



Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour policy has been devised by the staff of St Nicholas' Primary School and the wider school community. It was devised during the first term of the 2019/2020 school year and revised in February 2021 with Covid-19 in mind (See [Appendix 4](#)). This policy applies to all pupils while in school and engaging in all school related activities including trips and outings.

Rationale

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas' Primary School decided to review the Code of Behaviour to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

It is a requirement 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*.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

St. Nicholas' Primary School strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

The dignity of each pupil, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in this statement. As a staff we are aware of the importance of our pastoral care role in the welfare of our children, and are committed to safeguarding their well-being. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- (a) To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all
- (b) To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development
- (c) To ensure every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school
- (d) To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- (e) To comply with legislation e.g. The Education (Welfare Act) 2000.

Principles

- (a) The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accept and work with these differences.
- (b) It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- (c) The school recognises that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students.
- (d) Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- (e) The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the class teacher. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline in his /her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility with the staff for good order within the school premises.

Standards of Behaviour & School Rules

The school aspires to achieve the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- To adhere to class/school rules.
- To show consideration for other children and adults.
- To show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings.
- To attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- To do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- To wear their uniform/tracksuit as advised by class teachers (see Dress Code).
- To be neat and trim in dress and appearance (advisable for long hair to be tied up and/or clipped back).

Each class will develop and display their “Class Rules” on the wall of their classroom. These rules will be stated positively, discussed within the class, and will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class.

Other Rules

- Unauthorized use of mobile phones is not permitted.
- Children are not permitted to wear make-up or false nails to school.
- Chewing gum, crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks are strictly forbidden for lunch, as per Healthy Lunch Policy

Strategies for Encouraging Positive Behaviour:

Teachers and other school staff will use a number of strategies to promote positive behaviour at class and school level, for example:

- Praise and recognition
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Involving students in the development of class and school rules
- Reward systems e.g. star charts, student of the week etc
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A comment/stamp/sticker in a pupil’s exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy. See [Appendix 1](#) for examples.)

- A “Step Chart” will be displayed in classrooms (See [Appendix 2](#)) and used at class teacher’s discretion
- Reasoning / Reprimand with pupils (including advice on how to improve)
- Opportunity given to complete missing homework or other prescribed work
- Communication with parents
- Temporary separation from peers and/or loss of privileges including loss of play at lunch break
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal
- Note to parents
- Pupils may be deprived of school outings for consistent misbehaviour

- Fill in Student Behaviour Reflection Form (See **Appendix 3**). **Teacher will keep a copy.**
- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88).

Suspension

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour.

Procedures for Suspension

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas' Primary School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12) and our school policy on suspension.

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate. They will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

Procedures for Expulsion

Subsequent to our school's suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence (See p. 81 Guidelines). Expulsion for a first offence will apply in the event of:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Steps to be taken in the event of a consideration of expulsion

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management

3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

Record Keeping

A record will be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils. Breaches of behaviour will be recorded in writing by the class teacher and if necessary by the Principal and will be stored in a central file.

Procedures for notification of a pupil's absence from school

A written excuse must be presented explaining absence from school for any number of days or part thereof. Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of school term due to holidays. The school requests advance notification should this occur via Aladdin app or in the students homework journal.

If a child is absent for 20 days TUSLA (Child & Family Agency) will be informed.

Review

A previous Code of Behavior was adopted by the Board of Management on 4/03/2010 and reviewed on 25/04/2012 and reviewed again on 1/03/2016.

This policy will be revisited at staff meetings and will be reviewed as appropriate.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on February 10th 2021.

Fr. Michael Kilmartin
Chairperson

Laura Barnewall
Acting Principal

Appendix 1

Classification of Misbehaviours

Three levels of unacceptable behaviour are recognised by St. Nicholas' Primary School. They are 1) Minor, 2) Serious and 3) Gross misbehaviours.

The degree of misdemeanours will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows:

(These lists below consist of examples only. It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.)

1) Examples of Minor Misdemeanours:

- Interrupting class work.
- Arriving consistently late for school.
- Running in school building.
- Talking in class line.
- Leaving litter around school.
- Not wearing correct uniform.
- Being discourteous/unmannerly.
- Not completing homework without good reason.
- Rough play leading to unintended injury to self/fellow pupils.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours & regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours:

1. Verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil.
2. Class teacher should note the incident in his/her classroom notebook
3. Teachers will use a "Step Chart" which will be displayed in their classroom (See [Appendix 1](#)). This step chart will be used at class teacher's discretion.
4. Note home to parent/guardian.
5. Removal of reward or privilege including loss of play at lunch break
6. Phone call home.
7. Class teacher meets one/both parents.
8. Principal/Deputy Principal meets one/both parents concerning behaviour.

2) Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

- Constantly disruptive in class i.e. repeated instances of misbehaviour, persistent interruptions.

