

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

St. Vincent's Convent Primary School

October 2010

Introductory Statement

This Code/Policy was jointly compiled by parents, teachers and children in St. Vincent's Convent Primary School and replaces an earlier document. The working sessions were facilitated by Margaret Reid, and the work was undertaken during the summer term 2010. The children in 4th class were consulted and their views were recorded and brought to the working group.

In developing the Code of Behaviour, the NEWB document, *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, was used.

During the policy development process, the entire teaching staff received in-service from Brendan O'Connor, NEPS Psychologist, on understanding children's behaviour. In addition, the policy-making group sought the advice of Tony O'Connor, Education Welfare Officer, on the subject of suspension and expulsion.

The Code of Behaviour was approved and adopted by the Board of Management on November 24th, 2010.

Vision for relationships and behaviour in school

St. Vincent's Mission statement says that "our pupils are given the opportunity to grow and develop to their full potential in the moral, social, cultural and intellectual spheres" and that "this is done in an atmosphere of care and concern for the individual."

The school is a community consisting of pupils, staff, ancillary staff, Board of Management and parents. It is necessary to provide a framework that promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour for the total well-being of our school as an entire community.

The group feels that a Policy, if it is to work, must be arrived at through partnership. The policy must be implemented through a partnership involving those whom the policy will affect, in this case, the whole school community.

Aims and objectives of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to achieve a happy, safe, secure and well-ordered environment which will assist the academic, personal, social and emotional development of the children. The policy further aims:

- q. To promote the growth and development of each child in an atmosphere where children are listened to respectfully and are taught to listen to others;
- q. To promote a positive approach to behaviour issues in the school through the development of a consistent sense of fairness and trust;

- q. To welcome and encourage the involvement of parents/guardians in the promotion of the good behaviour of their children;
- q. To foster good direct communication with parents in the context of their children's behaviour
- q. To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school in the management of behaviour;
- q. To ensure and promote a safe, friendly, welcoming environment within the school, where pupils through the development of self-discipline will feel secure;
- q. To ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the school rules and the Code of Behaviour and that teachers and parents will support each other and work together on all matters of discipline.

Principles

- q. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences.
- q. It is important to teach younger children what is acceptable behaviour as this is the foundation for the development of behaviour patterns in later years.
- q. Discipline issues will be managed with due consideration for the ages of the children.
- q. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, parents and pupils.
- q. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- q. Every effort will be made to promote good behaviour at all times.

Management of unacceptable behaviour

The degree of misdemeanours, i.e., minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the Principal and staff on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours. Final judgment of the category of misdemeanour will rest with the Principal. In serious cases the Chairperson of the Board may be consulted. Examples of different levels of misdemeanour are listed below together with staged steps for dealing with the misdemeanours. It should be noted that the lists of misdemeanours below are not exhaustive and will be considered with due regard to the respective ages of the children.

Examples of minor misdemeanours

- Breaking school rules occasionally
- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school occasionally without good reason
- Running in school building
- Jumping or running on stairs
- Talking in class line
- Leaving seat without permission at appropriate times
- Leaving litter in school or playgrounds
- Not wearing correct school uniform
- Being unmannerly/discourteous

Not completing homework without good reason or not having work signed by parent

Rough play in school yard at break time/hurting others (in a non-serious way)

Lack of respect for library books

Examples of serious misdemeanours

Breaking school rules consistently

Consistent engagement in minor misdemeanours

Doing anything that might pose a danger to child himself/herself or others

Damaging school property

Stealing from other children or staff in the school

Deliberate injury to another child or adult in the school environment

Being defiant

Use of bad language

Consistently not doing homework

Having a mobile phone in school without permission (Refer to Policy regarding mobile phones.)

Bullying

Examples of gross misdemeanours

Leaving school premises without permission

Smoking, drinking alcohol, use of stimulants

Repeated persistent bad behaviour, e.g., Bullying, stealing, defiance

Having inappropriate material in school

Sharing of inappropriate material

Placing of photographs taken in school on internet without written permission

Serious damage to school property

Racism

False accusations and taking of character

Organising fights while on the school premises for outside the school premises

Verbal assault

Intimidation

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards others

Child having a weapon in his/her possession

Physical assault

Reckless behaviour that would put child herself/himself or another child in danger of injury or death in the school or on school outings

Where problems arise outside of school

Problems arising outside of school will be acknowledged by the school.

Parents will be informed if they do not already know.

Problems arising from the use of mobile phones or the internet will be referred to parents. The school will not take responsibility for or intervene in incidents involving these media.

Parents may ask for help and the School may be willing to get involved to help where possible and appropriate.

Parents may be directed to agencies that may be of further help, e.g., Community Guard, Social Worker.

Behaviour management procedures

Step 1: Procedure for dealing with minor misdemeanours

- Teacher speaks with the child when an incident of minor misbehaviour occurs.
- If incidents of minor misbehaviour by a child occur on a regular basis the teacher will record the exact nature of the misbehaviour each time and date same.
- If incidents of minor misbehaviour occur in the classroom or yard at playtime the teacher on duty will communicate with the class teacher and the class teacher will record and date the misbehaviour.
- If incidents of minor misbehaviour by a child occur on a regular basis the teacher will speak to the child's parents and show them the written record of the child's behaviour.

