

# St Declans N.S.

*The following Code of Behaviour was drawn up by the staff of St Declan's Primary School, Waterford. It was presented to the Parents Association in draft form on April 13th 2010. Their observations and comments were presented along with the draft policy to the Board of Management on May 11<sup>th</sup> 2010. The Policy was ratified by the Board on that day.*

This policy was formulated in accordance with section 23 of the Education {Welfare} Act 2000 and was prepared in accordance with guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board {NEWB} in consultation with Mr Eamonn Fylnn NEWB Officer for Waterford.

## **School Ethos and Mission Statement**

St. Declan's School is a Catholic Primary School under the patronage of Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The school aims to teach pupils in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church while at the same time having regard and respect for beliefs of others.

Education in St. Declan's is based on a holistic approach – having regard for the child's spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical development. These values are reflected in the methodologies and objectives of the Revised Curriculum (Govt. of Ireland 1999).

The pervading atmosphere of the school is one of harmony – promoting respect and tolerance of difference. Pupils are enabled to learn in an environment which is safe and secure so that each individual can realise his full potential and take place in society with confidence.

## **Overall Aims**

This code of behaviour is based on reward as well as on compliance and sanction. The emphasis in the school is on promoting good behaviour rather than on punishing bad. At its core is a respect for others and a tolerance of difference. For the most part it is trouble free. At the same time it is important that parents are aware of the procedures, and work with the school in ensuring that all children are happy at school.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour are:

- To allow for the smooth and harmonious running of the school.
- To promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the

school.

- To facilitate the development and education of all the children.
- To promote good behaviour and self-discipline among the children.
- To promote equality and fairness among all.
- To enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- To promote co-operation between home and school.
- To promote consistency in the application of rules and sanctions.
- To outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be used in response to negative behaviour.
- To enable each child to reach their creative and intellectual potential.

### **Code of Behaviour**

## **A. Expectations of school by.....**

1. the children themselves.
2. by the children of each other.

#### **A1: The children expect that school will be:**

- Safe.
- Happy.
- A positive learning environment.
- Encouraging and supportive and fair.
- Affirming of all children.
- Able to deal with inappropriate behaviour and bullying and be supportive of victims.

#### **A2: The expectation the children have of each other:**

- Respect them and their learning.
- Not bully them.
- Show acceptance and respect their differing

personalities.

- Never insult or belittle them because of differences.
- Respect their property and not take anything that is not yours.
- Listen to them and acknowledge them.
- Share equipment and resources with them.
- Allow them to be part of the group/game.
- Speak to them with courtesy and respect.
- Be kind and helpful.
- Use respectful ways to resolve differences and conflict.
- Show forgiveness.

## **B: The expectations of the children can be supported by...**

1. Parents
2. The Staff
3. The School BOM

### **B1: Role of the parents**

How parents can support implementation of the Code:

- Be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school and the expectation of pupils. (i.e. Homework, Anti-bullying policies, Code of Behaviour)
- Show support for school personnel in their implementation of the schools behaviour policy.
- Read all notes.
- Support your child in his school work.
- Check and sign homework.
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of your child, and provide a note for any absences (in accordance with NEWB regulations).

- Ensure he has the necessary materials, books, etc.
- Ensure your child has a positive attitude to and abides by the school and class rules.
- Never undermine the authority of the school or its' staff.
- Promote respect for all school personnel.
- Give a contact number where you can be reached in an emergency, and update it as necessary.
- Be available to discuss a problem.
- Inform the school of any circumstances which may affect the child while in school.
- Model the standards of good behavior expected of pupils.
- Exert firm discipline in cases where your child's behaviour is having a negative impact on the behaviour of others.

## **B2: The Role of the Staff**

Staff can support the Code of Behaviour by:

- Making school a safe and happy environment for children.
- Drawing up class rules in conjunction with the children, and discussing them regularly.
- Recognising all pupils as individuals.
- Supporting children who need it.
- Ensuring fairness and consistency in the way children are dealt with.
- Not labelling children.
- Ensuring an atmosphere of support and inclusion.
- Contacting parents at an early stage to inform them of any problems.

- Being willing to listen to parents' viewpoint.
- Listening to suggestions and support about problems in school.
- Ensuring confidentiality regarding any personal information communicated to the school.
- Dealing with concerns in a professional manner.

### B3: Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management can support the Code of Behaviour by:

- Providing a safe working environment for staff and children.
- Co-operating to achieve the schools aims and objectives.
- Encouraging professional development and providing training when required.
- Ensuring an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect.

## School Rules

The following is a list of the primary rules and guidelines under which the school is run. The boys are expected to...

- Show respect and courtesy to all members of staff, to follow class rules as laid down by your teacher and to listen when others are speaking.
- Show respect and courtesy to each other.
- Accept the authority and responsibility of the teacher to impose sanctions on those who misbehave.
- Help to create a safe, positive environment.
- Arrive on time, attend school regularly and not miss days without good reason.
- Not leave during the day without permission.

- Respect all school property and keep the school tidy and litter-free.
- To take responsibility for their own work and belongings.
- To complete all homework fully and carefully.
- To always try and do the best they can.
- Wear the school uniform/tracksuit on the appropriate days.
- Not wear ear rings as they are not permitted.
- Avoid distracting behaviour in class.
- Be truthful and honest at all times.
- Avoid swearing, fighting, spitting or name calling.
- Play in a manner that is safe for yourself and others, and to obey playground rules.
- Listen to messages given and do as requested.
- Participate in school and class activities.
- Move quietly around the school and avoid causing disturbance.
- Remember that the reputation of the school depends on your good behaviour outside the school when wearing the uniform/tracksuit.
- Follow school procedures in relation to the use of a mobile phone on school property.
- Inform a member of staff if there is a problem so that so that it can be solved.

## **Responses, Strategies and Sanctions**

### **Rewards**

To promote the aims and ideals of this policy every effort will be made to encourage and reward good behaviour as situations arise. A reward system for positive behaviour will be in place, including assemblies where positive behaviour is recognised and encouraged.

This system will reward children for consistently behaving in a positive manner, or for improved behaviour, and also for such things as

- Walking away from a confrontational scene instead of becoming involved.
- Being attentive and co-operative.
- Reporting an incident of bullying.
- Making a conscious effort to keep the school clean and tidy.
- Being kind and helpful to others.
- Being gracious in victory or defeat.
- Helping to resolve conflict between others.
- Opening doors, standing back to allow other pass, helping to carry things.

Rewards may include such things as:

- Treats
- Pupil/Star of the week
- Homework vouchers
- Allowing pupils to start homework early or give reduced homework.
- Verbal praise
- Extra PE or art
- 'Lucky dip'
- Jobs or messages
- Trophy for good behaviour
- Star charts
- Golden Time
- Circle Time
- Trip to the park
- Stickers/stamps
- Principal's Reward Card
- Reward cards carried by other staff members to mark instances of good behaviour.
- DVD on Friday
- End of term prizes for positive behaviour

## **Mobile Phones**

1. While we do not encourage the taking of mobile phones to school, in situations where they are necessary, they must remain..
  - a) In the school bag.
  - b) Turned off.....at **ALL** times during school hours.
  
2. Phones may not be turned on until the pupils are off the school grounds. Breaches of the above will result in confiscation of the phone until it is collected by the child's parent. Any subsequent breaches will incur confiscation of the phone for FIVE days and is to be collected by parents. The school cannot be responsible for mobile phones brought to school.
  
3. **NB** - Any video footage or photos taken on school grounds
  - a) of a staff member without his/her consent,
  - b) of students wearing their school uniform (including tracksuit, jersey etc)

.....which are subsequently distributed in ANY form is considered to be **Gross Misbehaviour.**

### **Please note:**

1. This applies to all school events including games, tours, outings etc.
  
2. Use of cameras on school trips/outings will be at the discretion of the teacher.
  
3. The above rule concerning mobile phones also applies to the Nintendo 3DS etc and all such equipment which have the facility to take audio, still or video footage.
  
4. The school will endeavour to promote an awareness of proper use of the internet {netiquette}. Parents are expected to do likewise and we consider it the duty of parents to closely and frequently monitor



all electronic communication {MSN, Facebook, Xbox etc} for the protection of their own child.

### **The School Yard**

The school yard is always supervised during breaks. The teacher in charge deals with problems that arise during play.

If a child misbehaves in the yard he may be sent to the 'Box' for 5 or 10 minutes. The "Box" is a corner of the yard where a child can stand away from the play area. This can happen for interfering in others games, rough play, going outside the play area etc.

For more troublesome misbehaviour, a child's name is entered into the Yard Book. The Yard Book is used to track boys who may frequently misbehave in the yard.

### **Responding to Children with Challenging Behaviour/Special Educational Needs/Special Circumstances**

Challenging behaviour is defined as behaviour of such intensity, frequency and duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to, and use of ordinary facilities. (Managing challenging behaviour – INTO)

In responding to challenging behaviour this code will also be informed by the requirement to be aware of a pupil in difficult social, economic and personal circumstances and that an effort be made for the provision of an appropriate pastoral response in conjunction with disciplinary sanctions.

The possible strategies/supports we may use in co-operation with parents, are as follows:

- National Educational Psychology Service {NEPS}.
- On-going parental support.
- HSE community psychological services.
- Garda Community liaison officer.
- National Council for Special Education {NCSE}.
- National Educational Welfare Board {NEWB}.
- Child guidance services.
- Social skills groups.
- Resource team intervention / Care team.
- Individual behaviour plans.
- Buddy system.

