

CODE OF DISCIPLINE POLICY

To be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the school principal in consultation with a PPDS Advisor, all staff members, the members of the Board of Management, the senior students and the parents committee. It was devised during the third term of 2010 and reviewed during the first term of 2012-2013 school years.

Rationale

The Board of Management of St Laurence's decided to review the Behaviour Policy 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.

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:

- A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

St Laurence's N.S seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

1. Our aim in St Laurence's is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

2. This code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are used by our teachers. Greater emphasis will be placed on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will be in the long run, give the best results. All members of staff will make every effort to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
3. St Laurence's recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
4. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents.
5. The Board of management believes that respect for authority, concern for and courtesy towards others, constitute a high standard of behaviour for young children. Consequently specific regulations are not included in this code of behaviour.
6. Every effort will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest and lack of progress.
7. The overall responsibility for discipline rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within her/his classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order with the school premises. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for a serious breach of discipline and for repeated incidents of misbehaviour.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and their property.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and 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.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules" (see Appendix 1), each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through

consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they recorded in simple language and stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and form part of SPHE lessons.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. The Principal has delegated the on-going implementation to the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Discipline in the school. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time is allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code. Staff is given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

To facilitate new members of staff become 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 included, in the school booklet, will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

As part of school policy the Sticks and Stones Theatre Company deliver their antibullying programme to the 4th and 6th classes. This programme has been extended to cover such topics as cyber bullying, inappropriate use of mobile phones and Facebook. This visit coincides with the teaching of the "My friends and other People" SPHE lesson in the classroom and the staff agree that the additional focus on this subject is most beneficial. Expansion of this arrangement to include those children in 2nd class has been suggested but is still under consideration.

Rewards and Sanctions

Good behaviour will be rewarded in the following ways:

- Praise
- Rewards- stars-badges
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;

- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- Special mention at assembly;
- Classroom Job privileges
- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication;
- End of year awards ceremony.
- Record of good behaviour

Unacceptable Behaviour

The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed. The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Time out/Sin bin (Age appropriate including advising child about reflecting on their behaviour);
- Temporary removal from peers, friends ,others;
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Reflection sheet (signed by parent and kept on file by teacher);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom (maximum stay one hour);
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians;
- Prescribing extra work (kept on file by teacher);
- Detention during breaks
- Withdrawal of privileges;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
- Formal written communication with parents/guardians;
- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;
- Formal meeting with parents/guardians;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion.

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 good behaviour and aim to “catch” repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

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

Parents will be informed at an early stage of all instances of serious misbehaviour. Teachers will keep a written record of all such instances as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious

sanctions, for example, suspensions, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with parents.

In the event of 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 have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6)

With parental consent an emotionally disturbed child will be referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also from support services within the wider community, for example, the Community Care Services provided by the Health Services Executive.

Before adopting this code, the Board of Management held consultations with the Parent's Association and with the teaching staff. This code is open to review at any time by parents or teachers- during the annual preparation of school manual it will be open to review.

The Board of management believes that to be a top class school the school must have the best possible relationship with parent. ~Every effort will be made by the Principal and Staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed,, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

By enrolling a pupil in St. Laurence's National School, pupils and parents are deemed to have accepted the school Code of Behaviour and discipline.

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 as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

Interrupting class work / Regularly arriving late for school / 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 / Talking out of turn.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal reprimand;
- Time out;
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Carrying out a useful task within the school;
- Noting instances of yard misbehaviour in the incident book and informing class teacher.

Regular Occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour

Regular occurrences of minor misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

Phase 1

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)

Phase 2

- Child will be sent to the teacher in charge of discipline and yard duty.
- Contact with parents informing parent of continuous misbehaviour;
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour, unless accompanied by parent/guardian;
- Class teacher and/ teacher in charge of discipline will meet with one/both parents;
- Formal meeting with Principal and parents.
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Persistently not working to full potential
- Damaging others' property
- Bullying
- Answering back a teacher
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Using unacceptable language
- Deliberate, continual disobedience.

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour

- Child will be sent to the / teacher in charge of Discipline/Principal
- An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book;
- Formal letter from school teacher in charge of discipline informing parent of misbehaviour;
- Class teacher or Yard duty teacher and Teacher in charge of discipline/Principal will meet with one/both parents;
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal;
- Suspension 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. Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

Regular Occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour

Regular Occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Parents will be invited to meet class teacher, the principal and/or the chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour;

Gross Misbehaviour

The following are examples of 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
- 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).
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

- Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned. The Board of Management has deferred responsibility to the Principal to impose an initial sanction of up to three days. Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act

(2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

- When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code 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 student (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.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the board and the principal.

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).

Misbehaviour on the Yard

Our children are given designated play times according to class and age to minimise behaviour.

Incidents of yard misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil/s misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following procedure may be followed:
 - Ask the pupil/s misbehaving to accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard;
 - Impose a period of "time out" – 5 to 15 minutes – where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
 - Inform the class teacher who will decide on the method of discipline

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 journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Teacher in charge of discipline will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the teacher in charge of discipline at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity. Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the teacher in charge of discipline may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty, Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

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 need. 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 a specific journal 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

Parents should notify the school by telephone or in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Reference to other Policies

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-Bullying Policy
- o Enrolment Policy
- o Health & Safety Policy

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____