

St Dymphna's Code of Behaviour

If the school is to achieve a happy, secure environment in which children can develop to their full potential, it is necessary to provide a framework that promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, and the ideal is that pupils will acquire self-discipline. There are times however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and protect the rights of pupils and staff to learn and work in a safe environment.

Rationale

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered in the school. It details Section 23 (2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

- A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of school.

The purpose of this policy is to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. The code will enhance the learning environment, where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

The principal, staff, and Board of Management of St. Dymphna's school are committed to the principle of providing a holistic education to all its students in an environment of care and safety. This incorporates the promotion of acceptable behaviour patterns which the students will carry into their adult lives. Recognising the intrinsic value and importance of co-operation between home and school we endeavour in St. Dymphna's to provide clear guidelines on what is expected regarding behaviour. This can only be achieved when there is a high level of respect and co-operation between staff, parents, and pupils.

Aims

- To ensure an education environment that is guided by our mission statement.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance, and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate those differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of those procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner in so far as is possible throughout the school taking into consideration the special needs and age of the pupil.
- To ensure that the learning environment in the school supports the development of pupil self-esteem.

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school.

The Education Welfare Act 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”.

Ch. 6 Setting standards of behaviour, *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008* offers guidance on setting standards and using those standards to promote good behaviour.

The guidelines for behaviour in St Dymphna’s reflect our mission statement and include:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and staff.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children’s, and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework activities.
- Each staff member is expected to show respect for staff and pupils.
- All staff are expected to support each other in the implementation of the code.
- Each staff member is expected to respect the confidentiality of all students when behaviour is being reported or discussed.

As this is a special school factors influencing children’s behaviour will have to be considered and accommodated where appropriate. The disability of the pupil and the context leading up to and after the behaviour will be taken into account when making decisions around interventions, rewards, and sanctions. There is a focus on intervention and how each pupil can be accommodated in so far as is within the resources of the school to do so. The school will seek the support or intervention of outside agencies with the consent of the parents

Section 23(4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents with school’s code of behaviour and that the principal ‘may, as a condition of registering such child, require his/her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code of the child’. This is implemented in our school.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour.

The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include.

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony; all policies will continually be reviewed in this school.

- Teamwork and an inclusive approach are necessary to facilitate positive behaviour in any school.
- A whole-school system approach to curriculum.
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing the behaviour policy will take place as appropriate to consider legislation and both pupils and staff will be consulted.

3. Staff

It is the responsibility of each class teacher to remind pupils in their class about the Code of Behaviour and to ensure that the pupils in their class are familiar with the sanctions and rewards outlined in the Code of Behaviour (It is the duty of parents to explain these to their child.) The Code of Behaviour will also be highlighted throughout the school day and by the Principal when appropriate.

The code will be given to new staff members. The code is given to all parents/guardians enrolling children at the school so that they can sign an agreement of the code.

The IEP when appropriate may include behavioural targets for some pupils.

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school and for ensuring that there is a Code of Behaviour in place.

Parents

Co-operation between staff and parents is encouraged through IEP meetings, phone calls and regular communication between home and school.

It is expected that parents will support the school in the promotion and maintenance of positive standards of behaviour.

This is necessary to ensure that it is possible for both the school and the parents to work together in supporting the needs of every child. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that their child is familiar with the rewards and sanctions outlined in the code. Parents are also required to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Ensure their children do their best and take responsibility for their work.
- Be aware of, and co-operate with, the school's rules and systems of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensure that they support all school policies and request information on any policy, from the Principal, if it is required.
- Encourage their child to have respect for themselves and others.
- Return calls made by the school regarding their child.
- Ensure that the school can contact them on the phone numbers they have given to the school.
- Attend meetings at the school if requested.

- Support the school in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

Positive Strategies for managing behaviour

Classroom

These are some positive strategies which the staff use to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom. e.g.

