**St. Mary’s National School, Fairview**

**Code of Behaviour**

**Introduction**

This revised school policy on behaviour and discipline was drafted as a whole school exercise involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management during the 2020\2021 school year.

The purpose of this policy is to promote positive behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. It will also enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development. It will comply with the Education Act of 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.

This policy upholds the characteristic spirit of the school. In particular it embodies the Christian values of justice, fairness, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, consistency, inclusiveness and impartiality.

**Our Vision**

In St. Mary's, we aspire to provide a centre of educational excellence where, together with parents and the community, we provide a happy, safe and inclusive environment in which all pupils reach their full potential.

**Mission Statement**

Our mission is to enable the pupils in our care to achieve their maximum potential throughout the various stages in their growth and development. We aspire to equip them with the skills necessary to live a full life in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

St. Mary’s National School strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable and where respect is fostered in a Christian community which also values diversity and difference.

**The aims of the policy are:**

* To create a happy, safe, caring and secure school environment for our children
* To ensure efficient operation of the school through a structured whole school approach to good relationships and behaviour management
* To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
* To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
* To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
* 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
* To ensure that the system of promoting good behaviour and dealing with incidents of poor behaviour are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
* 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 encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation

In order to achieve these goals a stable secure learning environment is absolutely essential. Accordingly, this code has been devised, which we believe is acceptable and reasonable. All parents, guardians and pupils are requested to cooperate with the school in promoting good discipline as specified in this code.

This code applies to all the pupils enrolled in St. Mary’s;

* When the pupils are in the school and on the school grounds.
* School Tours.
* Games/matches at home and away.
* All extra curricular activities.
* Any event/activity organised by the school.

Where a student engages in activity outside the school at a time when he/she is not the responsibility of the school the Code may apply. This would happen if the behaviour has a negative impact on the work/reputation of the school. The school will make a judgement call in each individual case.

**School Motto:** Treat others as you would like them to treat you!

**GOLDEN RULES**

These are the rules that promote thoughtful and responsible behaviour and form the basis of our interactions with each other.

* We are gentle; we don’t hurt others
* We are kind and helpful; we don’t hurt anybody’s feelings
* We listen; we don’t interrupt
* We are honest; we don’t cover up the truth
* We work hard; we don’t waste our own or others’ time
* We look after property; we don’t waste or damage things
* We respect and take pride in our environment

Using the **Incredible Years Programme** the youngest child in St. Mary’s is introduced to these six rules using the three ‘kinds’ as a guide;

* Kind feet
* Kind hands
* Kind words

**Classroom rules**

* Listen to the teacher and avoid disturbing the class
* Put up your hand to speak/gain attention
* Remain seated in class
* Put your chair under your desk anytime you leave it
* Say “please” and “thank you”
* Treat all school property with respect
* Treat rented books and library books with respect and return to the school when completed
* Only use the active panels (IT) when a member of staff is present
* If you take something out put it back
* Do not throw objects in the classroom
* Infants – do not swop personal belongings

**Playground rules**

* In the interests of safety, wrestling, karate, trains and other rough contact games are not allowed
* Children remain in the yard during lunchtime and obey all adults
* If children bring food out , they must finish eating in a designated area before starting to play.
* Children must go into their lines in an orderly fashion at the end of break times

**Inside yard**

* All equipment will be used appropriately
* Children will not climb on the ramps
* A maximum of four children will go on the hammock at any one time
* Children will not run on the red tiles when it is not their turn to play there

**Outside yard**

* Only two basketballs can be taken to the yard during breaks
* Footballs are only allowed when the day is dry and the field is open
* Electronic games are forbidden in the yard

**Inside the school**

* Children will make every effort to remain quiet on the corridor and stairs.
* Running is prohibited in all areas inside the school
* When walking on the stairs children
* Walk on the right hand side
* One behind the other
* Take one step at a time
* Hold the handrail

Upstairs all children walk on the right hand side of the corridor

Infants – children walk one behind the other in the centre of the corridor

**Communication/Consolidation**

**An important part of settling into a new class every year will be class discussion and agreement on the class rules.**

* Reminders of the Golden Rules will be displayed prominently around the school.
* Teachers will display class rules in senior classrooms
* Children will regularly review the rules in all classes.
* Rules will be revised during assembly
* Teachers will refer to the Code in their fortnightly plans and in their Cúntas Míosúil
* When misbehaviour or conflict arises we will use a restorative approach to address the harm.

