



St. Mark's Boys National School

Code of Behaviour

“Education is a shared commitment between dedicated teachers, motivated students and enthusiastic parents with high expectations.” - Bob Beuprez

Introduction

St. Mark's Boys National School is dedicated to providing a safe nurturing educational environment that will enhance the development of the whole child. This will foster a lifelong process of learning and development resulting in a happy responsible citizen.

The staff of this school want to create a climate of physical, emotional, social and intellectual safety for the students, teachers and parents so that teaching and learning can occur within relationships of mutual valuing and respect.

High standards of behaviour are encouraged by a clear code of behaviour, backed by a balanced combination of rewards and sanctions. These are enforced fairly within a positive school atmosphere, in order to effectively meet the needs of each individual child.

Rationale

A Code of Behaviour is required under both the DES Circular 20/90 on school discipline and the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 23 (1 and 2).

Our long term aim is:

- ***The creation of a positive environment in which each child can learn at his own pace in a secure and happy school setting.***
- ***The creation of a suitable climate where each teacher can teach to the best of his/her ability in an environment free from disruption and conducive to learning.***

Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour are:

1. To promote good behaviour and self discipline among the children.
2. To promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the school.
3. To promote equality, fairness and inclusion among all.

4. To enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
5. To increase the cooperation between home and school.
6. To outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to negative behaviour and to ensure consistency.

Policy Statement

This policy covers:

- a. School Rules
- b. Parents & School Working Together
- c. Behaviour in the School Yard
- d. Behaviour in the Classroom
- e. Positive Reinforcement of Good Behaviour
- f. Sanctioning Misbehaviour & record keeping
- g. Categories of Misbehaviour and Sanctions
- h. Suspension and Expulsion
- i. Supervision - Staff Duty of Care
- j. Procedures for Working with Parents and Guardians
- k. Pupil Registration and Code of Behaviour
- l. Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- m. Acceptable Use, Mobile Phone and Smart Devices & Anti Bullying Policies
- n. Success Criteria
- o. Ratification

A: School Rules

- Respect yourself, others and property
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Show courtesy and good manners at all times
- No hands on
- "Be in your line at ten to nine" - come to school on time
- Wear uniform or tracksuit daily
- Complete homework each night and have all items ready for class
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Always request permission to leave the classroom
- No jewellery except an analogue watch or stud earrings
- Healthy lunch - one small treat on Friday
- No chewing gum, fizzy drinks or crisps (See Healthy Lunch Policy)

The school rules are summed up for the pupils as our *Three Golden Rules*:

1. *Speak and act with respect for yourself and others*
2. *Do as the adult asks immediately*
3. *No hands on*
- 4.

B: Parents/Guardians and School Working Together

“When schools and families work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more” - Henderson & Mapp

The Code of Behaviour requires the support and cooperation of parents / guardians and its success depends on teachers and parents / guardians working together. The school will keep parents / guardians informed of problems before they escalate. Also, it is important that parents notify the class teacher / principal if they become aware of a problem at the earliest possible stage.

Aladdin Connect, email and phone calls are an important means of 2-way communication between parents / guardians and teacher. Parents / guardians should keep in contact with the school regarding all aspects of their child’s progress. It is essential that parents / guardians regularly discuss the Code of Behaviour with children at the earliest possible stage.

Parents/guardians can support their children at home:

- By making themselves aware of School Rules and being consistent in following them.
- By teaching children to respect all people, all property and their environment.
- By teaching good manners.
- By teaching children right from wrong.
- By encouraging a sense of cooperation.
- By encouraging children to speak respectfully.
- By helping children to feel positive about themselves.

Each child has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Bullying interferes with this right and breaks the rule of mutual respect and therefore is not acceptable (see Anti-bullying Policy).

