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## Code of Behaviour

### Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed and updated in line with Department of Education & Skills (DES) and National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) guidelines by the school community of St Michael's National School. It will form the basis for the interaction of the different relationships within the school community, i.e. adult/adult, adult/child and child/child. It will also inform new and temporary teachers of the Code of Behaviour in the school. In formulating this document, the following sources were consulted:-

- ***Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB: 2008)**
- **Code of Behaviour SMNS 2004/5**
- **School Development Planning Support (Primary) in conjunction with Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)**
- **INTO website**
- **Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN)**
- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Admissions Policy**

Various groups within the school community worked on aspects of the Code i.e. pupils, Board of Management (BOM) and staff. (In this document all page numbers referenced are from the NEWB Guidelines).

### Rationale

The revision of the Code of Behaviour is a legal requirement, due to the amendment section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* in the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*. "It provides for a range of factors, which must be considered by an Appeals Committee in relation to suspensions and expulsions." (p.7)

In addition, it allows for the special provision of a modified Code of Behaviour in respect of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This modification can only be allowed with due consideration for the safety of all pupils and adults in the school and for the preservation of public and personal property. This modification is also at the discretion of the principal in conjunction with the Board of Management.

## **Ethos of the School and Relationship to the Ethos**

This school is under the patronage of the Church of Ireland. In line with the Department of Education & Skills' advice that "a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school", the Board of Management and the staff seek to create a Christian ethos and approach within the school. Children are expected to take part in the whole life of the school. St. Michael's N.S is a school where moral values such as honesty, fairness, justice, truthfulness, tolerance, concern for and a responsible attitude towards others is fostered and encouraged. Therefore, the staff of the school strives to create a happy, safe environment for the children where they feel secure and included, knowing that if they have concerns, they will be listened to with understanding and respect and that these concerns will be acted upon. The school promotes the development of self-esteem and encourages the child's inner sense of responsibility.

## **Philosophy**

The philosophy of St. Michael's N.S. is to educate pupils in a friendly atmosphere and to develop high standards of social and moral behaviour. An opportunity is provided for each child to reach his/her full potential and to develop the capacity to think clearly, creatively and critically. Parents are encouraged to get to know and understand what is happening within the school through contact and discussion with members of staff and to take advantage of the opportunity provided for consultation. Co-operation among the groups within the school community is encouraged, with everyone endeavouring to show mutual respect. It is firmly believed within this school community that children also learn from the example of their elders. Older pupils are given the limited and supervised responsibility of looking after younger pupils.

## **Aims**

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St Michael's N.S. are:

- To provide guidance for pupils and adults on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem & self-discipline and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance 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 promote understanding and tolerance of differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Pupil rights**

- To be educated in a disruption free classroom
- To be treated fairly, consistently and with respect
- To have their individual differences recognised and provision to be made for these differences
- To be listened to and to ask questions, at appropriate times
- To have their positive behaviour affirmed and their misbehaviour addressed appropriately

### **Pupil responsibilities**

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To work quietly and safely, to the best of their ability
- To listen to their teachers and to act on instructions and advice
- To listen to other pupils and to wait their turn to speak
- To show respect for all members of the school community
- To respect the rights of other pupils to learn
- To care for their own property and to respect all school property and property of other pupils
- To avoid behaving in a way, which would endanger themselves or others
- To contribute to good order in the school, by moving quietly around the school and by keeping the school clean and tidy
- To inform their teacher or a staff member immediately when an incident occurs
- To bring the correct materials and books to school
- To follow school and class rules and procedures

### **Teacher rights**

- To be treated with respect and dignity by all members of the school community
- To be able to teach in a safe, well-maintained environment, free from disruption
- To have the support and co-operation of all staff colleagues, parents and Board of Management, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the school
- To work in an atmosphere which encourages professional development
- To consult with pupils and parents informally and formally, when their professional judgement deems it necessary

### **Teacher responsibilities**

- To support and implement the school's code of behaviour consistently and for the duration of the academic year
- To create a warm, safe, welcoming environment for each pupil
- To develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- To facilitate each pupil to reach their full academic potential, by recognising and providing the individual talents

and differences among the pupils

- To be courteous, consistent and fair, while keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum and addressing misbehaviour appropriately
- To use their professional judgement, to decide when it is necessary to communicate with parents and to provide reports on matters of mutual concern
- To keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated misbehaviour (Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS)