- “Ground rules”/behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which sets a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils input in devising the class rules.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. The disability of the child and the context of the behaviour should always be considered in this regard.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Timetabling. Schedules and behaviour/reward charts

Playground

Staff also incorporate strategies to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour

- There is concise set of playground rules which emphasis positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted. These are communicated to pupils by their class teacher and SNA(s).
- Teachers and SNAs facilitate the supervision of pupils during break times. There is a rota for the lunchroom and playground that is followed by all staff.
- All pupils must be always visible and pupils are not allowed to enter any part of the playground where they cannot be seen by staff.
- The pupils are required to leave the lunchroom, one class at a time.
- The SNA’s and the teaching staff ensure that all areas in the playground are observed at all times.
- There is also a rota for wet days where the pupils are allowed to stay in the lunchroom or designated areas e.g., Resource room.
- When the breaks are over the pupils line up in their classes and are collected by their class teacher.
- If an incident of misbehaviour occurs during the break-time this is recorded by the staff member who observed the behaviour on an incident form which is kept in the office.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour would usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Positive behaviour as outlined in school

is also expected for school tours, games, and extracurricular activities as well as other school-linked activities.

Rewards and Sanctions

Strategies to promote good behaviour in our school:

- There are standards that set high expectations for student behaviour and include respect for others, courtesy, and doing ones best in class.
- The standards are clear, consistent, and widely understood.
- Parents are expected to support the school by encouraging good behaviour.
- Positive relationships between teachers, parents and students create a happy school atmosphere and are essential in making the Codes work.
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students.
- Good school and class routines.
- Clear boundaries and rules for students.
- Helping students themselves recognise and affirm good learning behaviour.
- Exploring with students how people should treat each other.
- Expectation, in regard to positive behaviour is addressed during assembly when appropriate.
- Rewards are given at assembly (where appropriate) for positive behaviour.
- Good news regarding positive behaviour is related to parents through the homework diary, IEP and parent/teacher meetings as well as phone calls and letters.
- There is an open-door policy where the parents can speak to the Principal on the phone at a convenient time or make an appointment for a meeting.

Rewards

Class teachers have a reward system that is appropriate to the age and interests and development of each child.

Examples include: Positive affirmation in class, lunchroom etc

1. Time on IPAD/Laptop.
2. Time drawing or choosing an activity they enjoy.
3. Praise in class/school assembly.
4. A reward system in class appropriate to pupil age/understanding.
5. Certificate of achievement.
6. Extra privilege/rewards depending on pupil age.
7. Notes for parents in homework diary.
8. Messages on See Saw.

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour and involving parents

As recommended by the *Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* there is a problem-solving approach to inappropriate behaviour in this school. The *Guidelines* also recommend that the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour are listed and incorporate a ladder of intervention e.g., initially misbehaviour should be dealt with by class teacher by way of warning and/or advice but, if it is more serious or persistent, the parents may be involved. It will be necessary for the Principal and or Board of Management to be involved for more serious inappropriate behaviour.

Problem Solving Approach

- Information is gathered so that all concerned can try to understand the behaviour and why it has occurred. This may include notes kept by the teacher/Principal and incident report forms.
- Advice is sought from the parents of the pupil in question.
- Advice is sought from relevant professionals where appropriate and when available.
- Interventions/sanctions are implemented and recorded on the incident report.
- The agreed ladder of intervention as outlined below is implemented by all staff consistently.
- It is acknowledged that there may be a settling in period at the beginning of a school term for students and this will be taken into consideration for pupils when implementing the code.
- The intervention strategy will be reviewed if it is not working, and alternative strategies put in place.

Minor Incidents of misbehaviour

These incidents, e.g., being unkind to others, interrupting a lesson, preventing others from learning in a lesson will be dealt with by the class teacher.

If there are repeated incidents of the behaviour the class teacher will contact the parents. Incidents at morning and lunch breaks are dealt with by the teacher on duty.

Strategies used by staff at present

- Non-verbal signs- look or frown.
- Change in tone (not level) of voice.
- Moving physically to sit beside pupil.
- Ignoring undesirable behaviour.
- Speaking quietly to pupil- reminding them of rules.
- Temporary separation from peers.
- Communication with parents/guardians.
- Referral to Principal.

