



## Code of Conduct Policy

### Introduction

#### Aims of Primary Education

The aims of Primary Education may be stated briefly as follows: to enable children to live full lives as children, to equip them to avail of further education and to prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults in society.

#### Vision & Mission Statement for St. Patrick's NS Slane

St. Patrick's Primary School, Slane, strives to provide a caring, happy and secure educational environment.

With a view to providing the highest possible teaching standards we actively promote staff development on an individual & collective basis. This is a Catholic primary school which fosters gospel values and holds our Catholic ethos as a cornerstone of school life.

We endeavour to enhance the self esteem of everyone in the school community, offering equal opportunities for all pupils to develop to their full potential in a well ordered and disciplined atmosphere where parental involvement is encouraged and the wider community is served.

As a staff committed to the realisation of these goals, our aim is to create a happy, secure working environment for our pupils, in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable approach to discipline. This is done by having guidelines to direct behaviour for the good of all. These guidelines constitute the school's **CODE OF CONDUCT**.

#### Aims of a Code of Conduct

The aims of a code of conduct are:

- To help create a positive learning environment in which every pupil can benefit from school.
- To help pupils to become more self-disciplined and to encourage good standards of behaviour.
- To help organise a large group so that school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.
- To care in a practical way for pupils, staff, the school and its environment.

In addition to this code of conduct we have a separate code of conduct for Sport.

### Promoting a Happy School

Encouraging high standards of behaviour among pupils, and creating and maintaining an orderly atmosphere for learning in the school, involves a whole school approach. Teachers explain the code of conduct on a regular basis, teaching children the importance of respect for self and others. This results in sound relationships between teachers and pupils, leading to effective teaching and learning.

### 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.

#### Roles & Responsibilities of Staff

The Teaching Council has set out a code of professional behaviour and practice for teachers. In conjunction with this code we expect teachers to

- Be courteous towards each other, pupils and parents
- Be prepared for lessons, professional and on time
- Dress in a professional and appropriate manner
- Communicate in a positive and appropriate manner
- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- 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



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- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all

### **Roles & Responsibilities of Parents**

Parents are expected to

- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/ Principal through the school office
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
- Label Pupils Coats and other property.
- Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school
- Refrain from bringing family pets/dogs into the school yard (even if on a lead)
- As the Board of Management are responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another child, not their own, on the school premises.

### **Content of the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct covers the following areas: Behaviour in class, Behaviour in the playground, Behaviour in the school environment, Behaviour on school trips/outings, Attendance at school, Homework

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible 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.

### **School Rules & Expectations**

#### **1: Rules regarding Behaviour in Class**

- Pupils are expected to respect the right of other pupils to learn and to avoid disrupting the work of the classroom.
- Pupils are expected to have respect for their teachers and follow instructions given by them.
- Pupils are expected to go to and from their classroom in an orderly manner.
- Running is not allowed at any time in classrooms or corridor.
- Pupils are expected to show courtesy and respect towards other pupils.

#### **2: Rules regarding Behaviour in the Playground**

- Pupils are expected to have respect for the person and property of others.
- Pupils are expected to avoid rough play and bullying (both verbal and physical).
- Pupils are expected to obey signals at the end of break.
- Pupils are only permitted to re-enter the school premises during break with the teacher's permission.
- Pupils are forbidden to climb walls or fences.
- Bad language will not be tolerated in the playground.
- Pupils must remain in their own designated areas.

#### **3: Rules regarding Behaviour in the School Environment**

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

#### **4: Rules regarding Behaviour on School Tours and Outings**



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School tours and outings present particular challenges for the school. As well as the normal standard of behaviour expected from all our pupils, the following should be noted:

Pupils **must** wear their uniform on all school tours and outings.

Pupils must obey the instructions of teachers, drivers, tour guides, or anyone person designated to be in charge of them during the course of the outing.

Pupils are not permitted to absent themselves from the travelling group, except with the express permission of the teacher in charge.

#### 5: Rules regarding Attendance at School

Pupils are required to be regular in their attendance at school.

After a pupil has been absent, a note from the parent / guardian must **always** be brought to the teacher on the pupils return to school. Sometimes parents phone the school office to explain an absence if the child is to be out of school for a number of days. Parents are required to explain absences to the school as the Principal is required by law to report such absences to the National Educational Welfare Board.

Pupils are expected to be on time for school each day and, in the event of a late arrival, bring a note to the teacher.

Mitching from school is considered a serious offence and is reported to parents / guardians and to the NEWB.

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises for any reason, unless collected by parents or guardians. The collecting adult signs the child out at the office.

#### 6: Rules regarding Homework

Homework consolidates work already done in school.

It is given on a regular basis and pupils are expected to complete it neatly.

Parents / guardians are requested to ensure that homework, written and oral is completed. They are requested to check and sign the journal nightly.

If for some reason homework cannot be completed then a signed note stating this should be sent to the class teacher.

#### 7: Rules regarding Misc. items

Pupils are expected to wear their school uniform.

Tracksuits and runners are essential for physical education.

Jewellery other than watches and stud earrings are not allowed in school.

Toys/Trading cards/gameboys or other electronic devices are not permitted in school

## Reward Systems

The use of praise and rewards for good behaviour is promoted within the school. We aim to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. 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 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, stickers or vouchers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

The following are samples of reward systems currently in use in the school:

Junior Classes – stickers / reward charts / team or table of the week etc.

Senior Classes – pupil of the week / group of the month / golden time etc.

## School Organisation

**Yard** – Designated play areas for different groups / yard games provided / play equipment / organised leagues / assigned teams

**Supervision** – Each yard has two adults supervising each break – . In the senior area when the field is open one of the adults supervises in yard and the other in the field. Pupils who require bathroom visits during break must ask permission to do so.



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**Wet Day supervision** – Pupils remain in their seats – board games, colouring activities provided. Two senior children in each room from infants to fourth help organise games – Four adults walk between classrooms - each have designated rooms to supervise.

If a supervisor is absent then another staff member fills in and the change is noted on the supervision rota in the staff room. This rota is stored with school files at end of each year.

**Special Needs Pupils** – Children with behavioural difficulties have SNA supervision in yard. The teacher and LS teacher will set specific social skills targets & strategies for these pupils in their IEP

## Misbehaviours

Maintaining standards of behaviour will also involve, in some instances, the application of sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. When sanctions are invoked, pupils should understand that what they have done is unacceptable and it is the misbehaviour that is rejected. The following are samples of unacceptable behaviours. This is not an exhaustive list.

### Minor Misbehaviours:

Homework not done and no note, mobile phone with no permission slip, interfering with others, rudeness, borrowing items without asking, inattentiveness, answering out of turn, alienating friends, not wearing uniform, throwing slippers, swinging on chairs and senior pupils running through junior yard.

### Serious Misbehaviours:

Fighting, bullying, mitching, bad language, bad attitude, name calling, exclusion, rough play, disrespecting others, hitting, back talking, belittling personal comments, damaging play equipment or school property, stealing, leaving school premises without permission, climbing on walls

### Gross Misbehaviours

Gross Misbehaviours are where a student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the safe operation of the school. Examples of Gross Misbehaviour include: Serious damage to school property, striking a member of staff, serious physical violence which threatens safety of other pupils. A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

## Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features - It must be clear why the sanction is being applied, the consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour, it must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions, there should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences and it should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this. The particular stage used will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.

1. Discussion with the pupil on the behaviour (including advice on how to improve).
2. Reprimand or Warning regarding behaviour
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.(5-15 minutes within own classroom/yard area to complete task at hand or cool down)
4. Loss of privileges
5. Teacher communicates with parents / guardians – solutions and strategies outlined. Teacher also informs Principal at this stage.
6. Referral to the principal teacher.
7. Exclusion from some school outings.
8. Temporary suspension.
9. Expulsion

Communication between teacher/principal with parents / guardians through letters, phone call or meetings will occur at all stages from stage four or where necessary so that parents / guardians are involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

In St. Patrick's N.S. we promote restorative practices, to the extent possible, by inviting those who have a stake in a specific offence to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible. Punishment alone for



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the offender offers little in the genuine way of accountability; does little to meet a victim's needs and does little to address the cause of wrongdoing.

**Procedures in respect of Suspension. (as per pages 70- 77 of the NEWB Guidelines)**

While the BoM has the authority to suspend, they have delegated this authority to the Principal together with either the chairperson of the BOM or the Deputy Principal for periods of up to three days. The following procedures will apply:

- Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.

If suspension is still decided upon

- Principal notifies parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm.
  - The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
  - The reasons for the suspension.
  - Any study programme to be followed.
  - The arrangements for returning to school, including commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents.
  - The provision for appeal to the Board of management or secretary general of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
  - Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision-making process.
- The decision and rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

**Expulsion.( As per page 82 of the NEWB Guidelines) Procedures in respect of expulsion.**

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
  - Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
  - Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the principal( see page 84 NEWB guidelines)
- Consideration by the BOM of the principal' recommendations and the holding of a hearing. (see page 84 NEWB Guidelines)
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing. ( page 85 NEWB Guidelines)
- If BOM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the TUSLA Educational Welfare Officer in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB should be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie) or from their helpline (1890 36 3666). This form should be completed and sent to **School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7.**
- Consultations arranged with TUSLA.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

**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)

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

Code of Conduct for Sport, School Tours, Procedures for Trips, Complaints Procedure, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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