



St. Aidan's National School
Kiltimagh
Co. Mayo
Scoil Aodáin, Coillte Mách, Co. Mhaigheo.

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Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed by the teaching staff of St. Aidan's N.S. during February 2017 in consultation with representatives from the Parents' Association and the Board of Management. The Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on February 28th, 2017.

Rationale

It was decided to review the Behaviour Policy

- to ensure it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the National Educational Welfare booklet 'Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools' (May 2008).
- It is also recognised that a Code of Behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 23 (1) and this act states that this code will specify
 - The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school
 - The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards
 - The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned
 - The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student and
 - The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

Reference is made in our Mission Statement to the 'provision of an orderly learning environment where there is clear and consistent application of the rules, thus affording each pupil the opportunity to attain his/her potential'.

St. Aidan's N.S. seeks to promote behaviour based on mutual respect between all members of the school community. The teachers encourage the highest standards in collective and self discipline. The aims and ethos of the school and the planning of the curriculum, promote attitudes and values necessary for individual children to contribute to their own personal development and to that of the school. The school's ethos supports the premise that the establishment of a good teacher / pupil relationship is central to working effectively with all pupils especially those who experience emotional / behavioural difficulties. The school believes in the importance of 'Negotiating'. This encourages mutual respect and fosters self-responsibility in the pupils.

General Principles

- All pupils have a right to receive an education in a safe, calm, supportive and purposeful environment.
- All pupils have a right to be accommodated in our school and to feel welcome in an inclusive learning environment.
- All who work in our school will be expected to deal with people in an inclusive and respectful manner.
- Those who visit our school will be expected to uphold our Code where self respect and respect for others lie at its core.
- The school places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the ideal is that the pupils will acquire the skills of self-discipline.
- The school believes in counselling, supporting and helping both victims and offenders.
- 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 and respect among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

Aims

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption in order to facilitate the education and development of every child
- To promote positive behaviour, a sense of responsibility and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and the welfare of all members of the school community
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

- The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and the on-going monitoring of this policy.
- All staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school community when providing in-class support, resource support, yard duty or any other school/out-of-school activity.
- Each class teacher should ensure that he/she compiles **Classroom Rules** at the beginning of each school year. This should be done in collaboration with the pupils so that the pupils have a sense of ownership of these rules. Rules should be consistent with the school ethos and set a positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers should ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.

- The concise set of **School Rules** as listed in **Appendix A** will be communicated to everyone. These emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear to all what is expected.
The rules will be revised with all pupils on a regular basis.
- The Code of Behaviour will also apply to all extra-curricular activities e.g. school tours, football matches, swimming lessons etc.
- For the school to be a happy, secure environment where children can develop to their full potential it is necessary to provide a framework, which promotes constructive behaviour, and discourages unacceptable behaviour.
- The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the ideal is that all pupils will acquire the skills of self-discipline.
- There are times, however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and to discourage offenders.
- The school recognises the variety of differences, which exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure that all staff are familiar with the Code of Behaviour and with practices within the school, a discussion on the Code will form part of the first staff meeting of the year.
- All staff will have a copy of the Code of Behaviour.
- Substitute/ temporary teachers will also be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour (It will be included in each teacher's Absence Pack).
- The parents of newly enrolled pupils will also be given a copy of the code.

Implementation of the Code of Behaviour

Every member of the school community (Principal, Teachers, Substitute Teachers, Student Teachers, SNA's, Visiting Coaches, School Secretary, Caretakers, Parents and BOM) has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Emphasis will be placed on good behaviour, rules will be kept to a minimum and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences. Good behaviour will be rewarded and encouraged.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- The Board must provide a safe, secure and comfortable environment
- The Board must support the Principal and the staff in implementing the code.
- The Board must ratify the code

Principal's Responsibilities

- The Principal must promote a positive climate in the school
- The Principal must ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- The Principal must ensure that visiting teachers, coaches etc. are (a) Garda vetted (b) made familiar with the code
- The Principal must arrange a review of the Code as required

