



Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

(St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

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Code of Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Behaviour has been reviewed by staff and in consultation with pupils and parents of St Laurence O'Toole's National School. It is our belief that good behaviour and discipline in a school are essential to the wellbeing of the pupils in its care and to ensure a positive learning environment for all.

RATIONALE AND AIMS

Devising a Code of Behaviour 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*

Our main aim is to create a happy, secure environment for all our pupils, within which there is a good sense of order, effective teaching and an agreed approach to behaviour.

We also aim to:

- Develop pupil self-esteem by promoting positive behaviour
- Foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others
- Foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- Encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “the standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”. The following Golden Rules were developed in consultation with all pupils in the school and are the basis for all good behaviour throughout the school. These rules apply to all areas of school life. They are:

GOLDEN RULES

1. **Be kind:** Don't hurt anyone's feelings and be polite.
2. **Be gentle:** Don't hurt anyone. Respect everyone.
3. **Listen:** Follow all instructions from staff immediately.
4. **Look after property:** Keep things clean and tidy and don't damage things.
5. **Do your best and let others do their best** at all times.
6. **Move around safely** in the yard and in the school.
7. Support friends and staff to **stop bullying** of any kind.

All parents are provided with a copy of code of behaviour prior to enrolling their pupils in the school and must give consent that they will ensure all reasonable efforts are made to ensure compliance with the code by the child.

SCHOOL MOTTO AND VALUES

Our school values were devised by staff, pupils and parents and underpin all that we do in St Laurence O'Toole's National School. Our core values are embedded in all school activities and policies and permeate throughout our Code of Behaviour. Our School Motto is: **We Aim High.**

Our Tochar Values

Teamwork

Championing Others

Cinnealtás (Kindness)

Honour

EngAged in Learning

Resilience

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

Staff are expected to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity and to implement the Code of Behaviour in a fair, consistent and reasonable manner
- Promote positive behaviour throughout the school and do their utmost to create a positive environment.
- Teach pupils the Golden Rules and regularly reinforce them.
- Listen to parental concerns and work in partnership with them in order to ensure that children are enabled to reach their full potential.
- Regularly make pupils aware of the Code of Behaviour and will remind them of the expectations throughout the school year.
- Prepare Behaviour Plans for individual children and for their classes where necessary
- Liaise with outside agencies working with specific children, for example, Tusla, Enable Ireland, CAMHS etc.
- Use circle time or other strategies to work with children to explore behaviours and promote positive behaviours
- Teach the Stay Safe programme and all aspects of SPHE curriculum
- Monitor behaviour and respond and report as appropriate

Board of Management are expected to:

- Ensure that the Code is reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary.
- Treat all pupils, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Support the Principal and staff of the school in the application of the Code of Behaviour and sanctions used.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Contribute to the development of the Code of Behaviour
- Be courteous and respectful to pupils and staff at all times
- Model and reinforce good behaviour
- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Encourage children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Attend meetings at the school if requested
- Inform the teacher in writing when children are collected early
- Provide written information for the school attendance child is absent from school
- Help children with homework and ensuring that it is completed and signed
- Ensure children have the necessary books and materials for school

- Ensure children always wear the correct school uniform
- Share any relevant information with the school which may affect a pupil's behaviour
- Make an appointment when you wish to discuss something with the school
- Be very careful of the reputations of all children
- Refrain from approaching or reprimanding another child while on school property
- Refrain from discussing teachers/staff members on social media or in a chat group (WhatsApp) in a disrespectful manner.

Pupils are expected to:

- Contribute to the development of class rules and the review of the Code of Behaviour when necessary
- Learn about taking personal responsibility for behaviour
- Appreciate the value of good behaviour to promote a positive learning environment
- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Do their best in school at all times
- Respect staff members
- Respect themselves and other pupils around them
- Allow other children to learn in a disruption free environment
- Participate in all school activities

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

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 and may pose a threat to the safety of pupils and teachers.

Our policy is to **intervene early and positively** when a pupil's behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school. Early intervention is key to our Code and the following positive behaviour strategies are used within the school.

Whole School Positive Behaviour Strategies

- All pupils must follow the **Golden Rules**.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Reward the '**Line of the Week**' with extra yard time and a trophy weekly.
- Reward '**Yard Champ**' weekly for good yard behaviour.
- Announce '**Stars of the Week**' during assembly.
- Announce any special awards/achievements that children have accomplished both in school and outside of school during assembly.

