

St. Ultan's School

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Code of Behaviour for St. Ultan's School.

Introductory Statement

The review process of this Code of Behaviour began in June 2010 and continued into the first term of the school year 2010 / 2011. The review included all members of staff before presentation to the parents and Board of Management in January 2011

In devising this code consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school as a special school for pupils with mild general disabilities.

Rationale

It was decided to undertake a review of the Code of Behaviour at this time in order to:

- maintain and ensure the orderly climate for learning in the school.
- ensure that the existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (National Educational Welfare Board, NEWB, 2008)
- as a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

As outlined in the mission statement of the main aim of our school is 'to foster self-esteem, confidence and a positive self-image, thus enabling the pupils to become valued and valuable members of their communities'. We believe that pupils must be guided towards positive, responsible self-behaviour if they are to achieve their potential in all aspects of their development. We expect the highest standard of behaviour possible in this school. We will strive to engender good behaviour in a caring and positive environment. Our Code of Behaviour will be most effective where there is respect, openness and co-operation between staff, parents, guardians and pupils. We will maintain a close working relationship with all partners to ensure that the Code is understood by all and thereby works for the personal and social development of each and every pupil.

Aims:

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St. Ultan's School are:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way to enable the children to make progress in all aspects of their development
- 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
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To enable the pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour in a way that will enable them to live their lives happily and productively as adults.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to understand and tolerate these differences. However, as children learn best in a well organised and caring environment, they will always be guided and enabled towards the best behaviour possible to enable them to learn and develop to the best of their potential in this school.

The main principle guiding the Code of Behaviour in St. Ultan's is **RESPECT**. We expect our pupils always to:

- Show respect for each and every person in the school
- Show courtesy, good manners and a willingness to co-operate and help others
- Show respect and care for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Attend school on a regular basis and be punctual
- Do their best always in class
- Take responsibility for their own work and behaviour
- Keep the rules of the classroom and the school

The following are the school rules that will be made known to all pupils and parents/guardians on enrolment and on a regular basis through each school year. Pupils are expected to observe these rules every day

School Rules

Each pupil must always do their very best to:

1. Treat each person in the school with respect

2. Show respect for property (no litter, no vandalism, belongings to be kept neat and tidy)
3. Co-operate with teachers, SNAs and classmates in doing work.
4. Complete all homework set by the teacher as best as you can
5. Attend school on time every day
6. Chewing gum is not allowed anywhere in the school
7. Mobiles phones and other electronic devices are not allowed in the school. If a pupil brings and takes out one of these items in school, they will be required to hand them over to a member of staff and parents/guardians will be asked to collect them from the school office. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to any phones or electronic devices if taken to school.
8. Dangerous play or 'mess fighting' is not allowed during break times
9. Bad, foul or inappropriate language and deliberate name calling is not allowed
10. Pupils may not leave the yard without permission.
11. Pupils must line up quietly when the bell rings.
12. Smoking or having cigarettes, lighters, alcohol or any other illegal substance is not allowed on the school grounds or while wearing the school uniform.

These rules must be followed at all times in the classroom, on the yard and during all school trips and out-of-school activities

Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour

It is the responsibility of the school management and staff along with pupils and their parents to work together to create a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. In achieving this objective each partner has their own role and responsibility.

Board of Management

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the fair and consistent implementation of the Code of Behaviour. All serious matters regarding behaviour must be reported to the Board of Management.

Principal

The Principal has final responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. He/she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. Any concerns with regard to behavioural issues must be reported to the Principal.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal supports the Principal in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. In the absence of the Principal he/she acts for the Principal.

School Staff – Teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

All teachers are responsible for discipline within his/her classroom as well as the orderly assembly and dismissal of his/her class at break time and at the end of the day. Pupils are never left unsupervised in St. Ultan's School between 8:50a.m. and 2:40p.m. Teachers make pupils aware of the school rules at the beginning of each school year. Teachers of older classes guide pupils towards the agreement of class rules at the beginning of the school year. Teachers report concerns regarding pupils' behaviour to the principal as they occur.

SNAs liaise with and support the teacher at all times in the maintenance of discipline and a calm working environment in the classroom. They assist pupils in their care needs to enable them to work successfully to the best of their ability. All new members of staff are made aware of the Code of Behaviour when they come to the school. Matters relating to the Code of Behaviour are discussed at all staff meetings most particularly the first staff meeting of the school year.

Parents

On enrolment of their child, a copy of the Code of Behaviour will be given to parents. Parents are requested to support the school staff in keeping the rules of the school. This can be done by:

- ensuring their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually
- encouraging and helping their child(ren) to co-operate with the school's rules
- helping their child(ren) with their homework and ensuring that it is completed
- attending meetings in school as requested

The staff of our school always welcomes the opportunity to discuss with parents, any behavioural problems that may arise from time to time. With mutual respect, trust and goodwill these occasional problems are readily solved.