**Children with special needs**

Teachers will help the pupils with special needs to understand clearly the rules and the purpose of sanctions. They will help them make a link between appropriate behaviour and the school rules using visual prompts, pictures, social stories role play, etc. as appropriate

**Implementation by all staff**

Staff will model the rules set out in the Code. All school staff are committed to recognising and promoting good behaviour. The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support and build positive relationships. It helps 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. The school was offered and accepted training in the Incredible Years Programme over a two year period beginning in the 2019 school year. Teachers were trained and have shared ideas and strategies for promoting positive behaviour and dealing with negative situations with the whole staff.

**Promoting Good Behaviour**

Our approach to good behaviour in St. Mary’s is based on the understanding that

positive actions are more effective than negative ones. We aim to be proactive rather than reactive in our approach by using a range of methods including those in the Incredible Years Programme to help children to learn, recognise and adopt behaviour that is positive and rewarding. All school staff are committed to recognising and promoting good behaviour. When we notice good behaviour we will comment on it and share our praise with other adults. We use the following strategies to promote positive behaviour;

* Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
* Clear boundaries and rules for students established with the class at the beginning of the year.
* Praise & recognition
* Stamp & sticker systems
* Dojo points
* Reward systems in the class for positive behaviour (additional yard time, Golden time, Homework Passes, ball pool time etc.)
* Behaviour contracts
* Visit to another teacher or the Principal for praise of good behaviour or neat work
* Variatious motivational strategies & reward systems within each classroom
* Assembly –regular whole school reinforcement and acknowledgement of positive behaviour

Praise

We believe that praise is the most powerful tool in maintaining high standards of behaviour. Children who behave well and appropriately are praised as often as possible. Praise is freely given, specific and is targeted to actions.

Praise may be given by means of any of the following:

● A quiet word or gesture to show approval;

● A comment in a child’s copy or 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;

● Different reward systems

● Special mention at assembly;

Happy Gram certificates are presented to children for showing positive behaviour/improvements of behaviour in assembly on Fridays.

● Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;

● A mention to parents

**School Response to Misbehaviour**

The school community endorses a positive and consistent ethos, promoted by the Principal and ISM team, reinforced by the staff and understood by the children. Close liaison with the parents is vital to the implementation of this policy. With a positive approach to discipline in mind, and in an effort to support children who present with challenging behaviour, the NEPS Guidelines: ‘Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties, a Continuum of Support’ will be used for reference. The areas of support will be as follows:

* + - * Classroom Support
      * School Support
      * School Support Plus

***Classroom Support*** :

Minor breaches of behaviour are dealt with immediately by the class teacher or the teacher on duty (yard time). These include:

* Reasoning with the pupil.
* Reprimand-including modelling acceptable behaviour.
* Temporary separation from peers, friends within class and\or temporary removal to another class, etc.
* Use of the ‘Calm Down Zone’ (Incredible Years)
* Loss of privileges like ‘Golden Time’.
* Detention during a break.
* Prescribing additional work.
* Walking with the teacher on duty for a time out while on yard (for misbehaviour on the yard)
* Teacher records all unacceptable behaviour in their Incident Book and any improvements
* Incident\Accident books on both yards to record any situations.

Sanctions will 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. Support will be available to staff managing challenging behaviour from the SESS and senior staff members if required.

***School Support:***

If necessary a child with behavioural difficulties may access the following supports;

* School Care Team – Class Teacher, SEN coordinator, Principal, other staff working with pupil, Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, School Completion Programme (if eligible), Play Therapist
* School Support plan with target setting for improved behaviour
* Meet Parents/Guardian to target behaviours to improve
* Short-term one-to-one intervention with Resource Teacher if possible
* Keep record of meetings and supports put in place
* *Date for review organised*

***School Support Plus:***

If pupils’ special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support and an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). This can be incorporated into any stage of the Continuum of Support and be part of classroom, school or school support plus.

This will involve:

* Consultation with personnel outside of the school with expertise in this area – Primary Care, NEPS psychologist, Special Education Support Service – for assessment and intervention purposes
* A problem-solving approach by school and outside personnel
* A review of the work already done at classroom support and school support stages which will provide important information for the pupil’s IBP
* An IBP being drawn up and the outcomes closely monitored and regularly reviewed.

