



Code of Behaviour

Introduction

In St Mary's we have adopted a positive Code of Behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school. The policy was reviewed in 2025. The policy was formulated in line with the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools 2008"

Guiding Principles of Our Code of Behaviour

1. The need to foster a climate of self-respect for all in the school community
2. The need to promote positive behaviour allowing the school to function in an orderly manner
3. The creation of a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning in which pupils can learn and teachers can teach.
4. To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
5. The need to help young people to develop into responsible, caring, participating adults.
6. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
7. To nurture each child and to develop her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child is valued.
8. To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.
9. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

Strategies to affirm positive behaviour

The following are example strategies which may be used to promote good behaviour at class and school level.

- Certificates of merit awards – student of the week, Principal's award.
- Prepared commendation letters to parents
- Comments, stickers, badges, ink stamps on children's work
- Time on PC or special activity
- Photographs of award winners taken and displayed
- Work displayed
- Lucky Dip
- "Special Contribution Assembly"- one per term where commendations are given for good attendance, good behaviour, good work, special achievements, service to the school. Principal's Award.
- Raffle tickets, cinema tickets, book tokens, vouchers for music or sports shop – rewards for major contributions or achievements
- Golden Times (games) 30 mins
- Class treats
- Class prizes
- "Good News Board" (class, school)

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

Part of the vision of St Mary's NS is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to 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 as 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 copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos" in class or special mention at assembly
- Certificate/Merit Awards: Student of the Week, Principal's Award.

School Staff are expected to:

- support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour in a fair, consistent manner
- be cognisant of their duty of care
- model positive interactions with other staff members and pupils
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for pupils and parents
- develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- praise desirable behaviour
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential
- recognise and provide for individual differences as far as is reasonable
- be courteous, consistent and fair
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum
- keep a record of serious misbehaviour and repeated instances of minor

misbehaviour

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually
- listen to teachers and others
- pay attention in class and follow the instructions of the teacher
- show courtesy and respect to everyone in the school community
- obey the school rules
- wear the school uniform and school tracksuit as instructed by class teacher
- work quietly and safely to the best of their ability at all times
- respect the right of other pupils to learn
- respect school property, the property of others and their own belongings
- keep the school environment clean and tidy
- follow class rules

- move quietly and carefully around the school
- line up quietly in an orderly manner before and after break
- stay on the premises and within designated areas during school times
- do their homework to the best of their ability

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly and that they arrive punctually for 8.50 am start time and that they are collected from school on time (1.30 pm for infants and 2.30pm for all other classes)
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour
- ensure their children wear the school uniform and school tracksuit as requested by the class teacher
- ensure their children have the correct books and materials
- have their children's belongings labelled
- read written communication received from the school and respond appropriately
- make an appointment (phone call to office/email/note in pupil's journal) if they need to meet a teacher
- to treat all members of the school community with respect
- explain all absences by completing the appropriate Aladdin "Explanation of Absence Form"
- inform call teacher of any change to collection procedure for their children
- help their children to learn and practice good behaviour and to have a positive attitude towards themselves, other people and towards the school
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour
- attend meetings at the school if requested
- help their children with their homework and ensure it is completed

Board of Management is expected to:

- support the staff in implementing the code of behaviour by providing opportunities for staff development e.g. seminars on challenging behaviour etc.
- support the Principal and Staff in dealing with serious breaches of behaviour/discipline

General School Rules

Good discipline promotes order, gives security and fosters a situation where organised, orderly learning, as well as safe and fair recreation may take place. School Rules help our pupils to develop self-discipline and build relationships based on mutual respect. It is to be understood that each teacher and class group has its own internal code of discipline and children will be reminded regularly of what is expected of them in areas such as courtesy, hygiene, the care of text-books, homework, punctuality, listening, neat presentation of work etc.

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In order to achieve a happy, healthy and safe working environment, where a sense of mutual respect is fostered, every pupil is expected to keep the following rules:

1. Children are expected to show respect for themselves, their fellow students and for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching members.
2. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.
3. Full uniform must be worn each day except on designated P.E. Day. School tracksuit and appropriate footwear must be worn for P.E. activities.
4. The main door will open at 8.40am each morning. Classes commence at 8.50am.
No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving at the school before 8.40am
5. Children are not allowed to leave school grounds unless she is accompanied by a teacher, parent or other responsible person.
6. All absences must be explained in writing via Aladdin
7. Communication in writing from parents will also be required for any of the following reasons:
 - A. In the event of a parent wishing the child to leave school or the school grounds before normal time.
 - B. In the event of a child coming to school without completed homework
 - C. If a child is not wearing her school uniform
8. Chewing gum is not allowed
9. Children should have a sense of pride in their school and in the environment and should not litter the area.
10. Rough play and other dangerous behaviour (piggybacks, birthday bumps etc) is forbidden.
11. Pupils are expected to line up quietly at break times and to move quietly through the school.
12. Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones on school grounds or on school related activities.