### **Parent/ guardian rights**

- To be treated with respect
- To have a safe and welcoming environment provided for their child
- To expect that there will be a recognition of the individual differences among pupils
- To expect that there will be fairness and consistency in the way the pupils are treated
- To communicate with teachers by appointment on matters of mutual interest or concern
- To expect contact at an early stage to discuss difficulties and/or problems
- To receive regular communication on the school's policies and procedures
- To be consulted in relation to the school's Code of Behaviour and to appeal decisions in accordance with agreed procedures

### **Parent/ guardian responsibilities**

- To encourage pupils to have a sense of respect for themselves and others, for their property and that of others
- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To show interest in their child's education by ensuring their child has the correct books and materials and by signing homework notebooks and reading records
- To support the school in the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. It is a condition of enrolment in the school that parents agree to comply with the school's Code of Behaviour (Education Welfare Act 2000 section 23, 4)
- To co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- To communicate with the school as soon as possible in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/ behaviour

### **Supporting Policies**

This Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Management of Special Needs Policy

- Suspension Policy
- Expulsion Policy

## School Rules

Rules are colour coded:

**Red** - Safety

**Green** - Communication

**Blue** - Learning

**Yellow** - Respect

**Golden** - This rule is taught and practiced over a given period of time.

### Red Rules

1. I sit on my chair correctly.
2. I keep my hands and feet to myself.
3. I walk quietly around the school building and grounds.

### Green Rules

1. I listen when someone else is speaking
2. I wait my turn to speak

### Blue Rules

1. I try my best
2. I work quietly

### Yellow Rules

1. I am nice to everyone
2. I look after property - my own, other people's and school property

### Golden Rule

This can be reinforcement of any of the above rules or something that arises and is relevant within a particular class.

## Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

In Saint Michael's N.S. we aim to promote good behaviour, rather than merely deter unwanted behaviour. In promoting positive behaviour we aim to establish a climate where praise and encouragement far out-weigh the frequency of reminders or sanctions. We use a wide variety of strategies to this end. The below list gives some examples but is not exhaustive:

- Wait for silence and everyone's attention before talking to the whole class. This will need continual reinforcement.

- Use of non-verbal signals.
- Check that students have understood the task.
- Scan the room frequently and use praise to keep reinforcing good on-task behaviour.
- Focus on effort and on positive aspects of work.
- Encourage students to complete work in time allowed by acknowledging and rewarding task completion.
- Prepare the students for transitions from one task to another.
- Ensure that all students are treated fairly and equally.
- A word of approval - either publicly or privately, being sensitive to the age and personality of the pupil.
- Matching work with students' abilities.
- Reward Systems. These can be individual, group or whole class e.g. sticker charts, Class Dojo, extra P.E., Golden Time etc.
- Proximity control (move in close to the student that is displaying disruptive behaviour).
- Tactically ignoring misbehaviour.
- A visit to another member of staff for praise.
- Communication of positive behaviour to parent.
- Implementation of programmes such as Circle Time and Golden Time to promote positive behaviour.
- Behaviour Plan if required

## **Undesirable Behaviour**

The undesirable behaviour of pupils is categorised into minor and serious misbehaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.

*Minor misbehaviour can include:*

- Running in the hallways / when coming in and out of school
- Disturbing the learning or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests
- Interrupting class work
- Misbehaving in the line
- Leaving seat without permission at lunch time
- Littering
- Not completing homework frequently without good reason/note from parent guardian
- Not switching off and handing up a mobile phone
- Not being truthful
- Not listening to others
- Rough play

*Serious misbehaviour can include:*

- Repeated instances of minor misbehaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. pushing, shoving, hitting)
- Stealing
- Damaging property
- Bullying
- Threatening or physically hurting another person intentionally
- Engaging inappropriately on social media platforms within school
- Cyberbullying
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Using unacceptable language
- Possession of or use of dangerous toys, school equipment etc
- Bringing weapons to school, e.g. catapults, pen knives, pellet guns, etc.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin

## **Strategies to Prevent Escalation of Misbehaviour**

The following strategies may be utilised in any particular order, to prevent misbehaviour escalating:

- Non-verbal signs such as a warning look, a change in tone of voice or stopping speaking and waiting for attention
- Moving to stand in the vicinity of the pupil
- Overlooking/ ignoring behaviour while praising the pupil demonstrating the appropriate behaviour
- Moving the pupil to a quiet spot to work or temporary separation from peers
- Regular reminders and class discussions about the class rules
- Establishment of clear class and school routines to minimise opportunities for misbehaviour
- Arranging a meeting with the class teacher to discuss the behaviour.