- The Principal must communicate respectfully with all members of the school community

Adult Responsibilities

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.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld

As adults we should aim to:

- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be polite, consistent, respectful and fair
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour(s)
- Provide support for colleagues
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- Communicate respectfully with members of the school community
- Discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Avoid any behaviour in class that disrupts learning
- Show respect for all members of the school community both in word and in action
- Respect all school property and the property of others.
- Avoid behaving in any way that would endanger self or others
- Avoid any behaviour that might result in offending or upsetting others
- Include other pupils in games or activities
- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school rules
- Follow class rules
- Follow safety procedures for Assembly and Dismissal

Field trips, school and away sporting events and annual school tours will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to behave well.

Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities

- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually (Doors open at 8.50am and classes start at 9.00am)
- Encourage their children to have a sense of respect for themselves and others and their property

- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Ensure homework is checked and signed
- Co-operate with and support the school in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate respectfully with the school in relation to any problem that may affect their child's progress/behaviour
- Co-operate with all arrangements the school may have in place, for effective operation e.g. co-operating with before school supervision arrangements, home time collection arrangements
- Adhere to school guidelines re school uniform, healthy eating and safety during assembly and dismissal times

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to the Principal and/or Class Teacher about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect their child's behaviour.

Children with Additional Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be drawn up in consultation with parents, the class teacher, outside agencies (if involved), learning support/ resource teacher and principal. We will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. These plans may include sanctions adapted to the individual(s) in question. 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 additional 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.

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.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (*Infants do not have a homework journal so please check homework folder for notes*)

- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters
- School web-site
- TextaParent service.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

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 reprimand the child who misbehaves.

Strategies to be used to promote positive behaviour could and should include

- 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
- A reward system e.g. Student of the Week/ Occasional Treat/ Golden Time, Star Reward Charts, Dojo Points, Stickers, Homework Pass
- Special mention at assembly
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents either written or verbal communication
- End of Year awards ceremony
- Student of the Week/Month
- Using Buddy System to promote positive interaction/good example between senior and junior pupils e.g. Paired Reading

The rewards above are aimed at individual pupils but we also try to reward classes to foster co-operative behaviour. Such rewards include

- Extra play/games
- Class treat
- Reduced homework/No homework on agreed nights

Applying Sanctions

While every effort will be made by the teachers to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school, it is accepted that there is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

No pupil or group of pupils can be allowed to engage in unacceptable behaviour, particularly if it disrupts schoolwork and interferes with the rights of others to learn.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour:

The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy. The degree of misdemeanour will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misbehaviours.

Examples of Misbehaviours

- Interrupting class work
- Talking out of turn
- Being disrespectful/back answering
- Leaving seat without permission
- Arriving late for school
- Running on corridor
- Messing in class line
- Leaving litter around school
- Not wearing correct uniform
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Not having homework signed when requested
- Coming back into school building during breaks or after school
- Not using designated entrance and exit
- Being unmannerly
- Engaging in inappropriate behaviour
- Infringement of school rules
- Inappropriate language
- Bringing a mobile phone into school without prior permission from the principal. *(Please Note: permission will only given in exceptional circumstances and the phone must be switched off and left into the Principal's Office for that day)*
- Bringing any electronic device eg i-pod, tablet, etc into school

Use of sanctions

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to the age and emotional development of the child. The use of 'blanket punishments' is to be avoided.

The following strategies will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour

- Reasoning with the pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve from Class Teacher/Principal
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or the yard)
- Reduced playtime at lunch
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent
- Referral to another teacher for a short duration
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians
- Prescribing extra work - Always to be kept in proportion to the seriousness and frequency of the misbehaviour(s)
- In the event that an electronic device is found in the possession of a pupil it will be held by the Principal until the Friday of that week and must be collected by a parent.

