



Code of Behaviour

St. Louis Primary School

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Code of Behaviour St. Louis Primary School

Rationale

The formulation of a Code of Behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 23) which refers to “the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school, specifying:

- The standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.

This policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008” Our Code of Behaviour aims to ensure an orderly climate for learning in our school.

Our Code of Behaviour was devised by the teaching staff of St. Louis Primary School in November 2023. During Croke Park hours, staff had the opportunity to discuss the Code of Behaviour. As part of the consultation process, the In-School Management team also met to discuss feedback from the whole staff collaborative process. The student council met to discuss behaviour in our school and their views and opinions also formed part of the review. The Principal also engaged in further consultation with parents and the Manager once the consultation process with staff and children was completed.

Introduction

St. Louis Primary School is a Catholic, co-educational school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere in which the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social, emotional and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and nurtured. We endeavour to enhance self-esteem in the entire school community, to foster in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage them to be thoughtful, responsible and caring. A positive attitude permeates the code, which is based on respect, courtesy and self-discipline.

The school promotes the motto of ‘Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words’ to create an atmosphere of harmony and security for the pupils and this motto is displayed in permanent format at the front entrance of the school.

All stakeholders in the school are expected to subscribe to this code of behaviour. We recognise the uniqueness of each child and teach mutual respect for all people. Parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children. Teachers are recognised as professionals in education, and they work in partnership with parents. St. Louis Primary School strives to foster a positive relationship between home and school. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community and the co-operation of all stakeholders. A positive school ethos is based on the relationships within the school community.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs

and circumstances of our school. Every effort will be made by all staff members to adopt a positive approach regarding behaviour in the school.

Aims

Through the implementation of our Code of Behaviour, the school hopes to achieve the following aims:

- Allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- Ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement.
- Create an atmosphere in the school of respect and tolerance, where positive behaviour and self-discipline is promoted.
- Facilitate, through structured classroom management, an effective and stimulating learning environment.
- Empower the children to recognise and respect differences among children, and to understand the need to accommodate these differences.
- Ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
- 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 implementation of these procedures.
- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Guidelines for behaviour in our school

Our school community recognises the differences that exist among children and the need to accommodate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among the staff, children and parents. Such co-operation can be witnessed through teachers and parents discussing issues as they arise, distribution of our Code of Behaviour at enrolment, reinforcement of our positive behaviour message regularly in the newsletter and through formal Parent/Teacher meetings.

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour within his/her class while sharing a common responsibility for good order on our school premises. The rules are being kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what children should do.

The school places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions:

“Catch them being good”

in the belief that this will in the long run, give best results. All efforts will be made to adapt the curriculum to suit the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each child. Positive rules for behaviour in class and out of class are discussed and agreed by pupils at the beginning of their school year. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. Consistent positive reinforcement of desired behaviour are the key to success in our school.

Our Golden Rules

In St. Louis Primary School the children adhere to the motto “kind hands, kind feet, kind words”(Junior Infants to 2nd class – Appendix 4) and these principles underpin our 6 golden rules (3rd to 6th class – Appendix 5).

1. *We listen. We don't interrupt.*
2. *We are gentle. We don't hurt others.*
3. *We are honest. We don't hide the truth.*
4. *We are kind.*
5. *We work hard. We don't waste time.*
6. *We look after property. We don't damage things.*

Our School Rules and Children with Special Educational Needs

Children who present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs are supported by their SET teacher and the SNA's. A School Support Plus Plan with behavioural/educational/social/emotional targets are set and behavioural charts/agreements are drawn up to ensure that the standards and rules are explained to each child in a way that he/she can understand. Our school may also seek support if necessary, from Tusla, NEPS, and NCSE.

Following on from the use of appropriate interventions, if the inappropriate behaviour persists, the behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with this Code, which may include the use of suspension and/or exclusion as appropriate. Our school's SPHE curriculum is used to support our 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.

Expectations for Children, Staff and Parents

Children

Children engage with and are aware of the code of behaviour by:

- Drafting rules for the classroom.
- Taking part in assemblies.
- Discussing appropriate/ inappropriate behaviour in class.
- SPHE lessons in class.
- Student Council feedback.

Children can expect to:

- Be treated fairly, and with respect.
- Have their individuality recognised and acknowledged when and if possible.
- To feel safe, respected and secure.
- Have positive behaviours reaffirmed.
- Have misbehaviour dealt with appropriately.

