

**Catherine McAuley Junior School/ Bunscoil Nic Amhlaidh  
New Ross, Co. Wexford**

**Code of Behaviour**

**Introductory Statement**

This code was devised, in consultation with staff and parents of Michael St. N.S., in line with *Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools NEWB*. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Catherine McAuley Junior School on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

A copy of the Code will be distributed to parents on the enrolment of their child.

**Rationale**

The Code has been reviewed to include:

- \* The standards of behaviour expected of each child attending the school.
- \* The measures to be taken when a child fails or refuses to observe those standards
- \* The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled
- \* The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school

**Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school**

As a Catholic school, Catherine McAuley Junior School, strives to create an environment in which each member of our school community feels valued and is given an opportunity to grow and to develop to their full potential spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and physically, as individuals and as members of society.

**Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

- All pupils are expected to have self-respect and to behave in a manner that is respectful towards adults, towards each other, towards school property and the property of others.
- We expect and encourage our children to be polite, friendly, kind, co-operative and well-behaved.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school regularly and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

**Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

Each child is entitled to feel safe when in school and to be educated in an environment that is relatively disruption-free. To create such an environment we have a Code of Behaviour which aims to be fair and consistent.

In order to create a positive learning environment and a friendly, safe atmosphere in the school, the focus will be on praising and encouraging good behaviour and co-operation. We aim to develop in the children, the ability to make good choices and the ability to accept responsibility for their actions and words.

A whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour is taken.

**The role of the Board of Management**

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for discipline in the school and for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared and implemented. In the day-to-day running of the school that responsibility rests with the Principal.

The Board will play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

Through the Principal, the Board will consult the staff and parents in reviewing the Code.

The Board will make sure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in developing and implementing the Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management will formally record the adoption of the Code of Behaviour(Code), the commencement date and decisions about when the Code will be reviewed.

The BOM will support the Code by providing for opportunities for staff development and by implementing the procedures in place to deal with serious breaches of the code of behaviour.

### **The role of the teacher**

- \* Each class teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of good order in his/her own classroom while sharing responsibility and working with the whole staff to maintain good order in the school premises and in the playgrounds.
- \* Teachers will model the behaviours that are expected
- \* The teacher will help the children to formulate the Golden Rules for their class and will make sure that all the children are aware of the rules and the consequences of not observing the rules.
- \* The teacher will use classroom management strategies that promote good behaviour e.g. trophy for "The best that I can be", Star of the week/table of the week, Incredible Years individual behaviour target charts etc.
- \* Relationships of mutual trust grow between pupils and teachers through the fair and consistent implementation of the rules.
- \* The Code will be made available to new members of staff and will be communicated to the new member by the Principal and the other members of staff.
- \* All teachers/SNAs will avail of Incredible Years Training in school, facilitated by NEPS and sponsored by the Board, over a two year period 2016-2018.

### **The Role of Parents**

The Code is likely to work well where parents can make meaningful contributions to the development and review of the Code, drawing on their expectations, insights and experience. It will help to underline parental responsibility for their child's behaviour.

- Co-operation between staff and parents is encouraged by an open-door policy where parents can meet the teacher briefly in the morning (8.45-9am) or can make an appointment for after school if necessary.
- The Parents' Association will be involved in the review of this policy. The general parent body will be notified of the review and will be invited to participate if they wish.
- The Code will be given to parents on the enrolment of their child.

Parents have the responsibility to support the Code by

- \* Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- \* Encouraging their child to do their best and take responsibility for their work.

- \* Being aware of and co-operating with the school's rules and the system of rewards and sanctions.
- \* Supporting and promoting the rules at home
- \* Attending meetings in the school if requested.
- \* Modelling good behaviour towards others and promoting a positive and respectful attitude towards school
- \* Helping with homework and ensuring that it is completed.
- \* Ensuring their child has the necessary books and materials for school.
- \* Parents should not assume that the school is aware of problems that their child may be experiencing and should inform the school in order that the matter can be dealt with.

### **The role of the pupils**

- \* As a pupil is more likely to support the Code when s/he has helped to develop it, the pupils in each class will draw up the Golden Rules for their class.
- \* Each child will be expected to be aware of and follow the school rules and to play his/her part in keeping himself/herself safe, by avoiding rough play and by looking out for each other.
- \* The children will have the opportunity to reflect on the Code of Behaviour by discussion, as situations arise during the course of the school day.

### **School rules**

- ❖ Each child is expected to show respect to others at all times.
- ❖ S/he is expected to do what s/he is told and is expected to be attentive and to participate in all school activities.
- ❖ A child may not leave the classroom without the permission of the staff member in charge. All Junior Infants and Senior Infants must be collected. A First/Second class pupil may go home on their own but only with written permission of parents.
- ❖ When in the classroom during breaks/lunch-time each child is expected to play quietly.
- ❖ Each child shall keep his/her classroom tidy and free from litter. As part of our Green-School Campaign a prize will be awarded to the tidiest classroom each week.
- ❖ Each child is expected to take good care of his/her books, belongings and school property.
- ❖ The children will not have anything that would cause harm to themselves or others. Toys which encourage rough play, are not allowed in the school.
- ❖ The children will not have dangerous substances or chewing gum on the school premises.

