

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

This policy was formulated in conjunction with the Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Students of St. Michael's N.S. A member of the P.P.D.S. facilitated a staff meeting on Developing a Code of Behaviour.

Rationale

The Code of Behaviour was reviewed to ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school and that our policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The Code of Behaviour reflects the school's ethos and philosophy.

St. Michael's N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

The main objective of the school is to prepare the pupils to take their place in society as good and responsible citizens. This is done by example and teaching – parents, pupils and teachers working in harmony in an atmosphere of mutual trust and harmony rather than through strict discipline.

St. Michael's will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

St. Michael's N.S. complies with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which are based on "*Children First–National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011*".

A copy of the school's Child Protection Policy is available on request.

Aims

By introducing this policy St. Michael's N.S. hopes:

- To create a positive school ethos where learning and development can take place
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way 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 ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To create the highest possible degree of consensus about standards of behaviour among staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Students benefit from their education and are happy in a structured, caring environment where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to.

Each child should:

- Show respect for self and others
- Show kindness and willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners
- Be able to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Be able to forgive

St. Michael's N.S. expects a high commitment from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. These include:

- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Doing one's best in class
- Taking responsibility for one's work and actions
- Keeping the rules
- Helping to create a safe positive environment
- Respecting other students and their learning
- Participating in school activities

The following kinds of behaviour are not acceptable in school:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

2. Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management, staff, parents and pupils of St. Michael's N.S. will endeavour to create a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. All members of the school community will have an opportunity to contribute to the formation of the Code of Behaviour, and be involved in any review. All school policies and practices support the objectives of the Code of Behaviour.

The SPHE curriculum supports the 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.

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for the Code of Behaviour rests with the B.O.M. Before ratifying all policies the Board ensures that they reflect the ethos and responsibilities of the school.

With regard to the Code of Behaviour the B.O.M.

- Ensures that staff have opportunities to review the Code of Behaviour regularly by allowing staff meetings and supporting the use of facilitators
- Ensures that all members of the school community have an opportunity to be involved in work on the Code of Behaviour
- Ensures that the Code is read and formally adopted at a meeting of the B.O.M.
- Ensures that the Principal under the direction of the Board implements the Code in the school
- Ensures that all new staff and newly enrolled families are aware of the Code
- Ensure, through the Principal, that all parents confirm in writing that they have read and accept the Code of Behaviour and will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance
- Ensures that correct procedures are followed in dealing with serious breaches of behaviour

Principal

- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Arrange for review of the Code as required
- Ensure all new staff/substitutes are informed in relation to policy

Staff

Teachers - The teachers 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

Ancillary staff – secretary, caretaker, etc. have no direct role in the implementation of the policy except where directed by the Principal.

Support staff – (football coaches, etc.) act under the instructions and advice of the Principal/teaching staff. They refer all behavioural issues to the teacher/Principal.

All adults on school grounds are expected on all occasions to model appropriate behaviour for the children.

Parents

The Code of Behaviour will work well if all members of the school community are involved in its formation. Parental involvement will:

- Help to underline their responsibilities for their children's behaviour
- Give parents insight into what teachers need in order to be able to teach effectively
- Equip parents to reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school
- Help parents to have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work
- Help to ensure that parents give consistent messages to students about how to treat others

All parents were circulated with a draft policy and were invited to make suggestions based on it. Final authority rested with the B.O.M. in accepting or rejecting such amendments.

All parents who wish to enrol their child in St. Michael's N.S. are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour and are asked to submit in writing that they have read and accept the code.

Parents can promote positive behaviour by:

- Ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work and actions
- Being aware of and co-operate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Attending meetings at the school if requested

- Helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed
- Ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- Making an appointment with the school to discuss any concerns or worries they may have
- By communicating all concerns, no matter how minor, to the school before they become a major issue.

Pupils

Students are more likely to support a Code of Behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Through their involvement students can:

- Hear directly from teachers about what is needed for teaching and learning
- Experience being part of a collective effort to make sure the school is a good place to teach and learn
- Learn about taking personal responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's well-being and the well-being of the teachers
- Learn essential skills of listening, negotiating and managing differences
- Have their experience, insights and expectations recognized and used

Pupils are involved in:

- Class discussion on the importance of Code of Behaviour
- Devising school and classroom rules in consultation with Principal and Class Teacher
- Modelling good behaviour for younger students
- Showing respect and tolerance for others

3. Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

The following is a sample of positive strategies that are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