Each child is expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Wear their full school uniform (accommodations are made for children with additional needs).
- Engage with school work at all times.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings.
- Keep the school environment clean and tidy.
- Follow class rules.
- Move quietly and carefully around the school.
- Line up in an orderly manner before and after break.
- Stay on the premises and within designated areas during the school times.
- Stay seated when their teacher is out of the room and at lunch and breaktimes.
- Help create a safe, positive school environment.
- Take responsibility for their own words and actions.

Staff

Staff can expect to:

- Feel safe, respected and secure.
- Get support and co-operation from colleagues and parents in order to achieve the school's aims and objectives.
- Work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development.
- Get support and professional advice from NEPS, Department of Education, NCSE, SENO.
- Have grievances dealt with according to agreed procedures as set out by the CPMSA.

Staff are expected to:

- Support and implement our Code of Behaviour.
- Model our school's standards of behaviour in their interactions with children and others.
- Be cognisant of their duty of care.
- Create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their children.
- Strive to develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each child.
- Work as a team to promote positive behaviour in school and at school related activities/events.

- Adhere to the Teaching Council's Code of Conduct.
- Liaise with outside agencies e.g. Tusla, NEPS etc
- Keep records of serious misbehaviour or repeated incidents of misbehaviour.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians can expect to:

- Be treated with respect.
- Have fair and consistent procedures applied by the school when dealing with their child.

Our Code of Behaviour is issued to parents/guardians on enrolment of their child in our school. Parents/Guardians sign that they agree to the Code of Conduct.

It is expected that parents/guardians:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work.
- Are aware of and co-operate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions.
- Act as positive role models for their child/children in school.
- Attend meetings at the school if requested.
- Ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Share information with the principal/ teacher on issues that might affect a child's behaviour in school.
- Be aware of early warning systems e.g. note in homework diary/ phone calls are employed to alert parents/guardians of concerns regarding a child's behaviour, so that ways of helping a child can be discussed and agreed.
- Adhere to signs around the school.
- Do not post derogatory comments on social media platforms about members of staff/ the school and or members of the school community. Posting of such comments will be treated with the utmost seriousness.
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the health and safety of all staff and children, parents/guardians are requested not to reprimand another person's child on the school premises and or at school related events, but to bring such matters to the attention of school management or teaching staff.
- The Board of Management does not tolerate rude, threatening or abusive behaviour and/or assaults by parents towards staff members or other parents. The BOM has a duty of care to protect staff under the Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. In the event of a person engaging in rude, threatening or aggressive behaviour and or assault, the individual will be asked to leave the premises and the Board of Management informed. The matter may also be notified to the Garda Síochána.

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for ensuring that our Code is prepared and implemented. The Board of Management provides support to the Principal and Staff, where necessary, in implementing this Code, e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development, as appropriate. Where suspension or expulsion of a pupil may be deemed necessary, the Board of Management will adopt the procedures laid out in this policy, which are in accordance with the NEWB guidelines.

The Board of Management:

- Is involved in the consultation, review and ratification of our Code.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing our Code.
- Becomes involved in certain matters if necessary.

Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

Procedures for the Classroom

In all classrooms, rules should be based on the school's Code of Behaviour. The display of the Classroom rules should be appropriate to the age, ability and level of understanding of the children in the class. Our school motto of "kind hands, kind feet, kind words" and our Golden Rules are also displayed in classrooms.

- "Ground rules"/ behavioural expectations are set in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Children have input devising the class rules at the beginning of the school year (age appropriate).
- Teachers ensure that children understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Children discuss and explore how to relate with peers, teachers and other adults in the school community.

As some children in the school attend classes in more than one classroom, and allowing for the amount of movement, integration and support that takes place, the rules in the corridor/hall areas and in the yard are standardised throughout the school.

Procedures on the Corridor

When in the corridor pupils are expected to:

- Walk quietly, and to be aware that other pupils are working.
- Show good manners and politeness to other members of the school community.
- Refrain from eating or drinking.
- Go directly to their classes and to be punctual.
- Walk quietly in assembly order/in class line when going to/from the yard/hall.

