

We at St. Peter's Primary School believe that it is the right of every pupil and member of staff to be able to work in a safe and caring environment. We further believe that a school should be a place of learning and this learning should take place in a mutually respectful environment.

In accordance with DES (Department of Education and Science) Circular 20/90 and section 23 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, the Board of Management (following consultation with the principal, teachers and parents) are required to prepare a Code of Behaviour for the school.

The sole aim of this is to ensure that each student and staff member alike can work in a relatively disruption free, caring and safe environment.

In order to attain this, high standards of discipline are set and are expected to be adhered to by all students. These rules are put into place to benefit both students and teachers alike and are an invaluable tool in creating and maintaining a positive atmosphere in the school.

The following are the standards of behaviour that are expected in the school

1. Honesty
2. Respect for self and others
3. Kindness and willingness to help others
4. Courtesy and good manners
5. Fairness
6. Personal responsibility of one's own actions
7. Forgiveness

We appreciate the importance each staff member, as well as parents, guardians and the Board of Management play in implementing and ensuring the effectiveness of this code of discipline and each of these parties were consulted in drawing up this code.

Therefore, it is the aim of all parties concerned to work together towards achieving the following objectives.

1. For each child to be educated in a positive, friendly, safe and effective learning environment where there is respect for all. Therefore the following describe the commitment that the school expects from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:
  - Attending school regular and punctually
  - Doing one's best in class
  - Keeping the class and school rules
  - Helping to create a positive and safe environment
  - Respecting staff
  - Respecting others students and their learning
  - Participating in school activities
2. To encourage and promote good behaviour and to acknowledge the need for sanctions for inappropriate behaviours. The school plan at every opportunity to promote good behavior in the school by:
  - Positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
  - Good school and class routines
  - Clear boundaries and rules for children
  - Recognising and giving positive feedback about behavior
  - Involving the students in class rules
  - Sending home monthly reports and notes to report positive behaviours

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the school Principal and the Board of Management. However, staff should consider themselves responsible at all times for the

behaviour of all students within sight and sound of them and should respond accordingly to any incident of misbehaviour.

**There are two levels of misbehaviour within our code of behaviour:**

1. Mild Misbehaviour
2. Serious Misbehaviour

### **Examples of Mild Misbehaviour**

- Distracting or interrupting others
- Interrupting teacher
- Wandering around the classroom or school
- Fidgeting or inattention
- Deliberately wasting time
- Using bad language
- Careless or untidy work
- Breaking any of the school rules

### **Examples of some of the sanctions for mild misbehaviours**

- Discussion with the child and/or reprimand
- Home School Community Liaison teacher to inform parents
- Note home to parents in the journal
- Object causing the distraction taken until after school and returned to pupil or parent
- Additional tasks at the teacher's discretion
- Child made to sit or stand out of activity for short period
- Extra work given
- Child moved to another seat
- Other sanctions at the discretion of the class teacher

### **Examples of Serious Misbehaviours**

- Bad attitude or back-answering adults
- Teasing/Bullying
- Any behaviour that interferes with other students' learning
- Abusing and vandalising property
- Defiant behaviour
- Fighting or causing injury to others
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Incidents occurring either outside the school grounds or school hours, that either directly or adversely affect any member of the staff or the reputation of the school may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the code of behaviour. This may include but is not limited to cyber bullying. If deemed necessary, suspension, or in extreme cases expulsion may occur.
- Leaving the school grounds without permission. If this happens the child's parents will be called. If they cannot be contacted the Gardaí will be informed for health and safety reasons.

**The above are examples of serious misbehaviours but are not exhaustive.**

### **Examples of some of the sanctions for serious misbehaviours**

- Notify parents in the homework journal, by telephone, or by post.

- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal to another class
- Home School Community Liaison teacher to inform parents
- Extra work given
- Stand at the wall during lunch for a period of time
- Removal from the yard for a given period
- Send misbehaving child to the principal
- Detention in school or after school (parents will be given notice of this)
- Missed work to be made up
- A student may be given a weekly report. This report will inform parents how their child is behaving in school on a daily basis. The report will be sent home to parents on a Friday and they will be required to sign one of the reports and return it to the school.
- Suspension. If a student is suspended, they may be required to make up the time they missed (5 hours for each day of suspension). This will be at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the class teacher. This time may either be made up at lunch time or after school.
- Longer periods of suspension
- In very extreme cases expulsion from school

The school will regularly define and teach the behaviours they expect from students in class and during school assembly.

An important element of the approach to a student's inappropriate behaviour is a problem-solving approach by the school. It is an approach where the teacher and the school respond to the unwanted behaviour using these steps.

1. Gather information. Understand the factors that may be affecting behaviour.
2. Generate ideas about possible solutions.
3. Decide and agree on specific strategies (this might include behaviour modifications)
4. Implement the agreed strategy consistently

### **Physical Interventions**

When a staff member believes a child is a safety risk to either themselves or others, physical restraint may be used. In such cases, the school will follow the physical intervention policy which is available from the school upon request.

### **Notification of a child's absence from school**

When a child is absent, the parents/guardians are required to notify the school (in the school journal) as to the reason. This is important as the school needs this to fill out their records at the end of the school year.

### **Process Leading to Suspension/Expulsion**

It is the policy of St. Peter's Primary School to record incidences of consistent misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour. In the event of consistent or serious misbehaviour being recorded the following steps will be taken. Two copies of letter 1 (see appendix 1) will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil in question requesting that they talk to their child about this matter. One of these copies has to be signed and returned to the school and the other one can be kept by the parent(s)/Guardians as a record. At this time a daily record of the student's behaviour will be kept by the class teacher for a minimum of two weeks and for a longer period where deemed necessary. A copy of this letter will be sent home to the parents/guardian of the child. The problem solving approach discussed earlier will also be implemented.

If the misbehaviour continues, Two copies of letter 2 (see appendix 2) will be sent to the student's

parents. This letter will invite the parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting in the school to discuss the misbehaviour. One of these copies has to be signed and returned to the school and the other one can be kept by the parent(s)/Guardians as a record.

If after these two warnings the misbehaviour continues it will be proposed that the student will be suspended for a period of no more than three days (amount of time to be decided by the Principal). The school will follow fair process before they suspend any child. This process involves the parents/guardians right to be heard and to respond and to have the reason for the proposed suspension fully explained. If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal should write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the school will have the right to impose the sanction.

Two copies of letter 3 (see appendix 3) will be sent home advising the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspension as well as the date of the student's return to school. A phone call will also be made to ensure the parent(s)/Guardian(s) are aware of the situation. The student and/or his parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to attend a meeting in the school to discuss the inappropriate behaviour and give assurances that this behaviour will not continue. The student will be re-admitted only when these assurances are given. If the child continues to misbehave after being suspended, then the school reserves the right to immediately suspend them, without giving them the three letters of warning again.

In the event of a once-off incident of serious misbehaviour, which in the opinion of the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Management is deemed serious enough, the student will be immediately suspended (pending fair process). If the school principal deems it necessary, the school may require the parent to collect their child as soon as possible from the school. If the parent is unable to do this, the school may arrange for the child to be brought home. Two copies of letter 4 (see appendix 4) will be sent home advising the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspension as well as the date of the student's return to school. A phone call will also be made to ensure the parent(s)/Guardian(s) are aware of the situation. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student (if deemed necessary) will be required to attend a meeting in the school to discuss the inappropriate behaviour and give assurances that this behaviour will not continue. The student will be re-admitted only when these assurances are given.

Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will usually be referred to the Gardaí who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters.

If the misbehaviour continues after the suspension, the student may be immediately suspended but may be for a longer period (at the discretion of the Principal). A letter (letter 4) will be sent home. If deemed necessary, a meeting with the principal, Chairperson of the Board of Management, teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required before a child will be re-admitted. Discipline letters will not be carried forward from the previous year and therefore each child will start with a clean slate for the new school year.

Expulsion of a student, in extreme cases, will be in accordance with section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

**Please sign the section relating to the Code of Behaviour on the pupil information form stating that you have read this policy and are willing to abide by it.**