- Special Education Support Service {SESS}.

Confidentiality is very important when dealing with children with special educational needs/circumstances. Therefore in the case of a student with SEN/circumstances, where all reasonable attempts to resolve a disciplinary have been exhausted, only at that point will the need to breach confidentiality be referred to the BOM for consideration.

## **Minor, Serious and Gross Misbehaviour**

**Examples of Minor Misbehaviours could include:{This list is not exhaustive}**

- Failure to follow school/classroom rules.
- Failure to follow directions given by a teacher in charge.
- Failure to complete school/homework to the best of ability.
- Failure to look after own or school property.
- Deliberate or intentional disruptive behaviour.
- Behaviour which constitutes a risk to the health and safety of others.

**Examples of Serious Misbehaviours could include:{This list is not exhaustive}**

- Persistent minor misbehaviour.
- Verbal abuse towards other children or staff.
- Misbehaving during a fire drill.
- Persistent teasing.
- Deliberate disobedience.
- Fighting and kicking.
- Telling lies.
- Stealing.
- Biting.
- Truancy.
- Bringing lewd material to school.
- Leaving school without permission.
- Spitting at somebody.
- Age inappropriate play or use of inappropriate language.
- Not following mobile phone practice on school grounds.

**Note:** In light of the COVID19 outbreak {2020-21} intentional coughing or spitting at a member of staff/pupil and/or threatening to do so, will be considered as serious misbehaviour. Also included is.... not following school health and safety arrangements for the prevention of the spread of COVID 19. Such behaviour, depending on the circumstances may also be viewed as gross misbehaviour and therefore subject to the consequences listed below.

**Examples of Gross Misbehaviour could include:{This list is not exhaustive}**

- Re-occurrence of serious misbehaviour.
- Bullying.
- Verbal abuse towards a member of staff or a visitor to the school.
- Cheek or defiance of a staff members direction.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards others.
- Physical assault on member of staff, student or visitor, or threat of same.
- Serious theft.
- Vandalism.
- Gross indecency.
- Intimidation of other students.
- Distribution of digital images of children and/or staff without consent.

## **Sanctions**

In dealing with issues of misbehavior, the nature and circumstances of the pupils behaviour will determine which action is considered appropriate by the teacher at the time.

### **Responding to Minor Misbehaviour**

- Quiet word.
- Reminder of school or class rules.
- Seek an explanation from child / ask child why he is doing it.
- Change position in class. / Temporary removal from group within class.
- Longer interview away from class group.
- Loss of minor privileges.
- Note in homework journal/ Chat with parents.
- Lines (Small amount ) or reflection sheet, signed.
- Temporary removal to another class (max 1 hour).
- Unfinished/sloppy work may be completed/corrected at home.
- ‘Time out’ in the yard at playtime.

### **Responding to Serious Misbehaviour Sanctions as above (if appropriate) and**

1. Referral to Principal.
2. Yellow/Red/Orange Card.

### **Disciplinary Card System**

1. Here in St. Declan's we operate a yellow/red/orange disciplinary card system. They are issued in response to serious and/or gross misbehaviour. Fair and due process will be followed in determining the facts of any misbehaviour.
2. Yellow cards can be issued by both the Principal and the teachers when deemed appropriate.
3. A formal warning of a yellow card is issued by the Principal. This will be rescinded after 3 months from date of issue if there has been no other report of misbehaviour.
4. Red and orange cards can only be issued by the Principal.
5. The Card system applies to all classes from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class.
6. Every child begins each school year with a clean slate as long as he agrees to follow the rules and guidelines outlined in this policy.

### **Card Procedure**

#### **Yellow Card**

- Child's name and nature of misbehaviour will be written on each card.
- Cards issued by the Principal will be signed by the Principal and returned signed by the parents/guardians.
- Cards issued by teachers will be signed by the teacher and by the Principal and are returned signed by the parents/guardians to the Principal.
- Depending on the nature of the behaviour the child may be confined to a certain area of the playground for up to 3 school days.

#### **Red Card**

- A 3<sup>rd</sup> yellow card offence will equate to a red card. Issuing will follow the above procedure. However parents will also be informed by post/phone or in person and will be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the child's behaviour in school. Depending on the nature of the misbehaviour the child may be confined to an area of the playground for up to 5 school days.
- A straight red card can be issued when deemed necessary.

#### **Orange Card**

- The next card to be issued after a red card has been issued is an orange/amber card. This will represent a warning that the suspension process will be followed on the next occasion should any further serious/gross misbehaviour take place.
- This too will follow the procedure as with the Red Card. However, now parents will be requested to attend a meeting the following school day to discuss the child's behaviour and to outline the suspension process

should any further serious/gross misbehaviour take place.