Positive Strategies

The emphasis in the school is on encouraging, highlighting and rewarding good behaviour rather than on punishing bad behaviour. It is important that parents are aware of the procedures used in the school and work with the school in ensuring that all children are happy at school.

These are amongst the strategies that are consistently used in this school to encourage good behaviour.

PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE

- A quiet word of approval to the pupil
- A word of praise in front of the class or group

- A reward system – stars, stickers, appropriate to the age and maturity level of the child
- A comment in pupil's copy or homework journal to show to parents
- A visit to the Principal or another member of staff for commendation
- Delegation of a special responsibility or privilege
- Special phone call or note to parents to report good behaviour

In the classroom

- Each class has ground rules that all pupils are aware of and that must be kept daily
- Pupils are involved in deciding the class rules at the beginning of the year/term
- Class rules are displayed on a chart in the classroom
- Award systems such as stars, treats, etc. are used to encourage good behaviour

Responses and Sanctions for Bad Behaviour

The purpose of sanctions is to encourage good behaviour and discourage bad behaviour. Sanctions are always administered with full regard of the pupils' age and particular special needs as well as the seriousness of the behaviour.

The following are sanctions that are used in St. Ultan's. They may not always be followed in this order. However, depending on the serious nature of the bad behaviour it may be necessary to utilise the more serious sanctions contained in the list at the commencement of the sanctions.

- Quiet word with pupil or gesture/signal to stop bad behaviour
- Reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Ask the pupil the reason for their difficult behaviour and discuss alternatives
- Reminder of the class rules
- Time out
- Change position on class/Temporary isolation from group
- A longer discussion with pupil about behaviour away from the group
- Loss of privileges (e.g. no football, swimming) or extra duties or responsibilities
- Behaviour Contract
- Write out the list of school rules or the school rule that has been broken
- Detention
- Note in homework journal to be signed by parents
- Communication book to parents recording daily/weekly behaviour
- Phone call/chat to parent
- Recording of repeated bad behaviour and referral to principal

- Formal meeting with parents/guardians
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Pupils will not be deprived of any part of the curriculum except on the grounds of health and safety.

Occasionally, other prudent, unlisted steps or sanctions may be taken.

Initially, incidences of bad behaviour are dealt with by the class teacher. This includes talking to pupils about their behaviour and how they might improve. Discussion about behaviour and its' consequences also form a large part of the Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme in this school at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to 'catch' reported offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour. However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious, it may be necessary to involve others including the principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management. The principal and staff may also seek the assistance of NEPS, SESS, HSE or other agencies.

What are the misbehaviours in our school?

Misbehaviours may be regarded as being minor, serious or gross. Staff will always make a judgement on an appropriate sanction for the misbehaviour based on common sense, the age and special needs of the child.

Minor offences include:

- Interrupting class or talking out of turn
- Running in class/corridor
- Littering around the school
- Regularly coming to school late
- Not completing classwork or homework (without note from parent/guardian)

When a minor misbehaviour occurs staff will take the following steps

Step 1

- Quiet word/signal to stop
- Verbal reprimand
- Time out
- Note in journal to be signed by parent/guardian
- Discussing reason for behaviour with pupil and reminding them of class/school rules

Step 2 – If the minor misbehaviour continues on a regular basis

- Change position in the class
- Detention*
- Behaviour contract
- Removal of special privileges or duties
- Pupil sent to Principal/Deputy Principal
- Parents will be asked to come to school to discuss the issues

Misbehaviour on the Yard

Incidents of misbehaviour on the yard will be dealt with as follows:

The staff members on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil(s) misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following sanctions may be imposed:

- Misbehaving pupil(s) must accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard
- Impose a 'time out' period (at the wall of the middle building) where the pupil(s) will be asked to stay until allowed to return to play.
- Inform the class teacher who may impose further sanctions depending on the misbehaviour

Serious Behaviour

The following are examples of serious behaviour

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Using bad or inappropriate language
- Answering back a staff member
- Being deliberately disobedient, disrespectful and unmannerly
- Damaging school or other person's property
- Bullying
- Deliberately hurting or endangering self or other pupils on the yard
- Leaving school premises without permission

Staff will take steps as outlined from Step 2 as above, but depending on the misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with serious misbehaviour

- An account of all incidences will be entered in the pupils' incident sheet in the his/her file
- Parents will be invited to meet the teacher and/or principal to discuss the repeated behaviours

Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with a pupil have failed and where efforts of the school in consultation with the parents/guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve an improvement in the behaviour of the pupil. Following verbal discussions a letter outlining items discussed will be sent to parents.

Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained.)

Gross Misbehaviours

The following are examples of gross misbehaviours

- Deliberately engaging in threatening violent or aggressive behaviour towards staff or other pupils
- Persistently engaging in activities that have been identified by staff as dangerous or inappropriate
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Bringing dangerous items or substances to school

When dealing with Gross Misbehaviour, teachers will inform the principal and chairperson immediately and suspension may be sanctioned.

