



# ST. ANNE'S SCHOOL

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY STATEMENT**

This document is a statement of the Code of Behaviour at School of St. Anne's School. It was developed through a process of consultation with the teaching staff. It was presented to all parents and staff in draft form. Their observations and comments were presented along with the draft policy to the Board of Management. In devising the Code of Behaviour, consideration has been given to the challenges experienced by the pupils of St. Anne's, keeping in mind individual needs and circumstances of all. The code allows for implementation of individual behavioural management plans but in the case of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour when the safety and duty of care of others' is at risk, the code takes precedence.

### **The Aims of Our Code of Behaviour is:**

- To provide guidance for students, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations, helping them understand the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
  - To develop students' self- esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
  - To enhance the learning environment where students can make progress in all aspects of their development by fostering a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in them, based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
  - To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between students and the need to accommodate these differences.
  - To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community so school can accommodate these differences.
  - To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
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- Behaviour Management Index includes the following guidelines from a whole-school approach, these guidelines
    1. Governing Principles.
    2. Behaviour Analysis/Problem Behaviour Inventory.
    3. In-school group consultation process.
    4. Individual Behaviour Management Plan.
    5. Positive Behaviour Support Planning and Strategies.
    6. Crisis Development Model (where necessary) Supportive, directive, intervention and therapeutic response.

### ***Our Golden Rules***

<b>Do</b>	<b>be gentle</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>hurt anybody</b>
<b>Do</b>	<b>be kind and helpful</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>hurt people's feelings</b>
<b>Do</b>	<b>be honest</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>hide the truth</b>
<b>Do</b>	<b>work hard</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>waste time</b>
<b>Do</b>	<b>look after property</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>damage things</b>
<b>Do</b>	<b>Listen to people</b>	<b>Don't</b>	<b>interrupt</b>

#### **Our School expects that its students will:**

- Attend school regularly. The school will comply with the statutory requirements regarding the notification of student absences.
- Arrive on time.
- Complete all assigned work.
- Not bring any possessions to school which are not required for their day to day education.
- Respect all school property.
- At the end of the school day, wait quietly in the GP Hall until they are called by the person on duty.
- Walk in an orderly fashion from the GP Hall to the main door and board the bus in a safe and orderly manner.

#### **The Teacher expects that students will:**

- Come to school on time and have all necessary items.
- Show him / her courtesy and respect.
- Accept his/ her authority and responsibility and his/ her right to impose sanctions to those who display challenging behaviour.
- Listen carefully.
- Avoid distracting behaviour.
- Try their best at all times.
- Follow the rules drawn up by their class.

#### **Fellow Students expect that students will:**

- Show acceptance and respect their differing personalities.
- Be respectful to them and their property.
- Listen to them and be a friend.
- Be well mannered.
- Share toys and school equipment.
- Not bully them.

**Our Students can expect that the school will be:**

- Safe • Happy
- Suited to their learning style
- Encouraging and supportive
- Affirming of their abilities
- An equal and fair environment for all

**Our Parents can expect that:**

- A safe and happy environment for their child.
- Each pupil will be supported and encouraged to reach maximum potential.
- Recognition and provision for the individual differences of pupils.
- Fairness and consistency in the way children are supported.
- Every effort made to promote positive and appropriate behaviour.
- Regular home/ school liaison.

**Our Staff can expect:**

- That their working environment will be safe
- That they will be supported and encouraged.
- That there will be a fair and consistent implementation of the policy.
- That there will be a fair and agreed structure of sanctions.
- That St. Anne's School encourages professional development and in willingness to learn and change.
- That their professional judgements will be respected.
- That the lines of communication within the school will be clearly defined.

**The School expects that parents will:**

- Be familiar with the various policies and codes of the school and the expectation of pupils.
- Inform the school of any significant changes or otherwise that may impact their child's development of engagement in school.
- Show support for teachers in their implementation of the school's policy.
- Support their child in his/ her schoolwork and their positive behaviour strategies as per individual behaviour support plan, where necessary.
- Ensure the punctuality and regular attendance of their child.
- Ensure he/ she has the necessary items required for school.
- Encourage their child to have a positive attitude to and abide by the school and class rules.
- Promote respect for teachers and other school personnel.
- Give contact numbers where they can be reached at all times.
- Be available to discuss concerns.

**Strategies and Incentives in Place:**

The school aims to implement a blend of the following strategies and incentives.

