

# **St. Mary's National School, Fairview**

## **Code of Behaviour and Conduct for all Pupils**

### **Introduction**

This revised school policy on behaviour and discipline was drafted as a whole school exercise involving parents, pupils, staff and Board of Management. It was circulated to the entire school community in St. Mary's and communicated to the whole school community in due course.

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 also comply with the Education Act of 2002. 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**

We at St. Mary's 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 school are:**

- To provide for the welfare of all pupils while on the school premises.
- To ensure a safe, child friendly environment is available to all children.
- To conform to Health and Safety legislation.
- To provide an integrated and multi-dimensional curriculum designed to meet the intellectual, social, personal, religious, moral, physical and cultural needs of the pupils.

- To create a friendly atmosphere where positive values are taught and reinforced.
- To strengthen an awareness of the link between good behaviour and learning.

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 co-operate 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.
- Breakfast Club.
- Any event/activity organised by the school.

Where a student engages in serious 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!

### **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
- Use the interactive whiteboard 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**

- All forms of bullying are absolutely forbidden in the playground (see bullying section)
- 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
- Children may not bring food into the yard
- 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

### **Agreed Charter of Breakfast Club**

- Breakfast is available in Room 8A only
- Breakfast is not provided before 08.10 or after 08.40 am.
- Children leave their school bags at a table before proceeding for breakfast
- Everybody queues in an orderly fashion at the serving table
- Each pupils eats breakfast while sitting at a table.
- Left overs are disposed of in the appropriate bin
- No food /drinks are to be taken from Room 8A
- Senior children proceed to the yard when finished breakfast
- Junior children are escorted to their line on the yard
- Children enter and leave the Breakfast Club in an orderly way in line with the general school rules on the corridors
- Courtesy and mannerly eating habits are expected at all times

## **Communication/Consolidation**

- A chart with the agreed rules will be posted up on the corridor walls, stairs and in 8A.
- Teachers will display class rules senior classrooms
- Children will recite the rules in all classes.
- Breakfast club rules will be displayed in Room 8A
- Rules will be revised during assembly
- Teachers will refer to the Code in their fortnightly plans and in their Cúntas Míosúil

## **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.

The school communicate to them using Visual prompts, pictures and using role play as appropriate

## **Implementation by all staff**

Staff will model the rules set out in the Code

## **Promoting Good Behaviour**

The day-to-day excellence of school management and classroom teaching will enable most students to behave in ways that support their own learning and development. Teachers and other school staff employ a range of strategies to promote good behaviour at class and school level. Rewarding good behaviour through praise verbally or through stars/stickers/display charts and prizes is left to each teacher him/herself.

Other strategies to encourage and promote good behaviour include:

- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students

- Clear boundaries and rules for students established with the class at the beginning of the year.
- Help will be given to students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- Teachers will recognise and give positive feedback about behaviour
- Teachers will explore with students how people should treat each other. They will link good behaviour with SPHE, Religion, Drama, English stories and Art lessons
- Students will play an active role in preparing school and classroom rules.
- Teachers will set targets with the pupils and monitor it on charts or through rewarding and affirming good behaviour.
- The teacher and pupils may have a Behaviour Agreement displayed clearly in the classroom along side the standard classroom rules already agreed upon in this code.

### **Sanctions**

The school community endorses a positive and consistent ethos, promoted by the Principal, Senior and Middle Management, reinforced by the staff and understood by the children. Close liaison with the parents is vital to the implementation of this policy.

The purpose of sanctions in St. Mary's is:

1. to bring about a change in behaviour
2. to ensure that St. Mary's is conducive to quality teaching and learning
3. to ensure that all children and adults are safe

This is achieved by:

- Helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- Helping them to understand that that they have choices and that all choices have consequences
- Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

In St. Mary's Sanctions:

- Help to diffuse situations
- Preserve the dignity of all parties
- Are applied in a fair and consistent way
- Are applied as soon as possible after the breach

For minor breaches of behaviour the class teacher deals with immediately by the class teacher through their class management. Other sanctions used by this school include:

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Reprimand-including modelling acceptable behaviour.
- Temporary separation from peers, friends etc.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detection during a break.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Teacher records all unacceptable behaviour in their Incident Book and any improvements or positive improvements.

### **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
- Chewing gum
- Dropping or throwing of litter
- Having a mobile phone on during the school day.
- Leaving the school premises without permission.
- Turning taps on and leaving them on so that floor is flooded
- Throwing wet tissue paper at the ceiling in toilets

Sanction for any of the above is a Yellow card or misbehaviour sheet.

Whenever a Yellow card is given out the teacher with responsibility for discipline will be informed so that a formal record can be lodged.

Following the giving of two yellow cards, the following staff will get involved:

- Class teacher, teacher with responsibility for Discipline meets both parents if possible

- Class teacher, teacher with responsibility for Discipline meets both parents and principal
- Where there are repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal.

*Record of Misbehaviour in St. Mary's National  
School Fairview*

*Teachers Copy*

\_\_\_\_\_ (pupil's name) has received this  
note because of a serious breach of behaviour.

Comments: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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If parent/guardian didn't make contact follow up and request an appointment.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ ( Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sent on \_\_\_\_\_  
 The meeting took place \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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## Record of Misbehaviour in St. Mary's National School Fairview

\_\_\_\_\_ (pupil's name) has received this notification because of a serious breach of behaviour.

Comments: _____ _____ _____
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You must come into the school immediately to discuss this serious breach of behaviour. Please contact the school at 8377551 or fill in a day, date and time that suits you and your appointment will be confirmed or changed if the time is unsuitable.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ ( Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed and returned: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I can meet on \_\_\_\_\_ (day & date) \_\_\_\_\_ (time)

Where a parent fails to make an appointment or attend the meeting the home/school/liaison teacher will make a home visit.

### Suspension

#### 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

### **Grounds for suspension**

- 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

### **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

## **St. Mary's National School Policy on Bullying**

### **Our School Ethos**

Our aim is to create a safe, caring environment to allow all our children to reach their full potential. To achieve this, the school has a policy of openness whereby all children are encouraged to report every instance of bullying as secrecy only encourages it. The children need to see that bullying in any shape or form is not tolerated and is taken seriously. Every child has the right to enjoy school and this cannot occur where bullying is an everyday part of life.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, emotional or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. It is the wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. It is systematic and ongoing.

#### **Bullying can be:**

- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Causing damage to another child's property – e.g. schoolbag, books, lunches or clothes.
- Extortion- forcing or threatening someone to do something.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing.

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, and refusing to let somebody join in games or belong to a group. Tormenting (hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Racist/religious taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Electronic-any text messages by phone or displays written or visual on web sites.

### **Indications of Bullying Behaviour**

- The following signs/symptoms may indicate a child is being bullied:
- Unexplained physical injury to self or damage to property
- Anxiety going to and from school - getting parents to collect them, changing the regular pattern etc
- Unwillingness or refusal to go to school or truancy
- A deterioration in performance
- Loss of concentration or enthusiasm
- A pattern of unexplained physical illnesses e.g. headaches
- Unexplained mood or behavioural changes
- Visible signs of anxiety e.g. stammering, nightmares, crying, not eating.
- Out of character comments about pupils or teachers
- Missing/damaged possessions
- Increased requests for money or stealing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is bothering them

These signs do not necessarily mean a child is being bullied, but if continually repeated they do warrant further investigation.

## **How will instances be noted and reported?**

1. The following should inform the Assistant Principal or class teacher of instances of bullying, which they have heard or witnessed.
  - Pupils
  - Parents/guardians
  - Non-teaching staff – caretaker, classroom assistants, secretary etc
  - Board of Management members.
2. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
3. All reports of bullying shall be noted in the Incident Book, the Assistant Principal shall be informed and the report will be investigated and dealt with accordingly.
4. In cases of serious bullying the matter will be referred to the Principal immediately and the Board of Management shall be informed.
5. Parents and guardians of both victims and bullies shall also be informed as a co-ordinated response between home and school is best.
6. Individual teachers in consultation with the Assistant Principal should record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour, in accordance with the schools policy and Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

## **Summary**

The school has in place a programme of awareness of the serious nature of bullying.

- The pupils are given suggestions on how to deal with incidents of bullying. This is done formally (Stay Safe, Walk Tall) and informally (Circle Time, chat time between teacher and pupils).

- Teachers reinforce the anti-bullying ethos in a positive way through a range of curricular initiatives, e.g. social studies, history, geography, art, drama, religious education and sporting activities.
- Assemblies, at which consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults are reinforced and encouraged, are held on a regular basis.
- The Staff is always vigilant in supervision and is aware of behaviour which may be bully orientated.
- Children will sign a behaviour contract
- Children will be asked to draw up a set of school rules.
- A bullying awareness day will be held each year.
- A Friendship week is organised in the 3rd term where the children will be asked to design friendship posters for display around the school.
- The school will work with bullies and victims on an ongoing basis.

If deemed necessary, following consultation with parents/guardians the school may get assistance from outside agencies

Home/school Liaison personnel,

Psychological services,

Social workers,

Doctors,

Gardai,

N.E.P.S.

The school completion co-ordinator.

### **Evaluation**

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

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2011 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sr. Éilís Coe

(Chairperson)