

St. Joseph's NS, Templarainey - Code of Behaviour Policy

Introduction

Under section 23 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

The NEWB Guidelines have their basis in law. The code of behaviour must be prepared in accordance with them.

Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St. Joseph's NS, Templarainey are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance 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.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Areas of Responsibility

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide staff with a comfortable, safe environment in which to work.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a confidential record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.

- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents/guardians when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow general school and class rules.

Parents'/ Guardians' Responsibilities

Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
2. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials. Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
4. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

General Rules

1. The school will be open to receive pupils at 9.10 a.m. each morning and not before that. Supervision starts at 9.10 a.m. Formal learning starts at 9.20 a.m. Lateness for school and absences require a note from parents.
 - (a) On dry days children go into class, leave in their bags and go out to play to their assigned playground.
 - (b) On wet days children go into class, put away coats, sit down and read or colour quietly.

Entrance doors are secured at 9.25 a.m. for security reasons and during school hours entry is through the main door next to the Secretary's office where a buzzer system operates from the Secretary's office.

School ends at 2.00p.m. for Infant Classes and at 3.00p.m. for all other children. It is important that children be collected promptly at these times. Pupils are supervised on exit from school building by class teachers and at point of exit from school grounds by senior teachers.

Collecting children earlier, except in the case of medical or other necessary appointments, should be avoided as it causes disruption to classes. Persistent late collection of children causes upset for the child and inconvenience for teachers.

Pupils involved in extra-curricular activities which take place in school after 3:00pm are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

2. It is a strict rule that all children walk into and out of school. Children should keep to the right in corridors and respect teachers, fellow pupils and all other adults, addressing them properly as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss., Father, Sister, etc. This will be enforced in school and should be reinforced in the home.
3. Pupils are encouraged to speak politely at all times. Foul language or aggressive tone of voice is never allowed and must never be used.
4. Involvement in sport and pastimes is actively encouraged in school. Please encourage involvement in leisure time activities at home as a healthy active child is less likely to be disruptive. Games which are violent and involve kicking, punching, bullying, spitting, biting, or verbal abuse towards others are strictly forbidden.
5. No child may leave the play area during breaks without permission from the teacher in charge. This includes the morning play (9:10am – 9:20am). Children may not leave school, at any time, without the written permission of the parents to the Class Teacher/Principal, and must, subsequently, be collected from the Secretary's office.
6. Chewing gum and peanuts are not allowed. Lunch leftovers must be taken home. This is to help general hygiene in the school and, ultimately, your child. This is also a part of the Healthy School Lunch Policy to help you monitor lunches. Glass bottles are not allowed because of the obvious danger they pose.
7. Formal school uniform must be worn properly at all times except on P.E. days when school tracksuit must be worn. Only black school shoes should be worn with the formal uniform. Appropriate runners are only allowed with the PE uniform.
8. Make-Up is not to be worn.
9. Running or playing on steps inside or outside school is strictly forbidden.
10. Cycling in or around school grounds at any time is strictly forbidden. Cyclists dismount at gate and walk with bike to shelter. Skateboards and scooters are not allowed in school at any time during or after school.
11. All school property and furniture must be treated with respect.
12. Parents will be asked to pay for any wilful damage caused by their children.
13. In the interests of safety, children are allocated play areas which vary in wet or fine weather. Children are made aware of their area and must play in these areas at break times.
14. Smoking on the school grounds is prohibited by law.

15. Children are not allowed to walk on the perimeter wall or climb trees in the school grounds. Parents are asked not to allow smaller children accompanying them to the school to do so.
16. Children are not allowed use mobile phones or smart watches during school hours.
17. Children will respect and follow all guidelines and rules pertaining to Covid-19 Health and Safety Regulations, AUP Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Data Protection Policy

Reporting Student Absences

Under the Education Welfare Act (2000), a school is obliged to report to TUSLA every time:

- a student has reached 20 days' absence cumulatively
- a Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- the Board of Management decides to expel a student
- a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason

Where teachers have concerns relating to a child's attendance and/or punctuality the following procedures will be followed:

- Note home or phone call checking reason for child's absence or late arrival at school – reminding parents/guardians of their responsibility to provide notes explaining absences.
- Meeting with parents/guardians to discuss the situation.
- Further monitoring of situation.
- If there is no improvement the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer with TUSLA and will forward the relevant documentation. The school will inform the parents/guardians that it is taking this action.
- Where the school has fears that there is an issue of neglect, the school may contact the Duty Social Worker with the HSE.

