

# St Ita's Primary School Code of Behaviour



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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 September 2010.

## Rationale:

The code of behaviour was 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).

## 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
- 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.

### 1. School begins at 9.20 a.m. and finishes at 3.00 p.m.

No responsibility can be accepted for pupils arriving before that time. School will end at 3.00 p.m. Neither can responsibility be accepted for pupils who wait after this time for late transport.

### 2. School day ends for infants at 2.00 P.M.

Please make arrangements to have your child collected at this time unless he/she is using C.I.E transport.

3. Please ensure that children in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class wear uniform at all times. Uniform is optional for Junior and Senior Infants. Uniform for girls is a wine coloured pinafore, wine coloured cardigan, white blouse, wine tights or socks for winter and white socks for summer. Girls wear tracksuits on the day they have P.E. only.

For boys it is a wine coloured pullover, grey shirt and grey slacks. Boys may also wear wine coloured tracksuits.

There is also a policy specifically for school uniform in the school.

4. Please label clearly cardigans, coats and lunch boxes.

5. P.E. shoes must be worn for P.E classes.

6. Children may not go to a shop during 11.00 a.m. break or between 12.30 p.m. - 1.00 p.m.

7. We recommend that children bring healthy lunches and avoid junk food e.g. crisps, fizzy drinks, etc.

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

9. "Chewing gum" is banned on school premises.

10. For the safety of our children hooped or dangling earrings are not to be worn. Only stud earrings allowed.

11. So that your children will benefit both socially and academically from school all forms of bullying are considered unacceptable. Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. (See Appendix 2 for reference to school policy on bullying)

12. There is a dustbin near at hand; dropping litter is strictly forbidden.

13. **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.

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

(a) When a child is absent.

(b) When a child is away for part of the day.

(c) When a child wishes to leave school during the day.

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.

14. **Mobile phones are not allowed in school.** If found will be confiscated and kept in Principal's Office for collection by parents/guardians only. (See Mobile Phone Policy)

### 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 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 newly-enrolled children 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.

### **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 brought before the Review committee discussed and incorporated into the policy where feasible. The new draft policy will be presented at our Board of Management meeting in September 2010 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.
- A copy of this reviewed Code of Behaviour will be sent to representative members of the Parents/guardians Council and they will be asked to give feedback with regard to its content.
- 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.
- At the beginning of the year a copy of the reviewed and sanctioned Code of Behaviour will be sent to all parents/guardians.
- Where a problem arises parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

## 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 documents 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. 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 have been drafted with the emphasis on positive behaviour (See Appendix 1 for complete list)
- Each staff member will receive a copy of these set of rules and an enlarged copy of these rules will be posted on the wall inside the exit doors.
- 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 senior infants to second class in one area and third to sixth class in the other area. Children are requested to remain within their own zone.
- There are two Special Need Assistants (S.N.A's) on duty with a teacher in the main yard at break times. The other Special Needs Assistant is on duty with a teacher in the small yard during breaks. The junior infants and one senior infant's class use this yard. Children who remain inside due to illness will be seated in the foyer adjacent to the toilet area.
- Two sixth class pupils will assist the supervising teacher by being 'on duty' at the doorways and helping to control children going and coming from the toilets.
- The S.N.A's will assist in supervising children going to the toilet. They will also assist the teacher in the event of accident occurring.
- 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. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high for work.

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. 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
- 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.
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment.
- 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
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break
7. Communication with parents/guardians
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents/guardians
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.

Therefore a child, who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety.

**It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.**

## **6. Managing aggressive or violent behaviour**

### **Strategies for dealing with aggressive or violent behaviour**

- Children who are emotionally disturbed or manifesting aggressive or violent misbehaviour are referred for psychological assessment.
- Appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Services Executives, NEPS and other social care services.
- SNA'S may be requested to support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- In the event of seriously threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil themselves or the safety of other pupils and staff parents may be requested to facilitate removal of the pupil during break times.
- 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 Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education 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:-

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

### **Roles and Responsibility**

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

### **Timeframe for Implementation**

September 2010

### **Timeframe for Review**

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

### **Ratification and Communication**

#### Communication

Policy on display on notice board in school during September 2010.

Parents/guardians informed by school newsletter.

Parents/guardians input in form of suggestions/amendments etc. invited within a specified timeframe.

#### Ratification

Policy ratified by B.O.M in September 2010.

Ratified policy circulated to all families of pupils attending St. Ita's N.S in early October 2010.

## Appendix

### **1. Rules for Yard and Outside the Classroom**

- **Do as you are told by all staff at all times.**
- **Behave in correct manner** - No bad language and no rough or dangerous play.
- **Play and stay in your own area.**
- **Leave drinks, yogurts etc. in the classroom.**
- **Get permission from the TEACHER on duty** - if you wish to go to the toilet.
- **Wall benches are for sitting only.** For safety reasons do not walk or stand on them.
- **Keep away from the road wall and the steps leading to the Convent Grounds.**
- **Play suitable games.** Balls are not allowed and skipping ropes are only for skipping.
- **When the bell rings go quickly and quietly to your line.**