Procedures for the Yard/ Millennium Playground

Play time is recognised as being of immense value to the children. We aim for them to play safely and to have fun. The following procedures are observed: -

- In the Yard Kind hands, Kind feet, Kind words.
- Show respect to all adults and children who are in the yard.
- Tell the adult on duty if anything goes wrong at playtime.
- Play safely on equipment (particular care is needed when dismounting from equipment).
- Pupils should always take turns when using the slide and other pieces of equipment.
- Pupils must not run up the slide or descend head first from the top of the slide.
- When the bell rings, children stop playing, and line up in assembly order.
- Pupils must behave in a way which does not endanger themselves or others.
- If a child from junior infants to 1st class is not playing fairly in the yard he/she must hold an adult's hand and stay with the adult for a suitable length of time.
- On days when the weather is unsuitable for outdoor yard, children stay in the classroom for breaks and remain seated unless given permission to do otherwise by the supervising teacher or Special Needs assistant(SNA).
- SNAs are on yard to assist certain individual pupils. If there is a difficulty the SNA will inform one of the teachers on yard duty.
- Adults are to actively supervise when on yard duty.
- Children should not re-enter the school building during breaks without the express permission of a teacher. If necessary two children may go to the toilet and report back to the teacher on duty when they return to yard.
- Children who are ill or injured require a note from their parents and may be cared for outside the Secretary's Office where appropriate.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school and representing the school.

Opening/Closing Time/Attendance

School hours are from 8.30am to 2.10pm. Parents are reminded that the school does not accept responsibility for children before the opening time of 8.30a.m. or after the official closing time of 2.10p.m. The School does not accept responsibility for children outside of these times, unless they are on a school outing or engaged in an organised school related activity/event which parents/guardians have been notified of in advance. Parents/Guardians are requested to ensure that children should arrive on time for school and be collected punctually after school. Regular late arrivals for school or requests for early departure form bad habits and these disruptions are unfair to the children and class teachers. Parents/Guardians should only request early departures in exceptional circumstances.

Regular attendance at school is essential for our children. Absences should be explained through *Aladdin* – our online administrative system. Any cases of infectious illness should be notified to the school without delay. Notes are retained online on *Aladdin*. Absences in excess of 20 school days will be reported to the N.E.W.B. (National Education Welfare Board). Parents are informed through *Aladdin* if their child has missed 20days. The school may contact/phone a parent/guardian if concerned about an absence. If a pupil needs to leave school early, a parent/guardian must inform the school via *Aladdin*. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues.

Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Positive encouragement and reinforcement of school rules are regarded as essential towards the development of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils. Rewards may take the form of favourable comments, merit stickers, prizes, homework voucher or notes in homework journal. Improvements in behaviour are welcomed and positively encouraged.

- Reward systems within the individual classroom may vary according to the age of the children.
- Rewards must be meaningful to the children or group.
- Rewards are given for effort as well as achievement.
- Rewards are based on a knowledge of the individual.
- Children's achievement is acknowledged, and they are often sent to visit another class/ Principal/Deputy principal.

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive and discourage negative behaviour. They should help children to recognise that their actions and behaviour impact on others. The decision to use the following procedures and the manner in which they are used will always be guided by our professional judgement, teacher agency and discretion. In applying any sanction, we will ensure the duty of care to the children. We recognise the importance of sanctions being applied fairly and consistently.

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

- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences.
- It must be understood by the child why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Children will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.

Procedures for Stages 1-3

Stage 1

- Non-verbal warning (e.g. eye contact, etc).
- Verbal warning.
- Reasoning with child– including advice on how to improve.
- Incident of misbehaviour may be recorded.
- Parent must be informed of repeated misbehaviour during this stage.

Stage 2

If the behaviour persists or is of an immediate serious nature, the following sanctions may be followed:

- Movement of children to a SET room to work for a short set period.
- This "Time-out" (See Page 12) can only happen after the Principal/Deputy Principal and the parents/guardian of the child have been notified.
- Reflection Sheet
- Referral to Deputy Principal (Principal informed of name and incident)
- Parent requested to meet with class teacher. In accordance with Circular 20/ 90 parents are kept fully informed. Fair procedure is followed, and parents are encouraged to work on strategies agreed.

Stage 3

- Referral to Principal.
- Parents formally requested to meet with class teacher and Principal or Deputy Principal.
- A *Behavioural Contract* may be drawn up with all parties involved. Every effort will be made to agree a plan of positive, corrective action between the parents/ guardians, the school and the child.
- Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed, and parents may be requested to meet with the Chairperson and the Principal.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of possible serious misbehaviour:

- Constantly disruptive in class / Telling lies / Stealing / Damaging others' property / Bullying / Answering back a teacher / Endangering self or fellow children in the class or the yard / Using unacceptable language / Continual disobedience / discourteous or unmannerly behaviour / leaving school premises without permission.