Suspension

If a pupil misbehaves on a continuous basis, or there is a serious incident of misbehaviour, it may be necessary to suspend a pupil. Procedures for the suspension of a pupil are as follows:

- Parents/guardians are invited in writing to discuss the matter with the class teacher and the principal
- If the parents (and the pupil) do not give an undertaking in writing that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner the pupil will be suspended.
- If the suspension is being invoked the parent/guardian will be informed of the terms of the sanction and the duration of suspension in writing
- The maximum period of the initial suspension is three school days

- A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of ten school days to allow for consultation with the pupils' parents/guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed
- Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/guardian may apply to have a pupil re-instated to the school. The parent/guardian (and the pupil) must give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school and the principal must be satisfied that the re-instatement will not pose a risk to the pupil's own safety or to that of the other pupils and staff and will not have a detrimental effect on the education of the other pupils. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, and will admit the pupil formally to the class.
- Where a satisfactory resolution of the problem is achieved, a pupil will be readmitted to the school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the board and the principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case (see *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, pp.80 – 82, NEWB*) e.g. where repeated incidents of serious behaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have already tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupils' behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

The above procedures with regard to the suspension/expulsion will comply with the Educational Act (1998). However in the event that a pupil becomes a danger to himself or others the parents/guardians will be asked to remove the child immediately – to allow time to put measures in place to ensure the safety of the child and others.

Appeals

In all cases involving suspension by the principal, the parent/guardians have the right of appeal to the Board of Management. 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 Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management including (1) permanent exclusion from school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days of the date that the decision of the school was notified to the parents or student (see Circular 22/02)

Keeping Records

Pupils' behaviour is recorded on all annual and any other relevant school reports. Such records always include references to positive as well as negative behaviour. Additional records of consistent misbehaviour may also be kept by the class teacher. All serious and continued misbehaviour will be reported to the principal.

- **Incidents of serious or consistent misbehaviour should be written in a factual and impartial manner and kept in the child's file or incident sheet.**

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, formal records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet and on the schools data base 'Aladdin'.

Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of a more serious nature are recorded in a specific journal/incident sheet. All such records are retained until the pupil is 21 years of age.

Notification of Pupil Absences from School

- Parents should inform the school of their child's absences from school by phone call or by sending in a written explanation by note or in the home work journal. This complies with their obligations under the Educational (Welfare) Act (2000)
- The school is obliged to record and report all absences and reasons for absences and to report in them to the National Educational Welfare Board.

This policy was amended and ratified by the Board of Management on 18th November 2020

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

Rational:

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

St. Ultan'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 November 2020

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

1. Follow D.O.H. and HSE guidance instruction on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
2. Use elbow or tissue to cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing
3. Dispose of tissues properly
4. Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
5. Inform the principal if experiencing any symptoms of COVID -19
6. The use of face coverings where appropriate in accordance with the guidelines

Additional Pupil's Responsibilities

1. Follow altered procedures for safe arrival and departure from school
2. Follow instruction around bubbles, pods, both in class and during breaks
3. Stay in seat as much as possible
4. Only share equipment by direction of staff
5. Keep work area neat and tidy
6. Not share drink bottles, food etc
7. Use toilets one at a time, ensuring hands are washed properly (20 seconds with soap) and dried before returning to their place

Additional Parent/Guardians' Responsibility

1. Follow altered procedures for arrival and departure or collection of child from school
2. Support the school by reinforcing guidance and teaching children hand hygiene, personal distancing, and respiratory etiquette
3. Stay outside the school building except when appointment has been made
4. Keep pupils who are unwell at home
5. Keep mobile phones on at all times, inform school if mobile contact changes during the school year
6. 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

1. Adhere to and follow all guidelines issued by D.O.H., HSE, DES, and school COVID -19 Response Plan protocols and procedures.
2. Encourage and practice personal social distancing in all school areas
3. Keep work area and school materials clean, disinfected regularly
4. Ensure pupils practice good hand hygiene
5. Teach pupils to co-operate with school life in a positive and empathetic way
6. Liaise with Lead Worker Representative on any issue of concern that needs to be brought to management
7. St. Ultan's Special School has a Covid -19 committee, consisting of two Lead Worker Representatives, (one from the teaching staff and one from the non-

teaching staff) the Principal and the Deputy Principal. (Siobhan Gillen, Sandra Irwin, Jean Cunningham and Eddie Martin)

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 misdemeanour 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.

1. Deliberately ignoring guidance on personal space and distancing
2. Hand hygiene
3. Name calling with regard to COVID-19
4. Respiratory etiquette
5. Coughing/sneezing deliberately in someone's space
6. Zones for playtime for pods and bubbles
7. Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
8. Any deliberate action, 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 and 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 consequence 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.

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:



Pat McCreanor

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 18th November 20