

Code of Behaviour

Background:-

Discipline comes from the Latin word *dicere* which means “to learn”. The close connection between discipline and learning is emphasised by the term *discipulus* which means “disciple” - one who learns from his master. The other term which highlights the connection is the word *disciplina* which means “training”, “learning”, and so forth. Subject areas are disciplines because the learner submits himself/herself to the rules implicit in them. The mark of progress becomes an increasingly disciplined approach to the subject and to many aspects of life.

What a teacher seeks to achieve through the exercise of his/her authority is self discipline by the pupils in worthwhile pursuits. A child can learn genuine self discipline only through self-generated activity and experience and not through impositions by another authority. A child needs space to make mistakes for he/she has to learn to evaluate the consequences of the actions for himself/herself and others. Discipline can be defined as the sum of experiences in our lives that enable us to grow up. (Castle, 1968.)

The long term aim of discipline in schools is the development of social awareness and responsible behaviour in children, in other words the development of self discipline.

Introduction:

Our discipline and behaviour policy is predicated on the belief that behaviour is learned so it follows that acceptable behaviour can be taught. We teach acceptable behaviour like we teach an academic subject. Teachers being in *loco parentis* treat their classes as a parent would treat a very large family. Tensions will sometimes arise for it has become a fact of life that the behaviour expected in school may differ from that accepted in the home.

The aims of primary education may be stated as:-

- (1) to enable the child to live a full life as a child;
- (2) to equip her/him to avail her/himself of further education so that she/he may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

The teachers are committed to the realisation of these aims. The Board of Management of the

school is committed similarly. Parents of children in this school have been strongly supportive of these aims for many years.

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This means a strong sense of community within our school and a high level of co-operation among teaching staff and between staff, pupils, parents, Parents Association, Board of Management and ancillary staff.

All members of the teaching staff have been involved in planning the code. It has been ratified by the Board of Management.

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruptive free environment.

The Code of Discipline aims to achieve:-

1. The efficient operation of the school.
2. The structuring of in-class discipline which prompts an efficient and stimulating environment.
3. The maintenance of good order and safety throughout the school day, including break times, sports activities and all movements between classes.
4. The development of self discipline in all pupils and care and courtesy towards others.
5. The development of self-esteem in the pupils and a true sense of one's self worth.
6. The development of respect for school buildings, all school property and the general school environment.

Principles of our Discipline Policy

The school's policy is based on the principles of caring, fairness, respect, tolerance, compassion and courtesy. The attitude of the teaching staff will have a critical bearing on how successful the policy is likely to be. Staff shall consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and shall respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour. However parents are also responsible for their children's behaviour in school.

If our school is to achieve a happy, secure environment where the children can develop and learn to their full potential, a positive, friendly, caring and encouraging atmosphere will provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour that is dangerous to oneself, others or which may be disruptive or anti-social. Therefore, every effort will be made by all members of teaching staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.

A central concept of our discipline policy is the basic fact that no child has to misbehave. They can make responsible choices. When anyone does misbehave, then he or she is making a positive

choice to do so. Children can always choose to “behave”. Pupils have to know that good behaviour brings desirable consequences and bad behaviour brings unpleasant consequences.

Our policy has three chief elements:-

A. RULES

Pupils are informed of expected and acceptable levels of behaviour.

B. REWARDS

In order to encourage pupils to choose to follow these rules and guidelines, a system of praise, affirmation and positive feedback is in place.

C. BEHAVIOUR CHECKS

Pupils who choose to break a rule will know that there will be consequences.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

General

1. **Respect and courtesy:** Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and all others. They are expected to treat all other pupils, all members of staff and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of any form of vulgarity or offensive language is unacceptable.
2. **Punctuality:** Pupils must be in on time for school each day and return to class punctually after breaks. The official opening time of the school is 8.50am. Class for infants ends at 1.30pm. All other classes end at 2.30pm. No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside of these times. Those collecting children from school should always be punctual. Lateness causes great anxiety especially for younger children.
3. **Safety when entering or leaving the school:** Children must walk when entering or leaving the school and must use the footpaths on the roadway.
Cyclists must dismount and walk when entering or leaving the school.
Courtesy and respect must be shown to the school bus driver. Pupils must walk when coming from the bus in the morning and when going towards in the evening. Pupils must remain seated when on the bus and behave in an orderly safe manner.
4. **Attendances/Absences:** Every absence of a child from school must be accounted for, either by parents/guardians calling to the school or forwarding a written note. If a child has to leave school early or be absent from school for part of the day, a written note must be forwarded to the class teacher in school. This is to ensure as far as possible the safety of children throughout school hours.
5. **Illness:** Any infectious illness should be notified to the school immediately. Children should return to school only when fully recovered.

6. **Personal Property:** Children must have their names on their coats and all personal property such as school books, copies etc. Pupils must keep their mobile phones switched

off at all times while on the school premises.

School Property: Pupils must respect all school property and treat all school books and equipment with care. Parents will be held accountable for the cleaning, repair or replacement of any school property, books or equipment wilfully damaged or vandalized by their children.