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows: Parents will be invited to meet class teacher, the Principal and/or the Chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour.

Gross Misbehaviour

Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour. The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school / Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate / Leaving school premises without permission / Deliberately injuring any member of the school community / Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a child; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting).

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour. The Principal and/or Chairperson are informed immediately, and suspension sanctioned.

Keeping records

Not all incidents of indiscipline are recorded. Staff use a common-sense approach and their professional judgement in this regard. Some incidents of indiscipline are recorded in the school journal by way of informing parents of the misbehaviour. Parent/guardians are contacted as soon as possible when a serious incident is recorded. Where necessary, Behaviour Support Plans are put in place.

Incidents of misbehaviour in the school yard during recreation time are dealt with by the supervising personnel and are verbally reported to the class teacher who may record them if deemed necessary.

Any incidents of bullying are dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti Bullying Policy.

In line with the data protection legislation GDPR, formal records in relation to childrens' behaviour are filed electronically or manually and stored securely in a locked press in the Principal's office. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

Internal Exclusion (“Time Out”)

The primary reason for ‘time out’ is to protect children and staff rights (especially the right to feel safe and the right to learn). It gives the child time to cool down and regain composure. The child learns to make the connection between behaviour and outcome.

If a child continually disrupts teaching and learning, he/she may be withdrawn from the classroom. Reasons for time out include (but are not limited to):

- Persistent talking/laughing causing disruption to teaching and learning
- Making unnecessary noise
- Throwing objects
- Inappropriate and/or abusive language
- Misuse of or deliberate damage to equipment, furniture or resources
- Making unpleasant remarks
- Using negative body language
- Refusal to follow school procedures
- Threatening/aggressive behaviour towards others

The following procedures are followed:

1. The child may be separated from the class/group in the classroom or may be supervised in another room.
2. The class is redirected to their work.
3. Behaviour Reflection Sheet (Appendix 2) may be completed by older pupils.
4. If the child refuses to leave, additional help is sought from Principal/Deputy Principal/In-School Management Team and parents/guardians are contacted. If the pupil’s continuing presence in the classroom poses a health and safety risk to the other children in the class, they and their teacher exit the room leaving the child under the supervision of a staff member.
5. Should ‘Time Out’ fail to calm a child and aggressive behaviour, which interrupts teaching and learning continues, a child may be collected before the end of the school day, subject to parental permission.

Suspension from School

(see NEWB Guidelines, Chapter 11 pages 69-78)

Suspension is defined as: requiring a child to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

- During the period of suspension, the child retains his/her place in the school.
- The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a child. It has delegated authority in writing to the Principal to suspend a child for a period not exceeding three days.
- If a suspension for more than three days is deemed necessary, the matter is referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances, where a meeting of the Board of Management cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. However, the Board of Management reserves the right to impose a longer period of suspension in appropriate cases.
- Suspension will 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. The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such as:
 - ✓ The child's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other children.
 - ✓ The child's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
 - ✓ The child is responsible for serious damage to property.
- **A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.**
- In cases where the Principal is imposing the suspension, the incident, will, where possible, also be investigated by the Deputy Principal.

Factors which will be considered before suspending a child:

1. The Nature and Seriousness of the Behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

2. The Context of the Behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg. in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group?)
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg. bullying, cultural or family factors).
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the child?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (eg. particular circumstances, SEN)?

3. The Impact of the Behaviour

- How are other children and staff affected by the child's behaviour?

- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning in the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some children or teachers?
- Does the child understand the impact of his/her behaviour on others?

4. The Interventions tried to Date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents/guardians been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available and/or appropriate?
- Is the child or parents/guardians involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving the problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance, e.g. Child and Adolescent Services?

5. Whether Suspension is a Proportionate Response

- Does the child's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour, the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil?

6. The possible impact of Suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the pupil to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other pupils affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the pupil?

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the child's behaviour.

The suspension should:

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the child and his/her parents/guardians.
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- Impress on a child and his/her parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

Informing the child and his/her parents/guardians

- The child and his/her parents/guardians will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension.
- Parents/guardians may be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. If informed by phone, a follow up letter will be sent.

Opportunity for parents/guardians and child to respond

- Parents/guardians & child are given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.
- A meeting is held with the child and the parents/guardians and they are afforded an opportunity 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.

- This meeting may also be an opportunity for the parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the child's behaviour.
- If a child and his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write to them advising them 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 will record the invitations made to the parents/guardians and their response.

Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the child in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of children, safety of staff of the school or any other person. Fair procedures will be applied.

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 children, other children, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for imposition of the suspension.
- The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.
- The suspension will not be open-ended. The parents/guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

Review

The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension will bring the number of days for which the pupil 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 (as amended).

Appeals

The Principal's decision to suspend a pupil can be appealed to the Board of Management.

Section 29 Appeal

- Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).
- At the time the parents/guardians are being formally notified of a suspension, they and the pupil are informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills under Section.29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) and are given information on how to appeal.

Implementation the Suspension

Written Notification

- The Principal will notify the parents/guardians and the child in writing of the decision to suspend the child. The letter will confirm:
- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.

- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitment to be entered into by the child and the parents/guardians (for example, the parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to this Code).
- 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 & Skills under S.29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended) (where applicable)

Where appropriate, when a decision to suspend has been made, the Principal or another member of staff delegated by the Principal will meet the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the child to behave well when the child returns to school and to offer help and guidance on this. Where the parents/guardians do not agree to meet the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension

- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).

After the Suspension ends

- The period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension.

Re-integrating the pupil

- The school will put in place a plan to help the pupil to take responsibility for catching up on work missed.
- This plan will help to avoid the possibility that suspension starts or amplifies a cycle of academic failure.
- Where possible, the school will try to arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the child during the re-integration process.

Clean Slate

- **When the suspension is completed, the child will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.**
- **Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this child as of all other children.**

A child will not be suspended again shortly after his/her return to school unless:

- He/she engages in misbehaviour that warrants suspension; **and**
- Fair procedures are observed in full; **and**
- The standards applied to judging the behaviour is the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other pupil
- Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:
 - It will inform the child and his/her parents/guardians about the complaint; and
 - It will give the parents/guardians and child an opportunity to respond.

7. Records & Reports

Records

- **Formal written records will be kept of:**
 - a. The investigation process (including the notes of all interviews held).
 - b. The decision-making process.
 - c. The decision and the rationale for the decision.
 - d. The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Reports

- 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 in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines as per the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the School and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion from School

(see NEWB Guidelines Chapter 12 pages – 80-87)

“A pupil is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school, having complied with the provision of Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000”.

The Board of Management’s policy and procedures for expulsion are in line with the NEWB Guidelines and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron.

1. Authority to expel

Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

2. Grounds for Expulsion

A child may be expelled where:

- a) **The child’s behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.**
 - b) **The child’s continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.**
 - c) **The child is responsible for serious damage to property.**
- The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension.
 - In addition to the factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, other interventions will have been tried and it is believed that all possibilities for changing the child’s behaviour have been exhausted.
- ### **3. Expulsion for a first offence.**
- There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a child 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 this Code could include:
 - **Violence or physical assault, including but not limited to, a threat against another child, member of staff or a member of the school community.**
 - **Supplying illegal drugs including but not limited to supplying illegal drugs to other children.**
 - **Sexual assault.**

Factors to consider before proposing expelling a child

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction, the Board of Management will undertake a detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a child including:

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (eg. bullying, cultural or other factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (eg. particular circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other children and staff affected by the child's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents/guardians been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour.
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the child or parents/guardians involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked of help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (eg. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)?
- Is the Board of Management satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the child to change his/her behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the child's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other child?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the child?
- Will the child be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with his/her peers?
- In the case of a child who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Inappropriate use of expulsion

Expulsion will not be proposed for:

- Poor academic performance

- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of this Code

However, any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or dangerous can be a serious matter. Behaviour will be examined in context to understand both the behaviour itself and the response or sanction that is most appropriate.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

The Board of Management is required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a pupil. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- 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.**
- 5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.**
- 6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.**

The Board of Management will decide whether the tasks involved in these procedural steps require separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting consistent with giving parents/guardians due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for the Board of Management hearing.