“No school can work well with students if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children’s best interests” - Doherty H Cohen”

C. Behaviour in School Yard

- Pupils must enter and leave the school building in their class lines.
- Children must stay in designated areas at break times (see timetable in staffroom)
- Children who need to enter the school building during break time must get permission from the teacher on the yard.
- Rough play is not permitted.
- No hands on.
- At the end of the break pupils must respond immediately to the teacher’s signal and stand quietly in line.
- Instructions of adults on yard duty must be obeyed.
- When weather does not permit outdoor activities children will remain in class and follow their regular class rules
- A notice will be placed on Aladdin Connect by teachers to notify staff of any child off yard

D. Behaviour in the classroom

The management of classroom behaviour is primarily a matter for the Class Teacher who will draw up rules for his/her class appropriate to the age levels of the children. However, the following apply in all classrooms:

- Children should work at an appropriate level of volume for the task being completed.
- All instructions from adults are to be followed straight away.
- If a teacher has to leave the class for any reason, pupils must work silently and remain seated.
- Pupils are expected to complete to the best of their ability the work/homework assigned.
- A note from parent / guardian is expected when work is not completed
- Classrooms should be kept tidy and everything should be put in its proper place including litter.
- Pupils are not allowed to have mobile phones/smart devices on school premises. (See Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy).

E. Positive Reinforcement of Good Behaviour

Encouragement is vital to success and achievement in pupils' lives. The school aims to promote and encourage good behaviour therefore positive reinforcement is essential. This may be done in the following ways:

- Staff modelling of respectful interactions.
- Building nurturing relationships between staff and all children.
- Selective timetabling to suit the pattern of children with challenging behaviours.
- Daily timetabling in Nurture Room for children with challenging behaviour (see below)
- Visit to another class/to the Principal for commendation.
- Affirmation of good behaviour and reinforce desired behaviours "catch children being good"
- Rainbow system for Golden Time on Fridays
- Other classroom management strategies will be put in place e.g. class Dojo
- Friendly gestures of acknowledgement – e.g. smile, compliment, round of applause.
- Student of the Month per class selected monthly – acknowledged in assembly (virtual or in person)
- Certificates of good behaviour - good news notes, tokens for homework off, 'kind kid' card
- Extra privileges – granted to those who behave well, e.g. extra time on playground, iPads, special activity or task, choice of sensory area, time out on bean bag etc.
- Awarding of stars, stickers and other prizes as appropriate.
- Golden Ticket for good work/excellent behaviour

The school places greater emphasis on rewards rather than on sanctions, in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.

Nurture Room:

Starting in September 2022, St. Mark's has established a Nurture Room. This is a targeted intervention for children with behavioural/social/emotional challenges. Working in Nurture groups provides the children with an opportunity to engage in work that supports their emotional awareness and helps to develop their maturity and resilience. The Nurture Schools programme provides targeted support to students who are at risk of educational disadvantage, aimed at enhancing social, emotional and behavioural skills, attendance, engagement, resilience and self-belief. It is our hope that providing children with a safe space to speak to an adult, will help to preempt, and eliminate escalating behaviours in the school. The assignment of a place in Nurture for the year is based on an assessment of target children using the Boxall Profile. From this, the teacher working in Nurture creates a Support Plan for the child for the year.

F. Sanctioning misbehaviour and record keeping

Distinctions will be made between minor, serious and gross misbehaviour and the aim of the sanctions is to preempt the behaviour escalating. It is important that children know in advance what the sanctions are and that it is the behaviour (actions) not children that is the focus of correction. As far as possible sanctions will be related to the misbehaviour and that they will be immediate, reasonable and consistent when a pupil chooses to misbehave. Sanctions/consequences will be proportionate to the behaviour exhibited. Where disciplinary problems arise parents will be involved at the earliest stage necessary.

A written record will be kept for repeated incidences of misbehaviour, (minor, serious and gross) in order to determine patterns which in turn may assist in generating solutions to deal with that behaviour or further highlight the need for further intervention. A 'Significant Incident Report' should be completed when necessary as soon as possible after the incident and reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Sanctions are implemented in order to change behaviour. Where children exhibit particularly challenging behaviour, it may be necessary to draw up an I.B.P. (Individual Behaviour Plan).

G. Classification of misbehaviour & sanctions

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child. At every occasion possible where there is a breach of the code of behaviour the child will always be afforded the time to de-escalate their behaviour and given time to self-regulate and manage their emotions so that they may then be given the opportunity to speak about the incident from their perspective. The principles of restorative practice will be utilised in this conversation with the child to address the incident and to work with them to figure out a solution and how to make things right (See appendix 1). The degree of misconduct, the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour and sanctions are outlined and classified below. These lists are not exhaustive.

