
St. Joseph's N.S. Rathdonnell,
Trentagh, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

074 91 37315

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive and safe learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and holistic development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

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.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive learning environment with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty, respect 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

Rules

All pupils are expected to treat all staff, Parents/Guardians, pupils and visitors with courtesy. School opens at 9:05a.m. Pupils are asked to listen to and to follow all teachers' instructions, as soon as they enter the school premises.

Pupils are encouraged to do their best and to present their class work and homework neatly. Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of other pupils or their families is unacceptable. Staff, Parents/Guardians and pupils are expected to keep the school clean and litter free and to respect school property.

Parents/Guardians must notify teachers of the names of any adults permitted to collect their child at the beginning of the school year.

Parents/Guardians must inform the class teacher, in writing, when a pupil has been absent and give reasons for the absence.

Pupils must have permission to leave the school premises during school hours. A note should be included in the homework diary if a pupil has an appointment during the school day.

Pupils are requested not to bring electronic devices into the school environment during school hours. Mobile phones will only be allowed on school trips where a previous request has been made by a parent on the grounds of serious health reasons.

The wearing of full school uniform is obligatory from September to June inclusive. Pupils should be proud of their uniform and should wear it when in school or representing the school. All uniforms should be marked with the child's name.

In the interest of safety we ask that children do not wear watches, jewellery or rings on P.E. day. The school will not be responsible for the loss of any valuables.

Chewing gum is forbidden at all times.

Pupils are always supervised by teachers in the playground, at P.E. and break times. Pupils must obey the teacher on duty at all times.

Pupils should request permission to leave the yard if the ball goes out on the road or over the fence. Fifth and Sixth Class pupils only, to leave the grounds through the gate and not over the wall or fence, please.

Pupils are to play safely, showing consideration and respect for others.

Only authorized school equipment is allowed in the playground at playtime.

When playtime ends children should stop playing, walk and wait quietly in their class line and walk in single file to their classroom.

Healthy Lunch Policy applies to all children

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children.

Examples of Strategies to Affirm and Promote Positive Behaviour

Verbal praise

Note in homework journal

Stars, stickers, stamps or points

Good conduct chart

Certificates

Homework voucher

Fun Time / Golden Time

Good attendance award

Tours / Outings

Behaviour

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

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

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

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.

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour

It is important to emphasise that the list in the policy is not exhaustive and that other types of misconduct may require correction or disciplinary action.

Interrupting class work (e.g. walking around the classroom without permission; throwing objects; talking at the wrong time; making noise; fiddling; eating at the wrong time).

Bringing drink bottle into class and drinking in class.

Swinging on chairs.

Leaving litter in and around the school, leaving desk and classroom place untidy, leaving bathrooms untidy or messy.

Disruptive behaviour in the bathrooms

Lack of compliance with school policy on uniform.

Being discourteous, unmannerly or answering back to pupils and staff.

Not completing homework without good reason.

Squirting drinks bottle or water bottle

Name calling

Gestures of defiance

Unruliness in the classroom, on the stairs or in the hall

Kicking basketballs or volleyballs

Bad language

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour:

Bad language

Giving cheek when corrected on the yard

Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying and discrimination)

Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning

Telling untruths about others, spreading rumours

Racist comments

Threats or physical hurt to another person

Damage to property

Theft

Inappropriate behaviour during games or swimming and in the changing rooms - Invading privacy of others

Blatant disregard to staff members through a combination of serious misbehaviour

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour:

Assault on a member of staff or pupil

Serious theft

Serious damage to property

Bringing contraband items to school

Strategies for dealing with misbehaviour

Teachers will use their professional judgement and their knowledge of the child and the particular circumstances of the behaviour or incident in selecting the appropriate sanction.

The sanction will be proportionate to the behaviour or incident in question.

The teacher will remind the child of the rule or emphasise the behaviour expected.

If the behaviour is repeated, the student is reminded of the behaviour required and informed of the consequence associated with continued misbehaviour. They are given a choice – a sanction or change/improve their behaviour.