The partnership between the home and the school will be crucial in making progress with the pupil and modifying the challenging behaviour

***At all stages, the needs of the child whose behaviour is challenging will be balanced against the right to learn of the other children in the class.***

**If a pupil misbehaves despite our efforts, the school response will follow closely the guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science.**

**Unacceptable Behaviour/Major Breaches**

The following behaviour is regarded as unacceptable in the school both in itself and in the interests of providing a safe school environment.

* Substance or alcohol abuse on the school premises.
* Persistent bullying of a pupil.
* Physical attack on a pupil or member of staff.
* Verbal abuse of a pupil or member of staff
* Persistent disruptive behaviour in class.
* Persistent infringements of relatively minor school rules.
* Significant damage to school, staff or pupils’ property, either in or outside school.
* Stealing from school, staff or pupils, in or outside school.
* Bad language or swearing.
* Biting
* Spitting
* Having a mobile phone on during the school day.
* Leaving the school premises without permission.
* Deliberately flooding toilet areas

If any of the above situation occurs the following procedure will be followed;

* Class teacher, meets both parents if possible to discuss issue
* Where a parent fails to make an appointment or attend the meeting the home/school/liaison teacher will make a home visit.
* A plan will be put in place to support the child in remediating poor behaviour\ making amends using restorative justice, see anti-bullying policy.
* Records are kept and parents\child will receive a ‘Record of Misbehaviour’ where necessary in senior classes.

**Suspension/Expulsion Procedures**

What if your child’s behaviour causes serious concern?

Children in St. Mary’s usually behave well and relationships are good. However we do recognise that for some children good behaviour can be difficult and impacts on their own and others learning, safety and well-being. For these children we may need to adopt a specific course of action to help the child learn how to behave appropriately. We aim to intervene early and positively, tackling issues using a problem solving approach.

In compliance with the Education Welfare Act, 2000, the following specifies the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from our school and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

Before suspension, we will refer to the Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools document published by the NEWB. We will refer in particular to the checklist on page 72 to ensure all other options have been exhausted.

**Suspension**

We regard suspension as a last resort sanction, having followed our procedures for dealing with misbehaviours and trying all possibilities available to us. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. In accordance with our standard procedure, outlined above, parents would be contacted at the earliest opportunity with regard to misbehaviours.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such that:

* The pupil’s behaviour has had a detrimental effect on the education of other students. This could be caused by ongoing breach of minor rules and failure to respond to all the reasonable effort to modify the unacceptable behaviour
* The pupil’s continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to his/her own safety or the safety of others
* The student is responsible for serious damage to property
* A single incident could warrant suspension e.g. assault

**Authority to suspend a pupil**

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This may be delegated in writing to the Principal. Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that has caused the concern. It will only be imposed where other interventions in a behavioural plan have failed.

**Forms of suspension**

* A student will not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a longer period is warranted.
* If a suspension longer than 3 days is warranted, the Principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management for consideration and approval
* Except in exceptionally serious circumstances the Board will not authorize suspension for longer than 10 days
* Where the total number of days reaches 20 in any school year, the parents may appeal the decision to suspend under Sec. 29 of Education Act 1998
* Immediate sanction may be imposed where the continued presence of the pupil poses a danger to him/herself or another person

**Procedure**

* Both pupil and parent/s will be fully informed about the complaint, how it was investigated and how a decision was reached
* Parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the gravity of the situation. Former breaches may also be outlined and how the school responded to such breaches
* Both parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond **before a decision to suspend is made**
* Where an immediate suspension is warranted because of a threat to the safety of the pupil, other pupils or members of staff, a formal investigation will take place following the suspension and all fair procedures will be followed e.g. notifying the parents and giving them and the pupil an opportunity to respond.

**Impartiality**

* When investigating serious misbehaviour, the person investigating the alleged misconduct will not make the decision on expulsion
* The principles of fair procedure will always guide and inform decision making in relation to suspension

**Implementing the suspension**

The principal will notify the parents and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

* The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
* The reason for the suspension
* Any study program to be followed
* The arrangements for returning to school e.g. a commitment to observe the school rules
* Parent’s right to appeal the decision to the Board of Management
* The parent’s right to appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Sec. 29 of the Education Act (where the total number of days for which the pupil is suspended reaches 20 in the current school year)

Once the suspension is lifted and the pupil returns to school every effort will be made to re-integrate him/her academically and socially.

**Expulsion**

A student is expelled from our school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The Board of Management is the only decision making authority body in relation to expulsions and it will only be invoked in the event of a very serious or dangerous matter.

**Grounds for expulsion**

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

Specifically the Board of Management may expel a pupil for the following offences:

* Where there is a threat of violence against another student or member of staff
* Where there has been violence or physical assault
* Where a pupil is in possession of or supplies illegal drugs to other pupils or any other person
* Where a pupil is involved in a sexual assault

**Procedure**

Fair procedures will be followed during the investigation similar to those outlined above in suspension and will include the following:

* A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal. As part of this process the Principal will inform the pupil and the parents in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
* Pupil and parents will be invited to a meeting with the Principal and the teacher in charge of discipline to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed
* They will be given an opportunity to ask questions and give their side of the story where there is a dispute about the facts
* After carrying out a full and fair investigation the Principal will make a recommendation to the BOM to consider expulsion
* The Principal will inform pupil and parents that the BOM is considering expulsion
* The Principal will ensure the pupil and parents have records of the allegation against the pupil, details of the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the BOM is considering expulsion
* The Principal will provide the BOM with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents
* The Principal will notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the BOM and invite them to that meeting
* Parents will be advised that they can make written and oral submissions to the BOM and that they can be accompanied/represented at the meeting
* The school will make every effort to give parents adequate notice of the meeting so that they can prepare for the hearing
* At the hearing/meeting both sides will put their case to the Board in each other’s presence and both sides will have the opportunity to question the other’s evidence
* Having heard all the evidence, the Board will, in the absence of the Principal and the parents, decide if the allegation is substantiated and whether expulsion is warranted
* Where it is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its decision and the reasons for the decision.
* The Board will not implement the expulsion before the expiration or 21 days from the notification of the Welfare Officer
* The BOM will notify the parents of the decision to expel and that they will now notify the Welfare Board of the decision
* Within 21 days of receipt of the notification to expel, the Welfare Officer will hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the students to discuss alternative educational possibilities. He/she will convene a meeting of these parties who agree to attend for the same purpose
* During this intervening period the BOM may decide to suspend the pupil
* When the 21 days has elapsed the Principal will confirm the expulsion to the parents and pupil in writing. It will then be implemented.
* Parents and the pupil will be informed of their right to appeal the decision and they will be supplied with the standard form on which to appeal
* The Principal will make a formal record of the decision to expel the student.

The BOM will review the use of expulsion in the school.

**4. Keeping records**

Any incidents of poor behaviour in the classroom are recorded by the teacher. Parent Teacher meetings and school reports provide opportunities for teachers to discuss behavioural issues with parents.

**5. Procedures for notification of student absences from school**

Parents must notify the school in writing of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence. Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 10+ days of school. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

**6. Roles and Responsibilities**

**Success Criteria**

The success of this policy will be measured through a range of practical indicators including:

● Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment

● Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers

● Positive feedback from staff, parents and children

**Roles and Responsibilities**

● The Board of Management will oversee the policy’s implementation and will review its progress periodically.

● The entire school community is responsible for the implementation of the policy, particularly the Principal, staff and children.

● The implementation of the reviewed policy will be coordinated and monitored by the leadership team and the Principal.

● Children will be an integral part of the implementation of the reviewed policy and of the future amendments to the policy.

● Parents can access the policy on the school website and agree upon enrolment to cooperate with the policy’s implementation. We encourage high standards of communication with parents and invite them to contact us at any time to arrange a meeting.

**7. Ratification, Communication and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in December 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

The Board of Management of St. Mary’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:*

1. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*

2. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*

3. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*

4. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to student;* 5. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.*

Signed : Kevin O’Meara

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 2nd December 2021

**Evaluation**

This Code of Behaviour and Discipline will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2023 and changes made in the light of our ongoing evaluation.The revised edition of the Code of Discipline and Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on 2nd December 2021.

Signed: Kevin O’Meara Date: 2nd December 2021

(Chairperson)