School related activities

Children are required to abide by the School Rules and Code of Behaviour while on school tours or school related activities.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross.

Minor instances of undesirable behaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher through the use of minimal interactions aimed at refocusing the pupil's attention. These interactions between teacher and pupil/s may include:

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour:

- No Homework
- Not following instructions
- Interruptions
- Overactive Indoor play
- Breaking classroom rules
- Not wearing proper uniform

Level 1 Sanctions

- Discussions with pupil/s regarding the need for appropriate behaviour
- Discussion with an individual pupil/s in order to ensure pupil/s understands why behaviour is unacceptable
- Diversion
- Rule reminders
- Reasoning with pupil/s
- Reprimand
- Communication with parents by classroom teacher (note home, phone call, note in journal)

Persistent breaches of level 1 discipline may result in LEVEL 2/LEVEL 3 sanctions being applied as appropriate.

Level 2 Serious

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- 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
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
- Truancy
- Persistent refusal to do classwork or homework
- Sending private/group text messages which are hurtful about any member of the school community
- Posting or endorsing a derogatory comment online about any member of the school community
- For misbehaviour which in the opinion of the relevant teacher falls into the category of serious or level 2 incidents, the class teacher will follow the procedures as listed below.
- Discussion of behaviour, reasoning, advice re appropriate behaviour
- Prescribing appropriate sanction (additional constructive work, loss of privileges)
- Incident is recorded by class teacher and parents are informed (phone call) Record on Aladdin
- Intervention of principal
- Principal speaks to child, to outline appropriate behaviour for the future and names sanctions
- Formal letter to parents from class teacher (following communication with Principal) to arrange a meeting of parents, principal and class teacher and possibly child to discuss the behaviour and appropriate sanctions

It should be noted that persistent breaches of level 2 discipline may result in Level 3 sanctions being applied as appropriate.

Sanctions

In case of non-compliance with Principal's verbal reprimand the following further sanctions may be imposed:

- Pupil asked to write an account of the misbehaviour and how she intends to behave in the future. This work to be signed by parents/guardians – See Appendix 1 Student Behaviour Reflection Form
- Denied privilege of school outing: i.e. tour, field trip, participation at school event
- Denied privilege of representing school at formal performances/functions i.e. sports event

Level 3: Gross Misbehaviour

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on any member of staff or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a pupil, teacher or other member of staff incidents, i.e. gross misbehaviour the following procedures will be adhered to.
- Communication with parents will be verbal and by letter
- Parents may be asked that the pupil in question be collected and taken home as soon as possible that day
- Pupil in question will be removed from contact with other pupils and supervised on an individual basis until parent/guardian arrives.
- Pupils misbehaviour will be fully explained to the parents.
- School's decision in relation to the appropriate sanction will be advised to the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Sanctions to be applied will involve one or more of the following measures as appropriate to the individual case as per NEWB guidelines in relation to Suspension Expulsion.
 - Suspension from school for an appropriate number of days(not exceeding ten days for any one period of suspension imposed)
 - Expulsion from the school and notification of the E.W.O.
- Before a suspension is lifted the parents/guardian and pupil concerned will be required to give a written undertaking of future good behaviour in the school. This must be subsequently adhered to.

The Board of Management of St Mary's NS has adopted the policy and procedures for Suspension and Expulsion as outlined in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools 2008". These Guidelines will form the framework for any decisions/procedures relating to Suspension or Expulsion.

Suspension is defined as "requiring a student to absent herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days". During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

The decision to suspend a student requires ground such as:

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any member of the school community
- deliberate damage to school property/vandalism
- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students

- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. However, suspension may be deemed a proportionate response to a single incident of gross misconduct.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour the chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested to attend a meeting at the school. This ensures that parents and student are given an opportunity to hear the complaint and respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. Where parents do not agree to attend a meeting regarding their child's behaviour, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

The maximum initial period of suspension will be 3 school days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers a period of suspension longer than 3 days is required in order to achieve a particular objective. The Board of Management of St Mary's, authorises the principal to act on its behalf to impose a suspension. If a suspension longer than 3 days is being proposed by the principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management of St Mary's authorises the principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to guidance concerning such suspensions. The Board of Management places a maximum of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. In cases of gross misbehaviour, the Board of Management of St Mary's authorises the principal to sanction an immediate suspension of 3 days maximum, having contacted the parents/guardians of the student in advance of that suspension.

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education directs that it be removed following an approval under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

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A plan will be developed by the school to help re-integrated a student who has been suspended and that student given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled from the school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude her from the school, while complying with the provisions of Section 24 of the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case of unacceptable behaviour.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- 6.1 A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the principal.

- 6.2 A recommendation is made by the principal to the Board of Management.
- 6.3 Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing with the parents/guardians
- 6.4 The Board of Management deliberates and acts following a hearing
- 6.5 Consultations are arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- 6.6 The decision of expulsion is confirmed to parents/guardians.

As in the case of suspension, the parents and student are given an opportunity to hear the complaint and respond before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

The Board of Management of St Mary's will, at all times, follow fair procedures as well procedures prescribed under the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000 when proposing to suspend or expel a student.

Appeals:

In the event of a pupil being either suspended for a cumulative period(s) of greater than 20 days in a single school year or expelled from the school, an appeal against the school's decision may be made to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. Parents in this situation will be advised of the appeal mechanism by the Principal/Chairman of the Board of Management, (circular22/02)

Sanctions

- Sanctions for level 3 misdemeanours are as set out in the procedures above.

Clean Slate/Fresh Start

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

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special education needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. See Appendix 1 & 2 Sample Behaviour Management Plan.

Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, Special Education Teacher, and/ or Principal. School staff 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. Implementation of this Code of Behaviour will take into account the individual needs and circumstances of each student. It is recognised that students in our Autism Classes may, due to their specific needs, be unable to comply with certain aspects of the Code. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

St Marys Code of Discipline takes recognition of the following policies:

- SPHE plan
- Bí Cinéalta
- Enrolment
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Bullying and harassment (See Anti Bullying Policy)

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in St Marys and all allegations will be investigated. Breaches of the school's Bí Cinéalta policy will be treated as a serious misbehaviour.

General Procedure to be followed when a behaviour problem arises:

- The class teacher/teacher in charge deals with it and may impose a sanction. If a parent/guardian wishes to make a complaint regarding a child's behaviour, it is expected that such a complaint would in the first instance be addressed with that child's class teacher and /or with the class teacher of their own child.
- If the problem is not solved/resolved, the class teacher/teacher in charge shall consult with other teachers, and/or the Principal and /or the parents/guardians of the pupil(s) with a view to helping the pupil(s) overcome the difficulty.
- If the problem persists or in the case of serious misbehaviour as outlined above it may be necessary to have on-going discussions between the parents/guardians, teacher(s) and Principal/Board of Management to monitor the situation and to deal appropriately with it, always with the objective of helping the child.
- In the case of an incidence of gross misbehaviour or where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Board of Management authorises the Principal to suspend the child for a period of time up to a maximum of 10 school days. Parents/guardians will be required to meet with representatives of the Board of Management to discuss the matters relating to the child's misbehaviour prior to the authorisation of a second period of suspension.
- The ultimate sanction of expulsion shall be exercised in accordance with relevant guidelines and current legislation.

Roles and Responsibility:

Board of Management

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. It also has a positive role to play in fostering understanding and cooperation between teachers, parents and pupils.

Principal and Staff

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.

Parents

Parents can cooperate with St Mary's by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules and by cooperating with the Principal and other members of school staff.

Parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitude which produces good behaviour in school. They should take full advantage of all formal and informal channels of communication made available by St Mary's.

Pupils

Pupils are likely to respond positively to a Code of Behaviour Policy if it is clearly understood and applied in a consistent manner. In this context, the Principal and teaching staff will reinforce this Code of Behaviour on an ongoing basis.

Procedures for raising a concern or bringing a complaint

Any complaints or concerns about behaviour or issues of this Code of Behaviour should be discussed with the class teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal/Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Procedures for notification or a child's absence from school

All absences must be explained in writing. Parents should use the explanation of absence facility on Aladdin to explain the absence. If no written explanation is given, the absence will be recorded as unexplained when and if compiling a report for NEWB,

Application of Code of Behaviour

Pupil behaviour in school and during all school related activities (school tours, field trips, sports activities etc) will be subject to this Code of Behaviour.

Success Criteria

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

Implementation Date: August 2023

Review Date: December 2025 ✓

Ratification and Communication

Board of Management St Mary's officially ratified the policy on 20/06/2023

This Code of Behaviour Policy was communicated to all school staff. The policy is published on the school website www.stmarysnscobh.com for parents. A hard copy of the policy is available on request from the secretary's office.

Signed



Michael Farrell

Chairperson of Board of Management



Noelle Lane

Principal

Appendix 1: Student Behaviour Reflection Form

Why do we need a code of conduct?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The School rule I chose not to follow was:

What happened?

What I could have done differently.

How I feel about my behaviour now

From now on I will start

Pupil Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) signature: _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 2: Sample Behaviour Management Plan

Pupil:

Expectations: _____ is expected to do her best

always: She is also expected to achieve the following goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The pupil and the teacher have agreed to the following positive outcomes if _____ reaches her goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The student will receive the following incentives:

Consequences

There will be consequences for unacceptable behaviour or serious misbehaviour as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. Sanctions will also be applied for failure to meet the expectations outlined above.

There will be:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Other interventions applied to the plan will include:

This plan will be monitored by the teacher, pupil, Principal and parents. It will be reviewed in __week(s) to assess the student's progress towards reaching her goal(s).

We have read and agreed to the plan:

Student: _____ Teacher _____

Parents _____ Parent _____

Principal _____