- Structured teaching environment.
- Praise and encouragement.
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Individual Positive Reinforcement Support Plan.
- Assembly acknowledgement.
- Access to preferred activity or material.
- Class merit/ rewards/ sticker/ star/ token/ Pupil of the Week.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.

- Written or verbal communication with parent.
- Use of a wide range of education materials, methods and media in the classroom.
- Advice sought from visiting therapists and professionals regarding individual behaviours, as necessary.
- Greenspan DIR Floortime principals and methods used where practicable.
- Use of LÁMH, PECs, Assisted Communication Technology and Speech for promotion of receptive/expressive communication as appropriate.
- Emphasis placed on social, practical and life skills education (e.g. Social Stories, independence, conflict resolution).
- Home / School Communication books.
- Behaviour data records & Incident Report records.

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour lends to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives.

### **Response and Sanctions:**

Responses and sanctions will be measured and implemented according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age and the emotional development of the pupil. The aim of responses and sanctions is to support and modify change in behaviour,

- to help pupils learn that their behaviour is unacceptable or inappropriate.
- to recognise the effect of their actions or unacceptable behaviour on others.
- to help bring awareness of responsibility for their behaviour.
- to help pupils (in ways relevant to age and cognitive ability) understand and make choices about their own behaviour and learn that choices have consequences.

### **Responses**

- Low arousal approach (quiet/calm) approach, clear and consistent communication.
- Reasoning and negotiating with the pupil.
- Positive reinforcement and redirection.
- Social behaviour mapping techniques.
- Appropriate programmes which consider specific and common needs of all students e.g. specific sensory regulation and needs.
- Behaviour support school team consultation process.
- Consultation with parents/guardians. Where serious breaches of school practice is compromised, response may be necessary to;
- Prevent serious disruption to teaching and learning
- Maintain the safety of a pupil, or other pupils or staff. (Whole-staff Behaviour Support Management Training).

**Supportive Approach**-empathetic, non-judgemental approach

**Directive Approach**-to decelerate escalating behaviour, e.g. teacher/student cue, redirection/alter task, reasoning, verbal/visual reminders

**Physical Intervention**-only when necessary to uphold the health and safety of students and staff

**Therapeutic Rapport**-restorative approach to re-establish relationships and routines.

### **Sanctions**

- Temporary move to a quiet place/another space.
- Loss of privileges (realistic to individual pupil comprehension)
- School communicating with the parents/Guardians.
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with Parent/Guardians.

- Suspension
- Exclusion (suspension or expulsion) from school. (In accordance with Rule 130 or Rules for National Schools as amended by Curricular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

### **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is defined as “requiring a student to absent himself or herself from the school for a specific number of school days”.

- The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority to suspend for a period of up to and including three days is formally delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management and Principal have a duty to ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation in making decisions about the imposition of suspension.
- The document of delegation will state any limits on that authority and specify how the principal is accountable to the Board of Management for use of that authority.
- The delegation of authority will reflect the provisions of the Guidelines, any relevant legal requirements and Articles of Management, where appropriate.
- Sanctions contained within this Code of Behaviour will allow for the principles of natural justice including the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.
- Great care will be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour will be dealt with in confidence.

#### **Grounds for Suspension**

- Suspension will be proportionate to the behaviour and only used as a means of sanction when other interventions have been tried.

#### **Inappropriate use of Suspension**

Students will not usually be suspended for:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

#### **Decision to suspend a student**

- The student’s behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student’s continued presence in school constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to school property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct.

#### **Suspension should be part of an agreed plan to address the student’s behaviour.**

- It should impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.
- It should give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- It should enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents.

#### **Forms of Suspension**

##### **Automatic Suspension:**

Board of Management can impose automatic suspension for certain prescribed behaviours or in exceptional cases for a first offence.

- Possession of a weapon
- Sexual assault
- Possession of illegal drugs
- Actual violence or serious physical assault
- Serious threat of violence against another pupil or staff member.

A decision to impose suspension for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures in each case. ***However, when allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a pupil these will be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating such matters.***

#### **Immediate Suspension:**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of other students, staff, themselves or any other person at the school. However, the Board still has a duty to follow due process and to apply fair procedures.

In cases where suspension is to take effect immediately and in the interest of health and safety.

- Parents/ guardians will be informed by phone and asked to collect the student.
- Students will not be sent home unless collected by a parent / guardian.
- Parents and student will be invited to meet with Principal and class teacher to receive the explanation for suspension.
- Written notification will be sent to the parents.

