

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

Following consultation with the parents, the teaching staff, the non-teaching staff and the pupils of St. Cronan's over a 12 month period, following an audit of the previous Code of Behaviour, this Code of Behaviour was drafted in Autumn 2010.

Rationale

- The previous Code of Behaviour was last reviewed in 2003. In the light of recent publications such as *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008* it is now felt that the policy needs to be revisited and in parts rewritten to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice.
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
 - B. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
 - C. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
 - D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
 - E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a school community, we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff if they have any concerns regarding behavioural issues.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Aims

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- 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 the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, 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 policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.

- 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**
- 2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**
 - **Staff**
 - **Board of Management**
 - **Parents**
 - **Pupils**
- 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**
 - **Classroom**
 - **Playground**
 - **Other areas in the school**
 - **School related activities**
- 4. Rewards and sanctions**
 - **Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour**
 - **Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour**
 - **Involving parents in management of problem behaviour**
 - **Managing aggressive or violent behaviour**
- 5. Suspension / Expulsion**
 - **Suspension**
 - **Expulsion**

- **Appeals**
6. **Keeping records**
 - **Class**
 - **Playground**
 - **School records**
 7. **Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school**
 8. **Reference to other policies**

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

In line with the Education Welfare Act, Section 23, the following are the broad standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school. We have the following expectations of our students and these will be reflected in school and classroom rules and procedures.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

In accordance with Section 23 (4) of the Act, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher provides the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and requests them to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

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. 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 accessed where appropriate.

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.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

The elements of the 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*

The emphasis in our school is on the promotion of positive behaviour and this emphasis is shared by the entire teaching and non-teaching staff.

Responsibility of Adults (Teaching staff/Ancillary staff/Visiting teachers/coaches)

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, 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 and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.
- Inform ourselves about special factors that impact upon behaviour i.e. SEN. Information may be sought from support services such as NEPS.
- The school's SPHE 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. (See SPHE policy for more information on this)
- In our school, Circle Time and SPHE is regularly timetabled at all levels and is used very beneficially to reinforce and discuss positive behaviour.

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies. The Board should play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

The BoM has supported the school in formulating of the Code.

Parents

The school maintains open pathways of communication with parents regarding the Code of Behaviour. Parents will be invited to examine a draft policy and to contribute any suggestions or amendments they feel worthwhile.

Prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher provides the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and requests them to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour e.g.

- Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work

- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

Pupils

Students are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and students can grow stronger through the process. In our school children are consulted informally and formally through the SPHE curriculum on matters regarding behaviour. In the Summer term of 2009, children were actively given opportunities to contribute towards the code, both in school and through discussion at home. They are active in implementing the Classroom Code – e.g

- Drafting rules for the classroom
- Buddy systems e.g. on the yard, on the bus, on swimming trips, school tours etc.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Various strategies are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour. We have clearly stated and achievable school rules.

School Rules

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for other's property
- Respect other students and their learning
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Ask permission to leave the classroom for any reason other than the bathroom.
- Do your best in class
- Take responsibility for your own work
- School opens at 9.20 a.m. and closes at 3pm. At school closing time, all pupils should vacate the premises as soon as possible
- The reasons for pupil absences should be explained to class teachers either in oral or written form.
- If a parent wishes a child to leave the school during school hours, he/she must communicate this orally or in written form.
- Pupils are expected to have all books, copies and other school requisites necessary to do their school work with them during school time and must keep them in good condition, replacing any that are lost.

- Pupils are expected to do all home and other assignments in a neat and careful fashion.
- Children should not bring money to school except for payment of books, school tours or at the request of the teacher for any other school purpose.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their school, its premises and equipment.
- Students must be neat and tidy in their dress and personal hygiene.
- Parents are welcome to visit the school at any convenient time to discuss their child's progress.

These can be summed up as 6 main rules;

- Respect/ Be nice
- Do your best
- Be tidy
- Be Safe
- Walk
- Listen

Classroom

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.

Incentives

Part of the vision of St. Cronan's NS is 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. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times 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 exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Playground(s)

Positive behaviour is expected at all times in the playground. We support and encourage such behaviour by

- Organising activities in ways which minimise misbehaviour
- Careful supervision at each break time (1 staff member at a minimum, as per the school's supervision roster) ensuring that all children are visible and actively involved.
- An incident book is carefully maintained where necessary
- The children's movement to and from the yard is orderly and supervised.
- On wet days, board games, jigsaws, cards etc are used in the GP room.

Other areas in the school

There is an expectation that the school rules will be implemented in all areas of the school such as corridors, halls, cloakrooms, toilets etc. Children are reminded of these expectations regularly. Older children are encouraged to model acceptable behaviour at all times.

School related activities

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour would usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. The school is in the process of drafting a policy on school trips and outings where the responsibilities of all parties are clearly outlined.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

As we have already described, the school places great importance on active rewarding of positive behaviour. Teachers are careful to grant age appropriate rewards and incentives

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Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour

Sanctions

In St. Cronan's NS, if a pupil fails to observe the standards of behaviour outlined in the school, certain measures and sanctions may be imposed.