Classroom

- Verbal affirmation
- Pupil/teacher involvement in drawing up classroom rules
- Regular review of rules
- Creating a positive environment
- Modelling good behaviour
- Promoting mutual respect
- Promoting good communication between parents, pupils and staff
- Having well-structured class routine
- Following a programme of SPHE where respect and self-esteem are nurtured and fostered
- Promoting the use of courtesy and good manners to all pupils, staff and visitors
- Ensuring that all members of school community have a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave
- Awareness of possible triggers for conflict
- Consistency of approaches among staff
- Effective timetabling

Playground

- A concise set of playground rules drawn up by staff and pupils which emphasise positive behaviour (see Appendix 2)
- Supervision of yard by members of staff on a daily rota

- Dividing the yard into 2 sections:
 - Junior
 - Senior
- Division will be made on an annual basis depending on the numbers in each section
- On wet days children remain in the classroom/G.P. room and play board games, jigsaws, etc.
- Pupils exit and enter the school in an orderly fashion
- When break is over pupils line up outside classroom door
- Children can only remain inside during break time if they have a note from their parents. In these cases they will be supervised in G.P. room
- If a child is in detention for part of break they will be supervised in G.P. room

Others areas in school

- A concise set of rules drawn up by staff and pupils which emphasise positive behaviour. (Appendix 1)
- High standards of behaviour are expected throughout the school
- Students are reminded of this and rules are reviewed at the start of each school year and at the start of term
- Every effort will be made by all staff members to adopt a positive and consistent approach to behaviour
- Every effort will be made to foster and maintain close links between parents, teachers and the Board of Management to ensure that any problems that may arise will be speedily and effectively dealt with
- The overall responsibility for the discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

School Related Activities

Standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply to all activities where the pupils are still the responsibility of the school – school tours/outings, games.

While the school is not directly responsible for the behaviour of pupils travelling to and from school the same high standards of behaviour are expected.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Good behaviour is promoted and affirmed on a regular basis by:

- Verbal affirmation
- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- Recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- Passing on 'good news' to parents, other classes, Principal

Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

Class Teacher

- The class teacher deals with inappropriate behaviour and may impose sanctions on child in line with agreed steps outlined below
- If the problem persists the class teacher will consult with the Principal in the hope of solving and helping the child with behavioural issues

- Parents will be informed at an early stage if a problem occurs and not simply when a crisis arises
- In the case of serious misbehaviour the Principal, class teacher and parents may need to have ongoing discussion to monitor the situation. The child may be part of some or all of these discussions

Where a student's behaviour disrupts the teaching and learning of other students they will be dealt with by one or a combination of the following procedures:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Verbal Reprimand – including how behaviour has impacted on others and advice on how to improve
- Reprimand – with regard to work, when it is felt that the pupil is not trying
- Detention for part of the break
- Completing homework during break when no note from parent has been received
- Allocation of additional work to be done at home and signed by parents
- Loss of privileges, jobs of trust, etc...
- Where it is deemed necessary, a record of breaches of discipline will be kept
- Temporary separation from peers within classroom
- Removal to another classroom for a short period
- Communication with parents, homework diary may normally be used for this purpose
- Referral to Principal where appropriate

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

The following strategies are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural assessment.

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available, e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS
- Resource teachers who are IEP co-ordinators act as mentors for particular children and assist teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children
- Newly qualified teachers are supported by ISMT members as required
- Professional development is made available to staff as required and requested, e.g. SESS, ICEP (ProfExcel) courses, Education Centres, and is financed by the BOM
- Where the school proposes to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or aggressive behaviour, we will -
 - a) Seek the written advice and consent of the parents/guardians
 - b) Seek expert advice, competent legal advice
 - c) Use Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers

Special Needs

We understand that a pupil may have difficulty for educational, emotional or psychological reasons in complying with the general Code of Behaviour. In this context the following steps are taken –

- Strategies appropriate to the individual child will be used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems once advised by the appropriate professionals
- Where there are health and safety concerns for an individual child or the other pupils, clear instructions from parents will be requested in relation to positive handling/restraint requirements

5. Suspension / Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents 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.

When there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal.

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 regarded in our school as a last resort and will only be considered if

- The Principal is concerned about the health and safety of a pupil or pupils
- The behaviour of a pupil (or group) or pupils is seriously affecting the right to education of other pupils
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property
- Parents/ guardians have not made adequate and effective attempts to address the concerns of the school
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

The Principal may immediately suspend a pupil following consultation with the ISMT or the Chairperson of the BOM

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 authorises 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.