#### **Rolling Suspension:**

Rolling suspension is when a student is suspended again shortly after returning to school from a previous suspension. This suspension should only occur if: the student engages in serious behaviour that warrants it: fair procedures have been observed in full: the judging of the behaviours is the same as applied to any other pupil.

#### **Informal or unacknowledged suspension/voluntary withdrawal:**

This is an exclusion of a student for part of the school day as a sanction or requesting parents to keep a student from school as a sanction.

#### **Open-ended suspension:**

A student cannot be suspended for indefinite periods as such a suspension is regarded as a de-facto expulsion.

#### **Procedures in relation to immediate suspension**

- A preliminary investigation will be conducted by the principal teacher to establish the case (a serious case of misconduct) for the imposition of the suspension.
- Parents will be notified by the principal teacher and arrangements made to collect the student (N.B. Duty of care still applies).
- A formal investigation by the principal teacher will immediately follow the suspension.
- The period of suspension will not last more than three days under the authority of the principal teacher.
- If a proposed suspension is longer than three days it must be referred by the principal teacher to the Board of Management for their consideration and guidance.
- In circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely manner the Board authorises the principal teacher (with the Chairpersons approval) to impose a suspension of up to five days.

- The Board places a ceiling of ten days suspension on any one period of suspension.
- A suspension that would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more will be formally reviewed by the Board. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act.

### **Section 29 Appeals**

- A suspension that would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current year to 20 days or more may be appealed.
- Parents of the pupil are given this right under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.
- When parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the pupil will be informed of their right of appeal and given information on how to proceed with an appeal if they so choose.

### **Implementing the Suspension – Written Notification**

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

- The period of the suspension.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school.
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Grounds for removing a suspension**

- The Board of Management decides to remove it for any reason.
- The Secretary General directs it to be removed following a Section 29 appeal. Suspension Completion
- Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal reintroduction of the pupil into the school.
- Parents will be requested to attend with the pupil upon his/ her return to the school.
- A written or verbal apology may be required for the pupil for his/ her misbehaviour.
- The pupil may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specific before returning to school.
- A meeting will be arranged between the Principal, Class teacher, parents and student to support the student during the reintegration process.

### **Records and Reports**

Formal written records will be kept of:

- Investigation and decision making.
- Report to the Board of Management.
- Report to the National Educational Welfare Board.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension. The Principal will report suspensions to National Education Welfare Board when a student has been suspended for 6 days and for 20 days accumatively.

## **EXPULSION**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, the authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

We recognise that expulsion of a student is a very serious step and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid the expulsion of a student. Acting on behalf of the Board of Management the Chairperson in partnership with the principal teacher will enact the following steps to avoid expulsion of a pupil:

- Meet with the parents.
- Ensure the pupil and the parents understand the possible consequences of misbehaviour.
- Exhaust all other options.
- Seek the help of support agencies i.e. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, National Council for Special Education, National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The principal teacher will withdraw from the meeting of the Board when a decision on expulsion is being taken to ensure an absence of bias and to uphold the right of impartiality.

### **Differences between Suspension/Expulsion**

While the grounds for suspension and expulsion may be similar the Board will consider the following additional factors to warrant expulsion:

- The degree, seriousness and persistence of the behaviour.
- The unsuccessful implementation of a series of interventions.
- All possible interventions to change the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

### **Expulsion for a First Offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school.
- Sexual assault.

### **Inappropriate use of expulsion**

Expulsion should not be proposed for:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour

### **Process in respect of expulsion**

- Detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal teacher.
- Recommendations by the Principal teacher to the Board of Management.

- Board of Management convenes hearing and parents are invited to put a case against expulsion.
- Board of Management deliberates and proposes action.
- Consultation arranged by the Education Welfare Officer (in the event of an expulsion).
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will:

Inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write advising the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to the parents and their response.

#### **A Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal should:

- Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents have records of; the allegations against the student; the investigation; written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents.
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written or oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that the parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

#### **Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's Recommendation and the holding of a hearing**

- It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to review the initial investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case.
- It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

If the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting will also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction.

In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student.

Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

#### **Board of Management deliberations and actions following a hearing**

Having heard from all parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is sustained and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all of the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion (Education Welfare Act 2000, s24(1)). The board of Management will refer to the National Education Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education Welfare Act 2000, s4A)

The Board will inform parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.

Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

#### **Confirmation of the decision to Expel**

- Where the twenty day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal).
- Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student will be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson**