



## Code of Behaviour

This code in St. Enda's National School is based on Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools as outlined by The National Education Welfare Board

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for cooperation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

### 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, availability of 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, 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

### School Rules

If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and wisely.

Respect and Courtesy: All pupils are expected to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of foul language and any form of bullying are unacceptable.

Punctuality: The official opening time is 9am, with supervision in place from 8.50am onwards for the safe arrival of pupils. Classes for infants end at 1.40pm. Classes for all other pupils end at 2.40pm. No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside these times.

Absences: Every absence of a child must be accounted for either by forwarding a note or by making contact with the school. If a child wishes to leave school early the parent/guardian should contact the school by phone/note. Children cannot leave the school grounds without the permission of the principal. Children can only be collected from school during the school day by their legal guardian or by designated person that the school has been informed about. Any uncertified absences over 20 days have to be reported to the Health Board.

Illness: Any infectious illness should be notified to the school immediately.

Personal Property: Children should have their names on their coats and other personal property such as schoolbooks, copies etc.

School Property and the School Environment: Pupils must respect all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free.

Healthy Lunch Policy: This prohibits sweets, chocolate, or crisps except on Fridays. No chewing gum is allowed in school at any time.

School Uniform: All pupils are expected to wear the School Uniform at all times, otherwise Parents should provide an explanation by note etc. Jewellery and clothes which present a health hazard should not be worn.

Mobile Phones: Children are not allowed bring mobile phones into school.

Birthday Invitations: The issuing of birthday invitations, cards etc. in school is forbidden as this can cause upset to children not included.

Bullying: Bullying of any kind is unacceptable (see Bullying Policy)

Breaks: Children are not allowed into the school building during breaks except to use the toilets. Yard monitors and toiler passes are used to support this system.

Homework: All pupils are expected to complete homework assignments, unless there is a genuine reason for not doing so, given to the class teacher in writing.

## Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

## Incentives

Part of the Mission Statement of Ballycanew National School is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own, individual best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly

noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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 exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
  
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege ▪ A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

All classes in the mainstream environment will operate a "Pupil of the Week" system where each week a student will be recognised for their positive influence on the school community or excellent application to school life. A specific board in the school lobby will be used for highlighting each week's recipients. Other reward systems e.g. class of the month, may be used also.

#### Unacceptable Behaviour

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

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a pupil or teacher
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

#### Restorative Practices

The Board of Management wishes to adopt a Restorative Practices approach to conflict resolution within the school environment wherever and whenever feasible. The staff received training in this process on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013. Ever since this approach has been utilised by staff throughout the school whenever the opportunity arises. The rationale and

protocols are outlined in the attached Appendix 1. The Board approved the adoption of Restorative Practices as an integral part of the school's Code of Behaviour on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

## Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
  
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Communication with parents
7. Referral to Principal
8. Principal communicating with parents
9. Detention during break
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

However sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child, who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

## Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

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.

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.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### 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 will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. 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.

#### Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Monthly newsletter

#### Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

#### Ratification and Review

It was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, BOM

## Appendix One: Managing Behaviour on the School Yard

1. A high level of supervision is in place at all times in Ballycanew National School. Our school yard is divided up into class levels during break times. Each child must stay in their own area.
2. No pupil has permission to leave the yard without a pass from a teacher. Yard monitors are placed inside the entrance from the yard to ensure no pupils exit the yard without permission.
3. The senior yard (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>) are permitted to play basketball matches. No other competitive ball games take place on the yard. Younger students can use mobile basketball hoops to have throwing games at break times.
4. During dry weather, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class access the green space at the front of the yard.
5. Yard/Behaviour books are carried by teachers on yard duty. This is used to record incidents of positive and negative behaviour. These books are also available for use by teachers to record in-class incidents.
6. A walkie-talkie system is in place should extra staff be needed for any reason.
7. Children engaging in inappropriate behaviour may be given a time out on yard, being placed at a designated wall for a maximum of 10 minutes. Such sanctions are to be recorded in the yard book.



## Appendix Two: Restorative Practices

Restorative Justice/Practices is a process which engages all parties in a conflict to collectively identify and addresses harms, needs and obligations in order to heal relationships and put things as right as possible.

### Key Values of Restorative Discipline

- Creates an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility.
- Creates a commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgemental
- Encourages collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy

A Whole School Restorative approach can contribute to:

- Happier and safer schools
- Mutually respectful relationships
- More effective teaching and learning
- Reducing exclusion/suspension
- Raising attendance

This process offers pupils the following:

- Someone to listen to their story
- A chance to question
- A chance to explain
- To acknowledge and understand the impact of actions on others
- An opportunity for sincere apology □ A chance to make amends
- Reassurance it won't happen again
- Reassurance that all parties are happy with the outcome

How does Restorative Practices impact on children:

- Pupils have to be willing participants for it to work properly

- Allows the sharing of emotions and makes it possible to improve relationships in a school community
- Allows students to be fully aware of the impact of their behaviour
- Puts the focus on the behaviour, not on the intrinsic worth of the person
- Is respectful in tone
- Encourages students to express feelings

### School Group Conference

- Offenders tell what they did
- Everyone talks about what impact this has had on them
- The group reaches a shared understanding of the harm that has been done
- The group negotiates an agreement about how to repair the damage and minimise further harm

### Key Skills of Restorative Discipline

- Active listening – SOLER
- Facilitating dialogue and problem-solving
- Listening to and expressing emotion
- Supporting others in taking ownership of problems

### The Fair Process

- Expectations – everyone knows what is expected of them
- Engagement – involve individuals in decisions/listen to views
- Explanation – clarify how decisions are reached
- Outcome – win-win situation for all concerned

### Restorative Questions

- What happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
- What are you thinking/feeling now?
- Who has been affected by this?
- What do you need now to move on?

- What needs to happen now, so that the harm can be repaired?

Note: The style of questioning is non-accusatorial and non-confrontational. The atmosphere should be one of trust and openness.

Avoid “why” questions, ask open-ended questions.

SOLER – Nonverbal skill

S = squarely face person

O = use open posture

L = lean toward the person

E =- use eye contact

R = relax, keep it natural

Nonverbal and verbal cues often conflict!

Remember that the nonverbal posture reflects true attitude.

What is active listening?

- Communicating verbally and nonverbally
- Practicing “uninterrupted” listening
- Restating the message
- Observing the sender’s nonverbal signals

How to practice active listening

- Physical environment
- Attending posture: SOLER
- Listening skills
- Questioning skills

Why practice active listening?

- Helps us understand others better
- Show others we respect them
- Allows us to receive accurate messages
- Enables us to respond appropriately

Physical environment

- Ensure privacy
- Minimize interruptions
- Eliminate barriers

Staff Training

Staff training was provided by Paddy O'Connor on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013. The whole staff including SNA's are well versed in the restorative approach to conflict resolution. New members of staff are trained-up in its use as part of their induction. Staff members are provided with the Restorative Questions Card.