St. Caillin's National School

Code of behaviour

Rationale

Good behaviour is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place in school. This code provides a just and reasonable system to ensure responsible behaviour by students, staff and parents/guardians.

Affirmation and reward of good behaviour by school and home is a fundamental part of this code. The code applies to school tours, school bus and all school activities.

Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by Túsla (formerly, the National Educational Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.).

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

St. Caillin's is a Catholic Primary School. The school is committed to nurture each child and develop his/her potential in a happy, safe and secure environment, where teachers, parents and pupils work together in a spirit of respect and co-operation.

Aims

- To ensure and educational environment that is guided by our mission statement
- 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 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.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Content of Policy

The policy addresses the following areas:

1. Standards of behaviour in the school.
2. Whole school approach to promoting good behaviour.
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour.
4. Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour.
5. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
6. Suspension/expulsion.

7. Record keeping.
8. Procedures for notification of pupils' absence from school.

Standards of Behaviour

The school standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. The expected standards of Behaviour and the Rules and Guidelines implemented are included in this Policy.

- In general, each pupil is expected to be well behaved, and to comply with classroom and school rules and procedures.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect and consideration for other children and adults.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for property of the school, other children's and their own belongings. (All children are encouraged to have their names on coats and jumpers and other property such as school books etc.)
- Each pupil is expected to attend school regularly and to be punctual. School opens officially at 9.05am. Classes end at 2.45pm. No responsibility is accepted for the pupils outside these times. (See supervision policy).
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Bullying will not be tolerated (see Anti Bullying Policy)

We recognise that other factors may influence children's behaviour from time to time. Regard will be had to such factors and the children will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Whole school approach to promoting Good Behaviour

A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other.

Staff

In our school, all children are treated with respect and dignity. There is a strong co-operation among staff, Pupils, parents and Board of Management. All agree that the aims are to promote and recognise positive behaviour.

- All staff, parents and children were consulted about the Code of Behaviour.
- All new and temporary staff is brought up to date with the code through staff meetings and general discussions.
- The quality of relationships in school is reviewed from time to time in class through discussions, circle time and continuous communication between staff and pupils.
- When necessary a student support file will be drawn up for children and will include behavioural targets and strategies for dealing with behavioural difficulties that may arise.
- The schools S.P.H.E. curriculum is used to support the Code of behaviour. It aims to help children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of behaving and interacting and conflict resolution skills. It aims to foster self-esteem, to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
- Teachers will adopt a whole school approach to help children think about their behaviour and how to make things better.

- Teachers will regularly clarify and discuss with the pupil's general school rules, classroom rules and rules in the playground. All staff will assess the effectiveness of school rules on an on going basis.

The Board of Management

The BOM supports the principal and staff in the school in maintaining desirable standards of behaviour at all times. It also provides opportunities for staff development. The members of the BOM are informed at various stages during drafting and preparation of the code and the final draft is ratified by them. Specific cases of concern are brought to BOM.

Parents

We recognise that to achieve and maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline, positive relationships with parents are essential.

- All parents are provided with a copy of the code and asked to confirm their acceptance by signing it. For parents of new pupils, a copy is enclosed with the enrolment pack.
- It is expected that parents will support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour.
- Parents should communicate directly with the school if they have any concerns. It is best practice to arrange a meeting time which is suitable to both teachers and parent.

Pupils

Pupils in each classroom were asked to contribute to the Code by sharing their ideas with the teacher through discussion about positive behaviour.

- Pupils and teachers are involved in devising their own classroom rules.
- Through S.P.H.E. curriculum, and general class discussion opportunities are given to pupils to monitor and discuss code of behaviour.

Positive strategies for Managing Behaviour

"The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place". (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for Teachers INTO 2004:5).

Classroom

The ground rules and behavioural expectations are established in each classroom and maintained to set a positive atmosphere for learning.

- Pupils devise classroom rules in conjunction with teacher.

- Good behaviour is central to the culture of the school and staff is committed to leading by example.
- There are clear systems of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour.
- Employing a variety of methodologies and stimulating lessons that motivate and sustain pupils' interest.
- Provide a classroom timetable which creates a consistent predictable environment for the student.
- It is important that each child experiences success.
- In keeping with the ethos of the school each child will be given an opportunity of a fresh start each day.

Playground

- A set of playground rules have been devised and children reminded of these rules on a regular basis.
- Supervision is provided, front and rear.
- Children going to and returning from the playgrounds must line up and walk in an orderly fashion, as soon as the bell rings.
- For children who wish to use the toilet at breaks, they must ask permission.
- Any pupil who is unwell will remain seated outside staff room.
- In keeping with the ethos of the school fair play and turn taking during play is encouraged. Participation and inclusivity is encouraged rather than competition.

Incidences of misbehaviour in playground

- An incident book is kept to record incidences of misbehaviour (or accidents).
- Misbehaviour is reported to the relevant class teacher.
- Children will be asked to take "time-out" at the wall at the teacher's discretion taking into account the severity of incident and age of the child.
- Withdrawal of privileges e.g. football

Other areas in the school

- Children are required to walk in corridors at all times
- Hallways are supervised to prevent behavioural problems in toilets/cloakrooms
- Children are regularly reminded to be courteous.

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- Special note communicating positive news about pupils sent to parents
- Homework off as a special reward
- Treats/Lucky Dip at teacher's discretion
- Good behaviour of pupils acknowledged in newsletter
- Other rewards/acknowledgements where considered appropriate by teacher.
- Effective praise and encouragement
- Giving small treats e.g. DVD or homework free night.

Unacceptable behaviour

Examples of minor misbehaviour

- Talking in Class when silence is required
- Talking out of turn
- Unruliness in the classroom and in lines
- Use of rude language
- Littering
- Name calling
- Non wearing of Uniform
- Being noisy/boisterous
- Hiding others possessions

Examples of more serious Misbehaviour

- Horseplay
- Kicking, punching, pushing etc.
- Impertinent to staff
- Refusing to carry out instructions
- Regular deliberate interruptions of lessons
- Lying
- Persistent failure to do homework
- Name calling and objectionable comments
- Throwing objects
- Any persistent minor misbehaviour
- Disruptive in class
- Defacing or damaging school property
- Wasting School materials or supplies repeatedly
- Abusive language
- Notewriting/texting/emailing to or about others using threatening or hurtful language
- Misbehaving while on school trips or outings

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour

- Temper Tantrums
- Threatened assault or actual assault on staff
- Assault on other pupil
- Vandalism of school, class or other pupil
- Theft

- Truancy
- Persistent infringement of school rules
- Bullying
- Threats to other Pupils

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

In general, the school uses a staged approach when dealing with misbehaviour. Initially misbehaviour is dealt with by the class teacher. The school also uses a whole school approach where by another teacher i.e. other than the Childs own class teacher will mentor the child while using a behavioural template sheet Appendix A to help the child focus on ways to improve their behaviour. In the case of misbehaviours other than gross misbehaviour and parents may be involved where teacher considers it necessary.

Where a class teacher is of the opinion that behaviour in question constitutes gross misbehaviour, it will be referred to the principal. Following investigation, the principal may take appropriate action with the involvement of the parents. The principal has full discretion to refer any misbehaviour to the Board of Management where he/she feels that their involvement is necessary. Parent will be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of gross misbehaviour.

The strategies used for misbehaviours other than gross misbehaviour include the following:

(a) Reasoning with the pupil
(b) Reprimand and advice on how to improve (mentoring by another teacher using whole school approach.)
(c) Temporary separation from peers, friends and others
(d) Loss of privileges
(e) Detention during break
(f) Prescribing additional work
(g) Time out at the wall
(h) Issue of a behaviour note
(i) Prescribing extra work
(j) Communicating with Parents/Guardian

The strategies used for gross misbehaviour include the following:

(a) Referral to Principal teacher
(b) Communication with parents
(c) Suspension/Expulsion

Involving parent in management of problem behaviour

It is the Policy of the school to inform parents from the outset of instances of gross misbehaviour on the part of their children. In the case of less serious misbehaviour, parents will be involved at the discretion of the class teacher where it is considered necessary.
Parents are generally contacted by sending a note home. In some cases, parents may be contacted by phone. Depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour, the contact may be made by either the class teacher or principal.

It is the school policy to welcome parents in an open manner, in a non-threatening environment. The focus will be on the behaviour rather than on the individual. In general, the meeting will involve the parents and the class teacher and/or the principal. The child will be present before the conclusion of the meeting to share the outcome and to help them manage their behaviour in future.

Parents are always encouraged to contact the school if they have any concern. Appointments need to be made in advance for all meetings, to arrange a mutually convenient date and time. (Parents should have a detailed record of dates and incidences in the case of alleged bullying).

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

The following procedures and guidelines have been identified by staff from dealing with aggressive and violent behaviour.

Children who display emotional problems may be referred for psychological assessment (with parental involvement). The assistance of the Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.) will be sought to secure expert assistance. Ongoing professional development is available for staff.

The following steps have been identified by the staff in the management of aggressive or violent behaviour: -

1. Remain Calm
2. Send for another member of staff
3. Remove child in question from the immediate environment or if needed remove other children from the area quietly, with supervision.
4. Contact parents and seek additional assistance if required.
5. Observe appropriate safety measures at all times.

