



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



Introduction

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

St. Tola's N.S. aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. 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, Ms. E. Smyth. 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 _____. The code has been considered by the Parents, Teachers and Staff and approved by the Board of Management on March 6th 2020. It was ratified by the Board of Management on March 6th 2020. The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. Tola's N.S. is a Catholic school which aims to provide a caring environment where management, staff and parents work in partnership through mutual respect to develop the spiritual, personal and academic potential of each child according to their talents, skills and abilities. Respect for others and co-operation amongst pupils, parents, staff and the Board of management are the guiding factors in our Code of Behaviour.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationship
- 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

Content of the Policy



In our Code of Behaviour, we address the following:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour – roles and responsibilities
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
4. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion
6. Keeping records
7. Attendance/Education Welfare Act
8. Reference to other policies

1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify “the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school”.

The school recognises that there are times and factors in a child’s life that may influence their behaviour. These will be taken into consideration and the child and his/her behaviour may be accommodated as a result.

In compliance with Section 23 (4) of the Education Act, prior to registering a pupil, parents/guardians will be issued with a copy of the school’s Code of Behaviour and on application, parents/guardians will be asked to confirm in writing that they accept the school’s policy *‘and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code’*

2. Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour – Roles and Responsibilities

Staff members, supported by the Board of Management, adopt a positive approach to discipline within the school. Children are encouraged and praised for their efforts in maintaining discipline. The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony.
- A teamwork approach to behaviour.
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management.
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy.

Staff



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- At the beginning of each school year all teachers will discuss the Code of Behaviour and devise a set of positive class rules.
- The school's Wellbeing curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
- A positive and consistent approach will be adopted by all staff to rewards and sanctions.
- The staff will ensure they communicate to parents/guardians any concerns in relation to their child's behaviour and well-being.
- Behavioural concerns may be brought to the attention of the pupils in class situations by the principal or teacher. Similar information may be conveyed to parents in person, by phone, letter or note home.
- The Code of Behaviour is given to each family upon enrolment. It is also available on the school website.

Board of Management

The Board of Management provides a supportive role to the principal and the teaching staff in the positive implementation of the school Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management actively promotes proactive staff involvement in behavioural concerns and to this end will fund where appropriate, opportunities for staff development in the area of understanding behaviour and its management.

Parents

St. Tola's N.S. strives to foster a positive relationship between staff and parents. Parents are actively involved in the school in a variety of ways e.g. school activities, Board of Management, Fundraising efforts, community events. Parental support is vital for the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour.

The school, therefore, requests that parents:

- Read this policy and understand that they implicitly accept the terms of the policy once they accept a place in St. Tola's N.S. for their child.
- Discuss the contents of this policy with their children. Explain to them the type of behaviour that is acceptable / not acceptable at school.
- Sign the Agreement to uphold the Code of Behaviour: See Appendix A
- Give supportive co-operation to school staff in the interest and benefit of their children.
- Cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensure children are punctual and are collected on time.
- Ensure children's attendance is regular. (The school is legally obliged to notify the Education Welfare Services in TUSLA when a child is absent for more than 20 school days.
- Give an explanation prior to a pre-arranged absence or following a child's absence.



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- Discuss any issues, other than minor matters, at mutually agreed pre-arranged meetings.
- Attend parent/guardian teacher meetings as necessary.
- Communicate any issue, which troubles you or your child at an early stage.
- Help children with homework, ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensure children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Ensure children have an adequate lunch in accordance with the school's healthy lunch policy.
- Ensure children wear their school uniform.
- Ensure children adhere to school policy on the use of mobile phones.
- Observe and respect all protocols when dropping off or collecting their children from the school e.g. keeping the laneway clear, following the one directional traffic.
- Monitor their child closely for signs and symptoms of illness and keep the child at home if they show any signs of infectious illness.
- Ensure that meetings with school are arranged in advance through email/phone via the class teacher/office.
- Ensure that school has up to date contact information for parents/guardians and other family members who may be required to collect their child.
- Answer telephone calls from school/call school back promptly and have arrangements in place for prompt collection of their child should it be required.