The student may be separated from other pupils in the classroom (“time-out”) – either by changing places with another student or moving to an isolated desk. During this time they still partake in class work.

The child may be asked to discuss their behaviour with the teacher.

The child may also be asked to meet with the principal.

The child may be asked to write an account of their behaviour to be signed by his/her Parents/Guardians.

Letter/note from teacher in homework notebook to be signed by Parents/Guardians

If misbehaviour continues, the student may be removed to the other classroom for a ‘cool down’ period (15 minutes). The student is given an assignment/classwork to complete during this time and will be encouraged to reflect on their behaviour.

In the case of homework that hasn’t been done and where there is no explanatory note in the homework journal, pupils may be asked to complete it at a time designated by the teacher e.g. when the rest of the class are completing informal activities such as art, PE, drama or Golden Time.

Detention at break-times may be used for minor and serious misbehaviour. Pupils will sit in their classroom for up to fifteen minutes at lunch time. Detention will be supervised by the teacher on duty. Pupils may be required to complete a reflection piece.

Parents/Guardians will be informed as soon as it is perceived that difficulties are developing with regard to their child's behaviour. Teachers may write a note in the homework notebook to be signed by Parents/Guardians. Parents/Guardians may also be informed by phone.

The child may be asked to keep a reflection journal. This will be sent home for the attention of the parents. This includes a checklist of examples of misbehaviour and also behaviour reflection exercises. The parent will be asked to co-operate with the correct management of the journal and it will be pointed out that the journal is to record also positive notes about improved behaviour.

If the misbehaviour continues or in the case of a serious incident, the Parents/Guardians will be requested to meet the class teacher:

In the event of ongoing incidents of serious or gross misbehaviour, the Parents/Guardians will be invited to a meeting with the Principal and class teacher. A meeting may also be arranged with the Parents/Guardians, principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

In the case of a serious or gross misbehaviour the pupil may be kept in detention at all/some breaks for a specified period. Parents/Guardians will be informed of such detention.

In the event of a gross incident of misbehaviour or where a pupil is continuously disruptive he/she may be suspended by the Principal/Board of Management for a minor fixed period of one to three school days. The procedures for suspension are outlined below.

Suspension and Expulsion

Normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension. 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.

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances:

The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students

The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a possible threat to safety

The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour.

The Board of Management and Staff of St. Joseph's N.S. Rathdonnell will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

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/Guardians will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at any time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupil or staff of the school, or any other person. Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in very serious/gross misbehaviour. In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil the Staff and the BOM will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student. These factors include, the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the context of the behaviour, the impact of the behaviour, the intervention tried to date, whether suspension is a proportionate response and the possible impact of suspension.

PROCEDURES IN RELATION TO SUSPENSION:

Communication to Parents/Guardians regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact Parents/Guardians by phone.

The Parents/Guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension. 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.

The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted. The Parents/Guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.

Where Parents/Guardians do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to Parents/Guardians. A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective.

The letter will confirm:

The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.

The reason for the suspension

Any programme of study to be followed

The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the Parents/Guardians (for example, the pupil and Parents/Guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)

The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29)

The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB 'Student Absence Report Form' (when applicable).

When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the class teacher or principal. The school will help the pupil to catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school with a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

If a pupil continues to misbehave he/she may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's Parents/Guardians to

address the issue.

As outlined above, Parents/Guardians/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.

The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.

Section 29 Appeal –when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the Parents/Guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION

Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with Parents/Guardians, if serious incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management.

The grounds for expulsion include the following:

The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

The pupils continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.

The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management.

In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil the BOM will refer to the factors to be considered before proposing to expel a student. These factors are similar to those mentioned above in relation to suspension.

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be expelled for a first offence.

Procedures in respect of expulsion:

A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

A recommendation to the Board of Management.

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

Board of Management deliberation and actions following the hearing.

Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Note: A detailed outline of each of these is available in Chapter 12 of the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour. This is available in the school office or can be accessed on the NEWB Website – www.newb.ie

Section 29 Appeals. A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (DES). A form for such an appeal is available from the DES

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.