

Radharc Na Mara Primary School

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The purpose of this policy:

To promote positive behaviour and 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

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up for the following reasons:

1. To ensure an orderly, safe and secure climate for the school community
2. It is a requirement under Department of Education and Science (DES) Circular 20/90 on School Discipline
3. 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 in relation to a student*
- (e) The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school*

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school:

Our school strives to provide a well-structured, caring, happy and secure environment for the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils. Radharc na Mara School will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to instil in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the ideal of being responsible. This can only be achieved when there is a high level of respect and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

Aims:

1. To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
2. To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement
3. To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
4. To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
5. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
6. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
7. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

Staff

Board of Management

Parents

Pupils

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Classroom

Playground

Other areas in the school

4. Rewards and sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

5. Suspension / Expulsion

Suspension

Expulsion

Appeals

6. Keeping Records

Class

Playground

School records

7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

8. Reference to other policies

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school:

The Education Welfare Act, section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify *'the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school'*

Each pupil is encouraged to develop self-respect.

Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times.

Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school and keep the school environment clean and litter free.

Each pupil is expected to be responsible for their own belongings and to respect other children's property.

(5) Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and be punctual

(6) Each pupil is expected to wear full school uniform every day

(7) Each pupil is expected to do his/her best in both schoolwork and homework

(8) Each pupil is expected to obey the instructions of any member of the school staff while in school or during school related activities.

(9) Each pupil is expected to obey school rules at all times.

2. Whole School approach in promoting positive behaviour

'A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong cohesion within the school' (circular 20/90).

Staff:

In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour ... 'It is important that the policy is accepted by all staff.' (Circular 20/90)

We strive to foster a positive relationship between the parents and the staff of the school. Parents are actively involved in the school in a variety of ways. Parents serve on the Board of Management, the Parents' Association and on various school committees e.g. Green School Committee, Health Promotion Committee etc.

Staff members are consulted at the planning stage of each policy document and new staff members are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour.

Pupils are involved in the drawing up of various rules in the yard and in their own classrooms. Individual teachers operate reward systems within the classroom to promote positive behaviour. Structured play is organised in classes to encourage co-operative interaction.

For pupils with special education needs the following strategies are in place:

Reward strategies, which are constantly reviewed and up-dated

Constant communication with parents

Structured play involving Special Needs Assistant

All of this is documented in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEP)/Support Plans

The school's Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. (see SPHE policy)

Board of Management:

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school' (Circular 20/90)

The code of behaviour was presented to the Board of Management for discussion after draft policy was formulated by the staff.

The Board of Management supports decisions of the staff based on the policies they have ratified.

The Board of Management supports the staff, parents and pupils. They acknowledge the rights of everyone in the school community and ensure the well being of everybody.

The Board of Management supports the staff by ensuring that teachers have all the necessary resources for development e.g. guest speakers and planning days devoted to this policy.

Parents/Guardians:

'Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with

parents/guardians.'

'Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.' (Circular 20/90)

The staff will ensure they communicate to parents/guardians any concerns in relation to their child's behaviour and well-being. Regular communication will be maintained with parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are asked to view a draft copy of the Code of Behaviour and to offer any further suggestions. A draft copy will be sent to the Parents' Association.

Parents/Guardians play an important role in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

co-operating with the school's system of rewards and sanctions

ensuring children are in school and are collected on time

attending meetings at the school if requested

helping children with homework and ensuring that it is completed

ensuring children have the necessary books and materials for school

ensuring children wear full school uniform

Pupils:

Pupils play an important role in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour

by participating in the formation of class rules at the start of the year

through discussion during S.P.H.E. and other curricular areas

by taking part in whole school assemblies

The children's behaviour is continuously monitored and discussed. The Principal will discuss school rules at assembly to ensure ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour.

Children are given the opportunity to discuss the code of behaviour and contribute ideas to promote positive behaviour.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place.' (Managing challenging behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004:5)

Classroom

The following strategies are used to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom.

(1) "Ground rules" / behavioural expectations in each class that are

consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.

(2) Pupil input in revising the class rules

(3) Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

- (4) A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour (see below no. 4)
- (5) Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- (6) Timetabling

Playground

The positive strategies which the staff implements to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour are:

A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted.

Rotas are in place for supervision in the playground during break times.

On wet days children will be supervised in their classrooms.

Special Needs Assistants (SNA) are present during breaks to provide assistance to on-duty teacher. They keep a close eye on the children to whom they have been assigned.

Children are taught playground games.

Zones are created within the playground, providing sections for specific age groups and various activities.

