

St. Mary's Parish Primary School

Bryanstown, Drogheda, Co. Louth, A92 XD80.

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Code of Behaviour

St. Mary's Parish Primary School is a co-educational primary school which aims to provide the best possible environment to cater for all our students with the resources available to us. Our philosophy is the education of the child to reach his/her full potential including the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and social aspects of human development; and where a love of learning and an appreciation of life and the world are ingrained.

St. Mary's Parish Primary School endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community and to empower all, especially the pupils, to be kind and friendly, respectful and tolerant, confident, resilient and independent. We aspire to promote a nurturing inclusive environment where each child is encouraged and motivated to become a responsible and happy individual.

We aim to create a school where each child achieves his/her full potential. The school aims in particular to:

- Respect the dignity of the student with his/her background, tradition and beliefs, valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak.
- Enable the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- Encourage in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others.
- Promote the student's appreciation of his/her cultural heritage.
- Prepare the student through academic training for his/her vocational role in life.
- Provide opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service of others.
- Provide a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his/her own education and for the life of the school community

The Code of Behaviour of St. Mary's Parish Primary School reflects this vision and values of our school, its patron and the Túsla / The Child and Family Agency guidelines for schools. This code was developed in consultation with the staff, parents and the Board of Management, in compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. It translates the expectations of the school community into practical arrangements, routines and procedures which ensure that its aims are implemented and that the particular needs and circumstances of our school and community are met.

1. Aims:

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are as follows:

- To foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected, explained, understood and supported.
- To help create a positive learning environment in which all pupils can benefit from the education system and achieve their personal best.

- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community as well as caring for the school and its environment.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their cooperation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

2. Principles Underpinning Our Code:

- Enrolment at St Mary's is contingent on adherence to the Code of Behaviour.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that our code is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner and that all members of staff adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- Differences amongst our pupils e.g. Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils will be acknowledged.
- A whole school approach will be adopted. This requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and sense of ownership from all the stakeholders – B.O.M. teachers, SNAs, parents, pupils and ancillary staff.
- Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

3. Whole school approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

An effective Code of behaviour requires the cooperation of all stakeholders in the school. To this end there are specific roles and responsibilities in achieving high standards of behaviour in our school.

Staff

- Teachers are expected to adhere to the Code of Professional Behaviour and Practice for teachers as developed by the Teaching Council of Ireland.
- As a staff we work together to devise reward/sanction programmes as necessary and we undergo any professional development necessary to ensure that there is a united front in dealing with behavioural matters.
- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum also supports our code of behaviour. This curriculum helps children to develop communication and problem-solving skills while fostering self-esteem.
- For children with Special Educational Needs, who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their needs, learning support and class teachers liaise regularly to develop behavioural targets for such children consulting with National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) as necessary.
- This behaviour policy is circulated to all teachers and all temporary or new staff are also made aware of the policy and its content. Through regular staff meetings and good communication, the policy is reviewed and updated on an on-going basis.

Board of Management

- Members of the Board of Management were involved in drafting this policy and the board will be involved in any future review of the policy.
- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an on-going basis.
- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and provides, as necessary, professional development in behaviour management education and training
- The Board of Management gives authorisation for particular sanctions in the case of serious breaches of behaviour.

Parents

- Positive relationships are built from the start with parents and they are encouraged to take an active role in the development of their child. Teachers work in collaboration with parents to develop any specific behaviour plans needed for their child.
- There are clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a pupil.
- On enrolment, parents must give an undertaking to support the Code of Behaviour. This is available on the school website or in hard copy upon request. Parents are encouraged to share information about anything that might affect a pupil's behaviour in school.
- Parents are notified early if there is a concern about a pupil's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupils can be discussed and agreed.
- The school has a Parents Council. Parents are encouraged to get involved in this association as a structure through which they can work together for the best possible education for their children. Information is often offered through the Parents Council, such as talks or workshops or courses on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development.
- Parents are expected to:
 - Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
 - Be courteous towards pupils and staff
 - Make an appointment to meet with a teacher or the Principal through the school office
 - Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
 - Label pupils' coats and other property.
 - Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school.
 - Actively monitor their child's online behaviour.