Suspension

The procedure followed in the event of suspension being considered will be in accordance with law.

When suspension is being considered parents should be informed of their right to come to the school to discuss misbehaviour of their child.

Suspension is warranted when:

- A student has displayed behaviour that has a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.

- Their continued presence constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for damage to property
- A single incident (to be decided at school level) of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension
- Suspension will be used to give the student an opportunity to reflect on the consequences of his/her misbehaviour
- It gives the staff an equal opportunity to plan effective reintegration of the student into the classroom

Authority to suspend

The B.O.M. of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a student for a maximum initial period of 3 days pending a review. Parents will be notified formally in writing.

Suspension will only be applied when all other interventions have been tried without success.

- Parents will be involved at each stage of intervention and are made aware of ongoing misbehaviour.

To avoid the serious consequence of suspension positive parental support would be of the utmost importance in preventing the sanction of suspension.

It is the policy of the school to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend a student.

When a preliminary assessment of facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant a suspension the Board of Management should observe the following procedure:

Step 1
Investigate and gather all relevant information about alleged misbehaviour leading to proposed suspension.

Step 2
Inform parents and student of the alleged misbehaviour

Step 3
Provide opportunity for parents and student to respond

Step 4
The B.O.M. will convene to make a decision without bias based solely on the evidence.

Step 5
Principal informs the parent and student of the decision made in writing.

Appeal
Parents have the right to appeal this decision. They are also given an opportunity to appeal the decision if the child has already been suspended for a total of 20 days during the year.

The school will have a plan in place to reintegrate the student successfully into the classroom and with a clean slate.

Record Keeping

Formal records of each stage of the process will be kept in the Principal's office.

Expulsion

A student is expelled when the B.O.M. makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from school and they believe that all options have been exhausted in trying to change the student's behaviour.

Expulsion will be considered when:

(1) Behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to teaching and learning.
(2) There is a real and significant threat to safety.
(3) There is serious damage to property.

Procedures for Expulsion

The procedure followed in the event of expulsion being considered will be in accordance with law.

Before a student is expelled there will be factors considered to determine the appropriateness of this action.

(1) The nature and seriousness of the behaviour: the period of time, its persistence and /or escalation.
(2) The context and circumstances of the behaviour
(3) The impact on teaching and learning of staff and students
(4) What interventions have taken place to change the behaviour
(5) Parents and other staff members will be involved in trying to change the behaviour
(6) Outside agencies will be involved if deemed necessary and of benefit to the child.

Parents will be informed at each stage of intervention and will hopefully be involved in addressing the issues.

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the school will implement the following procedure:

(1) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the principal and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Management.
(2) The BOM will consider this recommendation and will hold a hearing on the matter.
(3) Parents will be informed of the child's behaviour, the investigation and the hearing.
(4) Parents will be notified in writing of the hearing and will be invited to attend.
(5) Parents will be given an opportunity to make submission to the hearing.
(6) The BOM will ensure that the investigation is fair and impartial and will review all documentation and the investigation process itself.

Decision to Expel:

Having heard from all parties, it is the Board's responsibility to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if so whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

The BOM will notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) if it intends to expel a student. The BOM will not expel a child before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives notification. Where this period has elapsed and where the BOM remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the BOM should formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents and students will be made aware of their right to appeal the decision and will be provided with a standard form to lodge this appeal.

Keeping Records

Appropriate records are kept at each class level and of notable playground incidents in a factual and impartial manner.

Procedure for notification of pupil absences from school

Section 18 (Education Welfare Act 2000) stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for the absence. Every effort is made to provide a stimulating an attractive school environment to encourage good attendance. There is a system included in the code, for acknowledging and rewarding good and/or improved attendance.

- Absence sheets are sent out to parents. The parents must cite the reason for the absence. This is signed, dated and kept on file in the school.
- The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to Túsla.

Reference to other policies

- SPHE
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Home/School Communication
- Special Education Need
- Health & Safety Policy
- A.U.P. (computers & IT)

Success Criteria

- Positive behaviour noted in classrooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from school community

Roles & Responsibilities

- Board of Management have specific identified roles
- Teachers/Principal responsible for implementing Policy
- Special Needs Assistants have important role to play in implementation of procedures and Policies

- Monitoring of policy to take place at staff meetings
- Parents should support implementation of code.

This policy was formulated by the staff of St. Caillin's N.S., in conjunction with the Board of Management, parents and students and sanctioned by B.O.M. This Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management and staff in February 2026 and will be reviewed again in 2028.

Signed: Pat O' Toole (Chairperson)

Signed: Orla Redican(Principal)