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# Code of Behaviour

A thorough review of the existing Code of Behaviour was carried out in the Spring of 2014 and again in early 2016. This is an amalgamation of both reviews.

Input from staff, Board of Management, parents / guardians and pupils was drawn upon with reference to the N.E.W.B publication 'Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools'. The pupils were involved in discussing their role and responsibilities within the code. This code of Behaviour was subsequently prepared by the staff and Principal. It was presented to the Board of Management Meeting on 25/01/2016.

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Columbanus N.S is part of the Catholic Community of Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin

We strive to create a safe, appropriate and happy learning environment conducive to the attainment of true educational, spiritual and moral potential of each individual.

In everything we do we will, where appropriate, collaborate with the whole school community, agencies and individuals with whom we share common goals.

## AIMS

To provide a safe, appropriate and happy learning environment for each of our pupils and staff members.

To build positive relationships between pupils, parents and staff through the development of a teamwork approach to acceptable Christian behaviour.

To set a standard that reflects our Catholic ethos, our school's mission statement, aims and values.

In our Code of Behaviour we aim to communicate the system of rules, rewards and sanctions and how we intend to implement them, in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school to achieve an appropriated pupil education with the best possible outcomes.

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents / guardians, pupils and school staff.

St Columbanus N.S. promotes positive Christian behaviour with reference to the use of the

following programmes as appropriate.

- [ Restorative Practices\*
- [ Incredible Years Programme\*\*
- [ Virtues programme\*\*\*

## **1. PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

**Our Code of Behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community (pupil, staff, parents and guardians) will help to make the school a harmonious place for teaching and learning. The code describes how the school authorities will respond to the behaviour that interrupts, diminishes or prevents teaching and learning in the school.**

**Throughout this document we will use the word 'parent' to define all parents and guardians of our pupils.**

In St. Columbanus National School, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for implementing the Code of Behaviour in the school. The overall day to day responsibility for behaviour within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians must support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

## **2. AIMS OF THE CODE**

- [ 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 enable teachers to teach without disruption
- [ To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are communicated through the parents' handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- [ To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

### 3. RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS USING THE SCHOOL PREMISES

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

Adults should aim to:

- [ Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
  - [ Promote positive Christian behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
  - [ Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
  - [ Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
  - [ Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
  - [ Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
  - [ To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

### 4. RULES

#### 4.1 School Rules for Pupils

1. We show respect for self and others.
2. We show respect for our own property and the property of others.
3. We show respect other pupils and their learning.
4. We are kind and willing to help others.
5. We follow instructions from staff immediately.
6. We walk quietly in the school building.
7. We show courtesy and good manners.
8. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
9. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
10. We do our best in class.
11. We take responsibility for your own work.
12. We wear the appropriate uniform.
13. We follow our Healthy Eating Policy.
14. We hand in mobile phones to the school office.

These can be summed up as 6 Golden Rules:

1. We listen. We don't interrupt.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We are kind.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.

6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

These 6 "Golden Rules" will be the main ones used for infant classes. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities.

## 4.2 Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the "Golden Rules". Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' instead of 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the ages of the pupils and to individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted.

## 4.3 Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of St. Columbanus National School is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, training, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Praise for behaviour should be given as often as for work and should be used frequently.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- [ A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- [ A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- [ A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- [ A word of praise in front of a group or class
- [ Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- [ A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- [ 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly.

Field trips, school tours and any additional special events will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to behave well. Those whose behaviour is unacceptable will be excluded from such events.

