

**St. Mary's Special School  
Drumcar**

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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### **Introductory Statement**

We aspire to offer the highest quality of education to our students. Our individual education programme (I.E.P.) is directed towards the needs of the student, helping and enabling each student to reach his / her full potential. The I.E.P. is drawn up in consultation with the parents /guardians. Each parent/guardian receives a copy of the plan for their child at an agreed date during the first term of the school year. Our aim is that this approach to education will prepare each student for life to the best of his / her ability.

Consistent with the philosophy of the Hospitaller Order of St John of God, the school actively seeks to promote an ethos which is safe, welcoming, understanding, tolerant, caring, supportive and which acknowledges the inherent value, respect and dignity of each person.

The school:

- Supports a positive approach to teaching and classroom management skills and whole school development
- Works together as a team to create a climate where each student feels valued
- Encompasses an educational approach to assisting students to advance their learning and academic progress through the use of Individual Education Plans within a progressive and structured curriculum
- Encourages high expectations of all
- Recognises that the quality of teaching, the long term personal development of the students and the quality of relationships in a school are fundamental to developing positive learning attitudes in students
- Understands that careful planning and sensitive interventions in a classroom may considerably impact upon an individual student
- Promotes an enhanced quality of life and a safe environment for everyone
- Supports the delivery of needs-based training for staff
- Fosters the emotional well being of all students and staff

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this code of behaviour is to ensure

1. A safe, secure, stimulating and appropriate learning environment for all our students
  - That the individuality of each student is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each student to education in a relatively disruption free environment

## **Aims**

- To provide guidance for students, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To create a positive learning environment that facilitates, encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To achieve a harmonious environment, nurturing the potential of all our students and seeking to enhance co-operation between staff, parents and students.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are known through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication. This code of behaviour is presented to all parents/guardians.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a safe environment for staff and students
- Provide relevant Staff Training
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code of behaviour

The adults encountered by the students at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the students and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the students.

#### Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required
- Communicate with Parents.

#### Staff Responsibilities

- Support the Principal in implementing the school's code of behaviour.
- Promote a positive climate in the classroom and in the school

#### Teachers Responsibilities

- Create a positive learning environment that facilitates, encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- Include behaviour targets when planning for class/individual student
- Communicate with parents/guardians regularly
- Keep records as deemed appropriate (see Appendices)

#### Students' Responsibilities

Students are encouraged to;

- To understand and practice the school rules
- cooperate with the school staff
- treat other students with respect

#### Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

- Support the implementation of the code of behaviour
- Communicate with the school in relation to any issues which may affect their child's behaviour or general well-being

## Methods of Communication with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to all issues concerning their child's well being and education. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing an agreed approach 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.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in their child's life which may affect the child's behaviour

The following methods are used at all levels with the school

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher (Planning IEP and end of year)
- Phone calls from school to home and home to school
- Daily communication notes ( for some students – following consultation with parents/guardians) Ref. Sample Daily Communication Note (Appendix 4)
- Letters/notes from school to home and home to school
- Website, Text a parent

## **Limitations and utilisation**

This document is not designed to list all the possible violations which may arise nor to state all the possible consequences of unacceptable behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the student, the teacher, the principal and parents/guardians of students to be used to solve individual problems.

## **School Rules / Incentives**

- The students bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. Together we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of mutual respect, consideration and responsibility. Our students need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. There is a whole school approach to affirm and promote good behaviour.

### Appropriate behaviour

We encourage our students to keep all the school rules, i.e.

- Be nice
- Be healthy
- Be safe
- Be careful of their things
- Be calm
- Work quietly
- Not to hurt other people
- Tell the truth
- Listen to their teachers

### **Outside School activities:**

Students involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

### Inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. 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.

The behaviours listed below, while not exhaustive, may be considered serious offences but need to be qualified on an individual basis.

### Examples of serious/gross misbehaviour

- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Behaviour that compromises the safety of an individual or a group while on an outing
- Persistent refusal to take instruction
- Leaving class without permission (storming out and not returning within a specified time)
- Stealing

- Damaging or throwing property during school activities and not responding to immediate correction
- Absconding from the school grounds or from school activities
- Abusive / violent language directed towards student or staff member (shouting, screaming etc) harassment by word, action or gesture. Threatening behaviour towards other students or staff.
- Bullying to the point where another student or staff member is upset or frightened (in all school related activities).
- Any physical attack - hitting another student or staff member/kicking another student or staff member/biting another student or staff member/pulling the hair of another student or staff member/attempting to choke another student or staff member/spitting at another student or staff member and not responding to immediate correction.

While we endeavour to achieve the highest level of behaviour among our students, we recognise that when implementing the policy, consideration must always be given to the level of understanding of the individual student. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable

### **Bullying**

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.

### **Sanctions Strategies**

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- Sanctions must be age and ability appropriate
- It must be clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- It should be the behaviour rather than the student that is the focus



The following steps will be taken when students behave inappropriately. 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 the sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again.

- Disapproving look
- Reasoning with student
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Being last / missing turn
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
- Loss of privileges
- Delaying activity (Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety)
- Communication with parents ( Letter or phone call home)
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with parents (Appendix 2 Sample letter)
- 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).

### **Suspension/Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Suspension/expulsion will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of a gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to secure the safety of the students/staff, the board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three days. Every reasonable effort will be made to contact the parents prior to suspension.

Parents will also receive details of suspension in writing. In extreme circumstances, emergency services may be contacted.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 200. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

#### Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents /guardians may apply to have the student reinstated to the school. The Principal must be satisfied that a suspended student will not constitute a risk to the students own safety or that of other students or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the student if required and will re- admit the student formally to the class.

#### School records

- Teachers record details of the incident on an Incident Report Form. Teachers submit reports to the Principal.

#### Ref. Incident Report Form

- Incident reports are stored in a designated file in the Principals office
- Documentation related to Suspension/ Expulsion is stored by the Principal

#### Appeals Procedure

Under section 29 of the Education Act (1998) Parents / Guardians (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including;

- Permanent exclusion from a school
- Suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year (Curricular 22/02)

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the School was notified to the Parents / Guardians.

#### Reference to other Policies

#### Success Criteria

- 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

This policy should be read in conjunction with St. John of God School, Challenging Behaviour Policy