Following consultation with the child's parents, the child's behaviour will be observed for signs of improvement.

While every effort will be made by all members of staff in adopting a positive approach to the question of behaviour in school, children must learn that there are consequences if they misbehave and that there are sanctions for episodes of misbehaviour.

Children also need to know that good behaviour will be rewarded and acknowledged, e.g., with certificates, homework credits, merit cards, pupil of the week awards, etc.

The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this positive approach will yield better results in the longer term.

Step 2: Procedure to be followed for minor misdemeanours if behaviour does not improve following Step 1

- q. After a certain number of verbal warnings a child's name will be entered in a record book in office and parents will be informed. (Entries in book will be at the discretion of each teacher, taking child's personality and home background into account. The record book must specify behaviours.)
- q. Parents will then be made aware that the Principal or delegated Post holder will speak with the child.
- q. Principal or Postholder speaks with the child and listens to the child.
- q. The Principal or Postholder makes an agreement with the child where the child agrees to change the behaviour over a specified period (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks).
- q. Principal or Postholder will meet with child again on a pre-agreed date to review the behaviour and parents will continue to be informed of the progress.
- q. All developments will be acknowledged and communicated to the child and his/her parents.

Step 3: Procedure to be followed for (a) minor misdemeanours if behaviour does not improve following Step 2; and (b) serious misdemeanours

The child will be asked to think about the behaviour, to write about it and to state what he/she will do to change behaviour. (If the child cannot write teacher will record.) In addition:

- Written work/assignment will be given at weekend and Parent/Guardian will be required to sign a note when homework is completed.
- Jobs of responsibility in school will be withdrawn.
- Detention at break time will be considered. (A specific format will be adhered to at these sessions.)
- The child will be on report to a staff member (a delegated teacher on each floor) on a daily or weekly basis, for a pre-agreed time, depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour.
- Access to trips/outings may be withdrawn.

Procedure to be followed for gross misdemeanours

- q. Where there is an incident or incidents of gross misbehaviour the Board of Management has the right to suspend a pupil subject to the provisions of the relevant acts, and the guidelines and circulars of the Department of Education and Skills.
- q. The parents/guardians will be contacted/informed.
- q. The Principal may then sanction suspension.
- q. The parents/guardians and child will be informed in writing of the date on which the pupil is to return to school.
- q. After a total of six days of suspension in any one school year the School Principal must inform the NEWB.
- q. Suspensions must be fair and reasonable – pupil must only be subjected to one suspension per misdemeanour and must never be over-punished.
- q. The Board of Management has the right to expel a pupil for a gross misdemeanour but it must first notify the EWO in writing of its opinion and reasons for the decision. The Board will not proceed to expel the pupil for at least twenty days after the notification has been received by the Education Welfare Officer.

Pupil commitment to observing code of behaviour

The school rules will be posted on a notice board on each corridor and highlighted at assemblies.

At the start of the school year, each child (1st Class – 6th Class) will sign a copy of the school rules to indicate the child's intention to abide by the rules and the parent's intention to support the rules. The children will also make commitments, as follows, under the headings, *safety*, *caring for myself* and *caring for others*.

Safety: For my own safety and that of others-

- q. I will obey the school rules.
- q. I will be careful coming to and going from school.
- q. I will walk, not run, when moving around inside the school building.
- q. I will remain seated in class when expected to do so and while eating my lunch.
- q. I will use the school gate entrance to come into the school and to leave the school and I will not travel up and down by the Convent when coming to or leaving school.
- q. I will show respect for my fellow pupils.
- q. I will always bring a note of explanation following absences.
- q. My name will be on my personal property.
- q. I will never leave the school grounds without permission of a teacher.
- q. I will be kind and not hurt others.
- q. I will not bring hot drinks to school.
- q. I will never set off the fire alarm.

Caring for myself:

- q. I will tell the teacher, my parents or a responsible adult if something is happening to me that I know or suspect is wrong.
- q. I will be in school on time each morning.
- q. I will work hard and always do my best in school.
- q. I will respect my school and always wear my complete and full school uniform.
- q. I will always bring a healthy lunch to school.
- q. I will listen carefully in class and always do my best completing all homework.
- q. I will be aware of personal cleanliness and always keep my hair neat and tidy.
- q. I will respect myself and my property, always keeping my schoolbag, books and copies in good order.

Caring for others:

- q. I will tell the teacher, my parents or a responsible adult if something is happening to another or others that I know or suspect is wrong.
- q. I will be respectful and kind towards my teachers, my schoolmates and visitors to my school by always being polite, mannerly, and remaining orderly and quiet in my class line.
- q. I will respect and keep the class and school rules.
- q. I will be careful and respect school property, always helping to keep my school clean. I will show respect for the property of my schoolmates, the school building and grounds.
- q. I will always be truthful and honest.
- q. I will treat others as I would like to be treated, fairly, with courtesy and good manners.
- q. I will celebrate others' success and will support my schoolmates and school activities.
- q. I will respect the differences in others.