- Principal communicating with parents/Psychologist/ other relevant agencies (if available) involved with consent of parents.
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000) and following NWEB Guidelines in Developing a Code of Behaviour specifically Chapter 11- Suspension and Chapter 12- Expulsion.

Physical Intervention

St. Dymphna's Special School recognises that there may be a need in certain situations, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property.

St. Dymphna's Special School is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive, reckless or violent behaviour, and will only use physical intervention as a last resort, in the interest of safety and it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying and health and safety.

In general physical intervention will only be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Where there is risk to their own safety and/or the safety of other pupils, staff or visitors;
or
- Where there is risk of serious damage to property; or
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline; or
- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence.

In assessing whether physical intervention is appropriate, staff shall take into account all the circumstances of the incident including the severity of the potential consequences, the likelihood of those consequences, the effect of physical intervention on the child in question and the likely effectiveness of physical intervention in reducing risk. All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour..

Serious Misbehaviour

Examples of these include (but are not limited to)

- Destroying other pupils' belongings or school property.
- Being abusive to staff and other pupils.
- Assault, aggression or sexualised behaviour directed at any member of the school community.

- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning.
- Refusing to co-operate and follow instructions or any form of behaviour that impacts on the health and safety of students or staff.
- Leaving the school grounds.
- Leaving the classroom without Teacher's agreement.

Sanctions/Interventions

There are three levels at which intervention may take and the support of parents will be sought.

1. Support – The majority of pupils behave appropriately with the implementation of clear and consistent rules and routines in school. Occasional, minor misbehaviour should be dealt with routinely by the class teacher. Behaviour targets may be set with parents, teacher and pupil being consulted.
2. Additional Support – Where some pupils may require additional support/input/intervention behaviour support will be sought by the school and parents from NCSE/SESS, NEPS or Progressing Disability Services if available.
3. The use of sanctions - We aim, as far as possible to prevent challenging situations happening in the first instance, but there are times when behaviour may occur that requires the use of sanctions which are set out below.

The objective of a sanction is to help pupils to learn and bring about a change in behaviour by:

1. Helping pupils understand that their behaviour is unacceptable.
2. Helping pupils recognise the effect their behaviour has on others.
3. Helping pupils understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that choices have consequences.
4. Helping pupils take responsibility for this behaviour.

A sanction may also reinforce the boundaries in the school code of behaviour and signal the other pupils, staff, and parents that child's wellbeing is being protected.

More serious breaches

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

1. Prevent serious disruption to teaching and learning
2. Keep the student, or other students or adults, safe

A sanction is a form of positive intervention and should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular a sanction should:

- Defuse and not escalate a situation.
- Preserve the dignity of all parties.
- Be applied in a fair and consistent way.
- Be timely.

We propose to apply good practice in the use of sanctions by ensuring that:

1. Sanctions are part of a plan of behaviour.
2. Sanctions are used consistently.
3. Students and parents know what sanctions are used in the school.
4. Sanctions are proportionate.
5. Sanctions are appropriate.
6. The sanctions are understood clearly by students with SEN so that they know and understand the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable and the purpose of the sanction.

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences.
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

Sanctions used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour at school:

The following steps will be taken if misbehaviour happens. These are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and nine being for serious misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this:

1. Reasoning with pupil.
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
3. Temporary separation from peers within class/or temporary removal to another class or “safe area” e.g. Resource room.
4. Loss of privileges.
5. Missing part of break.
6. Communication with parents/guardians.
7. Referral to Principal.
8. Principal communicating with parents/Psychologist/ other relevant agencies involved with consent of parents.
9. (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000) and following NWEB Guidelines in Developing a Code of Behaviour specifically Chapter 11- Suspension and Chapter 12- Expulsion.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils.

A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidences of minor misbehaviour. When a referral is made to the Principal the teacher will have a record of incidences and the efforts made to try to improve or change the disruptive behaviour.