In the event the above strategies do not work, the following will apply:

- Verbal warning
- Reasoning with the pupil (What did you do? What rule did you break? How can you fix it?)
- Loss Dojo Point / time from Golden Time / other similar consequence agreed between class teacher and class
- Time out within the classroom
- Time out in another room
- Communication with parents about behaviour causing concern
- Individual behaviour plan, in consultation with parents
- The principal requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour following three meetings with the class teacher or in the event of serious misbehaviour
- Suspension if there is no improvement following the meeting with the principal (Rule 130(5) for Primary Schools)
- Expulsion (Rule 130(6) for Primary Schools)

These steps will be followed when incidents occur out in yard:

1. Verbal warning
2. 5 minutes time out
3. Communication with parents when deemed necessary by staff members

The following sanctions may also be used:

- Completing incomplete tasks as extra homework during the week and at weekends, or during golden time
- Loss of privileges and/or classroom jobs
- Logical consequences – e.g. move to the back of the line for inappropriate behaviour in the line
- Pupil writes an account of their behaviour

## **Record Keeping**

A key part of the school's Code of Behaviour is accurate record keeping. All records are kept in an impartial and factual manner.

- Class Dojo keeps a record of points awarded and removed for each pupil.
- Staff on yard duty keep a record of misbehaviour on yard using the 'Behaviour Incident Report Form' (See Appendix A)
- Staff members write up factual accounts of incidents of behaviour that give rise for concern (including repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour).
- Serious misbehaviour is reported to the principal as soon as possible.
- The class teacher is informed by the supervising teacher of any incidents requiring follow up immediately after break

## **Restorative Justice (Appendix B)**

Restorative practices in our school provide a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence.

## **Suspension, Expulsion & Appeals (Please see Appendix C and D)**

This section of the Code of Behaviour is in direct reference to chapters 10, 11 & 12 of NEWB's Guidelines.



*The entitlement to education is protected in a range of constitutional and legal provisions and in human rights Conventions. These legal protections for the individual student's right to education mean that decisions to suspend or expel a student are open to appeal and may be subject to judicial review by the High Court. Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour. (p. 66)*

## **Suspension**

Suspension will be considered after other interventions have been tried and a review will take place as to why these interventions have not worked, except in cases where an immediate suspension is warranted. (p. 71)

For serious and continuous misbehaviour, a pupil may be suspended for a period of up to five days following the decision of the Board of Management. (The BOM must convene an emergency meeting for suspensions longer than five days and can sanction a suspension of up to a maximum of ten schooldays.)

*Serious misbehaviour is defined in the National Educational Welfare Board's (NEWB) Guidelines as:*

- a) The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students*
- b) The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety*
- c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property.*

*A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. (p. 71)*

## **Expulsion - Grounds for Expulsion:**

In most cases the school will have tried other interventions and sought advice in an effort to endeavour to change the student's behaviour.

The grounds for expulsion are similar to the grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of 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 safety.
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property. (p. 81)

In some cases, expulsion for a first offence may be warranted:

- 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.
- Serious/extreme Cyber Bullying incident

## **Complaints Procedure**

If a parent wishes to make a complaint, they should follow the procedures set out by the Board of Management. Please see *Parental Complaints Procedure* on our school website.

Signed:



The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane

**Chairperson**

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## Appendix D



Tel/Fax: 061 – 31 59 27  
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Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management (BOM) wishes to advise you that \_\_\_\_\_'s conduct while

- ☐ in school
- ☐ on the field trip
- ☐ on an out-of-school activity

has breached the schools Code of Behaviour.

The Chairperson of the Board of Management has been formally notified.

It has been decided that your child's conduct warrants a \_\_\_\_-day suspension. This begins on \_\_\_\_\_ and ends on \_\_\_\_\_.

The reason for the suspension is:

- a) ☐ the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- b) ☐ the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- c) ☐ the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- d) ☐ a single incident of serious misconduct

A copy of the Code of Behaviour is included with this letter of notification to suspend.

The BOM has a duty of care for pupils, staff, visitors and school property. The BOM formally advises you of your right to appeal.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Gleeson

Principal (On behalf of BOM)

If the BOM is of the opinion that the student should be expelled: -

- it will inform the parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process and the fact that the BOM will inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- it will notify the EWO in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, §24(1)). The student will not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification
- the BOM will refer to NEWB reporting procedures for proposed expulsions

#### 5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

Pending such consultations, the BOM may consider it appropriate to suspend a student where there is the likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of others.

#### 6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

The BOM will formally confirm the decision to expel and parents will be notified that the expulsion will now proceed where:-

- the twenty-day period following notification to EWO has elapsed
- the BOM remains of the view that the student should be expelled

Parents will be informed of their right to appeal.