Pupils

- At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children which reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Each teacher will develop classroom management strategies and approaches which are consistent with our Code of Behaviour.
- The children attend regular assemblies with the principal at which any behavioural concerns are raised and discussed.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and, where rules have been broken, to engage honestly with any investigation so that any issues can be resolved as quickly as possible.
- Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

4. Content of the Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour covers the following areas:

- a) General Standards of Behaviour
- b) Bullying
- c) Behaviour in class
- d) Behaviour in the playground
- e) Behaviour in the school environment
- f) Behaviour on school trips/outings
- g) Attendance and dismissal
- h) Rules regarding misc. items.

a) General Standards of Behaviour

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clear and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have the correct uniform, books and required materials and to be in the correct place at the correct time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's lawful instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

b) Bullying

Bullying is a pattern of deliberate abuse – physical, verbal or emotional, by an individual or group that adversely affects a pupil's well-being. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation, taunting and more recently cyber bullying which involves the use of ICT. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's **Anti-Bullying Policy**.

c) Behaviour in Class

- Pupils are expected to respect the right of other pupils to learn and to avoid disrupting the work of the classroom.
- Pupils are expected to have respect for their teachers and follow instructions given by them.
- Pupils are expected to go to and from their classroom in an orderly manner. Running is not allowed at any time in classrooms or corridors.
- Pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect towards other pupils.
- Visitors should be greeted politely and pupils should continue to work quietly.
- Pupils should have their own basic equipment, books, pens, pencils, rubbers, markers etc. Borrowing is not encouraged.
- No unnecessary money should be brought to school.
- Mobile phones / Smart devices should not be brought to school and they will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or guardian. Children will be asked to turn off the phones before handing it to the person who is confiscating it.

- On wet days, children in classrooms are allowed to play with board games/cards etc.

d) *Behaviour in the Playground*

- All pupils are encouraged to enjoy their games in the playground. It is expected that such activities will proceed without interference from other children.
- Proactive strategies and supervision practices are in place to decrease yard problems.
- Bullying, rough play, spitting, teasing, fighting and intimidation will not be tolerated.
- Pupils must play within their own designated area unless they have permission from the supervising teacher.
- The following behaviours are also forbidden: piggy backs, handstands, swinging out of railings and lifting other pupils and any other behaviour which the supervising teacher deems unsafe.
- If a physical fight occurs in the yard, the participants are separated and sent to the Principal /Deputy Principal.
- Students are not permitted to bring lunch into the playground.
- When the bell rings, pupils should walk to their lines.
- In a case where a pupil persistently refuses to comply with the Code of Behaviour in the yard, then the pupil will be removed from the confines of the school yard for the duration of the school breaks, at 10.50 a.m. and 12.40 p.m. In extreme cases parents may be required to remove the students from the school during break times and on completion of the break periods return the pupil to the school.

e) *Behaviour in School Environment*

- Pupils are expected to move about the school in an orderly manner.
- Pupils shall not remain on the school premises after school activities are finished.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for school property.
- Pupils are expected to come to and from school with due care for other pupils, for property, for traffic and pedestrians.

f) *Behaviour on School Trips/Outings*

School tours and outings present particular challenges for the school. The Code of Behaviour applies on school trips/outings. Pupils are expected to comply fully with all instructions during the course of the trip.

g) *Attendance and Dismissal*

- School begins at 9.10am for all classes. Pupils should arrive at school between 8.50 and 9.10am. On entering school in the morning pupils are asked to walk in an orderly fashion to their designated class assembly area where they will line up to await the school bell at 9.10am. Any pupil arriving before 8.50am is not allowed around the back of the school and should wait adjacent to the side gates. Pupils remain their parents' responsibility until that time.
- Breaks are from 10.50 to 11.10 and from 12.40 to 1.00 p.m. Pupils may go home for lunch if parents so request but they must take responsibility for their children's safety during that time.
- Infants go home at 1.50pm. All other classes end at 2.50pm. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met no later than 1.50 or 2.50pm as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after this time.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, clearly stating the reason for absence.(This may also be done

on the *Aladdin* portal/app) Where a child has had 20 absences the Principal is required by law to report this to the Child and Family Agency.