However, for serious misbehaviour a referral to the Principal can be immediate.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated incidences of misbehaviour suspension will be considered.

School Procedure in Relation to Serious Sanctions.

An effective disciplinary consequence is one that reduces or stops the negative behaviour. Given the profile of our students, it is the objective of the school to use sanctions such as expulsion or suspension as a measure of last resort only. It is hoped that in the vast majority of cases, the school's positive behaviour management strategies will obviate any need for such punishments. In rare cases the Board recognises that it may have no alternative but to suspend a pupil or in extreme cases to expel a pupil. This child's level of cognitive functioning will always inform the decision-making in relation to the use of sanctions.

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised and the following procedures will be followed.

It should be noted that in certain cases, the School may invoke sanctions for behaviour which occurs off school grounds or outside school hours which endangers or harms school pupils, staff or property, involves illegal substances or illegal activity.

In most cases, the school response to wrongdoing will progress through the various stages set out below. In cases of more serious wrongdoing however, particularly misbehaviour that constitutes a risk to the child themselves, other children, staff or any member of the school community, even where it is the pupil's first occasion of wrongdoing, the school's procedure may be commenced at a higher level (e.g. suspension or expulsion). The stage the procedure is commenced at will be commensurate with the level, risk and nature of the wrongdoing in question.

Stage 1 – Parent/School Meeting

The school principal will arrange a meeting with the parents of the pupil concerned and the deputy principal and class teacher will attend this meeting along with special needs assistant(s) who are working directly with the child. The purpose of this meeting will be to inform parents of the nature and level of their child's behaviours and to either create or review the child's Behaviour Intervention Plan. This meeting will be minuted.

Stage 2 – Internal Suspension

Internal suspension will be implemented by removing the child from the main classroom and placing him or her in a separate classroom for short periods. The decision to remove the child from the main classroom will be taken on health and safety grounds and also on the grounds of the school's responsibility to deliver a more disruption-free learning environment to all pupils. This arrangement may be temporary, but in any case, it will be reviewed to ensure that the child's needs are continuing to be met. In the event that clinical recommendations and

behavioural support are made available to the school, the ensuing behavioural plan will be developed in line with the arrangements outlined above.

The Board of Management requires that staff make every attempt to move the child towards increased inclusion in the classroom whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

The pupil will receive daily teaching time with the class teacher, as scheduled and this may take place in a separate classroom or the pupil may be integrated into the main classroom for short periods for specific tasks. In the event that the pupil is able to cope with short periods in the main classroom, this time may be gradually extended in accordance with the pupil's individual needs when balanced equally with the needs of the other pupils in the class. The main aim of this approach towards inclusion for pupils with high levels of challenging behaviour is to support children in modifying their behaviour through a highly controlled education programme.

Pupils are supported in coping with the demands of the main classroom by controlling the length of time they spend in this more demanding environment and by ensuring that this time is spent purposefully and disruption-free for all pupils.

The School Principal will arrange a meeting with parents to inform them of the reasons for the change in classroom for their child and to discuss how the child's education programme will proceed. This meeting will also be attended by the Deputy Principal, class teacher and the special needs assistant(s) working directly with the child and the meeting will be minuted.

Stage 3 – Suspension

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Other interventions may include:

- Parent Supervision
- Behaviour Monitoring
- Behavioural Contract
- In-school suspension
- Support from CAMHS team

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety for themselves, other students and staff members
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property or has engaged in assaultive behaviour

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

There may be instances where behaviour warrants immediate action and disciplinary absences are given in the interest of the safety of the student and other school community members.

Length of period of suspension

- The Board of Management has authorised the principal to impose suspension as a sanction for up to a maximum of three days. The Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson, is authorised to impose a period of suspension of not more than five days.
- The Board of Management may impose a period of suspension of more than five days but will normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. The Board will not impose an indefinite suspension and will formally review an proposal to extend an existing suspension.
- The Board will also formally review any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

Administrative Steps relating to Suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school should observe the following procedures:

Step 1: Inform the student and parents

Let the student and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Informing parents in writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let the parents know. It also ensures that parents are 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.