Pupils

Pupils play an important role in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by

- Being involved in discussing and choosing class rules.
- Understanding the need for these rules.
- Discussing, monitoring and reviewing aspects of the Code of Behaviour through the Student Council

Each pupil is expected:

- to be well behaved and to show respect and consideration for other children and adults.
- to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings.
- to report any instances of bad behaviour witnessed to a teacher or the principal so it can be addressed quickly.
- to do their best in school and for homework
- to obey the instructions of school staff.
- to use hand sanitiser, wipes, soap, hand towels, toilet roll for the purpose(s) for which they are intended.
- to show due care when using toilet facilities



School Hours:

Junior/Senior Infants 9am-1.40pm First-Sixth Class 9am-2.40pm

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

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 keep the school environment clean and litter free.
4. We show respect other pupils and their learning
5. We are kind and willing to help others
6. We follow instructions from staff immediately
7. We walk quietly in the school building, corridor, gym and classrooms
8. We show courtesy and good manners
9. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
10. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
11. We do our best in class
12. We take responsibility for your own work
13. We take pride in our appearance and adhere to the school uniform policy.
14. 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 school property & personal 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.



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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 differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Please see Appendix A for Breaktime Rules & Routines.

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 effort including awards, stamps, positive cards, smiles, positive comments and notes in the journal. Good behaviour and achievement will be recognised at class level. At times, 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.

Other areas in the school environment

- Pupils walk in single file to and from their classroom keeping close to the wall to leave space on corridors.
- Pupils should not run in corridors.
- Pupils should move about the school in a quiet orderly manner.



- Pupils should not shout in corridors or in the toilets.
- Pupils should not engage in rough play in the corridors and toilets
- Pupils should ensure that their coats, bags etc. are stored properly in classrooms/cloakrooms.
- Pupils must show respect for school property and the property of others at all times.
- Courteous behaviour (e.g. standing back to let adults by at doorways, greeting teachers and other adults) is encouraged

School related activities

The standards and rules contained in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where the pupil, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school, e.g. school tours, the church, games/extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is based on the idea that the best way to help someone who has done wrong is to give them an opportunity to put things right (NEPs Restorative Working Group, 2016).

A mentor (Class teacher/ Principal) meets with the pupil engaging in the negative behaviour or in the case of a disagreement between pupils; meets separately with both the 'victim'/ 'harmed person' and the person who showed the challenging behaviour.

1. The following questions are asked... to the person showing challenging behaviour:
2. What happened?
3. What were you thinking at the time?
4. What have your thoughts been since?
5. Who has been affected by what you did?
6. In what way have they been affected?
7. What do you think needs to happen next?

In the case of a disagreement between two or more pupils, the following questions are asked to the harmed person...

1. What happened?
2. What were your thoughts at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. How has this affected you and others?
5. What has been the hardest thing for you?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?



In the case of a single pupil's negative behaviour, the class teacher will discuss the pupil's responses with them towards resolving the issue whereby the pupil will identify how they can change their behaviour positively and to work towards not repeating the negative behaviour again.

In the case where there is a disagreement between two or more pupils, the teacher/Principal will then bring both together (having previously had separate discussions in relation to the 6 questions above) to discuss their responses now that they have had an opportunity to think things through calmly (the teacher may have given support in helping them to structuring their thinking).

4. Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers.

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



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.
- Incomplete homework.

Procedures to be followed by teachers and sanctions to be imposed when dealing with minor breaches of discipline:

- Verbal reprimand and reasoning with pupil
- Where the incident relates to behaviour in the yard, noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book and issuing a verbal admonishment
- Temporary separation from peers if and when appropriate
- Note in homework journal to be signed by parent/guardian
- Class teacher communicates with one or both parents, or guardians
- Stay in at break outside the office to complete homework

Examples of **medium misbehaviour include:**

- Breaking or damaging personal or school resources
- Being disrespectful to peers by e.g. making hurtful/ sneering comments
- Ignoring classroom rules; e.g. constantly shouting out, making smart comments, being disrespectful to the class teacher, SNA or other staff member
- Ignoring school rules; e.g. running on the corridor, repetitive disruptive behaviour in yard line-up, being rough with another pupil, repetitive use of the outside voice in class or in school

Procedures to be followed by teachers and sanctions to be imposed when dealing with medium breaches of discipline:

- The teacher will assign an age appropriate written assignment to be completed by the pupil which is to be signed by parent;



- Where the misbehaviour persists, teacher will contact the parents concerning the persistent misbehaviour requesting parental involvement in encouraging the child to abide by and adhere to the rules of the school.
- Principal or Deputy-Principal may meet one or both parents concerning behaviour;
- Where appropriate, a copy of the 'Reminder Letter to Parents regarding the school Code of Behaviour' will be sent home. *(See Appendix C)*

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.