- Pupils are expected to be on time for school each day and, in the event of a late arrival, bring a note to the teacher. Latecomers will have to sign a late book at the front office. Please note that where a child arrives at school after attendance has been taken he / she will be marked absent.
- No child will be allowed to leave school during school hours without a signed letter stating the time that the child is to be allowed home. Alternatively parents may call to the school and having consulted with the class teacher, the principal or deputy principal, they may bring the child home.
- If a child is sick during school hours we will endeavour to contact his/her home. It is important that every child has a phone number where his/her parents can be contacted. Parents who will be absent from home, or normal place of work, should arrange a contact phone number in case an emergency should arise.
- A child who is sick in the morning should not be sent to school unless there are strong indications that it is a minor matter that will not necessitate him/her being sent home.

h) Rules regarding Misc. items

- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have the correct uniform, books and required materials each day.
- Tracksuits and runners are essential for physical education but should be worn only on the appropriate days.
- Jewellery: Students should not wear any jewellery to school (with the exception of 1 pair of stud earrings) .
- No dying of hair or unconventional hairstyles are permitted. Braided hair must match natural hair colour.
- Make-up and false nails are not permitted.
- Toys and other electronic devices are not permitted in the school
- Mobile Phones / Smart watches / Devices capable of recording audio or video are not permitted in the school. (Students may wear 'fitbit' watches).

5. Ladder of Intervention

- Consistent clear rules and routines in class and in school assist the majority of pupils to behave appropriately. Minor misbehaviour will be dealt with on an on-going basis by the class teacher.
- More active interventions will be used to help some students manage their behaviour including, parental involvement, setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way, behaviour contracts and the involvement of another teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Interventions tried and the pupil response will be noted.

6. Rewards

Our policy is to promote and encourage good standards of behaviour. It is therefore essential that it be rewarded and be seen to be reinforced by the following:

- Good behaviour is acknowledged by teachers, principal, ancillary staff throughout the day.
- Pupil's journal is used to convey positive behaviour to parents.
- Each teacher recognises and acknowledges good behaviour in their own class and may develop systems of rewarding individuals/groups of children on a regular basis.

- At regular assemblies with principal, specific children and classes are praised for improvements in behaviour or exceptionally good behaviour.

7. Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the school and to ensure the safety of all, and to maintain an orderly atmosphere for learning, sanctions will be imposed where inappropriate behaviour occurs. It must be clear why the sanction is being applied and what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions. When sanctions are used pupils should understand that what they have done is not acceptable and that it is the behaviour that is rejected not the child. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are categorised according to age level and the nature of misbehaviour. The following are samples of unacceptable behaviours. This is not an exhaustive list.

Minor Misbehaviours:

Homework not done and no note/ rudeness/ borrowing items without asking/ inattentiveness/ answering out of turn/ alienating friends/ not wearing uniform.

Serious Misbehaviours:

Fighting, bullying, mitching, bad language, name calling, exclusion, rough play, disrespecting others, hitting, back talking, belittling personal comments, damaging play equipment or school property, stealing, leaving school premises without permission, riding bicycles / scooters on the ramps or school grounds.

Gross Misbehaviours

Gross Misbehaviours are where a student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school. **A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.**

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour include:

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a pupil /staff member.
- Bringing dangerous weapons to school.
- Deliberately damaging school property.
- Serious theft (e.g. electronic devices)
- Being in possession of alcohol/drugs

It should be noted that persistent serious misbehaviour may also warrant a period of suspension.

8. Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the 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 offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and nine being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this. The particular stage used will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour. Communication with parents /

guardians through letters, phone call or meetings will occur where necessary so that parents / guardians are involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

1. Reasoning with the pupil (including advice on how to improve).
2. Reprimand or warning regarding behaviour.
3. Class strategies, such as reasoning with pupil, reprimand, temporary separation from the rest of the class and/or additional work, are implemented and parents are informed.
4. Loss of privileges.
5. If the misbehaviour persists the parents will receive a formal letter issued by the class teacher. It will inform the parents of the strategies that have been tried and proven unsuccessful. It will also inform them that the strategies will continue to be tried, that the child is being given another chance and that if the misbehaviour persists the process will proceed to subsequent stages. A copy of the letter shall be logged by the class teacher, who shall notify the Principal/Deputy Principal.
6. Referral to Deputy Principal: parents will receive a formal letter issued by the Deputy Principal.
7. Referral to Principal: parents will receive a written request to attend at the school to meet the Class Teacher and the Principal.
8. Temporary suspension.
9. Expulsion.

9. Suspension

Section 21 (4) of the Education (Welfare) 2000 Act requires that if a pupil is suspended for a period of not less than 6 days The Education Welfare officer shall be informed, by notice in writing. While the BoM has the authority to suspend, they have delegated this authority to the Principal together with either the chairperson of the BOM or in his/her absence the Deputy Principal for periods of up to three days. Where the cumulative total of day's suspension reaches 6, the Child and family Agency will be notified. The following procedures as outlined in the current Túsla (Child and family Agency, formerly NEWB) guidelines will apply:

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.
- If suspension is still decided upon, the Principal notifies parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm.
 - a) The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
 - b) The reasons for the suspension.
 - c) Any study programme to be followed.
 - d) The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
 - e) The provision for appeal to the Board of Management or secretary general of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). (Only when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)

Factors which influence a decision to suspend are as follows:

- The nature, seriousness, impact and context of the behaviour.
- The interventions tried to date.
- Whether suspension is the appropriate response.

- Whether the pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils e.g. shouting at teacher, being disruptive, refusing to work, not allowing others to work, taking up teacher's teaching time due to inappropriate behaviour.
- Whether the pupil's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to the safety of pupils/staff e.g. physical fights in school yard, leaving school premises without permission, serious consistent incidents of bullying or racism, use of bad language to any member of school community.

10. Expulsion

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil from St. Mary's Parish Primary School will be made solely by the Board of Management (B.O.M). Expulsion is a very serious step and is only taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and only after the school has taken significant steps to address the behaviour. These steps include the following:

- Meeting with parents and pupil to explore ways of helping pupil change his/her behaviour.
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of the behaviour, (if it should persist).
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive Community Services (HSE), National Behavioural Support Service (NBSS).

The grounds for expulsion and the factors which need to be considered are similar to those for suspension, however where expulsion is concerned the school will already have tried a series of other interventions including suspension which unfortunately haven't changed the pupil's behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence

The following kinds of behaviour may warrant such expulsion:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or staff member.
- violence or serious physical assault.
- Supplying of alcohol / drugs.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

1. A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the principal.
2. Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
3. Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
4. A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the principal (see page 84 National Educational Welfare Board guidelines)
5. Consideration by the B.O.M. of the principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing. (see page 84 NEWB Guidelines)
6. B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing. (page 85 NEWB Guidelines)
7. If B.O.M. is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after Túsla has received written notification. Túsla should be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie or from their helpline (1890 36 3666). This form should be completed and sent to **Educational Welfare Services, Tusla - Child and Family Agency, Floor 4, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8**
8. Consultations arranged by the EWO.

9. Confirmation Board of Management of the decision to expel.

Appeals

Parents may appeal the decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. The appeals process under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 begins with the appointment of a mediator. An appeal may also be brought by NEPS on behalf of the pupil.

11. Agreement

Parents/guardians who apply to enrol their children will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour. An agreement signed by the parents/guardians to abide by the Code of Behaviour must be returned in advance of enrolment.

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Parish Primary School acknowledges the support of all teaching and ancillary Staff and the Parents Council in the formulation of this code:

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- School Tour Policy
- Parental Complaints Procedure
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement

12. Ratification / Review

Following consultation with staff, parents and students, this policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in January 2023 and will be reviewed again in January 2026 or earlier if considered necessary.



Anne Phillips
Chairperson, B.O.M

Date: 30th January 2023