

# **St. Michael's National School**

## **Code of Behaviour Policy**



### **Introduction**

The pupils of St. Michael's National School, Trim, have a very good reputation for the excellence of their behaviour and the school is very proud of its reputation in this regard.

Parents/Guardians too can be justifiably proud of their children and how they conduct themselves. The purpose of the following Code of Behaviour Policy is to ensure that together, school and home maintain these high standards so that children are safe and happy in their school environment.

### **Our Mission Statement and Our Code of Behaviour**

Our school aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Management work in partnership, where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive, supportive atmosphere.

### **Where and When the Code of Behaviour will be applied**

This Code of Behaviour will apply to all school activities, regardless of timing and location. This will encompass the normal school day, activities that may extend beyond normal opening and closing times and all extra-curricular activities such as school tours, outings, performances and sporting pursuits.

### **Aims of this Code of Behaviour**

- to create a safe, secure and positive environment where teaching and learning can occur
- to promote a friendly, happy atmosphere which will help every child to reach their full potential
- to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and consideration for all
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline where the children take ownership of their own behaviour
- to help our children to realise that they have choices about the behaviours they exhibit
- to help our children to mature into responsible and full participants in a learning community
- to assist Parents / Guardians in understanding the expectations and procedures that underpin the Code of Behaviour

- to ensure that all procedures of reward or sanction are implemented in a fair manner throughout the school

### **Responsibilities in Relation to Behaviour**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

#### **As adults we should aim to:**

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- model the good behaviour expected from the children
- provide a caring and effective teaching and learning environment
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability or disability
- show appreciation for the efforts and contributions of all

#### **Parents/ Guardians should:**

- familiarise themselves with St. Michael's Code of Behaviour and discuss same with their child
- encourage their child to abide by the school rules
- encourage punctuality every day
- encourage full attendance
- support their child with their homework and sign their homework journal
- inform their child's class teacher about illnesses/school absences in writing
- ensure their child is wearing their full school uniform/tracksuit
- ensure their child is eating a healthy lunch in accordance with our Healthy Eating Policy
- encourage good behaviour and respect for others at all times
- communicate with their child's teacher about factors likely to affect their child's behaviour in school
- make an appointment to meet with a teacher / the Principal with the secretary

## **General School Rules**

1. The school officially opens to receive pupils at 9.00 am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before this time. Classes will commence at 9.20 a.m. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have the children met at the school gate and the person to escort the children should be at the school no later than 3.10 p.m., as the school cannot accept responsibility after this time.
2. Pupils are expected to have good general behaviour and to make a sincere effort to do their work. Kicking, splitting, bullying, bad language or rough play will not be tolerated in the school.
3. The school uniform must be worn at all times.
4. Pupils are expected to take part in Physical Education unless excused by a doctor. Wearing of the school tracksuit will be permitted on the days the children have P.E.
5. All school clothing and belongings must be labelled clearly.
6. Children are encouraged to eat a healthy lynch. No sweets, chewing gum, crisps, popcorn or fizzy drinks are allowed in school. Pupils may include an appropriate treat with their lunches on Fridays.
7. In order to leave the premises during school hours, parents/guardians must report to the secretary's office and sign a pupil's release form.
8. Bicycles should be walked into and out of school and through the car park at all times to ensure everyone's safety.
9. Homework should be completed promptly and signed by parent or guardian. If for some reason, homework is not done, parents should write a note of explanation to the class teacher.
10. Medicines (prescription and non-prescription) shall be administered by the principal or deputy principal only and may not be retained by pupils. An indemnity form must be signed if parents wish medication to be held/administered in the school.
11. If a student is absent from school for any reason, a note signed by parent or guardian should be given to the class teacher. Please use absence slips at the back of the journal provided by the school. The school automatically notifies the National Welfare Board (TUSLA) for absences of 20 days or more. Once a record of non-attendance for a pupil has been entered in our system his/her parents/guardians will automatically be informed via text alert.
12. Under Health and Safety Rules, Tippex and permanent markers are forbidden.
13. For Health and Safety reasons, the use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited during school hours. The school phone will be available for urgent calls only. This policy will be strictly enforced.
14. All school rules are designed to protect the right of individuals and to protect property. Parents should impress upon their children that respect for persons and property is essential to the smooth running of any organisation.
15. Parents/guardians are requested to make an appointment if they wish to meet/speak with class teachers. This can be done by ringing the secretary or using the homework

journal. All such meetings must be outside school hours in the interest of the health and safety of pupils.

### **Behaviour in Class**

1. Be ready for class.
2. Good manners are expected at all times.
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same.
4. Raise hand and wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking.
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property.
6. Ensure you are safe in class and make it safe for others.

### **Behaviour in the School Environment and Behaviour on School outings**

Respect and courtesy to others is essential. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is unacceptable. Use of foul language among pupils is unacceptable. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence. Pupils must show respect for school property at all times. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school in an orderly manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school. When on school outings, pupils are expected to behave mannerly and show respect for public property. They should always co-operate fully with their teachers and support staff.

