

Code of Behaviour: St. Tola's N.S.

Related Policies available on request:

1. Anti-Bullying
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Admission and Participation (Enrolment) Policy
4. Child Protection Policy.

Introduction:

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school.

In *St. Tola's National School*, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

This revised Code of Behaviour comes into effect on August 29th 2016. The code has been considered by the Parents, Teachers and Staff and approved by the Board of Management in **April 2016**. It was/ **will be** ratified by the Board of Management **on April 28th 2016**. The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Admission and Participation Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Aims of the code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.

- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

School Rules

1. We show respect for self and others
2. We show respect for our own property and the property of others
3. We show respect other students and their learning
4. We are kind and willing to help others
5. WE follow instructions from staff immediately
6. We walk quietly in the school building
7. We show courtesy and good manners
8. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
9. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
10. We do our best in class
11. We take responsibility for your own work
12. We wear the appropriate uniform.
13. We follow our Healthy Eating Policy.

These can be summed up as 6 Golden Rules:

1. We listen. We don't interrupt.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We are kind.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.
6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

These 6 "Golden Rules" will be the main ones used for infant classes. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the "Golden Rules". Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Discipline for Learning (DFL)

In our school, we have a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive rules for behaviour in class and out of class are learned by pupils (as stated above) at the beginning of their school year. Discipline for learning is fostered through pupil's on-going knowledge, awareness and experience of the Code of Discipline and the respect for all ethos and are thus motivated to keep these rules.

We have many ways of recognizing good behaviour and effect including awards, stamps, positive cards, smiles, positive comments and notes in the journal. Good behaviour and achievement will be recognised. Consistent positive influences are the key to success in our school.

Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of *St. Tola's National School* 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.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious Damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

School Policy on Bullying: St. Tola's N.S. is a Bully-free Zone

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

- **PHYSICAL:** includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- **VERBAL:** name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL:** threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. "Cyber/text" bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Indications of Bullying / Behaviour:

- Anxiety about travelling to/from school
- Unwillingness to go to school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illnesses
- Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety/distress
- Possessions missing
- Increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:

- Calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
- Incidents best investigated outside the classroom situation
- Teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved
- Answers should be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why
- Members of a gang should be met individually and as a group
- Meet parents of parties involved

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents:

- All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A special incident book will be kept in the office for this purpose only
- Serious cases should be referred immediately to the Deputy Principal and then to the Principal
- Parents should be informed by the Deputy Principal/Principal earlier rather than later
- Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying
- Pupils must understand that reporting is not 'telling tales'
- Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with policy
- Non-teaching staff should be encouraged to report incidents. Discretion is important

Programme for work with pupils: Anti-Bullying

Learning strategies should allow for the enhancement of each pupil's self-worth – Cf. Stay Safe Lessons

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

Sanctions:

The **purpose of a sanction** is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, **sanctions may be needed** to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Remaining in during break
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

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.

Where 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. If the parents 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 safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise 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.

Suspension

This procedure is used in the case of gross misbehaviour and or health & safety grounds:

- a) If there is a single incident of gross misbehaviour the Principal requests a meeting with the parents. If considered warranted the Principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for 3 days initially. This power of suspension is delegated to the principal by the school Board of Management.
- b) In certain circumstances the Principal with the approval of their Chairperson of the BoM may suspend a pupil for 5 school days
- c) A meeting of the BoM may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Appeal

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

Expulsion

This procedure may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Grounds for Expulsion

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- Pupil responsible for serious damage to property.

Automatic Expulsion

BoM may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Sexual Assault
2. Possession of illegal drugs
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
4. Actual violence or physical assault
5. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

Procedures in Respect to Expulsion

1. Detail investigation by school principal
2. Recommendation by principal to BoM
3. BoM considers Principals recommendation and holds hearing
4. BoM decision, is expulsion appropriate? If BoM recommends expulsion, the BoM will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
5. Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
6. Parents of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
7. Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
8. Confirmation of decision.

As stated, expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of 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 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. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal 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.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters/school web-site/e-mails
- TextaParent service.

Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Under the Education Welfare Act 200, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in school journal and signed by parent. Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to Education Welfare Services - TUSLA.

When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 3.10pm) a note from parents must be brought to the class teacher stating the time at which the pupil is to leave and the reason for leaving. Children should only be withdrawn from school in exceptional circumstances (e.g. Medical appointment, other appointment that cannot be facilitated outside school hours). The Education Welfare Officer, TUSLA is available to support parents with attendance issues. Contact details are available from the school.

Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to office secretary. Parents/Guardians must sign out pupils who are collected early from school. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. School opens to receive pupils at 9.20am each morning. After a pupil has been absent, a note from the parents must always be brought to the class teacher upon the pupil's return to school. An attendance review by school management occurs monthly concerns about individual children's absence from school is noted and recorded. Please refer to School Attendance Policy.

Clár ama na Scoile:

The school opening times are as follows:

- Assembly in Yard: 9.20am
- School begins: 9.30am
- School Closes: Infants 2.10pm & 1st – 6th Classes 3.10pm

Homework:

It is the policy of the school to assign homework from Monday – Thursday inclusive each day. Parents are strongly advised to take an active interest in their child's homework (supervise and check) and to sign their homework journal each night (ensuring that it is done).

The time taken for homework will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take less than 30 minutes for junior classes and between 30 minutes and one hour in senior classes. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parents should sign the homework journal to confirm that the work has been fully attempted.

If for some reason homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal. Children can be asked to complete this work at break time (this is not a sanction or punishment) so as to be prepared for follow-on class work e.g. reading so that they can continue with the next reading section with their group later that day.

Homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the school Homework Policy for further information.

Jewellery

Students are permitted to wear stud earrings and watch only. Boys are not permitted to wear earrings for safety reasons.

Mobile phones/IPods/Electronic Games

Mobile phones, IPods and electronic games in school is strictly forbidden. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

School Uniform

All pupils must wear the correct and full school uniform each day.

School journal

The school journal is an important communication tool between parents and the school. Please read and sign the journal each night. Please ensure the personal information page in your school journal is completed. Please ensure that new phone numbers are updated as soon as in use.

Code of Conduct for Parents

In keeping with fostering and encouraging a respectful working relationship between all parties, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their children attend school and are punctual
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/the Principal through the office or directly with the class teacher
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
- Label pupils coats and other personal property
- Strictly supervise pre-school children, when in the school.

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

Conclusion

The essence of our code of behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self-discipline.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed in 2019/2020.

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management in April 2016.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Principal