## 4.4 Parents support Positive Behaviour by:

- [ Ensuring their child (ren) attend school regularly and punctually
- [ Ensuring that their child (ren) wear full uniform with appropriate clothing for weather and P.E.
- [ Arranging meetings with the class teacher if they have issues concerning their child(ren)
- [ Supporting their child (ren) doing homework
- [ Ensuring that their child (ren) has correct books and other materials
- [ Being familiar with the Code of Behaviour and other school policies
- [ Supporting the implementation of those policies

- [ Co-operating with school staff if their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- [ Attending meetings at the school if required

## **5. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and requested to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

To assist pupils in the understanding of behaviour, a Yellow, Orange and Red card system is in place. A visual reminder helps them see the gravity of their misbehaviour and it has been shown to prevent unacceptable behaviour from escalating. Teachers explain the system in detail at the beginning of the academic year and of each new term. Pupils must comply with the Code of Behaviour.

### **5.1 Use of Coloured Cards**

Yellow cards will be used for minor misbehaviour as part of classroom management. Children will have time-out in a designated area and complete a Behaviour Sheet. This sheet must be signed by parents/ guardians. This sanction should be between pupil and teacher.

Orange cards will be used if the minor misbehaviour occurs again. Pupil will meet with Deputy Principal / Principal as appropriate.

Red cards will be used for all major or gross misbehaviour. Pupil will meet with Deputy Principal / Principal

### **5.2 Minor (Yellow card) Misbehaviour includes but is not limited to:**

- ≥ Speaking out of turn
- ≥ Getting out of seat without permission
- ≥ Grabbing items from others
- ≥ Fidgeting
- ≥ Running on corridor
- ≥ Distracting others during lessons
- ≥ Angry moans / noises / tones / Irritating sounds
- ≥ Not completing work to the best of their ability
- ≥ Swinging on chair
- ≥ Not keeping hands to ourselves
- ≥ Talking when teacher is talking

### **5.4 Repeated Minor Misbehaviour (Orange)**

### **5.5 Serious (Red card) Misbehaviour includes but is not limited to:**

- ≥ Damaging property belonging to others
- ≥ Persistent refusal to take instruction
- ≥ Not respecting staff (laughing / ignoring / non-compliance / swearing under breath)
- ≥ Hurting others (Physically and/or Emotionally)

- ≥ Throwing items in class
- ≥ Hitting desks, walls and other school property in anger
- ≥ Arguing with teachers or other staff members about completing tasks
- ≥ Aggressive behaviour in class and yard- pushing/ shoving/ kicking school property.
- ≥ Disrespect for the school, staff and other pupils.
- ≥ Aggression (Physical, verbal or emotional)
- ≥ Disruptive and/or continued misbehaviour that may have an adverse effect on the operation of the school and/or the provision of education to other pupils.

### **5.6 Gross (Red Card) Misbehaviour includes but is not limited to:**

- [ Assault on a teacher, pupil, parent or visitor
- [ Theft
- [ Damage to property
- [ Bullying
- [ Possession of drugs, alcohol, dangerous weapons, cigarettes
- [ Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards an adult or pupil

### **5.7 Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, are not considered to be described as bullying.

- [ PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- [ VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- [ EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. “Cyber/text” bullying.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a telephone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher. This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual pupils in a sensitive manner.

## **6 SANCTIONS**

The purpose of a sanction is to try to eliminate unacceptable behaviour by:

- [ helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- [ helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others

[ helping pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences

[ helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

[ reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour

[ signal to other pupils and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

[ prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning

[ keep a pupil, or other pupils or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

These sanctions may include but are not limited to :

### **6.1 Phase 1**

Verbal reprimand including guidance on how to improve

Prescribing extra work

Loss of privileges

Time out (temporary separation from peers within classroom)

Referral to another teacher/classroom with specific work

Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/pupil and kept on file by teacher.

### **6.2 Phase 2 (for Serious Misbehaviour)**

Referral to Principal

Removal from class

Letter from the Principal informing a parent of continuous misbehaviour

Class teacher and Principal will meet with one/both parents/guardians

Pupil returns to class only when he/she has agreed in writing to accept classroom rules and general school rules.

### **6.3 Phase 3 (if deemed necessary)**

Pupil is suspended or expelled from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Chairperson of the Board of Management is informed and parents/guardians are requested to meet with the Chairperson (or other designated Board member) and the Principal.