Procedures for Steps 1-6

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direct of the Principal

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

- Inform the child and his/her parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give the parents/guardians and the child every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents/guardians 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/guardians are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents/guardians the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.
- Parents/guardians and the child will have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting will take place between the child and his/her parents/guardians, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The purpose of this meeting is to provide them with 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/guardians to make their case for lessening the

sanction, and for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the child's behaviour.

- If a child and/or his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will 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 inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents/guardian and their response.

Step 2: 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 will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

The Principal will:

- Inform the parents/guardians and the child that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure the parents/guardians have records of the allegations against the child, the investigation and 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 parents/guardians.
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing

- The Board of Management will review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board of Management will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who had any prior involvement in the case is part of the Board of Management's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board of Management who may have made an allegation about the pupil).
- Where the Board of Management decides to consider expelling the child, it will hold a hearing. The Board of Management meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board of Management procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians put their case to the Board of Management in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents/guardians to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board of Management must take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the child. After both sides have been heard, the Board of Management will ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians are not present for the Board of Management's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

- Having heard from all the parties, the Board of Management will decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled, the Board of Management will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- The pupil will not be expelled before the passing of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.
- The Board of Management will inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents/guardians will be told that the Board of Management will inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a child should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- 1. Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the child, and anyone else who may be of assistance**
- 2. Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.**

Pending these consultations about the pupil's continued education; the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of pupils is secured. The Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. Such suspension will only be considered where there is the likelihood that the continued presence of the child during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other children or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

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

An Appeal

A Parent/guardian may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a child

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

Reference to other Policies

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

- Anti-bullying

- Enrolment
- Home / School Communication
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- SPHE plan

Success Criteria

From a practical point of view, the success of this Code of Behaviour will be judged on the amount of positive feedback from children, parents and teachers. It will also be evident from observation of behaviour in classroom, corridors and yard and in the attitude of members of the school community as they relate to each other every day.

Roles, Responsibilities and Review

It is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure the implementation of this policy. The overall responsibility for discipline lies with the Principal. Each teacher is responsible for his/her own class and is required to foster good behaviour within the school. Parents are required to familiarise themselves with the code of behaviour and to ensure that their children adhere to it. The In- School Management Team along with the Principal are responsible for the review and up- date of the policy on a regular basis. The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

Ratification and Communication

The Manager ratified this policy in November 2023.

Signed:



Date: 23rd November, 2023

Reference Section

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
 - (2) Suspension
 - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino

A variety of suggested strategies for use in the classroom

- Develop the art of affirmation. Praise children a lot. Positive comments in copies or journal or just tell them how pleased you are. Use stickers/ stamps for affirmation.
- Build up the child's emotional bank account. If there are lots of positive lodgements throughout the day, through praise and encouragement, then the account will be well in credit when a withdrawal has to be made. (Read the section on Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Effective Parenting and apply The Emotional Bank Account system to the classroom)
- Use stickers/stamps/ marbles in a jar for a set number required. This could be used for additional computer or library time.
- Certificates, prizes are given for specified good behaviour.
- "Golden Time" to be earned at the end of the week.
- Bookmark with a target- gather stamps on it, leading to a reward when full. Could there be a Reading Bookmark, a Maths Bookmark etc, also used as a genuine bookmark? Could a full bookmark entitle the pupil to get a treat- perhaps some extra art activity or some extra time in the Millennium Playground?
- Class rules could be compiled (in line with school policy) by the class, then prioritised and displayed on the notice board. Point by point analysis could be used thus giving all children ownership of the process. Children need to know that the expectations in St. Louis Primary School may be quite different from other aspects of their lives.
- Use discs with red on one side and green on the other on the children's desks. When children are working they turn up the red side and when they need help they turn up the green side. This avoids children shouting out for help.
- "Time-out" could be carried out for a specific time with the use of an egg-timer at a Time-out table in the classroom – 3,4 &5min. The pre-arranged teacher signal could be quietly pointing or simply a yellow card with the words TIME OUT written on it or a card with a picture of an egg timer. The instruction to move to Time Out should not give the child any additional attention or disrupt the class work. If a yellow card is issued, the child can choose to put the card back on the teacher's desk. Thus indicating that they are ready to return to the class group.
- If the disruptive behaviour continues, Time Out would on the next occasion, take place in another classroom.
- Speak softly to the child. Avoid shouting.
- Avoid power struggles. Prevention can be better than cure. Children can often be distracted by hands on activities, depending on the age of the child. Act before the bubble bursts rather than react afterwards.

