

Rathfarnham Parish National School

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR



PREAMBLE

This whole school code of behaviour has been published by the Board of Management of Rathfarnham Parish National School ("the Board") in accordance with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 (and, in particular, section 23 thereof) and was revised in accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines in 2009 following consultation with the School's principal and teaching staff, parents of students attending the School and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to the School.

GENERAL

The philosophy and ethos of this Church of Ireland School is to ensure that all pupils are equally valued and respected. The school policy on behaviour is to create a harmonious environment nurturing the potential of all the pupils and accepting/embracing difference. It is based on reward as well as on compliance and sanction. The school ethos promotes close and positive co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. Disruptive behaviour is contrary to this ethos and undermines the values held by the school. A school climate rewarding positive school behaviour will be fostered.

This code of behaviour:

- Reflects the vision, mission and values of this Church of Ireland school community and its Patron.
- Translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students.
- Helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where good standards of behaviour are expected and supported.
- Sets out the rationale for having a code of behaviour along with the roles and responsibilities of the school's partners in relation to its implementation.

It addresses:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school;
- The plan for promoting good behaviour
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- The plan for implementing the code;
- Procedures for reporting student absences;
- School procedures governing the use of suspension and expulsion.

The Whole School Behavioural Policy also applies in particular to the following school policies:

[Anti-bullying Policy](#)
[Substance use Policy](#)
[Special Education Needs Policy](#)
[Mobile Phone Policy](#)
[ICT Acceptable User Policy](#)
[School Tour Policy](#)

AIMS

The aims of the Code of Behaviour are:

- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To promote conditions for learning and teaching,

- To promote dignity and freedom from the threat of violence for both staff and students
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To acknowledge, respect and support children of differing abilities.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote a positive and safe working environment for all staff and students.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognizing the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the policies and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the framework of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

A strong sense of community and co-operation is required from staff, pupils and parents to implement the code. Emphasis will be placed on rewarding good behaviour rather than focusing on shortcomings. Parents will be kept fully informed of the behaviour of their children.

Notification of a child's absence from school

If a child is absent from school parents or guardians are requested to follow the procedures below:

- The school secretary or the principal should be notified by phone or by email on the morning of the first day of the child's absence.
- The school should be informed of the reason for the child's absence
- When the child returns to school parents or guardians should provide a written note explaining the absence

Should a child fail to arrive at school and there is no explanation from the parent /guardian, the school secretary or principal will contact the parent/guardian for an explanation and to ensure the child's safety.

Children with Additional Needs

Every effort will be made to have children with additional needs referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will also be sought from support services such as Department of Education and Science, NEPS, Tusla, NCSE etc. The Board recognizes that the earliest possible involvement of these agencies is in the best interests of the child. The Board reserves the right to insist that children whose behaviour is likely to be harmful to others be accompanied and supervised at break periods and when necessary and to exclude such children from the school where the safety of pupils and/or staff cannot otherwise be safeguarded.

Supervision

The school is responsible for the care of the pupils from their arrival at 08.20 to the time classes end. Designated staff are responsible for the supervision and control of pupils at break time. A timetable for yard supervision is drawn up by Mrs. England. Staff on duty must be in the yard promptly and maintain watchful supervision at all times. When the weather is wet or children are unable to go outside for any reason, staff stay in the classrooms to supervise pupils at break time. Pupils who have to stay inside due to special circumstances need a note from their parents.

The Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management has responsibility for governing the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students, parents and staff. The Board recognizes that promoting good behaviour and preventing misbehaviour are the main goals of the Code.

The Board of Management will ensure where possible, that:

- The Code of Behaviour is informed by the principles of fairness and administered in a fair and impartial manner.
- The school's policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour are implemented in the school.
- A stimulating and happy atmosphere, which is conducive to learning and teaching, is fostered within the school.
- No student is discriminated against.
- The Principal, staff, parents and students will be supported with regard to the administration of a fair and efficient code of behaviour.

The Role of the Principal Teacher

The Principal teacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school subject to the authority of the Board of Management and therefore has a central role to play in promoting good order and discipline.

The Principal teacher shall:

- Encourage a sense of collective responsibility among staff, pupils and parents, whilst fostering a sense of commitment to the school.
- Work to create a climate within which individuals in the school can fulfill their obligations and responsibilities.
- Ensure that the policy of behaviour and discipline is implemented in a manner, which is consistent and fair to all.
- Endeavour to ensure that appropriate support personnel both within and available to the school are involved to assist students and staff.
- Be supportive of individual teachers with regard to the administration of the code of behaviour.
- Deploy teachers in a way, which makes appropriate provisions for pupils with serious learning and behavioural problems.
- Consult with teachers when delegating specific responsibilities to pupils.
- Ensure effective communication between home and school.
- Ensure that staff members are familiar with the code of behaviour.
- Establish meaningful authority structures, through which teachers may actively participate in the organisation and management of the school.
- Establish meaningful structures and activities through which children may form an identity with the school and benefit from school life.

The Role of the Staff

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is one of the most important influences on student behaviour. Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

The teacher is responsible for the effective implementation of the school's code of behaviour within his or her classroom / SEN room and in the communal areas during recreation and other times in accordance with the established policy of the school.

All members of staff are expected:

- To adopt a positive approach to behaviour.
- To compile a list of rules as they pertain to each class group.
- To discuss and explain the various rules and expectations as outlined in the school code of behaviour.

- To place emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions.
- To support the belief that positivity will produce the best results.
- To recognize the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To make efforts to enable each child to reach his or her full potential
- To foster and encourage a strong sense of community and co-operation between staff, pupils, parents and board members.
- To plan and organize their work to keep pupils interest and minimize the opportunities for disruption.

The Role of the Pupil

Pupils are expected

- To show courtesy and consideration at all times
- To have respect for their own property and the property of others
- To have respect for the school building and its environs
- To attend school on a regular basis and be punctual
- To do his/her best both in school and for homework
- To adhere to school rules

The Role of the Parents

Parents have a most important role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in school. Consequently, the school needs the support of parents in order to achieve a level of order which will ensure the optimal development of all its pupils. Clearly, therefore, a high level of co-operation and communication between parents and school staff is essential. Parents should take full advantage of all formal and informal channels of communication within the school.

Parents are expected

- To be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school
- To explain the Code of Behaviour to their children
- To show support for teachers in their implementation of this Code of Behaviour
- To keep in contact with teachers regarding their child's progress
- To support their child in their schoolwork and homework
- To ensure punctuality and regular attendance
- To promote respect for teachers and other school personnel
- To be available to discuss a problem

Strategies to affirm and promote good behaviour.

The day-to-day excellence of school and classroom management enables most students to behave in ways that supports their own learning and development. Teachers and staff use a wide range of strategies for promoting good behaviour and for minimising misbehaviour at both school and class level.

We encourage our students to behave well by:

- Praising and affirming their homework, classwork, behaviour, and by writing commendations in diaries and copybooks.
- Displaying their work as much as possible, which provides opportunities for the Principal and/or colleagues to affirm good work and/or behaviour when visiting classrooms.
- Recognising participation, achievement and contribution to the school across a wide range of areas such as behaviour, sports, art, music, drama, and academics.
- Giving children responsibility in the school and involving them in the preparation and implementation of school and classroom rules.

- Giving children opportunities to discuss and compile classroom rules in line with the code of behaviour, so that they understand that it is important, fair and that they have a role in making it work.
- Setting high expectations for student behaviour with clear and consistent standards.
- Creating a happy school atmosphere whereby parents, teachers and pupils support each other and interact positively together.
- Modelling the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Creating good school and classroom routines, and setting and implementing clear boundaries and rules for students.
- Monitoring student behaviour by recording individual incidents.
- Helping students to acquire values of good behaviour through specific subjects such as SPHE, R.E. and Drama.
- Utilising SEN resources and professional support services for students who require support.
- Putting in place appropriate supervisory management structures for overseeing school discipline.

Strategies which may be used to prevent and correct unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Advising and alerting students to the consequences of inappropriate behaviour
- Reprimanding students (including advising and practising how to improve).
- Temporarily separating students from peers, friends or others.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention during a break.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Confiscating disruptive items.
- Referral to the Principal.
- Communicating with parents.
- Suspension (temporary)
- Expulsion

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF A STUDENT

Context

All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. There may be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it would be in the best interests of the school community and/or the student involved, for the student to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and expulsion are the options available to the Board of Management in these situations.

The Grounds for Suspension

When making a decision on a suspension the school considers that suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, a range of appropriate student welfare and behavioural interventions will have been tried before suspension, and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons as to why these have not worked. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

The decision to suspend a student is not taken lightly and requires serious grounds such as:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education and/or welfare of other student/s and/or staff and on the administration and management of the school.

- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

The following Factors will be considered before a pupil is suspended:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of suspension

Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of the school has the authority to suspend a student. This authority is delegated in accordance with procedure by the Board to the Principal in the event an immediate suspension of not longer than one day is warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others. The Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal are authorized to impose a suspension, up to and including 3 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. This authority will be exercised by them having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to the principles of procedural fairness.

All longer term suspensions can only be imposed by the Board of Management.

Procedures to be followed in respect of suspension

When proposing to suspend a pupil the school authority will apply the principles of fair procedure. Where a preliminary assessment of an incident confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the following procedures will apply:

- A formal investigation will be conducted
- The pupil and parent will be given details of the complaint and any other information that will be taken into account and will be given an opportunity to give their side of the story and if necessary to ask questions about the evidence of the serious misbehaviour.

The period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for a period exceeding 3 days. However the Board may authorize the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to three days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The maximum period that may be imposed by the Board for any one suspension is 10 days unless the Board is considering expulsion.

Notification of suspension

The Principal will notify the pupil and the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The notification will confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
- The right of appeal to either the Board of Management or the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Appealing a suspension

Parents who wish to appeal a decision of the school to suspend should discuss the matter with the school principal who will inform them of their rights. An appeal may be made by a parent/guardian if they consider that correct procedures have not been followed, or that an unfair decision has been made. An appeal should be made in writing stating the reason for the appeal.

The decision of the Principal to suspend a pupil may be appealed only to the Board of Management.

The decision of the Board of Management to suspend a pupil may be appealed to the Patron. Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the suspension may be appealed to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management/Patron decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Procedure for re-introduction of student.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and reports

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all the interviews held)
- The decision making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension and also to the NEWB as required.

Report to Tusla

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the National Education Welfare Board reporting guidelines [Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 (4)(a)]

EXPULSION

The Grounds for Expulsion

The Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The step to expel student is very serious and will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Factors to Consider Before Proposing Expelling a Student

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour

- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of expulsion

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 will be applied where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion.

The procedural steps will include:

- The parents and student will be informed in writing that a detailed investigation in line with fair procedures will be carried out under the direction of the Principal to ascertain the veracity of the allegations and will be given an opportunity to give their side of the story and if necessary to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour.
- The Principal will make a recommendation to the Board.
- The parents and student will be provided with all details and invited to a hearing with the Board.
- The Board of Management will consider the recommendation and conduct a hearing in accordance with fair procedure.
- The Board will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will inform the Educational Welfare Officer to that effect.

The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives a written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, S24(1)). A Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time.

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Educational Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Educational Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, S4a).

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision of the Board of Management to expel a student to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science. An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student. All appeals must be made in writing.

Implementing the Code of Behaviour

The success of the code of behaviour depends on having a good plan for its implementation. The essential elements of an implementation plan are:

- Communicating the code
- Teaching students the behavioural and learning skills they need
- Identifying the educational and care needs of individual students
- Securing parental support for the code
- Monitoring behaviour in the school
- Reviewing the code

Communicating the code of behaviour

The Code of Behaviour will be communicated to parents by providing them with a copy of the code and/or by making the code available to them on-line on the school website. A copy of

the code will be provided to all parents when they enrol their child in the school. The Principal will discuss the code with new parents at the annual induction meeting. Teachers will also refer to the code at the class meetings held at the beginning of the school year. Parents are expected to support the school's Code of Behaviour and to ensure that their children attending the school support it.

Essential elements of the code are published in the Student's Journal each year and are available to students and parents.

Teaching the code and building student confidence and competence

The school will define and teach the behaviours which it expects from the students in order to foster in them the skills to manage their own behaviour and to respond appropriately to the behaviour of others. This will include:

- Explaining the code to all pupils at the beginning of each school year.
- Referring to the code in class on a regular basis and applying the values in class and throughout the school.
- Clarifying students' understanding of expected behaviours at appropriate times.
- Teaching and discussing appropriate and inappropriate behaviour with students as situations arise.
- Providing opportunities for students to learn and practice the rules.
- Using the Social, Personal and Health Education and R.E. programmes to teach skills for responsible behaviour and relationships.
- Assisting students with special educational needs to understand and observe the code.

Building relationships with parents

Parental understanding and support for the implementation of the code of behaviour is strengthened through activities such as:

- the induction meeting for parents of new students which introduces them to the organization and management of the school and its policies including the code of behaviour.
- encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school.
- alerting parents to concerns about a student's behaviour, so that ways of helping the student can be discussed and agreed
- having clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a student, and explore ways of helping the student
- providing information sessions through the Parent Teacher Association, such as talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development
- Involving parents in reviewing and planning appropriate school policies, as part of school development planning.

Monitoring behaviour in the school

The school needs to know how the code is working and if it is achieving its goals. Therefore the school has arrangements in place for reporting, monitoring, and recording misbehaviour which include written records of incidents in the child's file, record of bullying incidents and discussion on behaviour as needed at staff meetings.

Clear communication between Staff, supervisory staff, SEN teachers and the Principal is essential for the sharing of information and addressing difficulties.

Reviewing the code

The process of reviewing the code of behaviour is part of a continuous cycle arising from the use of the code in the school. It draws on a range of sources of information and evidence, including the experience and views of students, teachers and other staff and parents. It uses this information and analysis to plan ways to strengthen the operation of the code.