



St. Mary's School, Rochestown, Cork

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

AIMS/ETHOS:

1. To provide a happy, positive teaching and learning environment for the pupils and staff of St. Mary's.
2. To promote an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
3. To promote a positive, proactive, preventative approach to discipline and behavioural issues in St. Mary's.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide staff with clear guidelines so that pupils can expect and experience consistency throughout their school day.
2. To increase and maximise the time spent by pupils on positive learning activities.
3. To reduce the time spent by staff on dealing with inappropriate and/or challenging behaviours thereby reducing the number of incidents which disrupt the work of others.
4. To encourage positive assertiveness and the ability to communicate needs in pupils.
5. To increase staff confidence when managing inappropriate and/or challenging behaviours.
6. To increase opportunities for success for all by minimising opportunities for conflict and confrontation.

A. LONG TERM POSITIVE, PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES .

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH PARENTS IN ALL AREAS cannot be overemphasised. This is especially true when managing children with behaviours that are considered challenging.

*Parents provide staff with invaluable information, advice, support and reinforcement and school staff should always seek to **work with parents as partners** in the process of developing behaviours that are appropriate and acceptable.*

1. Every effort will be made to ensure that each pupil knows what is expected of him/her at all times. This cannot be taken for granted.
2. To this end, general **School Rules** will be taught in September and at the beginning of each term. A copy of the School Rules will be sent home to parents. Parents and pupils are asked to sign a form agreeing to abide by the Code each year.
3. Each Class will draw up a more specific set of **Class Rules**, which should also be revised and reinforced continuously.



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4. Parents will be informed regularly about Rules being taught, to allow opportunity for discussion/reinforcement at home.
5. Good and/or improved behaviour as well as effort in class will be praised at every opportunity.
6. Every effort will be made to ensure that tasks and activities are appropriate to each pupil.
7. Staff are aware of the importance of modelling positive, tolerant behaviour in their interactions within the school. Every effort will be made to maintain a calm, positive approach and to demonstrate respect for all.
8. Teachers should ensure that tasks and activities are appropriate to each pupil.
9. Every effort will be made to reduce anxiety and stress where observed, thus improving the learning experience for everyone involved.

B. PREVENTATIVE BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. Redirect the pupil to another activity.
2. Distract the pupil.
3. Reason with/cajole the pupil.
4. Use social stories to clarify expected acceptable behaviour.
5. Use "planned ignoring" – (where it is safe to do so).
6. Define boundaries and space for the pupil.
7. Use praise and positive attention when the pupil is behaving acceptably
8. Use Cause/Effect or Response/Cost – (pupil's action results in a loss of privilege).
9. Use rewards to reinforce acceptable behaviour. (See below)
10. Foster peer support.
11. Use the SPHE programme as an opportunity to discuss behaviour(s).
12. Use Behavioural Support Plans (which are agreed with parents) where appropriate.
14. Encourage the pupil to assume responsibility for his/her own behaviour through the use of contracts or recording notebooks which he/she helps to fill in.

C. USE OF PRAISE / REWARDS

St. Mary's School places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, as these are more effective in the short- and long-term in boosting much-needed confidence and self-respect. The following 'menu' of possible rewards is not intended to be exhaustive and can be used at the professional discretion of the teacher, as appropriate to each pupil/class level.

1. Praise specific improved behaviour e.g. "Well done, you shared your toys" or "Very good, it's nice to see you walking in the corridor!"
2. Praise in front of peers, other teachers and especially the Principal.
3. Praise with smiles, eye contact and enthusiasm.
4. Praise with pats (when appropriate) and gestures.
5. Praise using rewards and/or tokens. Whole class effort can gain a class reward.



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6. Reward a pupil by allowing him/her to have a favoured activity or object.
7. Use "Good Work" stickers or stars to reward written work/maths.
8. Display good work.
9. Foster peer support by clapping, cheering etc.
10. Allow the pupil extra responsibility or to do a popular message etc.
11. Allow the pupil to "Be the Person in Charge".
12. Send a note home so that parents can further reward pupils if they wish.
13. Send the pupil to the principal for praise.

D. SCHOOL RULES

As stated above:

- The General School Rules will be taught in September to each class. They will be few, flexible, relevant, realistic, pupil-centred, positively stated, clear, consistent *and understood by the pupil*.
- These will include rules for different areas in the School - e.g. Rules for School Transport; Rules for Assembly; Rules for School; Rules for the Playground
- A copy of the Rules will be sent home to parents in September, with a letter informing them that these are being taught.
- Each class will draw up specific Class Rules appropriate to age and maturity level.

General Rules

1. **We wear our uniform (track suit or sports clothing as directed)**
2. **We walk everywhere in the school.**
3. **We are kind to everybody in the school.**
4. **We look after ourselves, our belongings and our school.**
5. **The use of mobile phones by pupils within the school is NOT PERMITTED.**
6. **Hands Off People & Property – HOP!**

Playground Rules

1. **We are kind to each other. (We do not hurt each other or use bad language).**
2. **Hitting, pushing and pulling on the playground are not allowed.**
3. **We try to include others in our talk and games.**

Rules for Coming in to School



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1. We leave the bus/car in a safe way.
2. We walk on the path.
3. We go directly to the hall.

Rules for the Hall

1. We walk. We never run.
2. We stand in our class line and listen.
3. We say our prayers carefully.
4. We leave the hall with our class.

The above list may be added to or modified at any time.

E. SANCTIONS

Unacceptable behaviours should be responded to immediately and consistently by **reiterating what would have been more acceptable** using positive comments and statements. Every pupil, irrespective of his/her ability must be accorded respect for his/her rights as an individual. Restrictive measures should only be adopted:

- when there is no alternative;
- in the least detrimental manner;
- for the shortest possible time;
- if they are part of the agreed policy or set of guidelines approved by the Board of Management.

Please remember the following:

The competencies and functional abilities of the pupil are crucial in deciding on the appropriate responses to unacceptable behaviour.

The pupil who presents with challenging behaviours is extremely vulnerable.

The restrictive measures listed below are not to be used to punish pupils but as part of an agreed response which is based on what is in the pupil's best interest.

The support of relevant members of the multi-disciplinary team to manage persistent unacceptable behaviour must be sought as soon as possible.

If particular sanctions are regularly being used to control the behaviour of a pupil, especially from 4-9 below, it should be recognised that the sanction being applied is not



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working. It is important at this stage to seek additional support to manage the pupil's behaviour (see supports for staff below). Parents should be contacted at an early stage and included as partners in this process.

POSSIBLE SANCTIONS to consider in cases of MINOR or NOT SO SERIOUS BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE

1. Use of facial expression.
2. Use of a firm tone of voice (not shouting).
3. Putting the pupil "on notice" of a possible consequence of his/her behaviour.
4. Quiet Time – removing the pupil from the group or activity for a short period. (Each teacher should agree an 'exit strategy' with the other adults in the room). *The amount of time should be short – the recommended guideline is one minute per year of age of pupil, to a maximum of 15mins.* The pupil should always be under the supervision of the adult.
5. Withdrawal of privileges for a reasonable period of time realistic for the individual pupil.
6. Sending a pupil to another class for a short period.
7. Sending a note home.
8. Sending a pupil to the principal.
9. Removing others from the vicinity of the pupil.

TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE OR CHALLENGING IN THE CONTEXT OF ST. MARY'S.

1. Persistent refusal.
2. Persistent non-compliance.
3. Persistent inappropriate social behaviours such as spitting, cursing, gestures, shouting, screaming, nose-blowing etc.
4. Inappropriate sexual behaviours such as touching of themselves or others, suggestive language.
5. Smoking anywhere in St. Mary's School or its vicinity.
6. Constant interruption to activities/persistent attention-seeking behaviours which regularly disrupt the work of the classroom.
7. Causing physical hurt to others such as kicking, pushing, biting, hitting, etc.
8. Causing emotional hurt to others such as teasing, bullying, getting others into trouble etc.
9. Bullying – persistent (see definition below)
10. Telling lies.
11. Damaging the property of others.
12. Damaging school property.
13. Carrying items that could be considered dangerous or detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of pupils and/or staff or could cause serious injury/damage to persons or property.
14. Using a mobile phone or having an active mobile device on the school grounds/premises/school transport.



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VERY SERIOUS/GROSS BREACHES or PERSISTENT DELIBERATE BREACHES will result in:

1. Immediate referral to Principal/ Deputy Principal, or next most senior member of staff.
2. Parents being immediately notified, and arrangements made to meet with them.
3. Separation from peers under supervision.
4. Possible immediate suspension at the discretion of the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM.
5. Referral to the BOM in cases where the Health, Safety and Welfare of pupils and/or staff is compromised.

N.B.: All forms of physical punishment are strictly prohibited and will result in immediate suspension pending investigation by the Board of Management.

PERSISTENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Any or all of the following range of procedures will be put in place as deemed suitable to the particular case should a pupil present with persistent challenging behaviour in St. Mary's:

1. Referral to the school psychologist.
2. Establishment of a Behaviour Support Plan in consultation with parents and members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. (This plan will attempt to identify the antecedents and triggers of the challenging behaviours and focus on prevention.)
3. Frequent meetings/phone calls with parents as part of the process to manage the behaviours and to keep parents fully informed.
4. Requesting support from Trasna Training services.
5. Keeping incident reports, copies of which are made available to parents.
6. Informing the Special Educational Needs Organiser of the need for possible extra resources to support the pupil.
7. Sourcing relevant extra training for staff.

Suspension/Expulsion

In accordance with the terms and conditions laid down by the Educational Welfare Act 2000 Section 23.2, a pupil may be suspended or expelled for gross misconduct. This action will be taken when there is no alternative and after due consultation with parents, National Education Welfare Board and Multi-Disciplinary Team members. Gross misconduct in the context of this school is understood to mean that the resources available to the school are not adequate to meet the challenge posed to the



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Health, Safety & Welfare of the pupil, other pupils, or staff having regard to the provisions of the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children. (Children First Guidelines.)