### **Yard rules**

- ❖ Each child will play in his/her designated class area in the yard.
- ❖ Incidents in the yard will be dealt with by the teacher on duty.
- ❖ The adult on yard supervision must be obeyed at all times.
- ❖ Rough and/or dangerous play is not acceptable. Any such behaviour should be reported to the teacher on duty by the children or by the other adults on duty in the yard. Yard motto is "Tell to be safe".

- ❖ The play areas used by the children may change in accordance with the needs of the children.
- ❖ A child must get permission to go into the school building during playtime.
- ❖ The toilets in Classroom 3 must be used when going to the toilet from the yard. There will be an SNA on duty at these toilets during yard times.
- ❖ A child may not leave the school grounds without permission.
- ❖ Accidents must be reported to the teacher on duty immediately.
- ❖ The children are expected to keep the yard litter-free.
- ❖ When the bell goes, the children are expected to line up in an orderly fashion.

There will always be two adults on duty with each class grouping, one of whom will be a teacher. The teacher on duty will normally deal with unacceptable behaviour in the yard.

In the case of a serious incident or accident in the yard the class teacher and the Principal must be informed. Parents will be notified of a serious incident.

### **Strategies for dealing with misbehaviour in the school yard.**

1. Reasoning with pupil including discussion about making good choices/bad choices and how his/her actions can put the child himself/herself or others in danger. The emphasis will be on addressing the behaviour rather than labelling the child.
2. Loss of privileges. If the child continues to behave badly s/he may be separated from his/her peers for a short period of time and have a time out in a designated area in the school yard.
3. If the child continues to misbehave in the yard s/he will hold the teacher's hand and his name will be recorded in the Incidents Copy. This sanction will be particularly appropriate when a child's behaviour is likely to cause harm to himself/herself or to others.

The teacher on duty will record any incidents of serious misbehaviour in the yard in the Incidents Copy and on Aladdin.

### **Positive strategies for managing behaviour in the classroom**

The following positive strategies will be used to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

- \* Clear behavioural expectations which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- \* Pupil input in devising the rules
- \* Frequent reminders of expected behaviours
- \* Positive feedback and praise for good behaviour
- \* A clear system for acknowledging good behaviour
- \* Class reward systems e.g. Golden Time, stickers for Star of the Week, Table of the week etc.
- \* Trophy for The Best that I can be.
- \* Incredible Years Individual Behaviour Targets Charts

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to at any time.

The following strategies may be used for dealing with inappropriate behaviour in the class room

1. Reasoning with pupil including discussion about making good choices/bad choices and how his/her actions can put the child himself/herself or others in danger. The emphasis will be on addressing the behaviour rather than labelling the child.

2. Loss of privileges e.g. going to the library, visiting fire-station, lost minutes from Golden Time.

If the child continues to behave badly s/he may be separated from his/her peers for a short period of time and have a time out in a designated area in the classroom.

3. In some circumstances when all other strategies have not worked the child may be removed to another classroom during class time for a short period.

Teachers will keep a written note of all instances of serious/persistent misbehaviour.

5. Reduced hours in school may be considered in consultation with parents/guardians in extreme cases.

4. An Individual Behaviour Plan may be put in place for children with behavioural difficulties. This will be done in consultation with the parents/guardians.

5. In the event of serious breaches of discipline or the failure to resolve issues between the teacher, pupil and parent, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will invite the parents in for discussion.

6. If it is felt that a child needs extra support, he may be referred to the Drop-In Clinic at the Health Centre or to the NEPS psychologist and/or other support agencies such as Tusla/Springboard and Youth New Ross. This will be done in consultation with the Parents/Guardians.

The class teacher will keep records of serious incidents of misbehaviour on Aladdin.

Behaviour will be discussed at the formal Parent/Teacher Meeting and at more regular meetings if necessary.

Reference will also be made to behaviour in the School report at the end of the year.

### **Involving parents in management of behaviour difficulties**

- Parents will be notified at an early stage, if there is serious or persistent misbehaviour. The class teacher will work in partnership with the parents and the child, to foster a change to more positive attitudes and behaviours in the child.

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

- Aggressive and violent misbehaviour is a very rare occurrence but when it does occur it is very disruptive and causes a great deal of stress for those involved. When faced with a potentially violent situation the teacher will call for assistance using the Red Book. In Glaisín (Special Needs Unit) the red button will be used.
- The following steps will be used to de-escalate the situation.  
The child will be isolated by one or more other members of staff. This may involve exiting the child from the room or removing the other children from the room.  
The child will be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully.  
The teacher/SNA will stay at a safe distance.  
It will be made clear to the child that s/he is being listened to. This may help identify the cause or the possible resolution to the problem.  
The child will be asked to consider possible positive outcomes.