School Environment: Pupils must keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully in any clean up activities organised by the teachers.

Behaviour in Class

1. Pupils must have all books and materials or equipment required.
2. All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
3. Respect and courtesy are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, towards a teacher or ancillary member of staff or towards any visitors to the school is unacceptable.
4. Arrival and Dismissal – pupils should enter and leave class quietly and safely.

Behaviour out of Class

1. Corridors, toilets, yard areas.

Pupils should treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves. Pupils should behave in an orderly manner at all times and must walk when going from one area to another within the school buildings. This is to ensure the safety of themselves and all others.

Pupils must not behave in any way which endangers others or themselves. Examples of behaviour which endangers are: roughness, fighting, kicking, striking, spitting, punching, tripping, throwing objects or verbal abuse. Teachers will seek to ensure that standards of safety are observed and shall prohibit games or activities considered to be dangerous. Any directions given by teachers on these matters are to be followed implicitly.

2. Inclement weather

On such days pupils stay in the senior classroom. They must observe implicitly any directions given by teachers and safety procedures must be followed at all times.

3. Accidents

A child involved in any accident or hurt in any way must report or be reported to the teacher on yard supervision or to any other available teacher. The teacher may decide to attend to the injuries or to bring the child to a doctor or hospital. Where necessary, parents will be

informed or asked to bring the child home or the teacher may arrange for the child to be brought home.

4. Bullying and Intimidation of Others

This is always regarded as a very serious offense. All forms of threatening behaviour are unacceptable. Children must be able to attend school and to go home safely and without fears. If children are being bullied or threatened, either verbally or physically, teachers must be told so that the matter can be dealt with effectively.

Bullying clearly runs counter to the school philosophy of promoting the ideals of care and respect. It is instilled in the pupils that nobody has the right to make another feel uncomfortable by any action or by any use of language. Good relationships and respect are emphasised to counteract bullying behaviour.

As a matter of policy, we encourage disclosure of information where instances of bullying occur or are suspected. Pupils are made aware that since bullying is an affront to human dignity and a violation of personal freedom, disclosure is proper and necessary.

Types of Bullying:

1. Physical.
2. Verbal.
3. Gesture.
4. Exclusion.
5. Extortion.
6. E-bullying. (Telephone, e-mail, text messages.)

The school will insist that children who are bullying shall be brought to school in the morning and collected each afternoon by their parents until the matter is resolved. These children may also have to be brought home at lunchtime.

Any parent who feels their child is being bullied should contact the class teacher or the principal in complete confidence without delay.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

As teachers we realise that positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. We endeavour when possible to use positive language and reward good behaviour.

Strategies/Incentives used

- 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.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege eg. ring bell, collect copies etc.
- Merit systems for good behaviour eg. stickers/stars.

Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples that are considered very serious: stealing, bullying or threatening others, making abusive, insulting, offensive or insolent remarks, laughing or jeering at others' mistakes or disabilities, wilful

damage to school buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others, fighting, telling untruths, showing disrespect to teachers or other school employees, school bus driver, disrupting lessons by causing distraction, shouting and not working to the best of one's ability, being lazy in starting work or deliberately wasting time, being generally rowdy, aggressive, rough, spitting, being unhygienic, disturbing other children at work, being disobedient or defiant, leaving school grounds without permission, not having valid reason for absences.

These are dealt with from stage 2 up.
Bullying is dealt with at stage 3.

Serious Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples considered serious are: making rude signs or annoying gestures, using vulgar or bad language, being late often, copying work from others, not sharing with others, not completing school tasks, being inattentive during class work, not completing homework without a valid reason, entering classrooms without permission, littering in building or school grounds.

Minor Unacceptable Behaviour

Talking out of turn in class (if there is a repeated pattern, this is considered serious).

Sanctions plus Strategies to show disapproval of Unacceptable Behaviour.

Positive encouragements and reinforcement are regarded as primary in helping pupils to develop responsibility, a positive attitude and self discipline. However when a student wilfully disregards school rules and infringes on the rights of others to participate in an ordered and structured learning environment, sanctions may be needed. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance discipline within the classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school.

In the event of reasoning with the pupil not being successful the following strategies will be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

Stage One:

After receiving warnings, detention during a break will occur, (a short break will be afforded). If there is no improvement in behaviour we move on to stage two.

Stage Two:

After receiving warnings and detention during break a written note will be sent home to be signed by parents. If there is still no improvement in behaviour we move on to stage three.

Stage Three:

Warning and detention. Loss of privilege and parents are contacted regarding child's ongoing misbehaviour.

Stage Four:

Suspension. If there is no improvement in behaviour the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. The parents will be requested to come to the school and the pupil will be

suspended for a period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

Some very serious discipline matters are only dealt with from stage three up. In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board shall authorise the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130 (6).

Effectiveness of our Discipline Policy lies with all partners in education.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- 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 record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents 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 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.
- Cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which any affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Inform school in writing when child is absent.

If a parent has any concerns about their child's behaviour or progress they should contact the school without delay.