After any period of suspension the parent(s)/guardians of the pupil concerned must make arrangements to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal before the pupil is re-admitted to class.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

1. Other teaching and S.N.A colleagues.
2. Multi-disciplinary team.
3. Principal.
4. Agreed Behaviour Support Plans.
5. Parents.
6. Brothers of Charity Services.
7. Trasna Training Services.
8. Board of Management
9. Special Educational Needs Organiser
10. National Educational Welfare Board.

F. CHILD PROTECTION

Allegations, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse/neglect must be reported to the Designated Person – Kerri Hollywell, Principal. In her absence the Deputy Principal or next Senior Teacher is the designated person. The school follows the policies and procedures as laid down in the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, “Children First” in all matters relating to child protection. A copy of this document is available from the Principal’s Office.



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Addendum to St. Mary's School Code of Behaviour with regard to COVID-19 risks:

Rationale:

We aim to maintain a happy, healthy, and safe learning environment in which children are encouraged to have respect for themselves, each other and for school staff. To assist us in this, we have a robust code of behaviour, primarily focused on promoting positive behaviour.

St. Mary's Special School is proud to have a very respectful and considerate school community. It is important that provision be made to discourage behaviours that are now, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, considered inappropriate or potentially dangerous to the health and safety of others.

Updated August 2020:

All members of the school community, staff, pupils, and visitors are expected to:

- Follow HSE guidance instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
- Use elbow or a tissue to cover mouth & nose when sneezing or coughing
- Dispose of tissues properly
- Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- Inform the Principal if experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus

Additional Pupils' Responsibilities:

- Follow altered procedures and instructions for safe arrival and departure from school
- Follow instructions around bubbles, pods both in class and during breaks
- Stay in seat as much as possible (raising hand to seek attention)
- Only share equipment by direction of staff
- Keep their work area neat and tidy
- Not share drinking bottles, food, etc
- Use toilets one-at-a-time, ensuring hands are washed properly (20seconds, with soap) and dried before returning to their place

Additional Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities:

- Follow altered procedures for arrival and departure or collection of child from school
- Support the school by reinforcing guidance and teaching children hand hygiene, personal distancing, and respiratory etiquette
- Stay outside of the school building except where they have made an appointment by phone or email to meet staff
- Keep pupils who are unwell at home, informing the school by email/phone of the type of illness being experienced, until a full recovery is made. It is very important not to send a child who is unwell to school as this places everyone else at potential risk. We do not know if a cough or sneeze is COVID or a mere cold but we cannot risk the health and safety of the school community by having ill children attend school. **All children presenting with COVID symptoms will be sent home and**



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asked to remain at home until they have been checked by a doctor as per our Covid-19 response plan.

- Keep their mobile phone ON at all times while children are in school in case the school needs to contact parents urgently to collect child if unwell or if a case arises in the school. Inform school if mobile contact changes during year.
- Be available or arrange to have someone available to collect children if there is a need to send them home due to COVID-19 circumstances arising in the school or on the school bus transport.

Additional Staff Responsibilities:

- Adhere to and follow all guidelines issued by HSE, DES and school COVID-19 Response Plan protocols and procedures
- Encourage and practice personal social distancing in all school areas
- Keep the work area and school materials and equipment clean and tidy and disinfected regularly.
- Ensure pupils practice hand hygiene at all appropriate times (before eating/when entering classroom/after toileting/after using shared equipment/etc)
- Teach pupils to co-operate and learn the new routines and hygiene practices and support their re-connection with school life in a positive, empathic way.
- Liaise with Lead Worker Representative on any issues of concern that need to be brought to management

It is the aim that all staff and parents will ensure that pupils are taught the procedures set out above and that pupils will be encouraged and supported at all times to follow such procedures in a calm, supportive and proactive way so that potential risks are minimised.

However the following behaviours will be considered as misdemeanours under the code (whether minor, serious, or gross will be determined contextually), due to their potential impact on the physical and psychological health, safety and well being of other members of the school community:

Deliberately ignoring guidance on:

- personal space and distancing
- hand hygiene
- respiratory etiquette (e.g. failing to cover mouth/nose when coughing/sneezing, not properly disposing of used tissues, etc)
- zones at playtime for pods/bubbles

or

- Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
- Any deliberate action, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour
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- Any accidental action, persisted in after instruction or correction by staff, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour

The consequences for such behaviours which put the health and safety of others at risk will be as already set out in the Code of Behaviour but parents need to know that due to the increased health & safety risks associated with COVID-19 such behaviours listed above cannot and will not be tolerated and swift action will be taken to emphasise how serious such behaviours are and the consequences of engaging in such behaviours.

It is possible that parents of children who engage in behaviours as set out above will be contacted to collect their child from school if the behaviour is persistent despite all staff attempts to reduce the behaviour(s).

Parents and children will be required to read, accept and agree to the above specific measures to assist with maintaining the school to be a happy, healthy and safe learning environment for all pupils and school staff.

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian

Signed: _____

Pupil (if applicable)

Date: _____