Procedures to be followed when dealing with serious breaches of discipline:

1. An Incident Report Form will be completed by the pupil's teacher or supervising teacher. See Appendix D
2. Pupil is to be sent to the Deputy Principal or Principal for investigation and if necessary a request for the parent(s) to attend the interview may be made.
3. The Principal communicates by telephone or in writing with the parents alerting them of the offence. The parents may be asked to commit verbally or in writing that they will do all they can to encourage the child not to indulge in similar misbehaviour in the future.
4. The child will be expected to apologise to the class teacher and any other member of the school community who has been offended by the pupil's actions.
5. The child will be asked to commit to not engage in any similar behaviour in the future that may cause offence or injury to another member of the school community.
6. In cases where the behaviour is deemed to be of a more serious nature, the school may impose a sanction of 'Separation from Peers'. Here the child will be placed in the care of another teacher and for a short period of time. Parents will be notified of the imposition of such sanction. *In general, pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety to pupils and staff.*
7. Where the child's presence in another class other than his own is thought not to be appropriate, the pupil may be placed in the care and under the supervision of the Deputy Principal or Principal and assigned appropriate work by the class teacher to be completed over the course of the school day..



This consequence is reserved for occasions where the child's presence in class is detrimental to the education or well-being of others.

8. Where serious breaches of behaviour have occurred and continue to occur, the school may devise an 'Individual Behaviour Plan' that includes steps to be adhered to in order to prevent the recurrence of the misdemeanours.
9. The Principal will report to the Board at each Board meeting any serious breaches of discipline that have occurred since the last meeting. The identity of the children involved will be protected as far as possible.
10. Where necessary, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed of the incident and parents will be requested to meet with the Chairperson and Principal to discuss the behaviour and how to ensure good behaviour in the future.

Gross Breaches of Discipline

- Repeated occurrence of serious breaches of discipline will be considered to be gross breaches of discipline;
- Wilfully causing serious damage to school property or buildings;
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil or any member of the school community.
- Any behaviour that is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

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

(It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only. Other actions not listed above may be classed as gross misdemeanours.)

Procedures to be followed when dealing with gross breaches of discipline:

All incidents of gross breaches of discipline will be thoroughly investigated using the investigative procedures listed on page 4 above, and may lead to suspension or expulsion. If so, see 'Procedures in Respect of Suspension' and 'Procedures in Respect of Expulsion' below.



Fair Procedures

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. Fair procedures have two essential parts: The right to be heard, and the right to impartiality.

The Right to be Heard means:

- The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated
- The right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account
- The right to know how the issue will be decided
- The right to respond to allegations;
- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision- making body
- Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts.

The Right to Impartiality means:

- The right to an absence of bias in the decision- making process;
- The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision making.

Applying Fair Procedures in the School:

In school, fair procedures apply to the investigation of alleged misbehaviour that may lead to suspension or expulsion and the process of decision making as to whether the pupil did engage in the misbehaviour and in what sanction to impose.

The principle of impartiality in decision making means that it is preferable that, where possible, the Principal arranges for another member or members of staff to conduct the investigation and to present a full report on the facts of the case and any other relevant information to the Principal. The Principal is then free to take a view whether the child did engage in the behaviour and about the sanction, based on the report of the investigation. It is incumbent on the Principal to ensure that the investigation has been fully and fairly conducted.

In circumstances of particular difficulty, school authorities may need to seek legal advice to support their decision making. (NEWB Guidelines Page 66, 67)



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

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conduct 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 and further detailed in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

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.

Cyber Bullying

With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices. Instances of bullying or inappropriate use of social media which may directly impact on children in school or cause distress and/or disrupt their learning will be dealt with in accordance with this Code of Behaviour and the Anti Bullying Policy.



Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2016 provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to TUSLA or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from TUSLA in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

5. Suspension & Expulsion

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:

Implementing the Suspension



The Principal will notify the parents in writing of the intention to suspend. The letter should confirm:

1. The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end;
2. The reasons for suspension;
3. Any programme of school-work that should be followed;
4. The arrangements for returning to school including any commitments that should be entered into by the pupil and the parents;
5. The provision for an appeal to the Board;
6. The right to appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the DES.

In certain circumstances the Principal with the approval of their Chairperson of the BoM may suspend a pupil for 5 school days

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.

Repeated Offence

Where there are repeated instances of serious or gross 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. 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.

Notification of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Act (2000) obliges the school to notify in writing the Education Welfare Board (Túsla and Education Welfare Officer) of instances where pupils have been suspended for 6 days or more (cumulatively) and proscribes schools from expelling pupils until 20 days have elapsed following the notification to the Education Welfare Board (TUSLA) via the EWO. *(The EWO may be notified by way of the returns sent to Túsla at the end of each term.)*

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.



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.

Expulsion

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

Where expulsion is considered, the school authorities will generally have tried a series of other interventions and believe that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. These will include:

- Meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour;
- Ensuring that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour should they persist;
- Ensure that other possibilities have been tried;
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies such as NEPS, CAMHS and NCSE

Factors to be Considered Before Proposing to Expel a Pupil

(Listed NEWB (TUSLA) Guidelines for Schools p 82 under the following headings)

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
2. The context of the behaviour
3. The impact of the behaviour
4. The interventions to date
5. Whether expulsion is a proportional response
6. The possible impact of expulsion

Grounds for Expulsion:

1. Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
2. Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
3. 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

Step 1: A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal.

The Principal will:

- Inform the parents and the pupil in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents and the pupil every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Where expulsion may result from an investigation, the parents will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board is made by the Principal

The Principal will:

- Inform the parents that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that the parents have records of the allegations made against the pupil, the investigation itself and written notice of the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board with a copy of the same records as are given to the parents
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing and invite them to the hearing
- Advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- Ensure that the parents have enough notice to allow them time to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing



- It is the responsibility of the Board to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted in line with procedures.
- The Board should undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case.
- Where the Board decides to consider expelling a pupil, it must hold a hearing.
- At the hearing, the Principal and the parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.
- In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that they are and are seen to be impartial as between the Principal and the pupil. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this in line with good practice and Board procedures.

Step 4: Board deliberations and actions following the meeting

- Having heard from all of the parties, the Board must decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.
- Where the opinion of the Board is that the pupil should be expelled, the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).
- The pupil cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(1)).
- The Board should inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents should be told that the Board will now inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the EWO

Within 20 days of receipt of the notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a pupil should be expelled, the EWO must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the pupil and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).
- In the interests of the educational welfare of the child, those who come together should, with the EWO, plan for the pupil's future education.
- Pending these consultations, the Board may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of pupils is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)).
- The Board may consider it appropriate to suspend a pupil during this time. The suspension should only be considered if the presence of the pupil during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.



Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

- Where the 20-day period following notification to the EWO has elapsed and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the pupil is to be expelled, the Board should formally confirm the decision to expel. This task may be delegated to the Chairperson or the Principal.
- Parents should be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed.
- The Parents should be told of the right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.
- A formal record should be made in the minutes of the Board of the decision to expel a pupil.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may be brought by the NEWB (TÚSLA) on behalf of a pupil. The process begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (DES)

SUMMARY:

The procedures will include:

1. A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management to expel the pupil is made by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. The deliberations of the Board will be recorded, and the actions proposed following such a hearing.
5. Consultations will be held with the Education Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel will be recorded and communicated to the parents and TUSLA in writing.
7. The parents may appeal the decision to the Secretary General of the DES.

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 and professional advisors/agencies 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 meetings
- Through children's Seesaw account
- Letters/notes/emails from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters/school web-site/emails
- Aladdin text service.

6. Keeping Records

The school BoM is a data controller of personal data relating to its past, present and future staff, students, parents/guardians and other members of the school community. All such data is treated in accordance with the Data Protection legislation and the terms of our Data Protection Policy. Data relating to individuals will only be processed in a manner consistent with the purposes for which it was gathered. Information will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis, and access to it will be strictly controlled. In line with the school's policy on record keeping and data protection legislation, records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour both at class and school level. These records are written in a factual and impartial manner.

7. Attendance/Education Welfare Act



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Under the Education Welfare Act 200, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in the school journal/email/phone call to the office and signed by the 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 2.40pm) a note/phonecall/email from parents must be given 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 appointments 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 the 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 8.55am 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 the School Attendance Policy.

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 child's journal or view their child's Seesaw account 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 seesaw account/school journal whereby the parent uploads photos of the homework weekly.

If for some reason homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal/email/note. 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 on 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



Pupils are allowed to wear stud earrings. For Health & Safety reasons they are not allowed to wear long dangly earrings.

Mobile phones/IPods/Electronic Games

Use of personal mobile phones, smart watches and all other electronic devices capable of recording audibly/visually during school hours 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. Please see Mobile Phone Policy for further details.

School Uniform

All pupils must wear the correct and full school uniform each day. Please see Appendix C

School journal/SeesawAccount/Google Classroom

For the pupil's in Junior Classes the Seesaw account is an important communication tool between parents and the school. For pupils in the Senior End (3rd - 6th Classes), Google Classroom is an important digital tool for creating their Digital Portfolios. Parents need to ensure that they check it regularly.

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 2024.

Related Policies available on request:

1. Anti-Bullying Statement
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Admission and Participation (Enrolment) Policy
4. Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment.
5. Remote Learning Policy
6. Acceptable Use Policy



Code of Behaviour Policy

7. Data Protection Policy

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2020.

Reviewed and amended on Wednesday 4th October, 2023.

Signed: *Seamus Ó hÉanaigh* Date: October 2023
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: *Eileen Smyth* Date: October 2023
Principal



APPENDIX A

Agreement by Pupils and parents to uphold the Code of Behaviour for St. Tola's N.S.

Pupils from Junior Infants – 2nd Class (*Parent only please sign below*)

I have read St. Tola's N.S. Code of Behaviour and I have discussed this agreement with my child. I agree to uphold this Code of Behaviour.

Parents/ Guardian's Signature:

Pupils from 3rd – 6th Class (*Parent and pupil please sign below*)

I have read St. Tola's N.S. Code of Behaviour and I have discussed this with my child. I agree to uphold this Code of Behaviour.

Pupil's Signature:

Parent's Signature:



Appendix B:

St. Tola's N.S. Breaktime Rules & Routines

- **Be Ready** for yard times. Wear jackets/coats if necessary. Teacher Guidance.

While on the Yard/Pitch:

- School property must be respected and not damaged or destroyed. Access to the PE Shed will be controlled by an SNA and students from 6th Class will distribute the materials.
- Full Change of Clothes is mandatory.
- Each class keeps its own play area.
Small break: 2nd – 6th Class remain on the walking track. No Grass Access allowed.
Big Break: 3rd & 4th Class play together, 5th & 6th Class play together.
- Hurling/Camogie and Rugby are not allowed except where organised and supervised by a coach/teacher.
- No swinging from goalposts, basketball poles etc.
- Footballs/Equipment will be retrieved from the field (or roof) by staff members/supervision by Staff Members.
- Children are not allowed access to the back of the pitch.
- Permission must be sought from a staff member if leaving the yard/pitch for any reason.
- 'Fair play' in games is what is expected at all times. Nobody is to be deliberately left out of a game or told they are not welcome to play. **No Slide Tackling/Rough play allowed.**
- The area behind the prefabs & Chicken Coop is out of bounds.
- The school grounds are to be kept tidy and litter – free.
- Nobody should be returning to the school building during break except for going to the toilet.
- When the bell goes at the end of break children must line up IMMEDIATELY. Without Delay. No messing or bouncing of balls etc. in the line.
- Children should remain silent when coming in from break. No talking/messing on the school corridor.

If you're feeling unwell:

- Please tell an adult on yard.
- First Aid Stations are as follows:
 1. Pitch – supervised by an SNA
 2. Enclosed Court Area – supervised by SNA/Teacher
 3. Hard Surface area in front of staff room – supervised by Teacher.

Wet Days:

- On wet days children remain in their classrooms. Doors are to be left open. Children are not allowed to run around or to be 'out of their seat' unless instructed by the teacher.
- Children are expected to obey instructions from the staff member on duty without delay or question.



Appendix C

Reminder Letter to Parents regarding the school's Code of Behaviour

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

Please talk to your child and remind him /her of the importance of keeping the following rule(s):

- Behaving in class.
- Behaving in the yard.
- Not deliberately hurting others.
- Listening and paying attention.
- Having respect for all members of the school community.
- Having respect for school property, their own belongings and others.

Teacher's comments:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I have spoken to my child about the above rules and he / she promises to try harder.

Signed: _____ Date: ___ / ___ / ___



Appendix D

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Incident: ____ / ____ / _____ Time of incident: _____

Details of incident:

Staff members present: _____

Other witnesses: _____

Was incident a health and safety risk: Yes ____ No ____

If yes, to whom? _____

If physical hurt or injury was caused, please describe injury briefly:

Action Taken: Principal informed Yes ____ No ____

Parents informed Yes ____ No ____

Parents asked to visit school Yes ____ No ____

Teacher/Parents meeting held Yes ____ No ____

Principal/ Parents meeting held Yes ____ No ____

Further action:

Was the child suspended ? Yes ____ No ____ Date(s): _____

If a child was suspended , was the suspension reported to TUSLA ? Yes ____ No ____

Date: _____



Appendix E

School Uniform

The uniform for St. Tola's N.S. is as follows:

- Green V Neck crested jumper
- White Polo T-shirt
- Navy trousers/skirt/pinafore
- Black shoes

Please note:

In the interest of safety, stud earrings are only to be worn.

Long Hair should be tied up.

Navy shorts (of modest length) can be worn in the warmer months. No branded/GAA shorts allowed.

Pupils are not allowed wear:

- Make up
- Fake tan
- False nails
- Fake eyelashes
- Facial piercings and fluorescent hair dye are not permitted.



Code of Behaviour Policy