The use of sanctions or consequences is 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
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- 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. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils 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. Carrying out a useful task in the school
7. Detention during break
8. Communication with parents
9. Referral to Principal
10. Principal communicating with parents
11. 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 , NEWB Guidelines 2008 – all available in the school)

However sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore a child, who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work. This will always be carried out under supervision. A child will not be left alone in such a situation.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area such as PE or Art, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Teachers hold a common understand of the type and severity of sanctions imposed. If any member of staff is in doubt about the suitability of a sanction, whole staff consultation

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers have a shared 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 should be 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 are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal
- Telephone Contact
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Seriously violent or threatening behaviour is a rare occurrence in Carron NS. However, should a pupil's behaviour constitute a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school will take several steps. These include –

- Isolation of pupil//removal of the pupil to a safe place with a trusted member of staff
- Every effort will be made to calm the child
- Immediate communication with parents
- Immediate visit from parent if deemed necessary
- In extreme cases, child may need to be referred to external agency for psychological testing. This would only be done in consultation with the parents.

5. Suspension / Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

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 the pupil, 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, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB guidelines 2008. Suspension must also be notified to parents in writing. Where the parents decline the offer of meeting the school authorities, the written notification is to be regarded as the notification of suspension.

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.

Carron NS will follow fair procedures in the event that it is proposing to suspend or expel a student. These procedures have two essential components

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

These fair procedures apply to

- The **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour
- The process of **decision making**

In exceptional circumstances, the principal and chairperson of the BoM may extend a 3 day suspension to a 5 day period without full BoM sanction (e.g if the BoM is unable to convene at short notice).

The BoM will normally place a ceiling of **10 days** on a single suspension. Any extension of this will be considered as another suspension and due procedures should be followed.

Where a period of suspension exceeds 20 days, the parents of the child have the right to appeal this under section 29 of the Education Act. A section 29 appeal can be made by contacting the Secretary General of the DES. An application form for this procedure can be downloaded from the DES website.

Removal of Suspension

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. The school will make every effort to help the student reintegrate into school life – academically and socially.

The student will be given every opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Records and reports to be kept in respect of suspension will include –

Records of investigation and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investigation (including all interview notes) • The decision making process • The decision and rationale for same • The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension
Report to the BOM	The principal will report all suspensions to the BOM with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.
Report to NEWB	The principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education Welfare Act 2000, section 21(4) (a))

Use of suspension will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools the National Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB Guidelines 2008. The grounds for expulsion will be similar to the grounds for suspension. However, it will only be considered when all other interventions have been exhausted.

Grounds for Expulsion include

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Procedures in respect of expulsion

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal (similar to one carried out in the case of suspension)
- A recommendation to the BoM by the principal
- Consideration of the BoM of the principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
- BoM deliberation and action following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer (this should occur within the 20 day period between the Board decision and the start of expulsion date)
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

Records and reports to be kept in respect of expulsion will include –

Records of investigation and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investigation (including all interview notes) • The decision making process • The decision and rationale for same
Report to the BOM	The principal will report to the BOM and records of all relevant communication will be maintained.
Report to NEWB	The BoM is required to report expulsions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines and the Welfare Officer is required to liaise with the all relevant parties within that period.(Ed .Welfare Act 2000, section 21(4) (a)

6. Keeping records

All serious incidents on the playground are recorded factually in the School Incident Book.

Teachers include a record of individual children's behaviour on the annual school report.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The school informs the parents every September that The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. This notification can be verbal or written. Parents may utilise the appropriate pages at the back of the pupils' journals for this purpose. The principal keeps a careful record of all absences and reasons for such. This information is reported to the NEWB on the standard forms.

8. Reference to other Policies

Carron NS has an extensive range of policies which support and consolidate the school's Code of Behaviour. These include

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying policy
- o Sexual harassment policy
- o Enrolment policy
- o Health & Safety policy
- o Equality policy
- o Special Educational Needs plan

Success Criteria

Our school Code of Behaviour will be considered successful if the following criteria are satisfied:

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

Roles and Responsibility

- All members of the school community have responsibility in upholding the School Code of Behaviour.
- The BoM has a vital role to play in supporting the school Code of Behaviour, especially in extreme situations such as suspension and expulsion.

Implementation Date

September 2010

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals. A formal review will be timetabled 4 years from now.

Ratification & Communication

A copy of this policy has been sent to the Patron Body for approval.

This policy has been ratified by the BoM of St. Cronan's NS on

Signature _____

(Chairperson) _____

Date : _____

Reference Section

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007 - provides for certain changes in the hearing of Appeals under S29 of the Education Act, 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- Education Act, 1998
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
 - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
 - (2) Suspension
 - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership.
- Working Together – to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino