



## Code of Behaviour Policy

---

This policy was revised in January 2019 by a team of teachers in consultation with staff, parents and Board of Management.

### Rationale

St. Mochta's National School is committed to the realisation of the following goals for all of our pupils.

- To enable the child to live a full life in a happy, caring and safe school environment in which there is a sense of order and discipline
- To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning

Every effort is made to ensure that our code is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The school will make every effort to provide support for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs and make referral to outside support agencies when necessary.

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within our school and to achieve this, we maintain a high level of co-operation among all the staff and between staff, pupils and parents.

A Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The Code of Behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, pupils and parents to work together for a happy effective and safe school.

A Code of Behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1).

This school's Code of Behaviour supports the principles, initiatives and procedures for good practice as outlined in the two documents-

- *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*
- *Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support (NEPS 2009)*

Mission Statement:

Our school motto is:

*"Everyone has opportunities to succeed, everyone is treated with respect".*

The following Code of Behaviour Policy has been devised with this motto in mind.

St. Mochta's National School has a Catholic ethos. Our school is a diverse and inclusive school. We are committed to ensuring all members of our school community can work together in a safe, happy and harmonious manner. We promote a school environment that is welcoming, fair, caring and respectful to all, while recognising and celebrating difference and equality.

## **Aims:**

In the implementation of this Code of Behaviour we aim:

1. To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
2. To enhance the learning environment where children can progress in all aspects of their development.
3. To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
4. To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, while recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
5. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures in our code and to seek their co-operation in their application.
6. To ensure that our systems of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
7. To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of our school community at all times.

## **School Procedures:**

1. School starts at 8.50am. All pupils are expected to arrive on time and to assemble on the class line in the playground before the 8.50am bell. On wet mornings, children from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes go directly to their classrooms and children from 3<sup>rd</sup> Classes to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes line up in the hall.
2. Children remain in school each day until their correct finishing time. Infants finish at 1.30pm and all other classes finish at 2.30pm.
3. Children arriving to school prior to the 8.50am bell are expected to follow the relevant 'early morning' procedures for their class level. Children must follow directions and advice of school staff at this time.
4. On wet mornings between 8.30am and 8.50am, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes will line up in the hall. Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes will go directly to their classes.
5. On wet days, during break times, children are expected to remain in their seats in the classroom and follow directions of staff on duty.
6. All visitors to the school should enter through the front door and make themselves known to reception staff. Visitors will be required to sign in and wear a visitors badge before proceeding into the school.
7. Children are never allowed to release the exit button at the front door for any caller.
8. Children arriving to and leaving school must follow the entry and exit procedures specific to each class level. Parents are asked to co-operate with this arrangement at all times.
9. It is a strict rule that children walk into and out of school, on corridors and on stairs, and do so very quietly so as not to disturb the other classes.
10. Children should keep to the left when walking up and down stairs and hold railings at all times.
11. A note from parents is required when a pupil:
  - Has been absent (please refer to our Attendance Policy)
  - Has to leave school during hours
12. A parent must always collect or arrange for another person to collect the child if he/she is required to leave during school hours. A child may not leave the school early without supervision.

13. All persons must treat all school furniture and property with respect. Chewing gum is banned.

### **Expected Behaviour**

In addition to the school procedures outlined above, children are expected to

- Be honest, truthful and co-operative
- Show respect for self and others while in school and while wearing the school uniform and have respect for school property, furniture and equipment
- Treat every person equally and with respect
- Reply in a mannerly fashion, correctly addressing teachers
- Speak politely and with good manners at all times and towards all persons
- Recognise that each pupil deserves a share of the teacher's time
- Remain seated, at his/her own place in the classroom, unless otherwise instructed by the teacher
- Be tidy in appearance and uphold our school uniform as follows:
  - Wear required uniform at all times
  - Keep long hair tied back
  - If wearing earrings, wear only stud types (long/hoop earrings are not allowed)
  - False nails, make up or fake tan are not allowed to be worn in school
- Do their best in school and when doing their homework (please refer to our Homework Policy)
- Wait their turn in class and allow others to learn in the classroom
- Follow teacher's instructions and respect their advice
- Uphold the Code of Behaviour

### **School Rules**

Children are expected to follow these rules at all times.

- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Keep school environment clean and green
- Speak to please and not to tease
- Present homework in a neat and tidy fashion
- Respectful, kind and appropriate language is expected of all pupils at all times
- In the event of any systematic bullying, verbal, physical or psychological, tell any member of the teaching staff. (Please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy for further guidance.)
- Spitting, biting or throwing objects will not be tolerated
- Be aware of personal safety and safety of others at all times

### **Rules for Playground**

While using our playgrounds, children must

- Keep hands, feet and comments to yourself. Speak to please and not to tease.
- Avoid wrestling/martial arts moves or 'fighting games'
- Include others
- Stay within yard boundaries
- Never leave play area during breaks without the permission of the teacher on duty
- Tell teacher on yard duty if you have a problem

- Line up quietly when bell rings
- Walk in orderly fashion to classroom
- Follow all instructions/advice given by teachers and SNAs on playgrounds

### **Class Rules**

Each teacher will have their own classroom rules which will be consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour. These rules will be kept to a minimum and be written in clear, simple language, stated positively, telling children what to do, as well as what not to do. They will be based on a clear rationale that is explained, understood and agreed and developed in the classroom. They will be communicated and referred to regularly.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

In St. Mochta's National School we endeavour to recognise and reward good behaviour. This may include any or all of the following strategies:

- Teacher approval
- Peer approval
- Visual Display of Excellence i.e. progress chart, stars, merit stickers, stamps
- Dispensation from homework
- Delegation of some special privilege or responsibility
- A mention to a parent - either written or verbal
- A range of reward systems may be utilised within the classroom and these are devised by individual class teachers

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions for misbehaviour will be relative to the misdemeanour. The following is a range of sanctions that may be employed.