Operation of the Code of Behaviour

The Staff of St. Joseph's promotes a caring attitude to child behaviour, and approaches difficult situations in an effort to achieve a positive outcome for all parties. High standards of behaviour are expected by all members of the school community and these standards have become the norm in St. Joseph's.

Positive Approach:

Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. St. Joseph's places greater emphasis on encouraging positive behaviour rather than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results. We encourage the children to take pride in themselves, their work, their school and community.

Children are encouraged in each class and throughout the whole school to be positive and well-behaved towards each other.

The Stay Safe Programme and Walk Tall Programmes are throughout the school. Good behaviour, good attendance and achievements are acknowledged in the school. In the Religion programme there is great emphasis on respect and love for one another. In each class lessons are taught to promote positive behaviour.

Parents and guardians play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in our school and in the community. Please take full advantage of all formal and informal channels of communication made available by the staff. If you wish to discuss some issue with a teacher please ring the school secretary at 0402 32984 to make an appointment.

When children are registered in St. Joseph's, each parent must read the Code of Behaviour and sign it stating that they accept it and will implement it.

Difference:

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil.

Bullying

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline.

Strategies/Incentives to affirm good behaviour

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent/guardians.

Dealing with instances of misbehaviour

Where there is a serious incident or a consistent pattern of breaches of discipline by a child, the parents will be invited in to discuss the child's behaviour. This discussion would involve the class teacher and one of the senior staff members and/or the principal. This meeting would outline the pattern of unacceptable behaviour to the parents or details regarding the incident, and a strategy would be discussed on how to best address the needs and behaviour of the child. If necessary, there may be further meetings with the parents to discuss progress. Where there are repeated instances of serious 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.

Inappropriate Behaviour

The following are some examples of what is regarded as inappropriate behaviour.

Minor

talking out of turn, shouting, talking during work time, interrupting teacher or other pupils, lifting and carrying chairs incorrectly, walking in groups in the corridor, walking around classroom without permission, bumping off others, swinging on chairs, moving tables unnecessarily, incomplete homework (oral, memorisation and written), distracting others.

More Serious Misbehaviour

Repeated instances of minor misbehaviour; reacting aggressively to appropriate feedback, failing to follow instructions given by staff members, giving cheeky or impertinent responses, temper outbursts, repeated or aggressive shouting, making hurtful comments, name-calling, hitting, biting, bullying, stealing others' possessions, damaging property, throwing objects, non-accidental bumping off others, continued incidents of minor misbehaviour following correction

Gross Misconduct

Repeated instances of more serious misbehaviour; Inappropriate language, hitting, biting, spitting, and stealing and leaving the school premises without permission are considered to be major breaches of our Code of Behaviour as are any of the other behaviours occurring on a repeated basis.

Where a serious behaviour problem exists, parents must act on advice given to them by the class Teacher which is supported by the Principal and the Board of Management.

Sanctions:

Strategies for Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

“It is accepted that there is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. Each school will devise a graded system of sanctions suitable to its particular needs and circumstances”
[Department of Education and Science Circular on Codes of Behaviour].

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. The sanctions which are operational in the school are reasonable. The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

Level 1: Minor Misbehaviour - Sanctions

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.

Level 2: Continued Minor Misbehaviour- Sanctions

- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal from class.
- Prescribing extra work.

Level 3: More Serious Misbehaviour or Persistent Minor Misbehaviour- Sanctions

- Loss of privileges. Parental co-operation can be of great value here to withdraw some privilege at home; e.g. to ban television/ipad/Xbox for a period, pocket money, etc. to reinforce home-school link.
- Detention during break under supervision of class teacher.

Level 4: Persistent Minor Misbehaviour with no evidence of improvement, - Sanctions

- Communication with parents/guardians.
- Referral to Principal / Deputy Principal.
- Principal communicating with parents/guardians.
- Referral to Board of Management

Level 5: Suspension

Level 6: Expulsion

Suspension and Expulsion will be in accordance with the NEWB Guidelines – Chaps. 10, 11 & 12. – (see notes in Appendix A)

(see Chapter 11 of the Guidelines)

“The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a student. Where this authority is delegated to the Principal, the delegation should be done formally and in writing. The authority delegated to the Principal in respect of suspension should state any limits on that authority, and specify how the Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of that authority. The delegation of authority should reflect the provisions of these Guidelines, any relevant legal requirements and Articles of Management, where appropriate.” NEWB Guidelines p70

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board of St. Joseph’s NS, Arklow has authorised 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 parents.