Examples of Serious Misbehaviours:

- Repeatedly/Constantly disrupting class
- Deliberately damaging other pupil's property
- Damaging school property
- Bullying (*See separate policy*) intimidating, ridiculing other pupils, name calling, cyber bullying
- Repeatedly back answering a teacher
- Refusing to co-operate
- Continuously using unacceptable language
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil
- Stealing
- Deliberate continual disrespect
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / pupil
- Fighting
- Leaving school premises without permission.
- Endangering self or fellow pupils
- Endangering any member of staff
- Bringing a mobile phone into school without prior permission from the principal
- Attempting to access/Accessing inappropriate material on the internet

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 misbehaviour in the pupil's homework journal which parents/guardians are expected to sign.
- In cases where pupils are required to do some extra homework as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work.
- Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour.
- The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour.

Dealing with Serious Misbehaviours

Phase 1

- Send to Principal/Deputy Principal who will
 - discuss the seriousness of the behaviour with the pupil
 - give a verbal reprimand and/or sanction
 - or
 - arrange to contact and meet parents if deemed necessary

The Board of Management is mindful of every child's constitutional right to education and will only use the sanction of suspension or expulsion in exceptional circumstances and as a last

resort after the school, in consultation with parents, has taken all reasonable steps to avoid excluding the child temporarily by suspension and or permanently by expulsion.

Phase 2

- Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension/Expulsion

- Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communications with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.
- For gross misbehaviour or for repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension for a period may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss the child's case. Aggressive threatening or violent behaviour toward a teacher or fellow pupil will be regarded as serious misbehaviour.
- Where there are repeated instances of 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 (and the pupil - depending on the age of the child) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, suspension for a period will be considered.
- Prior to suspension, the Principal, where possible, may review the case, in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community, having due regard to records, (if any) of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used, and their outcome, and any relevant medical/family information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- In the case of serious misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils and staff, the Board of Management may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.
- 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. The maximum period of suspension that may be imposed is ten days. In line with the requirements of the Education 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 will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents 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 parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents/guardians 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 pupil (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.

- When 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 of Management and the Principal.

Expulsion

- The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case (see p. 80/81/82 Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) e.g. where repeated instances of serious 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.
- Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.
- Where the Board of Management is of the opinion that a pupil should be expelled the Board will inform the National Education Welfare Board of its decision and its reasons in writing.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the NEWB has received notification in writing.
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be recorded on the student absence form.
- The sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/Expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

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 Skills against some decisions of the BOM, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or the guardian. (See Circular 22/02)

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 all the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. The support of outside agencies may also be requested to deal with such aggressive or violent behaviour.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000 parents/guardians must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Reference to other policies

- Child Protection Policy
- SPHE Plan
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Attendance Policy

Record Keeping

All records pertaining to a pupil's behaviour must be kept in a secure filing cabinet. This is in line with the school's policy on record keeping and also is in line with data protection legislation.

This policy was ratified by the BoM on 28th February 2017

Signed _____.

Date _____

Appendix 1

SCHOOL RULES

1. We will be in school before the bell rings at 9.00am
2. We show respect for self and all others
3. We show respect for our own property, the property of others and school property
4. We behave well in class so that everyone can learn
5. We are kind and willing to help others
6. We are polite and well-mannered
7. We are honest and tell the truth at all times
8. We co-operate and follow instructions from staff immediately
9. We do our best in class and when completing homework
10. We take responsibility for our own work
11. We walk quietly in the school building
12. We remain seated while eating lunch and during the breaks on wet days
13. We play fairly in the yard and leave nobody out
14. We tell an adult (Teacher/SNA) if we get hurt or are upset/sad on the yard
15. We line up immediately we hear the bell after break and lunch
16. We wear the appropriate uniform and are aware of personal hygiene
17. We follow our Healthy Eating Policy.
18. We bring a note of explanation following absences
19. We do not leave the school without permission
20. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict

These are summed up as -

6 Golden Rules for Junior Classes

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| 1. | We listen. We don't interrupt. |
| 2. | We are gentle. We don't hurt others. |
| 3. | We are honest. We tell the truth. |
| 4. | We are kind. |
| 5. | We work hard. We don't waste time. |
| 6. | We look after property. We don't damage things. |