

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement:

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed in September 2016.

Rationale:

The Board of Management of Abbeyleix South National 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*.

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- 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. It details in Section 23(2), that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:
 1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
 2. The measure that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
 3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned
 4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student and
 5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school:

The staff of the South School strives to create an atmosphere in school where all pupils are equally valued and respected – irrespective of gender, social background, race, family circumstance or intellectual functioning. The staff also wishes to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour, discipline and achievement in the school. This involves a strong sense of community and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents.

Pupils will experience a sense of caring and belonging. Their spiritual, moral and religious development is encouraged, as is their intellectual, social and academic development. All efforts will be made by staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour and achievement. Greater emphasis will be placed on reward rather than on sanction.

Aims:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create 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 part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their cooperation 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

Guidelines for behaviour in our school:

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the 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. It is well-recognised that communication with parents is a key factor in the elimination of behavioural difficulties in schools. For this reason, parents will always be kept up-to-date with regard to behavioural issues, as required. As a general principle, parents are involved at the early stages of behavioural difficulties rather than as a last resort.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
 - Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
 - Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
 - Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Factors influencing children's behaviour may be considered and accommodated. Parents complete a Registration Form once their child has been offered a place. The Principal teacher then provides the parents of the pupil with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour, requiring parents to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour provided is understood by them and acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with this code by their child.

Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour:

In Abbeyleix South National School, a whole school approach is taken to promoting positive behaviour and classroom management, where we have an inclusive and involved school community.

Principal's Responsibilities:

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required

Staff Responsibilities:

All teaching staff of Abbeyleix South National School play an important role in supporting and implementing the school's Code of Behaviour. Each staff member is expected to:

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

- Cater for children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs by drawing up an I.E.P. with behavioural targets in conjunction with the S.E.T. (Special Education Team) and parents
- To facilitate new members of staff in becoming familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the Code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the Code will be included in all teachers' documents. The Code will also be given to parents whenever they enroll a child in the school.

Board of Management Responsibilities:

The Board of Management is expected to:

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment for staff and pupils
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour
- Provide opportunities for staff development
- Deal with serious breaches of behaviour by following the procedures that are in place

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

- Being familiar with the Code of Behaviour and by supporting its implementation
- Encouraging their children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property
- Ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually
- Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Being aware of and cooperating with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Attending meetings at the school if requested
- Helping their children with homework and by ensuring that it is completed
- Ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- Co-operating with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicating with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/behaviour

Pupils' Responsibilities:

In our school pupils played an important part in the drafting and implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

Pupils in each classroom have drafted a set of classroom rules which are on display and are referred to regularly.

Pupils are expected to:

- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Have respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities

- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules

Positive strategies for Managing Behaviour:

The following positive strategies are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

In the Classroom:

- Behavioural expectations are set in each classroom that are consistent with the ethos of Abbeyleix South National School, as expressed in the Code of Behaviour, and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- Pupils have input in devising their own class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour. A Parent/Teacher Communication Booklet is sent home weekly to be signed by parents
- Teachers ensure that a variety of activities and methodologies are used to sustain pupil interest and motivation

In the playground:

All teaching staff use the following positive strategies to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour in the playground.

- It is made clear to pupils what activities are permitted. These activities are communicated to staff at staff meetings and to pupils at the beginning of the school year
- The pitch, basketball court and tarmacadamed areas are used at playtime with 4 teachers and 2 SNAs on duty observing 100 pupils
- On wet days board games, Lego, stickle bricks etc are played in pupils' classrooms with the class teacher responsible for supervising her own class
- Pupils are expected to stand in line and walk quietly returning from the playground
- Pupils walk out of the school building only when a teacher has walked out into the playground before them
- Pupils remain in the yard until they are allowed to return to the Classroom
- All pupils ask for permission to leave the playground to use the toilets
- No pupil is allowed to remain in their own classroom unsupervised due to illness etc. if their teacher is on supervision duty. The pupil is supervised by another teacher free from supervision duty on that day
- The teachers on supervision duty report to the class teacher any incidents of misbehaviour
- Pupils are given "Time Out" standing in near proximity to the teacher on duty

Other areas in the school:

Pupils are reminded regularly of the school rules and expectations, particularly at the start of the school year when the class teacher talks with all pupils during September.

School related activities:

Pupils are reminded of the standard of behaviour expected of them during school tours, extra curricular activities and school linked events. Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where the pupils are representing Abbeyleix South National School as they are STILL the responsibility of the school.

Rewards and Sanctions:

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions in our school.

Rewards / Incentives:

The following rewards/incentives are used in Abbeyleix South National School.

