive attitude towards school.
- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually in full clean school uniform.
- Ensure their child has a healthy lunch in line with the school policy on "Health Eating".
- Arrange meetings with the class teacher and/or principal when they are concerned about any issue relating to their child;
- Communicate with staff when necessary, always with courtesy and respect and to model good behaviour in their relationship with teachers;
- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property
- Be interested in, support and encourage their child's school work;
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and other school policies and to support the implementation of these policies;
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.

Pupils are expected to:

- Treat all staff members, themselves and each other with due respect and courtesy;
- Listen to the class teacher, work hard, do their best and make best use of their time in school;
- Enter and leave the school building at all times in an orderly fashion.
- Respect other people; Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to be safe is unacceptable. Fighting, rough play or any physical force is never allowed or tolerated.
- Respect the school building and property; If any deliberate damage is caused, the parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement.
- Avoid using bad language - Inappropriate language if used towards a teacher/pupil or anywhere within the school or while on a school activity is considered a breach of the code.
- Not bring chewing gum, glass bottles, solvents, matches, cigarettes, alcohol or drugs to school either on the premises or to a school related activity;
- Not wear make-up;
- Hand up their mobile phone/iPod/smart watch, switched off, to the class teacher or principal as soon as school starts and collect it from the teacher/principal before school finishes. If a child is found with a mobile phone it will be confiscated.
- Value our school environment;

Schoolyard and Indoor Break Times

The rota for break-time supervision is the responsibility of the Principal and is displayed on the staffroom noticeboard and in the Principal's office. There will be one teacher and one SNA on duty each day.

Outdoor Break times

- All pupils are encouraged to enjoy their games in the playground. It is expected that such activities shall proceed without interruption from other children.
- Pupils will play within their own designated area unless they have permission from the supervising teacher to play elsewhere.
- When the bell rings, pupils should walk to their lines.
- Where a pupil refuses to comply with the Code of Behaviour in the yard, then the pupil will be removed from the school yard for the duration of the break.
- In extreme cases, a parent/guardian may be required to remove the pupil from the school during break times and on completion of the break periods, return the pupil to the school.

Indoor Break Times

- In adverse weather conditions pupils will remain indoors during break times
- The supervision rota applies in the same manner.
- During the break times, all pupils will remain in their classrooms and will be supervised.
- Pupils from Sixth class will be distributed between these classrooms to assist with activities and report to the supervising teacher.(Not possible while Covid-19 restrictions are in place)

When on school trips/tours, children are expected:

- To enter/leave the bus in an orderly manner;
- To keep the school rules as listed above;
- Not to bring mobile phones or electronic devices on school tours.
- To sit in their seats and avoid loudness that would distract the driver;
- To stay in their appointed groups at all times.

Incentives

Part of the vision of St. Patrick's NS is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children.

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
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication

Bullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools, bullying is defined as follows:

“Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, verbal, psychological or physical contact by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time”.

The following types of bullying behavior are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion
- Malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as:
 - Homophobic bullying
 - Racist bullying
 - Bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling Community
 - Bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs

Bullying will not be tolerated and parents/guardians will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Managing Misbehaviours

- Class teachers will record misbehaviours on the behavior tracker of their teacher's yearbook, or similar.
- Misbehaviours on the school yard will be reported by the supervising teacher to the relevant class teacher.
- It is the responsibility of the class teacher to monitor, track and deal with misbehaviours as outlined.

<i>Misbehaviour Category</i>	<i>Examples (This list is not exhaustive)</i>	<i>Typically dealt with by</i>	<i>Actions that may be taken</i>
Minor Misbehaviours	Minor disruption in class No homework (unexplained) Refusal to co-operate Not following instructions Deliberate interruptions Leaving room without permission Refusing to listen to teacher Verbal retaliation/Derogatory comments Defiance	Class teacher or Supervising teacher Parents/ Guardians (where repeated Instances occur)	Note home Phone call home Meeting with teacher & parent/guardian
Serious Misbehaviours *Absolutely unacceptable, regardless of circumstance	Persistent minor misbehaviours Serious disruption in class Foul/bad language Verbal abuse Offensive comments Repeated insolence Aggressive/Threatening behavior Fighting Physical retaliation (* see left) Vandalism Stealing Lewd gestures Constant defiance Mitching Bullying (as per definition) Using mobile phone/device during school day	Class teacher or Supervising teacher refers to Principal Parents/ Guardians	Letter home from the Principal Meeting with teacher & parent/guardian Temporary suspension considered by Principal
Gross Misbehaviours	Persistent serious misbehaviours Leaving school without permission Violent behavior/assault Using language of a sexual nature Sexual remarks or overtones Extreme verbal abuse	Class teacher refers to Principal immediately Parents/Guardians	Meeting with Principal & Parent/Guardian (* see below) Meeting with Chairperson &

		Board of Management	Parent/Guardian
	Persistent gross misbehaviour	Board of Management	Suspension Expulsion may be considered

***In extreme cases, and in consultation with the Deputy-Principal and/or Principal, a parent/guardian may be required to remove their child from the school.**

Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to encourage positive behavior and discourage misbehavior. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehavior, with due regard to age and emotional development. 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), unless deemed necessary.
- 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
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. Detention during break
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. 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)

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child, who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

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

Suspension

Before serious sanctions such as detention or suspension are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter 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 serious or 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.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent's/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent's/guardians 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.

Expulsion

Where there are persistent instances of gross misbehavior the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and expulsion may be considered. Parents/guardians will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Expulsion is a very serious step and may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The decision to permanently expel a pupil from St. Patrick's NS. will be made solely by the Board of Management. This decision will only be taken after the school has taken significant steps to address the behavior. These steps include the following:

- Meeting with the parents/guardians and pupils to explore ways of helping the pupil change their behavior.
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of the behavior, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies eg.
 - National Educational Psychological services (NEPS.)
 - Health Service Executive Community Services (HSE.)
 - National Behaviour Support Services (NBSS.)

Procedures in respect of expulsion:

- A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- Inform parents/guardians in writing of the alleged misbehavior, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents/guardians and pupil the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal (see page 84 National Educational Welfare Board – NEWB- guidelines).
- Considerations by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing. (see page 84 National Educational Welfare Board – NEWB- guidelines).
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing (see page 85 National Educational Welfare Board – NEWB- guidelines).
- If the Board of Management is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.
- Consultations arranged by the EWO.

The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after Tusla have received written notification. The NEWB should be notified using the Notice of Intention to Expel form which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie. This form should be completed and sent to Educational Welfare Services, Tusla-Child & Family Agency.

Parents/guardians may appeal the decision to expel their child to the Secretary General of Department of Education and Skills. The appeal process under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, begins with the appointment of a mediator.

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. The 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 to 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.

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 and are being reviewed regularly.

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
- Textparent – messaging system
- Through children's homework journal
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Email
- See-saw

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 11th November 2021.