At the end of break children line up in class groups and return to their classrooms in an orderly fashion under the supervision of the teachers on yard duty.

Children need permission from the supervising teacher to go to the bathroom. They will go to the bathroom in the main building, and the teacher on yard duty should be informed when they return to the yard.

In order to provide adequate supervision, all children must remain outside for the duration of the lunch break. If a child is feeling unwell, they may sit outside the secretary's office.

Other areas in the school

The following positive strategies are implemented to prevent behavioural problems in the following areas of the school: corridors, cloakrooms, toilets, and stairs.

Children walk in single file on the left hand side of the corridors and stairs

Children require teacher's permission to go to the bathroom

Children line up in an orderly fashion when collecting their coats from the cloakrooms

Class teachers teach the school rules

Principal visits classrooms regularly to reinforce the rules

Positive behaviour is verbally commended and is further communicated to class teacher

Each class teacher has his/her own system of rewards to further promote positive behaviour

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

The following are examples in which good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in the school.

Verbal praise

Stickers

Star charts

Certificates
Home-work Passes
Treats
Golden time
Trophies
Prizes
Public display of achievements

Participation in the Incredible Years Programme is proving to have a beneficial effect on the behaviour of pupils

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline '*the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined*'.

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.'

The following are examples of these types of behaviours

Minor

Speaking out of turn
Interrupting others
Breaking certain rules on a one off basis
Being inattentive
Disobeying certain yard rules (e.g. intentionally playing in the wrong area)
Homework not presented or incomplete
Not wearing correct school uniform
Repeated incidents of minor misbehaviours will then be considered serious

Serious:

Preventing others from learning
Defacing or destroying other pupils' belongings
Defacing school property
Refusing to co-operate with instructions and advice
Intentionally hurting another child
Acting aggressively or with violence towards another child
Bullying (Refer to anti-bullying policy)
Use of mobile phone during school hours without permission
Repeated incidents of serious misbehaviours will then be considered gross incidents
Not adhering to the school Covid 19 safety procedure and putting other children in danger by refusing to adhere to correct procedures and etiquettes in relation to preventing the spread of Covid 19

Gross:

Direct abusive language at any member of the school community
Acting aggressively or with violence towards members of the school community

Possession of illegal substances and materials

Strategies and Sanctions for dealing with misbehaviour

- make it clear that it is the behaviour which is being criticised and not the person
- sanctions should be logical, and leave the child's dignity in tact
- sanctions should be proportionate to the misdemeanour committed
- early escalation to severe sanctions should be avoided
- avoid whole class / whole group sanctions
- encourage children to contribute to the solving of behaviour problems
- apply rules consistently but take account of individual circumstances
- avoid the use of non participation in a curricular area such as Physical Education as a sanction

Teachers should

- keep a record of continuous inappropriate behaviour and all instances of serious unacceptable behaviour. This should be entered on the school databiz system
- design a behaviour management plan if necessary – Learning Support/Resource teachers can help here.
- inform parents as soon as difficulties develop with regard to behaviour

Sanctions will be at the teacher/principal's discretion and will be appropriate to the severity of the misdemeanour.

Examples of sanctions:

time out from play
walking with the teacher on yard duty
privileges removed
child sent to another classroom if being disruptive

Strategies to prevent escalation of misbehaviour

a non-verbal signal such as a look or a frown
change in tone of voice
stop speaking and wait for attention
overlook or ignore the undesirable behaviour
move the child to another seat
speak to the child, remind the child of the rule which is being broken and encourage him/her to keep the rule
circle time / SPHE classes are used to discuss behaviour and to promote positive behaviour

The following strategies will be used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour:

Reasoning with the pupil
Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
Child write about the incident of misbehaviour and how he/she can improve (Student Behaviour Reflection Form)
Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
Communication with parents
Referral to Principal Teacher
Loss of privileges

Detention during a break

Prescribing additional work

Suspension (See section 5 on Suspension)

The class teacher will initially apply the sanctions. Depending on the gravity of the situation the Principal may be involved. Parents will be involved at the appropriate stage. If all other options have been explored the Board of Management will be contacted.

Involving parents/guardians in management of problem behaviour

'Parents/guardians should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents/guardians at an early stage than as a last resort.' (Circular 20/90)

The following is the school's approach to involving parents when a pupil's behaviour is a source of concern:

1. The class teacher will make initial contact with parents when there is a concern regarding a pupils behaviour
2. Parents/guardians are invited to a meeting with the class teacher, where the class teacher discusses the situation and outlines the plans to deal with the behaviour of the pupil concerned

Parents/guardians are asked to contact the school if they have concerns regarding their child. Early intervention is imperative to prevent escalation of misbehaviour. This is also communicated to the parents at the Infant Induction meeting in May/June.

