

Tullamore Educate Together N.S. School Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated following consultation with teaching staff, parent representatives and the Board of Management in April 2009. The existing policy was updated in January 2010 so that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

Principles:

- (a) The school recognizes the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of large classes
- (b) It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- (c) Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- (d) Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The Code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilized by teachers.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of School

The Positive Behaviour Policy Document of Tullamore Educate Together N.S. fully recognizes the professional autonomy of the teacher alongside the pivotal role of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Aims:

- (a) In devising the code, consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- (b) Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.
- (c) While acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption-free environment it is very important that parents/guardians and children understand that with these rights come responsibilities.

School rules:

Safety: For my own safety and that of others:

- (a) I should line up safely when the bell rings
- (d) I should always walk while in the school building.
- (e) I should remain seated while eating lunch.
- (f) I should play safely in the designated play area.
- (g) I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal or class teacher – even to go to the toilet.

Caring for myself:

- (a) I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- (b) I should always be in school on time.
- (c) I should show respect for my school and be proud to keep it clean, tidy and litter free.
- (d) I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness – flush the toilet and wash my hands.
- (e) I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, minerals, sweets etc are only permitted on special occasions. Chewing gum is never permitted.
- (f) I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my classwork/homework.
- (g) I should always use the words; please, excuse me and thank you.

Caring for others:

- (a) I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by trying to keep the school rules to the best of my ability.
- (b) I should behave well in class so that everyone can learn.
- (c) I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- (d) Be truthful and honest at all times.

Bullying:

I should never bully others. I should never allow others to bully me and if it happens I should tell my parents/guardians and my teacher. Bullying is always wrong.

Strategies for Teachers

- (a) Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege (golden time)
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication

- (b) Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:-

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

Reasoning with pupils:

Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)

Temporary separation from peers, friends or others including time-out on yard

Loss of privilege- non participation in activity considered an award or treat

A note is sent to Parents/Guardians from the class teacher

Parents/Guardians to come to the school to meet with the class teacher

Parents/Guardians to come to the school to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal.

If behaviour continues we will confer with the Board of Management regarding a short day and/or suspension/expulsion in accordance with rule 130 of National Schools as amended by circular 7/88.

Please note the following :

A short day allows the school to restrict the attendance time of a child, who is presenting with serious behaviour problems.

Procedures:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows:

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Interrupting class work / Arriving late for school / Running in school building / Leaving seat without permission at lunch time / Leaving litter around school / Being discourteous/unmannerly /argumentative / Not completing homework without good reason / Endangering self/fellow pupils in the school yard at break time /constant attention seeking

Examples of serious misdemeanours

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Damaging other pupils' property
- Bullying
- Back answering a teacher
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Using unacceptable language
- Bringing weapons, inappropriate toys, literature or photographs of a violent or pornographic nature to school
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or school personnel
- Defacing/damaging the property of others or school property

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours

- Send to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Principal/teacher sends note/letter in Journal to be signed by parent
- Principal and teacher meets with one/both parents – child may be present for part of this meeting
- Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps turned on
- Deliberately setting off fire alarm
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards another pupil or any member of school personnel
- Defacing school property

- Deliberate transgression of measures put in place to minimise the risk of Covid 19- corona virus being introduced to the school and the consequent risk of its spread will be treated as a gross misdemeanour as per our Code of Behaviour

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours

- Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6)

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

Involving parents in the management of problem behaviour

Close co-operation with parents is essential to all our school policies. We try to involve parents at an early stage and encourage parents to meet the teacher. Home-school behaviour records may be used to monitor behaviour. Communication with parents will be by note in the journal, letter, phone or pre-arranged meetings. Every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to keep parents well informed, listen to their concerns, provide them with a welcoming atmosphere and to inform them of positive events as well as when their children are in trouble.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally pupils may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour.

A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. The class teacher will complete a written log to provide continuous feedback between parents and teachers on the child's behaviour, in addition to regular verbal communication.

Children whose behaviour suggests they might be emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological assessment. Appropriate support may also be sought from the Health Service Executive (CAMHs) and NEPS. The school will apply to the Special Educational Needs Organiser, for extra school support for children assessed with Special Needs.

Suspension - Procedures

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. If the parents (and the pupil) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the health and safety of pupils and teachers, the Board has deferred responsibility to the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Longer suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days. When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will

present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Reinstatement

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s (and pupil) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff and will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class. Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4).) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5))

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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.

The Principal will advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. A copy of the circular (22/02) outlining the appeals procedure as well as an application form will be sent to the parents by post.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

The school Principal will prepare a response if and when the Dept. of Education and Skills is investigating an appeal.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before time of 9.10am or after the official closing time of 2.00pm (infants) or 3.00pm (other classes) except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Record Keeping

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, formal records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure place in the office. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. All such records are retained until students reach 21 years.

Reference to other Policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour include

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- SPHE Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Supervision Policy

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Review

- Deliberate transgression of measures put in place to minimise the risk of Corona Virus (Covid-19) being introduced to the school and the consequent risk of its spread will be treated as a gross misdemeanour as per our Code of Behaviour

The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in May 2009.

This policy was reviewed on August 19th 2020.

Signed _____ Chairperson

Michael Joyce, Chairperson