



St. Ita's N.S.

Code of Behaviour

June 2023

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1. Introduction

This policy was reviewed and updated by the staff, pupils, Board of Management and parents/guardians of St. Ita's National School in February 2020 and again in February 2021. The National Educational Welfare Board publication "*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*" was used as a source during the review and updating process.

Rationale:

The Code of Behaviour is being reviewed because:

- It is a priority area identified by staff.
- The existing policy is due for review and amendment.
- It is a requirement under D.E.S Curricular 20/90 on school discipline as per the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 23 (1).
- Our Anti-Bullying Policy is currently being reviewed.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

- Order and discipline ensure effective teaching and learning and thus enable students to reach their full potential. It is our policy to encourage and acknowledge positive behaviour, to foster and develop qualities of leadership and responsibility in our students.
- We aim to maintain and build upon our high standards of teaching and learning.
- Community spirit in school through academic work, school activities and courtesy is acknowledged and rewarded.

Aims

- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others, including teachers.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents/guardians and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

2. Guidelines for Behaviour

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires high level of co-operation between staff, children and parents/guardians.

a) School begins at 8.50 a.m. and finishes at 2.30 p.m.

Pupils should be punctual and arrive on time for school in order to keep levels of disruption at a minimum. Doors open at 8.40 am each morning. Supervision is also provided at 2.30 pm when children are dispersing.

b) School day ends for infants at 1.30 P.M.

Please make arrangements to have your child collected at this time.

c) All children must wear the school uniform as outlined in our School Uniform Policy.

d) Please label clearly cardigans, coats and lunch boxes.

e) Appropriate footwear must be worn for P.E classes.

f) Children remain in school for the duration of the school day. Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds unless they are being collected by a parent/guardian or person nominated by the child's parent/guardian. When a child is being collected, the person collecting must call to the Principal's Office or Secretary's Office to inform them of this, and sign the child out.

g) No parent is permitted to go straight to a classroom.

h) We recommend that children bring healthy lunches and avoid junk food e.g., crisps, fizzy drinks, chocolate, popcorn or winders etc.

i) In the interest of safety for children no glass bottles are allowed.

j) "Chewing gum" is banned on school premises.

k) For the safety of our children hooped or dangling earrings are not to be worn. Earrings are not allowed except for small studded earrings. Make up, false nails or eyelash extensions are not allowed in school. Parents will be contacted to collect their child in the event of a pupil not adhering to this.

l) Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. In order to provide opportunities for your child to benefit both socially and academically from school, all forms of bullying behaviour are considered unacceptable.

m) There is a dustbin near at hand; dropping litter is strictly forbidden. As we are a Green School, we ask children to bring home their unconsumed food and empty containers.

n) Attendances/absences: For the furthering of each child's education and safety we request children to attend school each day unless there is a legitimate excuse. There is an obligation on the school to notify Tusla when child is absent for 20 days or more.

It is necessary for parents/guardians to send the class teacher a note on each of the following occasions.

- (i) When a child is absent.
- (ii) When a child is away for part of the day – please sign book in foyer.

Sometimes a child is “sick” and does not wish to go to school and we realise that this is difficult for parents/guardians to assess if illness is genuine. We request that, in this case, you make a responsible decision.

If a child is ill we ask you to keep him/her at home until fully recovered.

If your child/children are leaving the school permanently, please inform the Principal beforehand.

- o) Mobile phones are not allowed in school.** If a mobile phone is found in the possession of a pupil during the course of the school day, it will be confiscated and kept in Principal’s Office for collection by parents/guardians only. If it is considered absolutely necessary by a parent/guardian for a child to bring a mobile phone to school on a particular day, the phone must be handed to the Principal before class begins, with an explanatory note from a parent/guardian. The phone will be kept in the Principal’s Office and can be collected by the pupil at going home time.

3. Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

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 between staff, parents/guardians and pupils. Through discussion between staff members, pupils and teachers, parents/ guardian’s council representatives and Board of Management we agree that the focus in our school is on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour.

Staff

- A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the way in which pupils and teachers treat each other. The staff at our school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with children and with each other. The example set by adults in the school has an important influence on the children.
- In our school we treat our children with respect and dignity. We recognise the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- As a staff our focus will be primarily the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. We aim to:
 - Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
 - Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
 - Promote through example honesty and courtesy.
 - Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
 - Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
 - Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
 - Discourage physical and verbal aggression and to encourage kindness and respect.

The S.P.H.E curriculum will be used to support our Code of Behaviour. It aims to help children develop good communication skills and good positive self-esteem. It will also hopefully help them to grow up to become good responsible citizens. The content of the S.P.H.E programme is delivered in a two year cycle.

At the beginning of the year parents/guardians of Junior Infants will be invited to a meeting with Principal and teachers. They will be informed about the S.P.H.E Curriculum and their part in supporting it. Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) is part of the SPHE Curriculum. All pupils will receive lessons in RSE. If you do not wish your child to participate in the sensitive issues lesson, you must inform the school in writing.

Board of Management

- The Board of Management has a role to play in the review of the existing Code of Behaviour.
- A draft copy of the reviewed Code of Behaviour will be forwarded to each member of the Board of Management. Members will be invited to make suggestions or amendments to this draft.
- The suggestions/amendments will be discussed and incorporated into the policy where feasible. The new draft policy will be presented at our Board of Management meeting where it can be discussed and ratified.
- The Board of Management can support the school staff in their implementation of the Code of Behaviour by providing and facilitating opportunities for staff development. This can be done by encouraging staff to attend in-service courses, by facilitating projects which promote an orderly and harmonious school environment which promotes positive behaviour and where there is a high level of respect and co-operation among staff, parents/guardians and pupils.
- The Board of Management will be aware of the procedures that are in place as part of the school Code of Behaviour when dealing with serious breaches of behaviour. These procedures will be cognisant of current legislation e.g., Education Welfare Act 2000 and Department of Education and Skills, Curricular 20/90.