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

The following strategies are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems:

Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment

Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) personnel facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour

S.E.N. personnel act as mentors for particular children and assist teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children

A variety of professional development is available to staff e.g. Special Education Support Services, Colleges of Education, ProfExcel courses, Education Centres

The school will, if necessary, include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour.

Teachers will read 'Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers', INTO 2004

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the following will take place:

Temporary exclusion while consultation with Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and/or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) takes place about appropriate resources,

alternative placement etc.

5. Suspension/Expulsion procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify ...*'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned'* and *'the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.'* (Sections 23(2)c,d)

Suspension:

Suspension is defined as:

Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days,

During the suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

The principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.* (Sections 21 (4)a)

Circular 20/90 states that *'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated.'*

The following is the school's procedure in relation to suspension and expulsion.

Incidents of gross misbehaviour may warrant suspension.

The Board of Management will be consulted when the Principal feels suspension may be warranted (*exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days* (Rule 130, Section 5, Rules for National Schools)

The following procedures ensure fairness when excluding a pupil:

All other means of dealing with the behaviour have been tried

There has been previous communication with parents regarding misbehaviour, all of which will be documented by those involved

Parents are invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude

Throughout this process the children have a right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Procedures in respect of suspension:

The authority and decision of suspension of a child will lie with the Board of Management.

The Board of Management will:

Inform the student and their parents about the complaint – how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension.

Give the parent and student an opportunity to respond, before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

Ensure fair procedures: the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Ensure that all records are kept.

Ensure that in the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements will be made for collection of the child.

The Period of Suspension:

A student should not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances, where the Principal considers that a longer period is necessary and the Board approves. In exceptional circumstances the Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions. The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

Implementing the Suspension:

Notification:

The Principal should notify the parents and the student (if appropriate age) of the decision to suspend and then confirm:

1. The period of suspension and the dates from which the suspension will begin and end.
2. The reasons for the suspension
3. Any study programme to be followed
4. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
5. The provision for an appeal to the Patron
6. The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 – section 29)

Grounds for Removal of Suspension:

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management (B.O.M.) 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.

When the period of Suspension is over, every effort will be made to accommodate the smooth reintegration of the student

Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. As part of the code of behaviour the Board of Management shall ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedure for expulsion which are in line with these guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, *'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4)).* It is the right of a Board of Management to take *'...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is*

secured. (Section 24(5))

Authority to expel

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and should not be delegated.

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing
4. Board deliberations and action following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

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 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 year. Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. 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)

Parents/guardians are informed by the Chairperson of the B.O.M. of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion. Parents/guardians will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms. The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

6. Keeping Records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping and data protection legislation, records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour. These records are written in a factual and impartial manner. They should be entered on the schools Databiz System

Class Level:

Each teacher monitors the behaviour of the children in their individual class and records as appropriate on the school databiz system.

At the discretion of the class teacher, incidents of serious misbehaviour will be reported to

the principal (Circular 20/90)

End of year reports include a reference to behaviour. Parents have been kept up to date during the year regarding behaviour issues.

Playground:

Supervising staff keep a record of misbehaviour. This is done by means of an Incident Book. The class teacher is notified of incidents of misbehaviour at the end of each lunch period and they then enter the details relating to the child on the databiz system. The class teacher will then decide when/if to inform Principal and parents of the incident.

School Records:

Incidents will be recorded in an incident book for the school if they occur in the playground or are considered of a serious nature.

Each teacher will also keep individual records as appropriate and must enter them on the school databiz system

The following formal records are kept at school level on the databiz system

factual reports of particular incidents

communication between school and home

communication with outside agencies.

Class Teachers and the principal shall manage the updating, storing and access to these records.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2) (e) states that the code of behaviour must specify *'the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.'* Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence from school and the reason for this absence. (See school attendance policy)

Strategies that are used in the school to encourage attendance:

Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment

Attendance is acknowledged in the end of year report

Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils

Parents/Guardians send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes are signed and dated and kept for one succeeding school year. When a child has been absent for twenty days or more the Education Welfare Officer will be notified (Section 21).

8. Reference to other policies

The following school policies also have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour

SPHE

Anti-Bullying

Anti Cyberbullying

Enrolment

Health and Safety

Special Education Needs

Attendance

Homework

Chairperson _____ Date _____

Principal: _____ Date _____