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour where suspension is being considered, parents/ guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case.

The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested, in writing / by phone, to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and/or the Principal. Where the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a period. If such an undertaking is given, behaviour of the pupil will be monitored for an agreed period of time and reviewed.

Where there is an improvement in behaviour suspension will not be imposed.

Where there has been no improvement the Board will proceed with suspension procedures.

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 relevant medical information.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and 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 a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion

(See Chapter 12 of the Guidelines)

This section summarises the NEWB guidelines for Expulsion and the Board of St. Joseph's NS, Arklow will follow these procedures.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the NEWB Guidelines. Before expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

The Board of Management of a school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, this authority should not be delegated. Expulsion should be proportionate to the student's behaviour and should only be invoked in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour, and be satisfied that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. There may be exceptional circumstances where a board forms the opinion that the student should be expelled for a first offence, e.g. actual violence or physical assault.

Decisions to expel should follow fair procedures including:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing, including informing the Education Welfare Board of its opinion. (The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date that the NEWB receives this written notification)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Decisions to expel are subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act

Records & Reports

Each teacher maintains his/her own confidential records of any incidents that occur in the classroom. There is also an "Incident Book" which is available for staff recording incidents that occur on the yard. The Principal also keeps a record of incidents that are brought to his/her attention and where parents are contacted. These reports are maintained in the Principal's office.

For serious incidents the following procedure is followed:

Formal written records are kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to the Board of Management: The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The Principal will give a confidential report to the Board where there is a child safety, protection or welfare issue.

Report to NEWB The Principal will report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

Evaluation and Review of St Joseph's Code of Behaviour

This policy was originally adopted by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's NS Templeraíneay at its meeting held on 04/11/2013

It was most recently reviewed by the Board of Management at their meeting on 18th June 2025.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson BOM

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Principal

Appendix A: Suspension & Expulsion

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 of *Developing Codes of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* deal with the issues of suspension and expulsion from primary schools, including the legal and procedural requirements. Schools are advised that in drawing up or reviewing their Codes of Behaviour, they should follow the advice set out in these Guidelines. The Guidelines acknowledge a child's right to education, but also the occasional need for schools to suspend or expel pupils where serious misbehaviour occurs. Schools are reminded that decisions to suspend (for a total of 20 days or more in the current school year) or expel are open to appeal (under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998) and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court.

A school should ensure that it has a policy and procedures around the use of suspension and expulsion, and these should be widely communicated.

Fair Procedures (see Chapter 10 of the Guidelines)

In the investigation of alleged misbehaviour, and in decision making around what, if any, sanction should be imposed, it should be clear that fair procedures are adopted. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- The right to be heard; and
- The right to impartiality.

The principles of fair procedure always apply, but the degree of formality required will depend on the gravity of the alleged misbehaviour and the seriousness of the possible sanction. Procedures must be fair, and be seen to be fair. The need for confidentiality and timeliness in dealing with suspension and expulsion are also set out.

Suspension (See Chapter 11 of the Guidelines)

The Board of Management of a school has the authority to suspend. Where this authority is delegated to the Principal it should be done formally and in writing. Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff should have reviewed why these interventions have not worked. However, a single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

A decision to suspend a student requires that:

- The student and parents/guardians are informed of the complaint; and
- Parents/guardians and students are given an opportunity to respond.

A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances, where the Principal considers that it is warranted to achieve a particular objective. Where a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board. A Board of Management may wish to authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions. The Board should normally place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. Pupils should not be suspended for an indefinite period.

Schools should notify the parents/guardians and the student of decisions to suspend in writing. When the suspension ends, a plan should be made to reintegrate the student into the class, and pupils should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Expulsion (See Chapter 12 of the Guidelines)

The Board of Management of a school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, this authority should not be delegated. Expulsion should be proportionate to the student's behaviour and should only be invoked in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour, and be satisfied that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. There may be exceptional circumstances where a board forms the opinion that the student should be expelled for a first offence, e.g. actual violence or physical assault.

Decisions to expel should follow fair procedures including:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing, including informing the Education Welfare Board of its opinion. (The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date that the NEWB receives this written notification)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Decisions to expel are subject to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act