### **Behaviour in Playground**

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited. Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervision teacher. This includes re-entering the school building.

### **Out of Class Behaviour**

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard.
2. Play safely and fairly, treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated.
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy.
4. Stay clear of fire alarm and respect all school property.
5. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

## **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

All children are required to comply with the spirit of the Code of Behaviour. St. Michael's recognises that some children with special educational needs may need extra time and help in understanding some school rules. Individualised behaviour plans may be necessary at times. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with the class teacher, parent(s)/guardian(s), support teacher and principal. All will work together to ensure the child receives all the support they need. Any professional advice from our NEPS Psychologist will be taken into consideration also.

## **School Uniform**

Pupils are expected\_ to wear their complete uniform every day. Tracksuits and runners may be worn on P.E days only. The uniform consists of:

- Grey trousers
- Grey shirt
- Green striped tie
- Green v-neck jumper incorporating the school crest
- Black shoes

The P.E. tracksuit consists of navy tracksuit with crest and blue polo shirt.

In line with school policy, hoodies and baseball caps are not permitted in school. On health and safety grounds, earring, studs and rings are strictly forbidden. Hair should be of a length and style so as to be neat and tidy. Bleached hair and shaved designs are not acceptable.

## **Maintaining Good Behaviour**

As outlined in the school rules and policies, children are expected to observe the following and may be rewarded for:

- Significant improvement in homework/class work
- Exceptional homework/class work
- Being particularly kind, helpful or considerate
- Sharing
- Doing work that is over and above what is required
- Doing things without being asked
- Fair play

- Musician of the week etc
- Mathematician of the week etc
- Star poet/writer/speller etc
- Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine

### **SUGGESTED REWARDS**

- In class rewards
- Homework pass
- Class treat
- Student of the Week
- Work displayed on “Good Work Wall”
- Line of the Week
- Golden time

This list is not exhaustive.

### **Sanctions**

- Verbal warning
- Name in teacher’s notebook
- In class ‘Stop and Think’ table
- Reflection sheet
- Sit outside Principal’s/Deputy Principal’s office
- Appointment with Principal/Deputy Principal
- Parents to be informed and a phonecall/meeting arranged
- Apology
- Behaviour Board
- Sent home
- Suspension

A general staged approach of these sanctions will be carried out in each classroom:

1. Two verbal warnings
2. Name in teacher’s notebook
3. ‘Stop and Think’ table with reflection sheet where necessary
4. Communication home via phonecall
5. Principal’s office

*This staged approach is subject to flexibility depending on the individual situation.*

## **Behaviour Board**

The Behaviour Board consists of:-

- Ms. Gorry (Principal)
- Ms. Daly (Deputy Principal)
- Ms. Burke (Assistant Principal 1)

Teachers may refer pupils to the Behaviour Board if behaviour is considered highly inappropriate and occurs on a consistent basis.

The Behaviour Board shall discuss the behaviour with the pupil in question and investigate ways in which the behaviour can be improved.

The Behaviour Board will make recommendations that are specific and time framed. This may include:

- Establishing acceptable behaviours
- Follow up meeting with pupil and on occasion, parents/guardians also
- Recommending Individual Behaviour Plan and Behaviour Contract

## **Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion**

In certain exceptional circumstances of unacceptable behavior, it is necessary in the best interest of the whole school community for the student to be suspended or expelled.

### **Suspension**

Continuous breaches of school rules or serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour or a serious once off incident of misbehavior may warrant suspension from school.

Suspension from school is only sanctioned by the Principal (or Deputy Principal in her absence) and the Board of Management, initially for a maximum of three school days.

A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of ten school days, to allow for consultation with pupils parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

### **Possible grounds for suspension**

- Disrespect or continuous defiance towards or harassment or intimidation of any staff member or the harassment/bullying of any member of the school community. This includes use of obscene, abusive or inappropriate language
- Cyberbullying
- Possession, use or supply of prohibited substances, e.g. alcohol, cigarettes, vapes, drugs etc., in the school or on school related activities
- Vandalism or destruction of school property or the property of another member of the school community
- Continuous disruption of learning which results has a negative effect on other students
- Damaging the good name and reputation of the school
- Stealing
- Fighting or possession of offensive weapons (which may also be reported to the appropriate authorities)

This list is not exhaustive.

Suspension will be used after the Principal is satisfied:-

- That all other disciplinary/remedial option under the Code of Behaviour have been applied
- That appropriate support has been given to the student except for gross misdemeanor
- That discussion has taken place with parents/guardians in relation to the student's behaviour
- That a formal written warning has been notified to the student and his or her parents/guardians, except in case of a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour which may warrant immediate suspension
- That all actions have been documented
- That copies of all correspondence are available.