#### Appeals

Parents'/guardians' right to appeal the decision of the BOM to suspend or to expel a pupil is outlined in NEWB Guidelines. (cf. pp.76 & 86) This is under Section 29 of Education Act 1998.

#### Keeping Records

All records of conversations, interviews, telephone calls or other communication dealing with each suspension should be kept in a confidential manner. (Emails are not a confidential means of communication as stated by BOM.)

Where possible, a witness should be present at the interview with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the pupil/pupils being suspended and with any other pupil or person involved in a serious incident

**\*\*NNB\*\*In each record of suspension (or expulsion) discussed and brought to the attention of the BOM, the pupil MUST be referred to as X.**

A letter of *Intent to Expel* must be sent to the parents/guardians by the BOM.

1. An investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal.

The student and his/her parents/guardians will be informed in writing about the complaint, how the matter will be investigated, and that it could result in expulsion. They will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.

2. A recommendation will be made to the Board of Management by the Principal.

Where the Principal is of the opinion that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will:

- inform the parents and the student that the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that the parents have records of
  - the allegations against the student
  - the investigation
  - written notice of the grounds on which BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the BOM with the same records as are given to parents
- notify the parents of the date of the hearing by BOM and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the BOM
- ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

The BOM will review the initial investigation. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and circumstances of the case. The Board will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

3. Where the Board decides to consider expelling a student, it must hold a hearing.

**Hearing**

The following procedure is recommended in the interests of fairness and justice.

- The Principal and parents/guardians put their case to the Board in each other's presence
- Each party should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly
- Parents may take the opportunity to make their case for lessening the sanction
- The Board will be impartial between the Principal and the student
- Parents may, if they wish, be accompanied at the hearing
- After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations

4. Following the hearing, the Board of Management will have deliberations and may proceed with the following actions.

## **Appendix C - Procedures for Suspension and expulsion.**

Fair procedures should be based on the principles of natural justice, with due regard to the rights of the whole school community.

*Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The requirement for fair procedures derives from the Constitution of Ireland, international Conventions and case law. (p. 67)*

*Fair procedures have two essential parts:*

- ***the right to be heard***
- ***the right to impartiality.***

*The right to be heard means:*

- *the right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated*
- *the right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account*
- *the right to know how the issue will be decided*
- *the right to respond to the allegations*
- *where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body*
- *where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts. (Please note that a pupil may not be questioned by the parents/guardians of the child who committed a breach of the Code of Behaviour. the parents/guardians must be present if there is to be any direct questioning. Staff, being 'in loco parentis', may question any pupil who witnessed the incident.)*

*The right to impartiality means:*

- *the right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker*
- *the right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making.*

*Freedom from bias entails ensuring that a person with an interest in the matter is not involved in the investigation or decision-making. If a person has pre-conceived opinions, a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter, they should not attempt to settle that matter.*

*An impartial process is one that allows a decision to be made based on an unbiased evaluation of information and evidence. Generally, impartiality requires that the investigation is separated from the process of making a decision so that the decision-maker comes to the task with an open mind.*

*Decision making will be impartial: the decision will be made, in an objective way, on the findings of the investigation.*

(c.f. p.68 - it is preferable for investigation to be carried out by other members of staff and the findings reported to Principal)

Where immediate suspension is warranted for the reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted and a formal investigation will follow. (c.f. p.75)

## Appendix B - Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

These questions will be used by the teachers, to give the children an opportunity to reflect children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence.

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

### *To help those harmed by other actions*

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

## Appendix A - Behaviour Incident Report 2022/2023 (filled in as Google Form)

Please complete this log for any incidents on yard duty

**\* Required**

Date\*

Date

Staff Member Recording Incident\*

Ms. Gleeson

Mr. McDonnell

Ms. Morrow

Ms. Stackpoole

Ms. Halpin

Ms. Coombs

Ms. Tynne

Ms. Robinson

Ms. Doran

Substitute Teacher

Ms. Mullane

Child's Initials\*

Your answer

Class\*

Junior Infants

Senior Infants Ms. Gleeson

1st Class

2nd Class

3rd Class

4th Class

5th Class Ms. Doran

5th Class Ms. Stackpoole

6th Class

Senior Infants Ms. Halpin

Incident\*

Rough Play

Inappropriate Language

Name calling

Arguing with teacher

Other

Description of the incident

Your answer

Action Taken\*

Class teacher informed

Verbal reminder of yard rules

Children apologised

Sent to 'red wall'

Parents/Guardians contacted