- The child will be given space and time to cool off and to respond to requests.
- In the case of a child with (Severe) Emotional and Behavioural difficulties, parents will be involved from the outset.
- The child will be referred for psychological assessment as a matter of urgency.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser appropriate supports will be sought e.g. SNA support
- The class teacher will devise an Individual Behaviour Plan in consultation with the Principal, the parents and the psychologist.
- Access to professional development will be made available to the staff working with a child with aggressive or violent behaviour e.g. SESS, ICEP, Colleges of Education, Education centres.
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour is regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. The child's parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss the child's behaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of gross misbehaviour the Chairperson of the BOM will be informed.

The parents will be invited in writing to meet with the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period.

- **If the school needs to use physical restraint to ensure the safety of the child himself/herself, other children or the staff, parents will be called in immediately. Expert advice will be sought. Legal advice will be sought. Reference: INTO publication Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for teachers.**

## **Suspension**

1. Access to education shapes the life chances of children in a fundamental way. For this reason a proposal to exclude a student either through suspension or expulsion, is a serious step, warranted only by serious misbehaviour.
2. When there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour which have not been sorted by communication between the pupil, teacher, parents and Principal, the Chairman of the Board of Management will be informed and the Parents/Guardians will be invited, in writing, to attend at the school to meet the Chairman and the Principal. Both the parents and child will be required to give an undertaking that the child will behave in an acceptable and safe manner in the future.
3. If the student/parents/guardians fail to attend or refuse to give such an undertaking, then the Principal will write to them, advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The BOM has the authority to suspend a pupil. Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.
4. Fair procedures will be followed. The child will have the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.
5. Two members of staff will investigate and present a report to the Principal who will then make a recommendation to the BOM. A person who alleges the misbehaviour, who is a witness or who is a victim will not conduct the investigation. A child may be suspended if his/her behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of others, if his/her presence constitutes a threat to safety or if the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property. Then the child may be suspended for a temporary period pending a meeting of the B.O.M. to consider the matter. An emergency meeting of the BOM will take place within 10 days. Parents will be invited

to make a submission to the Board. Parents will be informed that they have a right of appeal to the Board.

6. The period of suspension will not be open ended.

The Principal will notify the Parents/Guardians in writing of the decision to suspend.

The letter will confirm:

- The length of the suspension and the dates the suspension will begin and end.
- The reason for the suspension
- A study programme to be followed.
- Arrangements for the child's return to school
- The provision of an appeal to the BOM and to the Secretary General of the DES

A plan for the re-integration of the pupil will be agreed by the pupil, parents/guardians and the school.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- \* The investigation
- \* The decision-making process
- \* In the case of suspension, the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The Principal will report all suspensions to the BOM with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension in accordance with NEWB guidelines (Ed. Welfare Act 2000 section 21(4)(a)).

The BOM will review the use of suspensions in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of behaviour are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that the use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

## **Expulsions**

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour and would only occur when the school authorities have tried other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety of staff and/or other pupils
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- This is not an exhaustive list.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation, carried out under the direction of the Principal, including written notice to the parents of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation and a meeting with the student and parents to discuss the alleged misbehaviour. A written record will be kept.
2. A recommendation to the BOM by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
5. Deliberations by the BOM and actions following the hearing.
6. A formal record will be made of the decision made by BOM.

7. Consultations with Principal, parents and student organised by the Educational Welfare Officer.

8. On confirmation of the decision to expel, parents and student will be notified of the right to appeal and will be provided with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- \* The investigation
- \* The decision-making process

#### Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (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 (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. Accordingly, parents will be advised of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. 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)

- Parents/guardians will be informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion by the chairperson of the BOM in writing.
- The Chairman of the BOM and the Principal will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

Documentation pertaining to Appeals will be held at school level.

#### **Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

It is the policy of this school that *parents must notify the school of a child's absence by letter or phone message*. Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) These messages will be recorded and kept in the pupil's class file.

The school will liaise with the NEWB official notifying him/her of pupils with more than 20 absences in a school year and of pupils whose pattern of non-attendance gives cause for concern.

#### **Reference to other Policies**

The Code of Behaviour is supported by work in SPHE, the Anti-Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy, Adult Anti-Bullying Policy, the Policy on Home/School links, Equality policy and the policy on Special Educational Needs.

#### **Success criteria**

- \* Observation of positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and school environment
- \* Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- \* Consistent implementation of procedures by staff

This Code of Behaviour has been formulated in the best interests of your child, to create a safe, co-operative and happy environment in which your child will blossom and grow.

We hope to work together with you, to achieve your child's full potential and to enable the development of all the children in our school.

**Ratification & communication**

The Code of Behaviour was ratified by the BOM on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

**Timetable for review**

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed every two years by the BOM.