- Use “I” messages rather than accusations – “I am very disappointed or I am very upset”, rather than “you did...”
- Three point strategy for conflict resolution with older children:
 - a) Listen to the child..... “I want to hear your side of the story”.
 - b) Help the child to identify the problem and take ownership of it – what do you think is the problem? What happened? Why do you think this happened? Maybe get the child to reflect on the problem by imagining s/he is in the other child’s shoes.....
 - c) Ask the child for suggestions about how to “fix it”, thus giving the child ownership of the solution.
- Lighten the atmosphere. Use clever tricks, especially with smaller children – the egg-timer to speed up a task, a glove puppet to issue instructions, a magic towel to diffuse a situation.
- With younger pupils, remove/ stop the child; state the rule firmly; distract and don’t give unnecessary attention for negative behaviour.
- Don’t reward unacceptable behaviour by giving lots of time and attention to the disruptive child. S/he does not care whether the attention is for good or bad behaviour and it can be very upsetting for the sensitive children in the class.
- Make use of effective listening techniques – be alert to the body language and facial expression, especially when children arrive into school upset, Endeavour to distract or amuse them or to create a fun environment around them and ensure that they are given tasks that will encourage them and build self-esteem.
- Teach children the importance of self-discipline and how it affects their performance at work and play.
- The seven “C’s” of **Correction** are **Clarity**, **Consistency**, definite **Consequences**, **Consideration**, being **Concise**, **Celebration** of improvement and when you have corrected, don’t keep going on – **Change** the subject.



THINKING SHEET



Date: _____

Name: _____

Class: _____

Room No: _____

What did I do?

Why did I do it?

What should I have done?

What will I do in the future?

Actions to be taken where incidents of bullying are reported/suspected:

1. Investigate:
 - a. Interview both students
 - b. Interview any individuals/witnesses mentioned by both students
 - c. If it is a class issue; give the class a chance to privately, confidentially provide their perspective (introduce a “something to say” box where they post messages for the teacher)
 - d. NB: Keep records (*use the bullying Record Sheet from the AB Policy*)
2. If we establish that the behaviours constitute bullying; inform Principal/Deputy who will then speak to the children and contact parents of those involved (class teacher can be the contact either)
3. Make it known to the child/children that they are in breach of our Anti-Bullying Policy and how they are breaking it.
4. From the Anti-Bullying Policy:
 - a. Verbal reprimand and advice on how to improve
 - b. On third reprimand: “time out” (from break etc)
 - c. Loss of privileges (we may skip to this stage if we think it’s necessary)
 - d. Temporary removal from classroom to another class or outside the office
5. “Pupils may need opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, develop their friendship and social skills and build resilience whenever this is needed” (AB policy page 6)
 - a. Whole class activities with both students present (Stay Safe, Walk Tall etc)
 - b. Small group activities: with SEN teacher if possible/required (both students can be withdrawn for a period of time; separately at first and/or together in time)

Role of Teachers:

- To resolve any issues and restore in so far as possible friendships/relationships of both students
- Use own professional judgement as how best to resolve the situation (in line with AB Policy)
- Keep records
- Keep parents informed as and when appropriate
- Make it clear that reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour
- Involve and inform SNAs or any other relevant staff
- Use a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach
- Ask: “who, what, where, when, why”
- Keep the sanctions private to the pupil/s being disciplined and his parents/teachers involved



Behaviour Strategy for 2nd to 6th

Golden Rules 2nd to 6th are as follows (an explanation is included so that the children understand what each rule means):

1. We are kind. *We treat others how we would like to be treated.*
2. We are gentle. *We don't hurt others.*
3. We are honest. *We don't hide the truth.*
4. We listen. *We don't interrupt.*
5. We work hard. *We don't waste time.*
6. We look after property. *We don't damage things.*

A copy of the Golden Rules will be given to you to display in your classroom (on yellow paper). Please spend time discussing these rules with your class and display the copy of the rules prominently in your room.

Our Golden Rules	
1. We are kind.	
2. We are gentle.	
3. We are honest.	
4. We listen.	
5. We work hard.	
6. We look after our property.	
	

Incident Report Sheet		
Child's Name		
Teacher		
Class		
Year of Enrolment in St. Louis Primary School		
Date	Description of Incident	Action Taken