- Verbal praise or gesture to show approval, made by classteacher/principal
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class
- Positive comment made by class teacher to principal
- Positive written comment in Communication Booklet from teacher to be signed by parent
- Verbal praise of child at formal/informal meeting with parents
- Positive note on child's work
- Individual prizes from teacher, e.g. rubbers, sharpeners, stickers, felt pens, pens, pencils
- Work exhibited
- Special Class treat e.g. extra break time occasionally
- Additional toy time for Infant classes

Sanctions:

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies are to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development.

Initial Instances:

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote and reinforce good behavior.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and/or the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies.

Classification of Misbehaviours:

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour.

The following lists indicate Minor, Serious and Gross Misbehaviours.

Minor Misbehaviour:

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Interrupting class work
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school

- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Name calling
- Minor infringement of the school rules
- Persistent talking out of turn
- Answering back a teacher disrespectfully
- Bringing a mobile phone to school and not handing it into the office during school hours

The following sanctions will be applied for Minor Misbehaviour, with due regard to age, emotional development and children with Special Needs.

- Reason with pupils including advise on the consequences of their actions
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Removal from the group in class
- Minor misbehavior recorded by teacher. Speak with parent in person or through a phone call
- A daily behaviour note book for Infant children if deemed necessary

Serious Misbehaviour:

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damage others' property
- Bullying
- Persistently answering back a teacher disrespectfully
- Using unacceptable language repeatedly
- Deliberate, continual disobedience

The following sanctions will be applied for Serious Misbehaviours, with due regard to age, emotional development and children with Special Needs.

- Instances of repeated serious misbehaviour recorded by Class Teacher in Incident Book
- Send child directly to the Principal
- Principal and class teacher communicate verbally with parents
- Class teacher and/or Principal meet with one/both parents
- Teacher on yard duty supervision, class teacher and Principal meet with one/both parents if misbehaviour occurred in playground
- Inform Chairperson of the Board of Management, request parents to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal
- Issue formal letter from Principal to inform parent of continuous misbehaviour
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour

Gross Misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school

- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community
- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps, fire hose etc. turned on
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting

The following sanctions will be applied for Gross Misbehaviours, with due regard to age, emotional development and children with Special Needs.

- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson
- Request parents to meet with Chairperson and the Principal
- Formal report to the Board of Management
- Suspension (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000) will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion

Suspension/Expulsion/Appeals:

Before suspension the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

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. The Board of Management will inform the NEWB when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

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):

The parents must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school Code of Behaviour 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, in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Appeal:

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

Expulsion:

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case (see p.81 Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/ expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

Expulsion:

This procedure may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000

Grounds for Expulsion

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- Pupil responsible for serious damage to property

Automatic Expulsion

Board of Management may automatically expel for certain prescribed behaviours:

- Sexual Assault
 - Possession of illegal drugs
 - Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
 - Actual violence or physical assault
 - Serious threat of violence against other pupil or member of staff
- Procedures in respect to Automatic Expulsion and Expulsion
- Detail investigation by school principal
 - Recommendation by principal to Board of Management
 - Board of Management considers Principal recommendation and holds hearing
 - Board of Management decision, is expulsion appropriate? If Board of Management recommends expulsion, the Board of Management will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
 - Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
 - Parents of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
 - Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
 - Confirmation of decision

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour:

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour, because of educational needs. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home.

Appeals:

Under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

Keeping records:

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of all communications with parents/ guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in the "Classroom Incident Book" and are retained until students reach 21 years. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school:

The *Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, Section 18, requires parents to notify the Principal of a school of the reasons for a child's absence. Section 23 of the same Act requires the Code of Behaviour of a school to outline the procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school. In compliance with these sections, the following procedures apply.

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. A book of Absence Slips is given to each family at the beginning of the school year. Teachers keep these slips on file and the Principal collects them when filling in NEWB returns at the end of each quarter.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21(4) requires a School Principal to inform an Educational Welfare Officer in writing if the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from school during a school year is 20 days or more. Additionally, Section 21(4) authorises the School Principal to notify an Educational Welfare Officer if, in the opinion of the Principal, a child "is not attending school regularly".

Abbeyleix South National School uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the NEWB.

Success Criteria:

- 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.

Roles and Responsibility:

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The Principal, teachers and SNAs will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the policy.

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour:

- Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community.
- Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's Homework diary which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening.
- In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour.

Conclusion:

The essence of our Code of Behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self discipline

Timetable for Review:

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed annually.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy will be circulated to the parent body after ratification.

Ratified by Board of Management on; _____Date

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management