## **Procedure**

The Principal (or Deputy Principal in her absence) makes a decision to suspend a student based on the written records maintained of all action taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

The student is informed of this decision and the grounds for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond.

Parents are notified in advance of the reasons for, dates and duration of the suspension from school and where possible invited to discuss the matter further with the Principal in accordance with the relevant legislation.

If the suspension is to be immediate, parents/guardians may be informed by telephone, with a written follow up.

Students will not be sent home during the school day, unless collected by a parent/guardian or some other suitable arrangement is made.

The formal letter of notification of suspension will include:-

1. Notice of suspension.
2. Effective date and duration of suspension.
3. Reasons for suspension
4. Expectation of student while on suspension.
5. Importance of parents/guardians assistance in the matter
6. Notice that the student is under the care of parents/guardians during the suspension.
7. Notice of right to appeal the decision of the Principal to the Board of Management.
8. Notice that the suspension will be notified to the local Education Welfare Officer (if it exceeds six days or more or for a cumulative total of twenty days).
9. Notice of right to appeal under Section 29 of The Education Act, 1998 and The Education Welfare Act, 2000.

### **Longer term suspension**

Before a longer term of suspension is applied, it must be sanctioned by the Board of Management. Parents will have had notification that the matter will be discussed at a Board Meeting and offered the right to reply. A meeting will have taken place with the parents/guardians, the Principal and the Deputy Principal and, where necessary, other SET/pastoral support personnel in the school to help resolve the situation.

Parents will be informed of their right to appeal any decision on suspension under Section 29 The Education Act, 1998 and The Education Welfare Act, 2000. Where an Appeal is successful, any period of suspension served in relation to the appeal will be removed from the student's file.

## **Procedure for reintroduction following suspension**

Where possible, parents are requested to accompany the student on his/her return to school following suspension.

Parents may be advised or requested to agree to certain procedures to assist in the student's rehabilitation, e.g. refer to the student psychological assessment, counselling or other pastoral services, e.g. CAMHS, Springboard etc.

## **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the ultimate sanction imposed by the school and is exercised by the Board of Management in extreme cases of indiscipline. In advance of any hearing, which could result in exclusion, the school will investigate the matter in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

## **Possible grounds for expulsion**

- Where, despite repeated suspensions, breaches of the Code of Behaviour continue
- Where the behaviour of the student is seriously disrupting learning and having a negative effect on other students
- Where there is serious disrespect, harassment or abuse of others
- Gross insubordination
- Where the student has no respect for/is not amenable to any form of school authority
- Breaches of policy in relation to substance abuse
- Where there is serious concern for the safety of others
- Serious misuse of social media
- Serious assault
- Serious theft;
- Major damage to school property
- Possession of or brandishing of an offensive weapon

Expulsion by the Board of Management can only occur when they are satisfied that:

- All other disciplinary/remedial option under the Code of Behaviour have been applied and documented
- Appropriate supports have been given to the student, e.g. diagnostic assessments and, where appropriate, counselling;
- Discussion has taken place with parents/guardians in relation to the student's behaviour in relation to specific incidences which may have led to suspension and now lead to expulsion

- Formal written warnings had been issued to the student and his/or parents/guardians, in relation to serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour
- The parents/guardians have been made aware of any reports of suspension to the Board of Management
- The parents/guardians are informed of the Board of Management meeting where there is an intention to recommend suspension or expulsion and they have been invited to attend such a meeting
- That all actions taken have been documented and copies of all correspondence are available

The formal letter of notification will include:-

1. Notice of intention to expel.
2. Reasons for expulsion.
3. Effective date of expulsion.
4. A statement that TUSLA – Educational & Welfare Services has been notified.
5. Information and documentation on appeal rights under Section 29 of The Education Act.

## **Appeals**

There is a right to appeal an expulsion under The Education Welfare Act. An appeal may be made to the Secretary General of The Department of Education & Skills under Section 20 of the Education Act.

## **Procedural fairness**

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all individuals dealing with authorities. All communities have a legitimate expectation that schools (Boards Principals, Deputy Principals and teaching staff) will follow these principles in all circumstances, particularly when dealing with suspensions and expulsions.

Procedural fairness is generally recognized as having two elements:

1. The right to be heard which includes:
  - (a) The right to know why the action is happening.
  - (b) The right to know the way in which the issues will be determined.
  - (c) The right to know the allegation made and any other information which will be taken into account.
  - (d) The right of the person against whom the allegations have been made to respond to the allegations.
  - (e) The right to appeal.

2. The right of the person to an impartial decision which includes:

- (a) The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision making phases.
  - (b) The right to an absence of bias in the decision making.
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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13/02/2023

Signed: *Mary Hilliard*                      Date: 13/02/2023  
Chairperson of Board of Management.

Signed: *Brid Gorry*                      Date: 13/02/2023  
Principal.