### **6.4 Suspension and Expulsion**

Where practical and, before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between the school Principal and parents will be utilised.

Communication with parents may be verbal, electronic or by letter, depending on the circumstances. Where a suspension or expulsion is deemed necessary, a letter will be posted to the pupil's address.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Parent(s) concerned will be requested to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of gross misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parent(s) do not give an undertaking in writing that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil will be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any other relevant information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of serious or gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parent(s).

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board or Chairperson or Principal as provided above shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

## **7. REMOVAL OF SUSPENSION (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the Principal will invite the parents to the school to discuss reinstatement of the pupil. The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking in writing that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with this Code. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of an individual behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

## **8. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. If required, individual behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support / resource teacher, and Principal will work closely with the pupil's parent(s) and arrange for whatever support that is available to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be sought.



The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the Rules and, thus, provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

## **9. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

Communicating with parent(s) is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with pupils. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of mutual co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

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

**9.1** The following methods of home- school communication are used:

- [ Informal or formal parent/teacher meetings
- [ Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- [ Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- [ School notice board
- [ Newsletters/school web-site/e-mails (texts when appropriate)

## **10. REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES**

Other school policies that have a bearing on our Code of Behaviour include:

SPHE

Anti-bullying

Enrolment

Health and Safety

Home/School links

Special Educational Needs

Attendance

Data Protection

## **11. SUCCESS CRITERIA**

Indicators of the success of the Code of Behaviour policy include:

Observation of positive and improved behaviour in classrooms, corridors, playground and school environment.

Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by staff.  
Positive feedback from staff, parents/ guardians and pupils.

## 12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone in our school community shares responsibility for the successful implementation of this Code of Behaviour. The implementation and operation of the above policy will be by the Principal, teachers, staff and parents utilizing whatever resources are available to them from time to time as provided / made available to them by the Department of Education. The Board of Management accepts no liability for anything arising under or out of the above policy.

## 13. RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This policy was prepared by the school staff in consultation with Parents. It was presented to the Board of Management for review and was ratified by the Board of Management on:

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Once ratified, the policy document will be circulated to all parents/guardians and staff members.

## 14. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation will be immediate.

## 15. TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

A review of the implementation of this policy will be undertaken during the year commencing January 2017.

### **\*Restorative Practices**

Everyone who is affected by bad behaviour/ a wrongdoing/a conflict has the opportunity to talk about what happened and to explain how they have been affected. They describe how they are feeling about what happened and say what they think has to happen to sort things out and to reach a resolution.

### **\*\*Incredible Years**

The Incredible Years® is an evidence-based programme for parents, teachers, and pupils aimed at reducing challenging behaviours in pupils and increasing their social emotional learning and

self-control skills. The programmes have been found to be effective in strengthening teacher and parent management skills, improving pupil's social emotional competence, emotion regulation, and school readiness, and reducing behaviour problems. Evidence shows the programmes have improved behaviours of up to 80 percent of the pupils of participating parents and teachers.

### **\*\*\*Virtues**

The Virtues Programme is based on the simple wisdom of the world's diverse cultures and religions about living by the best within us – courage, honour, justice, kindness and all of our innate virtues. It is easily integrated into our existing culture and children learn within the context of what they experience in daily interactions within classroom and playground.

It's really important to find something about each pupil which a teacher can legitimately appreciate and enjoy. Every pupil needs to see someone's eyes light up in recognition, with a look which says "I see you, and you matter to me." By identifying a virtue and naming it, you will see their eyes light up in recognition – of their own value. There are three fundamental ways to use the power of language to awake the innate virtues in pupils, thereby bringing out the best in them:

**Acknowledge** or praise them for a virtue they have practiced

Correct and **Guide** or prepare them to practice a virtue

Correct or **Remind** them when they have "forgotten" themselves and failed to practice a virtue, when they've done something wrong or made a mistake.