Classification	Behaviour	Sanctions
Minor Misbehaviour	<p>*This list is not exhaustive*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom misbehaviour • Interruptions • running in the building • littering/being discourteous • incomplete homework with no note from parent • inappropriate behaviour or gestures • minor infringement of the school rules • talking out of turn • not wearing appropriate uniform • leaving seat without permission 	<p>*minor misbehaviour should be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the <u>classroom teacher</u>*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Loss of dojos/rewards • Seating Arrangements altered • Complete incomplete homework • Poorly presented work re-done • Note to parent re uniform • Note/comment on journal/Aladdin to be signed
Serious Misbehaviour	<p>Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant back-answering • Hurtful behaviour e.g discrimination, bullying, racial, homophobic or identity-based abuse • name calling • Repeated minor misbehaviour which interferes with teaching & learning • Persistently not working to full potential • Threats to another • Damage to property • Arranging fights • Breach of mobile phone policy • Leaving the classroom without permission • Defiance and refusal to engage 	<p>Specific sanctions per behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect sheet • Remove from classroom and report to parents and principal • Temporary removal from class to another room with work • Report to parents (phone call/journal) • Off yard for 2 days - <i>class teacher needs to inform those on duty each day</i> • Fix property if possible/note in journal to parents • Sent to Principal's office/off yard for 5 days - <i>class teacher needs to inform those on duty each day</i> • Confiscate the mobile phone and give it to the Principal to be collected by the parent • Report to Principal/extra homework given that evening • Work sent home/phone call to parent

<p>Gross Misbehaviour</p> <p>(Management intervenes for all serious misbehaviours outlined here)</p>	<p><u>Parents should be contacted for all gross misbehaviour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal or physical aggression towards a pupil or staff member • Serious theft • Serious breach of AUP policy (Acceptable Use Policy) • Disrespectful gestures including inappropriate sexual behaviour/gestures • Leaving classroom/school building and refusing to re-enter • Use of objects as weapons with intent to harm • Repeated serious misbehaviours 	<p>- Referral to Principal/Deputy Principal <u>always</u> to enforce the following sanctions for the linked behaviours below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report card for one week or until deemed necessary/ off yard for 5 days • Suspension and item/value of item to be returned • Suspension/loss of privileges such as trips, sports days etc. • Report card for one week or until deemed necessary/respect sheet sent home • Sent home with additional work pack • Suspension • Suspension/loss of privileges such as trips, sports days etc. • Contact Community Garda
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**The above lists are not exhaustive.

H. Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension and Expulsion will be considered by the school in accordance with the NEWB Guidelines 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (2008)' as detailed in the section below:

Suspension:

- Authority to suspend: The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority is delegated to the Principal.
- Grounds for suspension: 'Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.' We will endeavour at all times to try other interventions as outlined in this Code and we will review why they haven't worked before implementing a suspension. Decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:
 1. the child's behaviour has a detrimental effect on the education of others.
 2. the child's presence in school is a threat to safety.
 3. the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

- On return from a suspension an agreed 'Behaviour Contract' between Pupil, Parent and Principal will be signed. This is a Behaviour Management Plan which sets out agreed behavioural expectations with the child. The Contract will expire on the first day of the summer holidays of the academic year in which it was signed. It will also give an opportunity to plan other interventions and impress on a child and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Clean slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. A record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed. Once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the pupil to adhere to the Code of Behaviour and Behaviour Contract if necessary. Pupils may be given a Report Card to help them to monitor and take responsibility for regulating their own behaviour. While records of these are kept and maintained on file every child is afforded a 'clean slate' every September and encouraged to achieve success daily.

Expulsion:

- Authority to expel: The Board of Management has the authority to expel a child and this authority should not be delegated.
- Grounds for expulsion: Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the child's behaviour.

It will only be implemented by the Board in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion. Such steps may include a meeting with parents and the child to find ways of changing behaviour and making sure that the child understands the consequences of their behaviour. All other options must have been tried including seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a child requires serious grounds such as:

1. the child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
2. the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
3. the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

See NEWB Guidelines published by the Department of Education in 2008 for further information on appeals, suspensions and expulsions.

In certain cases, with parental consent it may be necessary to refer a pupil for medical or psychological assessment.