The factors in Appendix 3 (From NEWB Guidelines) will be considered by the ISMT/BOM prior to other suspensions.

Implementing the Suspension

Written notification

The Principal should notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, section 29)

Expulsion

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved to the Board of Management. It cannot be delegated. Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Expulsion will be considered only following –

- A detailed investigation carried out into the behaviour in accordance with Appendix 4 page 82 of the Guidelines
- Written recommendation made to the BOM by the Principal
- The Board will consider the expulsion and hold a hearing
- Consultation with EWO
- Confirmation of decision to expel. Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from this school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer'.

In St. Michael's N.S. the procedures in relation to suspension and expulsion are in accordance with Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008. These guidelines are available to everyone in the school community from the school or online at NEWB website.

- Ch. 10 Suspensions and expulsions: legal and procedural requirements
- Ch. 11 Suspension
- Ch. 12 Expulsion

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

- Parents/guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion. Parents be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms as required
- The Principal will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science

Suspension and expulsion are always regarded as the last resort. Every effort will be made to resolve the issues before such measures are taken.

Clean Slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should 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 should expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

6. Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour. Records are written in a factual and impartial manner.

Class Level

- Every teacher is expected to maintain behaviour records which are factual and balanced and report accordingly to parents/guardians at parent/teacher meetings and school reports
- Serious misbehaviour should be reported to the Principal before contacting parents or guardians

School Level

- Incidents will be recorded in an incident book for the school and/or the teacher keeps individual records. The storage of and access to these records is the responsibility of the teachers and Principal
- Documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29 will be kept on school files for 10 years from the date of application
- **The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour based on the records above and will be fact based, balanced and consistently followed by all staff**

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Under the Act a school is obliged to report to the NEWB every time -

- A student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- A Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- The Board of Management decides to expel a student
- A student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- A student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason
- Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for absence. If parents know that their child will be absent for a number of days they should inform the school by telephone, followed by a note on their return.

8. Reference to other policies

All school policies and practices impact on pupil behaviour. The B.O.M. and staff of St. Michael's N.S. will ensure that all policies and practices support the objectives of the Code of Behaviour.

Criteria for success

The success of this policy will be determined by:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Implementation

Everybody has a responsibility to implement the Code of Behaviour

- Children
- Parents
- Teachers
- Principal
- Board of Management

Timeframe for implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following the circulation of the draft policy, consultation with members of the school community and amendment where necessary. Consultation will take place with pupils, teachers, parents and the Board of Management.

Timeframe for review

This policy will be reviewed in 2016

Responsibility for review

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management and staff to review this policy.

Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 1st Dec. 2011 and reviewed on June 11th 2014

Signed: _____
Chairperson B.O.M.

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Appendix 1

School hours: 9:20 – 3:00

Parents are required to notify the school -

- When a child is absent
- When a child needs to leave during school hours
- When homework has not been completed

Our Code of Behaviour is based on **RESPECT**

Respect for myself

Respect for others

Responsibility for my actions

- We always work to the best of our ability
- We bring to school all items, and only those, which are required for the school day
- We enter and leave the school building in an orderly manner
- We always walk inside the school building
- We welcome visitors (we stand back for adults)
- We always wear our school uniform
- We don't wear make up or any jewellery that could cause injury to ourselves or others
- We do not bring mobile phones to school (in exceptional circumstances where phones are required for after-school activity we leave them in the staff room)
- We are proud of our Green School status. We always keep our environment clean and tidy
- We bring 'healthy lunches' to school. We use plastic bottles for our drinks
- When we are involved in school related activities (school-tours, outings, games etc.) we behave in the same way as in school.

Appendix 2

Playground Rules

- At break times we go outside to play
- On wet days we remain in our class rooms and play with toys / board games.
The older classes may play table tennis
- We always stay inside the school grounds (6th class may get ball only when teacher is in yard)
- We play safely
- We always include others in our games
- We obey the bell promptly and we line up outside our classroom
- We are proud of our Green Flag status, we always keep our environment clean and tidy
- At home time we line up at the gate, we only leave the yard when told by teachers

Appendix 3

Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools

Factors to consider before suspending a student

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 behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

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

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

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 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?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student'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 student?

The possible impact of suspension

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

Appendix 4

Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

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 the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. 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 (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student'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 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 student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student'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 student?

The possible impact of expulsion

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

Please return the following signed

I confirm that I have read and accept the Code of Behaviour for St. Michael's National School and that I will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by my child / children.

Signed: _____

Date: _____