1. Teacher reasoning with the pupil, making him/her aware of inappropriate behaviour and its impact on others, suggesting correct behaviour
2. Verbal reprimand
3. Extra assignments
4. Thinking Cards (see Appendix A)
5. Time appropriate removal from the situation within class or in a similar class level
6. Loss of privileges
7. Detention for period of break time with supervision of Teacher
8. Referral to designated staff member/Deputy Principal/Principal
9. Communication with Parent/Guardian
10. Exclusion from school tour, following consultation with Principal
11. Suspension
12. Expulsion

Sanctions will be used according to a pupil's age/maturity and taking personal and family circumstances and other relevant factors into account. They will take account of the pupil's behaviour to date and the seriousness of the offence.

The objectives of a sanction are to help the student to learn and to change behaviour.

Sanctions may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills as in the case of any student. The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students including those identified with special educational needs.

Sanctions within the classroom are at the discretion of the classroom teacher consistent with the strategies outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

### **Aggressive or violent behaviour**

If a child is presenting with emotional or behavioural difficulties, appropriate support may be sought from available services including the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

### **Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour**

#### Minor Misdemeanours

- Disrespect for self and/or others
- Hurtful behaviour (including lying, name calling, exclusion)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning (including disruption in class, talking out of turn, not completing homework regularly, inappropriate language)
- Failure to adhere to school procedures outlined in this policy
- Failure to adhere to school rules outlined in this policy

#### Serious Misdemeanours

Serious misdemeanours include:

- Bullying in any form (see our Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Serious and recurring hurtful behaviour (including lying, name calling, harassment, discrimination, victimisation)
- Serious and recurring interference with teaching and learning.
- Defiance of teacher or any member of staff
- Threats of physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Use of phones and/or recording devices within school grounds (please refer to our ICT Acceptable Use Policy)

#### Gross Misdemeanours

A gross misdemeanour may include any of the above serious misdemeanours if the behaviour is recurring or escalating in nature. Gross misdemeanours also include:

- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberate activation of school alarm
- Indecent behaviour
- Substance use

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour, discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Bringing illegal or dangerous objects or devices or materials in to school, classroom or playground

\* ***The above lists are not exhaustive***

#### Consequences of Unacceptable Behaviour

In deciding on the consequences of serious and other misbehaviour these rights based on the principles of natural justice will apply.

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality
- The right to appeal

This policy aims to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in an environment that is safe and conducive to the child's development and learning.

#### **Consequences of Serious Misbehaviour:**

The following procedure is followed in a case of serious misbehaviour:

1. A teacher will report behavioural concerns to the principal and/or deputy principal.
2. The teacher will present the child or children involved at the principal's office where an interview will be held. This interview will be attended by the principal and/or deputy principal and the teacher concerned. The interview will determine events that have occurred and seek to elicit an understanding and acceptance of responsibility in the children concerned.
3. If more than one child is involved there may be separate interviews with each child. This may be followed by a group interview.
4. Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all concerned.
5. Following interview it may be decided that the child should write a written reflection on their behaviour. This piece of work will be completed at home and signed by a parent or guardian.
6. The principal or deputy principal will hold a follow-up meeting with the child in which the written work will be reviewed.

#### **Consequences of gross misbehaviour**

In cases of gross misbehaviour the above steps will be taken along with a meeting with the child's parents.

- It may be decided that the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to their own safety or that of others.
- If misbehaviour continues the Board of Management becomes involved, with a view to suspension/expulsion.
- These meetings may be followed by a suspension from 1-10 days.

- The Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board has the authority to suspend for one day with immediate effect.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil are as follows:
  - The pupil and his/her parents meet with Principal and/or Deputy Principal
  - Adequate recompense be decided and agreed
  - The Code of Discipline should be signed by the pupils' parents
  - Assurance given that the Code of Discipline will be observed and of parent co-operation in its observance
- Expulsion of the child may be deemed necessary.  
Expulsion may be challenged under Section 29 of the Educational Welfare Act, 2000 by Parents/Guardians.

## **Roles of Education Partners**

### **Role of Parent/Guardian:**

Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline. For this reason, parents are required to sign the acceptance form supporting the implementation of the Behaviour Policy for St Mochta's National School. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules.

### **Role of Teacher:**

The teaching staff seeks to promote a strong sense of community within the school, which involves a high level of cooperation among staff and between pupils and parents. Staff will respond promptly and firmly to any instance of unacceptable behaviour during school hours or whilst in a supervisory capacity.

### **Role of Principal:**

The overall responsibility for discipline within a school rests with the Principal. The Principal will always endeavour to facilitate meetings between parents and teachers. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline is administered in a manner, which is consistent and fair to all pupils. The Principal will be assisted in this regard by the Deputy Principal, teachers and all other school personnel.

### **The Role of the B.O.M:**

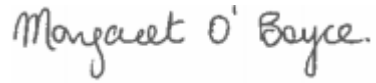
The Board of Management is supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair Code of Behaviour and Discipline within the school.

This policy is open to review by the Board of Management.

Ratified and signed on behalf of the Board of Management of St. Mochta's National School.



**Tony Rock  
Chairperson**



**Margaret O'Boyce  
Acting Principal**

19<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Date**