Step 2: Give an opportunity to respond

Save where an immediate suspension is warranted on health and safety grounds, parents and student should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. A meeting with the student and their parents provides an opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts. It may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of 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 negative behaviour. The school should record the invitations made to parents and their response.

Step 3: Decision as to whether to suspend the student or not.

Having heard what the parents and/or student has to say, the Principal (or where appropriate the Board) will make a decision as to whether to suspend the student or not, and the period of suspension to be imposed.

Step 4: Follow up

As soon as possible after the decision to suspend has been taken, the Principal should notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end,
- the reasons for the suspension,
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour),
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management,
- where applicable, the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) (Education Act 1998, section 29).

In the event of a student being suspended, the school will notify school transport of this fact and the date of return to school for the student.

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. It should be noted that this preliminary investigation is likely to be brief and will not involve the parents having a right to respond at the initial stage. A formal investigation (during which there will be full rights of fair procedure in relation to a right to a response etc. in accordance with Steps 1-4 above) should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. Under no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

Rationale for the use of Suspensions

We believe that using suspensions as a consequence for serious misconduct can have value if used with a specific purpose in mind. This includes giving staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour and giving the school an opportunity to seek support from other agencies that may be able to help to support the child (e.g. CAMHS, NEPS, Social Services). Suspensions can provide respite for staff and students, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences, and illustrate to other students that serious misbehaviour is not acceptable at the school. It can also be used to allow the school an opportunity to apply certain construction works or building upgrades necessary to deal with a child's behaviour.

Administrative Suspensions

In certain exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may apply an administrative suspension. Such a suspension is not intended to be punitive or disciplinary in nature, but is solely a management tool to allow the school an opportunity to pursue certain specified steps in relation to a student. For example, the Board of Management may deem that it is necessary to obtain funding for certain construction works or building upgrades in order to safely

accommodate a particular child. Equally, it may be necessary to obtain certain training for staff members, additional staff supports or additional clinical supports. Where it is necessary for the student to be out of the school until those supports or funding have been obtained, the Board of Management may, in its absolute discretion, place the child on an administrative suspension until those works or support or funding has been procured and completed. The administrative suspension shall be reviewed every 10 school days and the ongoing necessity for same will be discussed by the Board of Management on each such occasion.

Appeals

Decisions in relation to suspension imposed by the Principal should be appealed to the Board of Management within 10 school days of the decision being notified to the parent(s). In relation to suspensions where the period of cumulative period of suspension in an academic year reaches 20 school days, this can be appealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

Re-entry

A planned re-entry to school is convened after enforcing a suspension to minimize recurrence of unacceptable behaviour and disruption to the student's education. Parties who may be involved in this process: Principal, Parent/Carer, Teacher, Staff members involved in the incident, CAMHS keyworker.

A meeting will be scheduled to take place on the day of re-entry, before the official start of the school day. Children will be expected to return to school with a positive attitude, with their assigned suspension work completed. At this meeting, a review of the school rules will take place, and where necessary, a revised behavioural plan put in place.

The school principal must be satisfied that the pupil's return to school will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.

In the event that the pupil does return to school, a revised Behaviour Intervention Plan for the pupil will be required prior to re-admitting the pupil formally to the class.

Need for additional resources

At this stage it may be clear that the student requires additional resources that are outside of the school's capacity. In consultation with parents/guardians, and the BOM, an application will be made to the DES and the SENO for any additional resources required. This following list is not exhaustive and may include some or all of the following and may be for a short or sustained period of time

- *Additional SNA support*
- *Any other clinical supports as deemed necessary by the Board of Management*
- *Additional support from individualised escort on school transport*
- *Individualised transport*
- *Individualised teaching support*
- *Access to own classroom and accompanying teacher/SNA support.*

If any of the above resources are not granted to the school following application or, if there is a delay in accessing any of those recommended, a further period of administrative suspension may be required until such time as the resources are available. If further behavioural issues

occur during this period, the Board may be forced to consider the permanent exclusion of the child in accordance with the procedures set out below.