I. Supervision

Supervision by all staff is an essential component we utilise in St. Mark's to ensure pupils comply with the Code of Behaviour successfully. Staff are aware of their supervisory duties and should any member of staff be unsure about a situation they should consult with the class teacher or Deputy Principal/Principal if necessary.

Staff on lunch duty are allocated prescribed areas of supervision and times. It is imperative that staff adhere to the rota and their placement at all times in the interest of health and safety.

Staff will be required to document incidents that occur while the children are in their care. It is part of every staff's duty of care to use their professional judgement to decide whether or not an incident merits filling out an incident report or a significant incident report form. Reporting of incidents is crucial and must be factual and done so in a timely manner at all times.

A teacher who gives a consequence/sanction to a child for misbehaviour must ensure that on the changeover of the supervision staff, the new staff are aware of such incidents/consequences which must be adhered to by a pupil. A record of this will be found on the Staff Notice section on Aladdin regarding Yard Duty.

J. Procedures for working with Parents and Guardians

Parents /guardians are expected to uphold the high standards laid out in St. Mark's Code of Behaviour. The following steps will be taken when parents/guardians behave inappropriately or aggressively. They are listed in order of severity from a minor breach of appropriate behaviour to a serious or gross breach of appropriate behaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. The Board of Management may put in place alternative measures. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the parents/guardians communicate in an appropriate way. Every effort will be made to facilitate meetings in a restorative way. At all times the safety of the children and adults involved will be paramount;

1. If a parent behaves inappropriately with a teacher/member of staff, they will be asked to calm down and move away.
2. Teacher will try reasoning with the parent/guardian. This may be asking them to come back later in the day/week for a meeting.
3. If the parent refuses to leave, the teacher will walk (if possible) towards the principal or deputy principal, not engaging with the parent/guardian.
4. A meeting will be held at an appropriate time, when the parent/guardian is calm. The parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to air their grievance and if necessary the principal will issue a verbal warning including advice on how to communicate when issues arise.
5. If appropriate, the principal may then hold a restorative circle in order to repair any harm caused.
6. If the parent/guardian continues to act in an aggressive or inappropriate manner then the principal will then issue a written warning. She will inform the BOM of this action.
7. If inappropriate behaviour continues to exist then the principal will ask the chairperson to contact the parent/guardian. This may result in the parent being excluded from the school premise.
8. This matter will be reviewed by the board at their next meeting.

K. Pupil Registration and Code of Behaviour

It shall be a condition of the registration of a pupil in St. Mark's, from the date of formal ratification of the Code of Behaviour by Board of Management, that all parents/ guardians seeking to have their child enrolled in the school, shall confirm in writing/ on Aladdin Connect that our Code of Behaviour, is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by their child. Failure to do so shall result in refusal to enrol the child in St. Mark's Boys National School.

L. Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Every effort will be made to support the behaviour of pupils with special educational needs. Individual Behaviour Plans or behaviour specific targets / interventions outlined in the pupils SSP will be drafted for pupils exhibiting behaviours of concern. Records will be kept of any interventions utilised by staff in order to enable a pupil with additional needs to comply with the Code of Behaviour and follow rules so that they and their peers and the whole school community may have a positive and safe school experience and achieve success daily. Notwithstanding such support, pupils with special educational needs are subject to this Code of Behaviour. In exceptional cases, the school may consider options as an alternative to suspension to include a reduced timetable for a limited period with the consent of parents/guardians.

M. Acceptable Use, Mobile Phone and Smart Devices & Anti Bullying Policies

As mentioned previously in the Code of Behaviour all pupils are obliged to comply with the above mentioned school policies. Infringements or non-adherence will leave pupils open to sanctions under this Code of Behaviour.

N. Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are consistently implemented by all staff.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

O. Ratification

The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy. This policy will be amended and updated as required. This policy was reviewed and completed in September 2022. The next review date is June 2024.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of St. Mark's BNS at its meeting on _____

Signed; _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Restorative Practice – Questions to ask after an incident

Restorative Questions to Address Harm

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about it since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Points to remember when utilising the principles of Restorative Practice

Be Fair: Everything will work much better!

- **ENGAGE** with everyone who is affected by the decision.
- **EXPLAIN** why the decision needs to be made and any contributing factors.
- Make sure everyone knows what is expected of them in the future.