Parents/Guardians

- Schools need the support of parents/guardians in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.
- At the beginning of the school year the reviewed and sanctioned Code of Behaviour will be available to all parents/guardians on the school website.
- On the enrolment of their children a copy of the Code of Behaviour will be sent to parents/guardians.
- They will be requested to sign and return a form stating their acceptance and support of the Code of Behaviour.
- Parents/guardians will be informed that they are welcomed and encouraged to make an appointment to discuss with the Principal or teachers any concerns they may have about any aspect of the Code of Behaviour.
- Where a problem arises parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.
- In the event of a suspension or as a result of the cumulative effect of a number of suspensions which bring the total number of suspended days to 20 or more days, the parents/guardians may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act. This right to appeal applies to expulsions as well as suspensions. In each one of these situations the chairperson of the Board of Management will inform parents/guardians of their entitlement to appeal.

Pupils

- At the beginning of each year the class teacher will draft a Classroom Code of Behaviour with the children. These will reflect and support the school rules but through discussion with the teacher the children will take ownership of the rules themselves.
- Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety, physical and emotional welfare of all members of the school community.
- Rules will emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner.
- A Code of Behaviour policy document will be given to each teacher at the beginning of the year and they will explain and discuss with the children the school rules with due regard to age difference.

4. Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

Classroom:

At the beginning of each year all teachers will receive a copy of this Code of Behaviour. They will discuss it with their own class and ensure that pupils understand how they are expected to behave. It will be explained to the children that problems occurring during break times will be dealt with by the teacher on duty and not carried back into the classroom. This code of behaviour will support the drawing up of a code of behaviour for the classroom by pupils and teacher and thus create a positive atmosphere for learning.

Playgrounds:

- A concise set of playground rules has been drafted with the emphasis on positive behaviour (See Appendix 1 for complete list) and each staff member will receive a copy of this set of rules.
- The rules will have been explained to and discussed with the children.
- Classes are taken to and from the yard by the class-teachers.
- The main yard is divided into two zones with a junior and senior zone. Children are requested to remain within their own zone. Classes may be rotated during the course of the school year.
- There are Special Need Assistants (S.N.A's) on duty with the teachers in the yards at break times. Only Children with a serious problem (i.e. broken limbs etc.) will be allowed to remain in the foyer area at break times. This will be at the discretion of the Principal on receipt of a written request from a parent/guardian.
- Two sixth class pupils will assist the supervising teacher by being 'on duty' at the doorways and helping to guide children going and coming from the toilets.
- Serious incidents of misbehaviour by a pupil will be recorded in a book to be kept in the Principal's office.

5. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards:

Part of the vision of St. Ita's National School is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems

which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their personal best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Each of these should earn the same level of praise.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents/guardians, written or verbal communication
- Attendance Certificates of merit will be awarded for exemplary attendance at the end of each year.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher or by the teacher on yard duty. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of **serious misbehaviour**:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning and which infringes on the rights of others to education.
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of **gross misbehaviour**:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequence will be characterised by certain features;

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

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

1. Reasoning with the pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve in the classroom
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work
5. Referral to Principal
6. Communication with parents/guardians
7. Detention during break/after school
8. Principal communicating with parents/guardians
9. Loss of privileges (school tour)
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

However, sanctions should relate as closely as possible to behaviour.

6. Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

Strategies for dealing with aggressive or violent behaviour

- Appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Services Executives, NEPS and other social care services.
- A shorter school day for the pupil may in some circumstances be required to manage extremely challenging and disruptive behaviour.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, 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 or serious behaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. **Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.**

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If 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. 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. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. 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 may authorise 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/guardians.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil the Board shall notify the Local Educational Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal or 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.

7. Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians and the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the differences in all individuals.

8. Review and Implementation

Success Criteria:

Success criteria will be monitored by:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils.
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors and yards.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Principal will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the policy.

Timeframe for Implementation:

June 2024

Timeframe for Review:

This policy will be monitored & reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Ratification and Communication

Communication

- Policy will be available on the school website.
- Parents/guardians informed by school newsletter.
- Parents/guardians input in form of suggestions/amendments etc. invited within a specified timeframe.

Ratification:

Following ratification by the BOM, the Code of Behaviour will be circulated to all staff members. A copy of the Code of Behaviour will be available to parents and guardians on the school website.

Signed: Monsignor Cathal Geraghty
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Patrick Coyle
Principal

Date: 28/06/2023

Date: 28/06/2023

Appendix

Rules for Yard and Outside the Classroom

- **Do as you are told by all staff at all times.**
- **Be on your best behaviour at all times** – No bad language and no rough or dangerous play.
- **Play and stay in your own area of the yard and away from the road wall.**
- **Leave drinks, food cartons/wrappers and lunch boxes in the classroom.**
- Form an orderly line if you wish to use the toilet.
- **Wall benches are for sitting only.** For safety reasons do not walk or stand on them.
- **Play suitable games.** Only two volleyballs are allowed on the senior side of the yard.
- **Freeze on the first bell and walk quietly to your line on the second bell.**
- **Stand quietly after the bells are rung.**