Parental Engagement

Parents may need to pick their child up from school and if this is the case, they are required to be at the school within one hour of contact from the school. Parents are required to bring their child to a post-suspension meeting. Parents are entitled to respond to any sanction imposed by the school. Parents may ask to meet with the teacher and principal to discuss the incident, and to ask questions about the evidence of the serious misbehaviour. This meeting will also afford the school an opportunity to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

Reports to TUSLA.

If a student is suspended for a period of not less than 6 consecutive school days, then the school is obliged to report this to the Tusla Education Support Service (TESS). If a student is suspended for a shorter period(s) then it must be counted in the aggregate number of absences and if the student exceeds 20 days absence (including any suspensions) then this will be reported by the school also.

Stage 4 - Expulsion

This procedure may be used in a case of serious wrongdoing, in accordance with the principles set out below and with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. While it is envisaged that expelling a student would be a measure of last resort after a continuum or period of serious or dangerous behaviour, the Board recognises that there may be instances of behaviour which are so serious or dangerous that expulsion is warranted for a "first offence".

Grounds for expulsion:

- The pupil's behaviour is a consistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- Continued presence of the pupil in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the pupil's own safety and well-being.
- Continued presence of the pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety and well-being of others.
- Single incident or a series of incidents of significant, dangerous or serious wrongdoing.

Non-exhaustive list of examples which may warrant expulsion:

The Board may impose expulsion as a sanction in cases such as the following. Please note that this list is for information purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive. Other scenarios may arise in which the Board deem expulsion is warranted.

- Sexual assault

- Possession of and/or supplying illegal drugs
- Possession of and/or brandishing of an offensive weapon
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted or actual self-harm resulting in the occurrence of potentially serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school.

Procedure in respect of expulsion:

1. A detailed investigation of the incident(s) will be undertaken by/at the direction of the School Principal including interviews with all relevant parties, witnesses and the alleged wrongdoer. As part of this investigation, the Principal will meet with the pupil and his/her parents. At this meeting, the parents will have the opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) and make any submissions they wish to make in relation to the nature of the sanctions to be applied or how the pupil's behaviour might be managed without the school having to resort to expelling the pupil. The pupil's parents should be provided with copies of the relevant documentation before this meeting in order that they be aware of the nature and extent of the allegations against their child.
2. The Principal will provide a written report to the Board of Management outlining the facts of the matter as ascertained by the Principal and the Principal's recommendations in relation to sanctions.
3. Where the Principal is recommending expulsion as a possible sanction, the Principal's report should be furnished to the parents of the pupil at least 5 working days before the hearing referred to below or any rate sufficient time must be allowed to them to review the report and be aware of what allegations are being investigated as part of this process. If statements have been taken as part of the investigation or evidence gathered, the parents are entitled to copies of such statements (redacted if necessary) and details about the evidence which will be considered by the Board of Management. In certain scenarios, e.g. the statement has been given in confidence and on the understanding that it will not be shared with the pupil and/or their parents or where the making of the statement would put the person at risk (whether of reprisal or otherwise), the Board may provide portions or excerpts of the statement/evidence or may decline to provide the document or evidence at all.

