

Ss. PETER & PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, CLONMEL.

CODE OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

INTRODUCTION.

The school is justifiably proud of its excellent record of good behaviour amongst pupils. This record has been achieved through our system of encouraging the best in our pupils. Parents, Teachers, the School Principal and the Board of Management work together to do their best for every child.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

This code of discipline has been formulated by the Principal, the Teaching Staff and the Parents Council, in full consultation with the Board of Management (per Circular 7/88).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

Every child has the right to an education in a disruption free environment, and to be helped to achieve his full potential. This can only be brought about through a positive attitude to good behaviour. In this way, pupils will be enabled to grow in self-confidence and foster a respect for each other and for legitimate authority. Every teacher has a right to educate pupils without undue disruption.

Therefore, the following guiding principles are the foundation for our School's Code of Good Behaviour:

1. Every child has the right to be loved and cherished; it is only when the children know that they are valued and special that the best results will be achieved.
2. Parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes, which produce good behaviour in school.
3. The rights of pupils, teachers and parents will be observed at all times.
4. The school places emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions as we believe that, in the long run, this will give the best results.
5. The School recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
6. The Code will be administered in a consistent and fair manner for all pupils.
7. Parents will be kept informed of occasions of good behaviour or improvement in behaviour. They will be advised early of any misbehaviour, in order that the child's needs can be met before any problem becomes more serious.

Aims of the code.

- To create a positive 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 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, access to 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 climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty 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.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR.

Part of the vision of Ss. Peter and Paul's is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our system seeks to provide encouragement to children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Good behaviour is as highly regarded as academic achievement.

However, as all children are different, these are guidelines and not absolute rules, and as such will be applied at the discretion of the Teacher, who will have the best interests of the child as their first priority.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given.

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR.

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. Everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious behaviour or single instance of gross behaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

1. MINOR MISBEHAVIOUR.

As implied, minor misbehaviour is an action on the part of a pupil which does not cause serious harm to the pupil, other pupils, staff or property, but which contributes to a disruptive environment in the school. The kind of transgressions contemplated here would include but are not limited to the following:

- Eating in class

- Interrupting others
- Homework not done
- Wasting time
- Distracting others
- Running in corridor.
- Bringing a mobile phone to school

The following strategies will be used to deal with such misdemeanours:

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Reprimand, and advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from classmates or being sent to another classroom.
- Prescribing additional homework/lines.
- Loss of privileges (e.g. watching video).
- Repeated offences noted in the Discipline File.
- Parents informed after three entries in the Discipline File.
- Referral to School Principal after three (3) Discipline File entries, followed by meeting between parents, Principal and Class Teacher for discussion.
- *Yellow Card* issued after six (6) entries, i.e formal letter to parents from BOM.
- *Red Card* issued after nine (9) entries resulting in a three (3) day suspension imposed by the Principal who acts on behalf of the Board of Management.

2. **SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR.**

Serious misbehaviour consists of actions which may cause harm to the pupil, other pupils, staff or property, or is of an ongoing or disrespectful nature so as to disrupt the school environment.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include but are not limited to the following:

- Continued occurrence of minor misbehaviour constitutes serious misbehaviour.
- Disrespectful attitude to any member of the school staff.
- Teasing or intimidation.
- Falsely blaming others for transgressions.
- Noisy disruptive behaviour.
- Throwing objects.
- Telling lies.
- Truancy.
- Stealing.
- Deliberate disobedience.
- Abusing property.
- Bringing lewd materials to school.
- Kicking, pushing, fighting and spitting.
- Bad language.
- Using mobile phone in school.

Progressive sanctions needing to be applied would be as follows:

- Every deliberate act of serious misbehaviour will be recorded - Principal and parents informed.
- If a second such incident occurs the pupils will be given a yellow card.
- For a third offence, the parents will meet with the Class Teacher, the Principal and Board Chairperson, and will be reminded that a further occurrence will merit a suspension.
- For a further offence, the pupil will be given a red card and a minimum two-day suspension. The parents will be given details in writing and will be required to give a written commitment to co-operate fully with the school to ensure an improvement in the child's future behaviour.

- A recurrence of misbehaviour will merit a minimum three day suspension imposed by the principal with the prior sanction of the Board of Management with a warning that expulsion will be considered should the behaviour not improve.