- **Classroom visits** by the Principal to do spot checks on uniform, homework, care of books, etc. The purpose of these visits is to praise good behaviour and actions and works to create a climate of respect between principal and pupils.
- Weekly **assemblies** will make reference to *Code of Behaviour* and promote good behaviour.
- Classes will operate a **Traffic Light System** to reinforce good behaviour.
- **Wow Wall** and the **School Hub** will be used to highlight and praise excellent work and achievements throughout the school
- Opportunities for children to engage in whole school committees to develop the school, such as, Student Council, Green Schools Committee, Safety Squad, Creative Schools Committee, School Choir, representation of school in Sporting activities, Table Quizzes etc.

Class Strategies for positive behaviour (*this list is not exhaustive*)

- Reward **Star of the Week/Yard Champ and other in class awards** on a weekly basis.
- **Golden Time** used as a class reward on weekly/termly basis.
- A quiet word or gesture to show **approval**
- **Positive notes/comments** in copies and sent home to parents regarding good work/improved work.
- A visit to another class or Principal for **commendation**.
- **Praise** in front of the class group.
- **Certificates** for behaviour and application awarded.
- Delegating some **special responsibility or privilege**.
- **Classroom Routines**: Used to encourage smooth transition for various school/class activities i.e., Lining up, entering the classroom, getting attention of class, keeping pupils on-task, ending a lesson, giving out materials/copies, changing activities, going to the toilet, dealing with interruptions / visitors to the classroom.
- The children take pride in seeing their writing, poetry etc. and art work displayed on the classroom walls and corridors. Each classroom is maintained as a **print rich environment**.
- **Circle Time** is used to raise self-esteem and to support the development of emotional intelligence across a range of subject areas.
- **Golden Time / Class treat**

Yard Time

The rules of the yard are the same as in the classroom. The main difference is that the class teacher may not be “on duty” during this time. Therefore, it is essential that all staff know about the Golden Rules and are able to reward and sanction for behaviour. The rules of the Traffic Light System apply in the yard. The teacher / staff member on the yard must

communicate the sanction with the class teacher at the end of the yard. All staff are made aware of pupils with Behaviour Plans and/or concerns relating to peers or behaviour.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Rewards for Good Behaviour - Traffic Light System

The school operates a Traffic Light System which is our formal system for promoting positive behaviour and dealing with misbehaviour. It operates in varying forms throughout the school. Adaptations of the Traffic Light System are made for children with Special Educational Needs and/or on Individualised Behaviour Plans (see SEN and Behaviour Plan section).

- Children all are placed on a **Green Card** at the beginning of each day. This is a visual representation and acknowledgement of their application to their learning and good conduct towards their learning and others in the class/school.
- Children are awarded **Gold Cards** in exceptional circumstances whereby they have gone above and beyond in either their learning or behaviour. Gold Cards are given when children have pushed themselves and have lived up to the Tochar Values of our school. A child who receives a Gold Card will go to either the Principal or Deputy Principal to receive praise and a gold star. The whole school body will be informed via the intercom of the child's achievements.
- In the case of unacceptable behaviour, teachers will replace a green card with a **yellow** or **orange**, as necessary. Children have the opportunity to 'win back' a green card with improvements to their behaviour.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Sanctions are used to bring about a change in behaviour by helping pupils to:

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- understand (in ways that are age appropriate) that they have choices about their own behaviour and learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

The following steps are used as part of the Traffic Light System to deal with misbehaviour while also promoting positive behaviour.

***Steps 1 to 5 are used for dealing with minor misbehaviours in the classroom and the**

yard. Steps 4 and 5 are used to deal with serious misbehaviours.

Step 1: Minor Misbehaviour: Low Level Intervention - Verbal reprimand / warning from teacher to cease misbehaviour / reasoning with pupil / advising on how to improve / encouraging acceptance of responsibility

Step 2: Verbal reprimand and warning to improve behaviour and to stop unacceptable behaviour. **Yellow Card given to pupils** as a visual reminder to modify behaviour. Pupil may be removed from their seat to another seat within the classroom to complete work assigned by the teacher).

Step 3: Persistent Minor Misbehaviour: **Orange Card** - Pupil removed to another classroom to complete classwork. Pupil gives an orange card to the other teacher. The teacher communicates with the child to establish when they are ready to return to their classroom.