- For any boy who receives a straight red card, one yellow card will be allowed before an orange/amber card will be issued ..... unless the nature of the misbehaviour demands otherwise.
- A straight orange card can be issued when deemed necessary.

### **Responding to Gross Misbehaviour**

**Sanctions as above (if appropriate) and suspension or expulsion.**

#### **Procedure for Suspension/Expulsion**

Suspension:

1. Definition of suspension – Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.
2. The Board of Management of St. Declan's has the authority to suspend a student. The authority to suspend a student for a maximum of 3 days has been granted to the Principal. The Principal is to inform the Board of all suspensions and to keep them up to date on issues of a serious nature. For any proposed suspension above 3 days the BOM will convene to consider the matter.
3. The grounds for suspension are:
  - a) The students' behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
  - b) The students continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety.
  - c) The student is responsible for a serious damage to property.
  - d) Accumulation of Yellow Card offences.

The following will be the sequence used to outline the path of accumulated Yellow Card offences leading to suspension.

First Yellow Card, Second Yellow Card, Red Card, Orange Card, One day suspension, Red Card, Orange Card, Two day suspension, Orange Card, 3 day suspension.

At this stage, a special round table meeting of all the parties involved in the boys school life will be convened. Suggestions and recommendations of future actions will be discussed at this meeting. An emergency meeting of the BOM may also be called at this point to discuss the issue.

\*In line with NEWB procedures the following factors will need to be considered before a boy is suspended.....

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether suspension is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of suspension.

4. Procedure:

- a) A meeting with parents is arranged. Parents are requested to meet with the Principal and discuss the facts of the issue. Where parents do not agree to meet the Principal written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- b) The decision to suspend or otherwise is explained and if necessary the procedure for suspension is outlined.
- c) In the event of a 1-3 day suspension – a formal letter will be issued following NEWB guidelines. The letter will confirm.....
  1. The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
  2. The reason for the suspension
  3. Any study programme to be followed.
  4. Arrangements for returning to school....on completion of suspension the pupil will return with his parents and sign a letter of commitment to school Code of Behaviour.
  5. The provision of the right to appeal to the BOM/DES as appropriate.
- d) In the event of immediate suspension – parents will be requested to attend immediate meeting with Principal – child will be brought home and parents told that he is to remain at home that day plus one. Further investigation of the issue under the direction of the Principal may take place to determine the full facts. A meeting with parents is arranged for the following school day to discuss the facts of the issue.
- e) The decision to further suspend or otherwise is explained at this meeting. A formal letter will be issued for any further days suspension following NEWB guidelines as above.
- f) For any proposed suspensions above 3 days the BOM will be asked to convene to consider the matter. Following this meeting a formal letter will be presented to the parents at a prearranged meeting. This will follow NEWB guidelines as above. The Principal and the Chairperson will attend to outline the decision of the board.
- g) This policy respects the right of the student to appeal to the Board of Management the Principals decision to suspend. It further respects the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES.
- h) The school will plan to help the pupil to take responsibility for catching up on any work missed. The school will also monitor the reintegration process following suspension.
- i) If in any one year a pupil accumulates 6 or more days of suspension it must be reported to the NEWB.

#### Expulsion:

1. Definition of Expulsion – To permanently exclude a pupil from the school.
2. The Board of Management alone has the authority to expel a pupil
3. Grounds for Expulsion
  - a) The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

- b) The students continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

\*NB: The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that where expulsion is considered, the school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believed that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the students' behaviour.

\*In line with NEWB procedures the following factors will need to be considered before a boy is expelled.....

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. The context of the behaviour.
3. The impact of the behaviour.
4. The interventions tried to date.
5. Whether expulsion is a proportionate response.
6. The possible impact of expulsion.

#### 4. Procedure

\*For any proposed expulsion the BOM will be asked to convene to consider the matter.

- a) Parents will be informed that the BOM will be asked to convene and that a case for expulsion will be brought before it by the Principal.
- b) Parents will be given due notice {at least a week}, the reason for the meeting and an invitation to attend. Parents are allowed to be accompanied in order to make a submission to the BOM.
- c) Following the submission by both parties, the BOM will decide on the matter in their absence.
- d) If the BOM forms the opinion that the student is to be expelled, the NEWB must be notified in writing and the expulsion can't take effect until 20 school days have elapsed from the date the NEWB have been informed. The BOM may decide it is appropriate to suspend a child during this period.
- e) The BOM will inform the parents in writing of its decision and of its notification to the NEWB.
- f) Where the BOM remains of the view that the child should be expelled, the BOM must confirm the expulsion after 20 days has elapsed. Parents are notified that expulsion will proceed and are further notified of their right of appeal to the DES.

**\*This policy will be constantly under review.  
Last updated – Aug 25<sup>th</sup> 2020**