3. GROSS MISBEHAVIOUR.

Gross misbehaviour consists of actions which imply or cause harm to the pupils, other pupils, staff or property, or behaviour of an ongoing or blatantly disrespectful nature which untowardly disrupts the school environment. Examples of gross misbehaviour include but are not limited to the following:

- Bullying, as defined in the Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools is '*unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time*'. c.f. Anti-bullying Policy.
- Threatening behaviour of a serious nature.
- Serious verbal or physical threat or assault on another pupil.
- Serious verbal or physical threat or assault on any member of the Staff.
- Serious theft.
- Malicious damage to school property or to the property of a staff member or pupil.
- Leaving the school during school hours, without permission.
- Using a mobile phone for recording purposes (photographs, video or audio) or using a mobile to send offensive remarks/bully other pupils.
- Having any type of illegal substance, including cigarettes, in their possession.
- Carrying any item, which could be construed as a weapon to inflict harm.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the board of Management has authorised the Principal to sanction an **immediate** suspension of from one to three days, depending on the severity of the misbehaviour. If possible, consultation with the Board of Management Chairperson should take place before the suspension is imposed. The suspension would be ratified at the earliest opportunity by the full Board of Management. A special meeting of the Board of Management would be necessary for any further or longer period of suspension. A written commitment to co-operate fully with the school to ensure an improvement in the child's future behaviour will be sought from the parents. As a last resort, expulsion would have to be considered by the Board.

Children with Special Needs.

All children are required to comply with the schools code of behaviour. There are no exceptions. 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.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Criteria for re-admitting a pupil after a suspension period has expired.

A child will be permitted to return to school after suspension when the following conditions have been met by parents/guardians and child.

1. The child is accompanied by his parents/guardian.
2. The child is brought to the Principal's office (not to the classroom).
3. Parents sign an agreement form stating their intention to do everything possible to ensure the good behaviour of their child in school.

4. Make good any damage caused to school property.
5. Child will furnish a written apology (or verbal depending on age of child) to appropriate school personnel (Staff/pupil).
6. Child will give an undertaking to abide by Code of Behaviour.
7. Parents will have to give a written undertaking to ensure that every effort will be made by them to help their child to abide by school rules and Code of Behaviour.
8. Any written punishment given while on suspension will have to be completed.

A refusal by either child and/or parent to fulfil the above criteria will result in the Board of Management refusing to re-admit the child to school.

At the end of twenty (20) days of exclusion and if the matter has still not been resolved the parents have the right to appeal the Board's decision to the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act.

EXPULSION.

The sanction of expulsion will only be used in exceptional circumstances when all other avenues have been exhausted. However, the school has a duty of care to all its pupils and employees. The Health and Safety at Work Act 2005 requires that Boards of Management conduct their business, as far as reasonably practicable, in ways that prevent improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of employees or the health and safety of pupils, parents or visitors at risk. Provisions relating to expulsion of a student are contained in section 24 of The Education Welfare Act 2000.

The authorities will be reserved for the Board of Management. Expulsion will be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The following steps will be undertaken to address misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion:

1. Meeting with parents and pupils to try to help the student change the behaviour
2. Making sure the pupil and parents understand the possible consequences of the behaviour
3. Exhausting all other possible options
4. Seeking the help of support agencies i.e. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive (HSE) National Council for Special Education (NCSE), National Behavioural Support Services (NBSS).

GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION.

1. The pupil's behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
2. The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
3. The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUSPENSION/EXPULSION.

Whilst the grounds may be similar there would be additional factors:

1. The degree, seriousness and persistence of the behaviour
2. Where expulsion is considered a series of interventions should have been tried by the school
3. All possibilities of changing the pupil's behaviour should have been exhausted.

EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE.

The BOM may impose automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours or in exceptional cases for a first offence. These behaviours may include, according to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB):

1. Sexual assault
2. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
3. Actual violence or physical assault
4. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION.

1. Detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. Recommendations will be made by the Principal to the BOM
3. BOM will consider Principal's recommendation and hold hearing
4. BOM will deliberate and will propose action following the hearing
5. Consultations will be arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel will be relayed to parents by letter.

FAIRNESS OF PROCEDURES.

The Constitution of Ireland gives rights to parents and pupils in the matter of education and these will be respected as fundamental in the school's Code of Behaviour. The requirement of fairness of procedures also derives from the constitution.

The BOM will adhere to two basic rules of fairness.

1. The parents' right to be heard i.e. the right to respond, the right to know what alleged misbehaviour is being investigated, the right to know how the issue is decided. If there is a possibility of a serious sanction the right to be heard by the Board of Management. If the dispute is about facts, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses.
2. The right to impartiality i.e. The right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision-maker comes to the task with an open mind.

Appeals from decision of Board of Managements to expel or to suspend for 20 days or more.

This remedy is open to parents who feel that the decision of a Board of Management to expel or suspend a pupil for more than 20 school days is a Section 29 appeal or judicial review.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in June 2016.