Step 4: **Red Card** – If behaviour persists, the child is given a Red Card and Reflection Sheet. This Reflection Sheet will be completed in the presence of either the Principal or Deputy Principal (see appendix attached). This Reflection Sheet will be sent home and signed by parents to ensure that they are aware of unacceptable behaviour in school. A phone call may be made to parents notifying them of the Red Card received. The Reflection Sheet will be brought back to school the next day. All Red Cards are recorded and kept on file in the Principal's office.

For Serious Misbehaviour a child may move straight to a Red Card.

Step 5: **Persistent Red Cards – meeting held with teacher/principal and parent** to discuss child's behaviour and possible strategies to deal with it. Individual Behaviour Plan may be developed at this stage (see below).

More Serious Behaviour

It was agreed that some misbehaviour must be dealt with differently to the above due to the serious nature of it and the threat to the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. More serious behaviours are those defined, below, and generally refer to physical or verbal aggression. Behaviour can be divided into Minor, Serious and Gross Misbehaviour. As behaviour is subjective, it is difficult to define which behaviour fits into which definition. For example, age, areas of needs, intention etc are factors that can influence whether a behaviour is deemed serious or minor. Therefore, the following lists are not exhaustive and may overlap. In all cases, the teacher and/or principal will have the right to define a behaviour based on their own professional judgement.

Defining Behaviour

Minor misbehaviour

talking out, looking behind, out of seat, distracting others, messing/fidgeting, swinging on chair, misbehaving in lines, fighting, time wasting, calling other pupils names, being unkind to others. This list is not exhaustive.

Serious misbehaviour

any persistence of minor unacceptable behaviours, laughing rudely, answering back disrespectfully, shouting out of turn, slugging/teasing others, unacceptable language between pupils, excluding, verbal abuse, deliberate damage to property, bullying, defiance, refusal to carry out teachers' instructions. This list is not exhaustive.

Gross misbehaviour

aggressive threat of violence, abusive language towards teacher, violent actions of any kind, physical abuse towards staff member, deliberate persistent misbehaviour, racial abuse, aggression/harming other pupils either physically or emotionally, cyberbullying, inappropriate use of IT equipment, inappropriate use of mobile phone/internet or social media apps, leaving school without permission, damage to school property, deliberately leaving school grounds without permission, intentional sexual harassment, intentional unsafe behaviour, possession of a weapon, intentional theft of an item of value. This list is not exhaustive.

Step 6: Suspension - Dealing with Serious / Gross misbehaviour

- a) **If Step 5 is exhausted or there is a single incident of gross misbehaviour, steps 1 to 4 will be skipped.** The Principal will request a meeting with parents. If considered warranted the Principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for up to 3 days initially, on note to the Board of Management. The parents/guardians may have to collect the pupil immediately from school if the principal deems it necessary. Parents will be invited to come to the school and discuss the behaviour with the principal/class teacher and will have the opportunity to respond.

Physical violence: Yard suspension for 1-5 days (1st offence), sent home and/or 1-5 day suspension (2nd offence and beyond)

Verbal aggression: Removal from classroom / yard (1st offence), sent home and/or 1-5 day suspension for 3 or more offences

- b) Suspension will occur where: the pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of others; their presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety; the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property; the pupil's behaviour has a negative impact on the work of the school.
- c) A written letter will be given to parents detailing the behaviour and consequences of current and future misbehaviour.
- d) In certain circumstances the Principal with the approval of the chairperson of the BOM may suspend a pupil for 3 school days or more. Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- e) Where a pupil has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days, the National Education Welfare Board is notified using the standard form. Forms are available on www.newb.ie.
- f) The following procedures will be followed to ensure fairness when excluding a pupil:
 - Have all other means of dealing with the behaviour been tried?
 - Has there been previous communication with parents regarding misbehaviour?
 - Are parents invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude?
 - Has a fair investigation taken place, taking parents/ and pupil's perspective into account?
 - If the BOM is likely to reach a decision to exclude a pupil, how will it ensure the decision will be reached in an unbiased manner?
 - In certain cases, suspension will have to occur without exploring other avenues in some cases of Gross Misconduct.

The Principal will inform the parents of the decision to either suspend a pupil within the school day (yard suspension) or outside of school.