- The use of abusive and offensive language against teachers and students and any persistent misbehaviour that puts the educational welfare of other students at risk.
- Making untrue statements about others.
- Stealing.
- Damaging another pupil's property.
- Bullying.
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission.
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil.
- Aggressive threatening or violent behaviour.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:

1. Child will be placed directly on Step 4, (See [Appendix 1](#)).
2. Child will fill out a behavioural sheet. This sheet will be signed by parent/guardian, student, teacher and principal.
3. Principal meets with one/both parents.
4. Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal.
5. Contact Gardaí if a child leaves school premises without permission.
6. In cases of Infant parents, teacher will contact parents/guardians by phone or other.

Where there have been repeated instances of serious misbehaviour and all the above steps have been followed then suspension will be considered for a temporary period of time in accordance with the NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools.

3) Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:



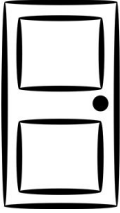

- Vandalism - Setting fire to school property/deliberately leaving taps/fire hose on.
- Aggressive threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil.
- Bullying.
- Supply or use of illegal drugs.
- Serious theft.
- Bringing weapons to school.
- Mobile phone usage on school grounds.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours:

1. Child will be placed directly on Step 4 (See [Appendix 1](#)).
2. Child will fill out a behavioural sheet. This sheet will be signed by parent/guardian, student, teacher and principal.
3. Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents.
4. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case.

Appendix 2

Step Chart

<p><u>Step 1: Warning</u></p> 	<p><u>Step 2: Move place</u></p> 
<p><u>Step 3: Go next door</u></p> 	<p><u>Step 4: Go to the Office</u></p> 

Appendix 3

Pupil Behaviour Reflection Form

1. What rule did I break?

2. What choice did I make?

3. Why did I make this choice?

4. How I felt:

5. What are the consequences of my actions?

6. What would be a better thing to do if this happens again?

7. Who else was affected by my behaviour?

8. How can I make amends to the other people involved?

9. Here is what I will do to correct this behaviour in future:

Student signature: _____

Student's class: _____

Parent signature: _____

Teacher signature: _____

Date; _____

Appendix 4

Covid-19

Rationale

In light of the need for students to be more mindful of attending school during the current Covid-19 climate, this amendment to the Code of Behaviour Policy is required so that students will be aware of specific rules on their return to school. The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) has necessitated that the Code of Behaviour be updated in compliance with the requirements of NPHET, DES and HSE guidance on protection from coronavirus (Covid-19). Our guiding principle when making any changes or adjustments to this policy is to be able to keep all of our students, families and staff safe. These amendments will be communicated to students, parents and staff.

Parents/Guardians

We request that parents:

- Observe and respect all social distancing protocols in relation to any contact with the school. This includes maintaining a two metre distance to other families when dropping off or collecting their children from the school and any contact with the school.
- Encourage their child to adhere to social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene guidelines.
- Monitor their child closely for signs and symptoms of illness and keep the child at home if they show any signs of infectious illness.
- Ensure that school has up to date contact information for parents/guardians and other family members who may be required to collect their child, should symptoms appear during the school day.
- Answer telephone calls from school/call school back promptly and have arrangements in place for prompt collection of their child should it be required.

School Routines and Procedures

All members of the school community have to be mindful of the following:

- Altered routines for arrival and departure of students.
- Moving around the school as per specific instructions (e.g. one-way systems).
- Rules about sharing any equipment in line with Covid-19 guidelines .
- Allocated playground times & areas to which pupils must stay within.

Student Expectations

Our school requires every member of the school community to observe and respect the principles of social distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette and make every effort to minimise risk to oneself and others.

This requires us to modify some of our student expectations which include:

- Arrive to and depart from school premises at the agreed time (surnames A-F and children who arrive by bus 8.50am, G-M 9.00am, M-Z 9.10am and caregivers)
- Proceed to their classroom without delay through the designated entry door.
- Follow instructions from staff members on movement throughout the school building
- Sanitise hands upon entry to the school premises and while in school, wash their hands more often than usual with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- Maintain healthy practise when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands.
- Refrain from spitting or coughing at or towards other students and members of staff
- Maintain responsibility for their own equipment e.g. stationery and water bottles and ensure that these are not shared with other students.
- Tell a member of staff if they are unwell and are exhibiting signs of Coronavirus.
- Follow rules at home about conduct in relation to remote education.

The school will explain these rules clearly to students and remind them periodically.

Sanctions for unsafe behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic

Incidents which involve students who deliberately fail to comply with instructions, will be addressed in line with sanctions of our current Codes of Behaviour policy. These include (but are not limited to):

- Failure to comply with requests from staff to practice social distancing.
- Deliberately not following respiratory and cough etiquette.
- Intentional damage to or misuse of sanitising and/or cleaning equipment and materials.
- Behaving inappropriately which causes offence or concern to other students and members of staff through pranks or fake coughs/sneezes.
- Spitting or coughing at other students or members of staff.
- Name calling or use of derogatory language related specifically to Covid-19.