4. The Board of Management will then consider the school principal's report and recommendations. If the Board decides to consider expelling the pupil, it will hold a hearing at which the child's parents/guardian can make submissions.
5. Having held the hearing, and having heard the pupil's parents submissions, the Board of Management will withdraw to consider the appropriate sanction and the Principal's recommendations in light of the following factors:
 - 5.1. The nature, scale and persistence of the behaviour in question,
 - 5.2. The effect of the behaviour on the school community (staff and pupils) – in particular their health and safety,
 - 5.3. The previous behaviour and conduct of the pupil,
 - 5.4. Any contrition or attempts by the pupil to reform their behaviour,
 - 5.5. The merits of any explanation of justification offered by or on behalf of the pupil
 - 5.6. Attempts (short of expulsion) made by the Principal and staff to divert, correct or check the behaviour and the effectiveness of those attempts,
 - 5.7. The duty of the school to provide an education for its students and whether the continued enrolment of the student affects or limits the Board's ability to discharge this duty,
 - 5.8. The duty of care owed by the school to its employees, pupils and to visitors to the school and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to meet this duty of care.
 - 5.9. The educational interests of the student concerned and the desirability of enabling him or her to participate in and benefit from education with his or her peers,
 - 5.10. The educational interests of and the effective provision of education for other students of the school and the maintenance of a classroom and school environment which is supportive of learning amongst all students in the school and ensures continuity of instruction provided to students,
 - 5.11. Such other matters as the Board of Management considers relevant.
6. Based on the foregoing considerations, any submissions from the parents and the Principal's Report, the Board will then make a decision as to whether or not to exclude the pupil.
7. If the Board of Management decides that expulsion is the appropriate sanction, the Board of Management will propose a date on which the expulsion will become effective at least 20 school days from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer is notified of the proposed expulsions.
8. If the Board deems it necessary, the pupil may be suspended for the period before the Board meets again to confirm the expulsion in accordance with step 11 below.
9. The Education Welfare Officer is informed of the proposal to expel the pupil and the effective date of that proposal.
10. The Education Welfare Officer will arrange consultations with the appropriate parties.

11. At least 20 school days after the EWO was notified of the proposed expulsion, the Board will meet again to decide whether or not to confirm the decision to expel the pupil.
12. Confirmation of the decision of the Board of Management (and if relevant, the effective date of the expulsion) is sent in writing by registered post or a recorded delivery method to the parents of the pupil.
13. Parents of the pupil are informed of their rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998.

Adult Behaviour: Responsibility of Adults/Expectations of Adults

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.

Board of Management.

The Principal and SMT

The Principal and SMT are expected to:

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for a review of the code every four years. (Board of Management term).

School Staff

Teachers/SNAs are expected to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- be cognisant of their duty of care.
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils.
- praise desirable behaviour.
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential.
- be courteous, consistent, and fair with pupils and parents.
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum.
- keep record of serious/gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of minor misbehaviour.
- provide support for colleagues.

Parents/Guardians

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour.
- make an appointment beforehand if they need to see a teacher.
- treat all members of the school community with respect.
- provide a note for all absenteeism.
- inform the class teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children.
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others.
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour.

Expectations

Teachers can expect to:

- be treated with respect.

- teach in a well-maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption.
- get support and co-operation from colleagues and parents to achieve the school's aims and objectives.
- be listened to and participate in decision-making which affects their own work and that of the school in general.
- work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development.
- get support and professional advice from the Board of Management, Department of Education and Skills, the National Education Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education and the National Educational Psychological Services to help to cater for the psychological, emotional and physical needs of their pupils.
- have grievances dealt with in a systematic manner – referral to Principal/Chairperson/Board of Management. Ref: Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA Grievance Procedure)

Parents

Parents can expect to:

- be treated with respect.
- have a safe and welcoming environment for their child.
- obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available.
- have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils.
- receive progress reports. (P.T. meetings, IEP meetings and end of year reports, phone calls/notes in homework diary or on See Saw)
- receive information on school's policies and procedures.
- have grievances dealt with according to agreed procedures i.e. (CPSMA Grievance Procedure.)

Conclusion

All pupils who attend our school are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour.

All pupils are entitled to learn in a secure, safe environment.

The Board of Management have a duty to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy place for all staff. (Circular 21/2017 and 62/2017)

We encourage open communication between staff and parents so that any issues can be resolved as soon as possible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Schools Anti bullying and Anti Cyber Bullying policies.

Success Criteria.

The success of this policy will be measured against its level of success in promoting positive behaviour in the school and in preventing and dealing with inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. Its success will be measured against the practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers and being supported by the parents. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff will also inform this decision.

Review and Evaluation.

The Principal with the SMT will be responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of this policy.

The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board of Management.

Approval by the Board of Management.

This document was ratified by the Board of Management on 19/10/22.