- A written letter will be given to the parents.
- At the end of the period of suspension the parents must accompany the student to the office to give a firm and binding commitment that there will be a marked improvement in the behaviour of the student.
- If there is no improvement in the student's behaviour further action may be taken. This may include longer suspension or expulsion under the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

d) 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.

f) A written record of the investigation and decision-making in relation to the pupil concerned, as well as any relevant reports, will be kept by the school.

Step 7: **Expulsion:** This procedure may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Section 23 of The Education Welfare Act 2000.

Grounds for Expulsion

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

AUTOMATIC EXPULSION

BOM may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Possession or supply of illegal substances in the school
2. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
3. Actual violence or physical assault to another pupil or member of staff.
4. Sexual assault
5. Any other gross misbehaviour that the BOM deems to warrant expulsion

In imposing expulsion as a sanction, due regard will be given to the following:

- Nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- Context of the behaviour
- Impact of the behaviour
- Interventions already implemented to deal with behaviour
- Whether expulsion is an appropriate response
- Possible impact of expulsion

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION

Step 1:

The Principal informs the pupil and their parents in writing about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and the possibility that this investigation might lead to an expulsion. Parents and pupil will be given the opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

Step 2

A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

Step 3

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.

Step 4

Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

Step 5

Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 6

Confirmation of the decision to expel. In the event that the Board of Management of St. Laurence O'Toole's National School invokes its right to expel a student, the steps listed above will be followed, as detailed in the National Educational Welfare Board publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" Appeals Process A decision to expel may be overturned if directed by the Department of Education and Science (following a Section 29 Appeal).

Children with Special Educational Needs

All pupils are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that pupils with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Planning to encourage positive behaviour may be included in the pupil's Classroom Support Plan, School Support Plan or School Support Plus Plan, which are drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians and the class teacher, special education teacher and/or the Principal. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times and professional advice from psychological assessments will be taken into consideration. Special Needs Assistants will be deployed where necessary and can help some pupils to comply with the Code.

Please refer to the school's *Behaviours of Concern Policy* for more information on management of behaviours of concern and the development of Individual Behaviour Plans.

Individualised Behaviour Plan

An Individualised Behaviour Plan will be devised where it is deemed necessary in order for a pupil to engage positively in the school environment. Children with particularly challenging behaviour may benefit from a Behaviour Support Plan.

- This plan will set out the attainment of a particular behaviour target over a short period of time e.g., day/ week.
- The plan will generally focus on the improvement of an agreed behaviour (one at a time).
- The achievement of the target is to be reinforced positively.
- Children may be part of the process of setting the agreed target. If the child has access to resource/support teacher time on the basis of behavioural needs, the resource/support teacher may be in a position to discuss the Behaviour Support Plan and/ or set targets in consultation with the class teacher.
- Referral will be made to NEPS and other appropriate agencies if it is felt that the issue will not be solved in the short-term.

BULLYING

St Laurence O'Toole's N.S., strives to be a positive and safe environment for all members of the school community. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Teachers have a professional duty to address bullying and the school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which includes action to be taken in relation to the alleged breaches of the school's anti-bullying policy. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the Code of Behaviour. Parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

PLAN FOR REVIEWING CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the school community and ratified by the Board of Management.

Refer to:

Anti – Bullying Policy

Behaviours of Concern Policy

School Tours, Outings and Sporting Activities Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

Communication with the School Policy

Parental Complaints Procedures

Ratified by the Board of Management:

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff, parents and pupils and ratified by the Board of Management.

Date: 20th June 2023

Signed:

Jamie Fitzmaurice

Chairperson

Sinéad Sharkey

Principal



Scoil Naomh Lorcán O'Tuathail

(St. Laurence O'Toole's National School)

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Reflection - Code of Behaviour

Your child is in breach of the Code of Behaviour of the school and has received a Red Card as per our Traffic Light System.

Which golden rule have I broken?

- ☐ **Be kind:** Don't hurt anyone's feelings and be polite.
- ☐ **Be gentle:** Don't hurt anyone. Respect everyone.
- ☐ **Listen:** Follow all instructions from staff immediately.
- ☐ **Look after property:** Keep things clean and tidy and don't damage things.
- ☐ **Do your best and let others do their best** at all times.
- ☐ **Move around safely in the yard** and in the school.
- ☐ Support friends and staff to **stop bullying** of any kind.

What could I do better next time?

Teacher signature:

Student signature:

Parent signature:

Date:

