**St. Mary’s N.S.**

**Code of Behaviour Policy**

**Introductory Statement:**

This policy was formulated by the Principal and staff members at a planning day in May 2012. It was reviewed and updated in May 2015 and in March 2018.

**Relationship to Characteristics of School:**

The health, safety and welfare of each member of the school community underlie this code. We aspire to create the best school environment in which to teach, learn, work and play – there is a duty and responsibility for all to play their part and to recognise the rights of all school members to participate fully, without threat, danger or obstruction and with the support and respect due to each individual.

**Rationale:**

We as a staff decided that the existing Code of Behaviour needed to be reviewed and updated. In doing so we have carefully studied and incorporated the guidelines issued by the Department of Education in Circular 7/88 “Discipline in National Schools”, Circular 20/90 “Guidelines Towards a Positive Policy for School Behaviour and Discipline” and Circular 20/93 “Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools”, Education Act 1998 and Equal Status Act 2002, NEWB’s Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools 2008, Circular 45/2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools and Circular 81/2017 Publication of New Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools. We hope it will be directive and informative in helping you as parents to understand the Policy and Ethos of our School with its concern for the growth and development of each child.

1. The standard of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.

This Policy was also devised to ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school and to ensure that there was an appropriate response to each situation having considered needs of the individual and the needs of the school.

**Aims:**

The aims of this Code of Behaviour are as follows:

* To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement.
* To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can 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.

**Content of Policy:**

* **Guidelines for Behaviour in the School:**
* The school considers that all members of the school community strive towards a high level of good manners.
* Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
* It is expected that at all times school property (including books) and equipment will be treated with respect and the defacing of such is forbidden.
* Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
* Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
* Polite language is expected from pupils at all times.
* Respect for others form the basis for the code of good behaviour.
* Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour will generally be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

**2) Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour:**

A positive school ethos is bases on the quality of relationship between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. The positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

**Staff:**

* In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion of positive behaviour.
* This Code of Behaviour was devised in conjunction with all staff members and has been accepted by all staff.
* The important aspects of the school’s Code of Behaviour are included in our school booklet which is given to all new parents prior to their child’s entrance to the school. General rules of behaviour are also outlined and revised each year for new entrants.
* New members of staff are provided with a copy of the school’s Code of Behaviour to familiarise themselves with our procedures and practices prior to the commencement of their employment in the school.
* This Code of Behaviour caters for children who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their special needs and pupils displaying challenging behaviour. If a child presents with behavioural difficulties arising out of special educational needs, a Behaviour Plan with behavioural targets will be drawn up in conjunction with all parties involved.
* The school’s SPHE curriculum is used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills appropriate ways of interacting and also behaving and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.
* All staff will teach the SPHE curriculum using a variety of resources available including; Stay Safe, Walk tall, Be Safe and various educational publications.

**Board of Management:**

* The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school.
* The Board of Management will ratify the Policy and recommend any changes necessary.
* The Board of Management will also have an active role in the sanctioning of pupils where there has been repeated instances of misbehaviour.
* In the case of serious misbehaviour, the Board will authorise the chairperson and the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending discussion of the matter with parents.

**Parents:**

Schools need the support of parents to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline. Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards in the following ways:

* They are aware of and cooperate with the school’s system of rewards and sanctions.
* Ensure children are at school in time.
* Attend meetings at the school if requested.
* Help children with homework and ensure that it is completed.
* Ensure that the children have the necessary books and materials for school.
* New and existing parents are informed of general school rules at our Annual Infant Day and these rules are also included in our school booklet.
* Adhere to the School Uniform policy at all times.

**Pupils:**

* Each Class level will participate in lessons in the curriculum area of SPHE which will deal with issues involving behaviour.
* Each class teacher will also involve the children in drawing up a Code of Behaviour for their classroom and also the playground.
* Pupils are encouraged at all times to behave in a respectful and pleasant manner.
* Pupils are also encouraged to report incidents of misbehaviour witnessed in the school/playground and praised for doing so.
* Pupils are reminded of various school rules throughout the school year as incidents may occur.

**3) Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour:**

Various positive strategies will be used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

**In the Classroom:**

* Other areas in the school
* Pupils must attend in full uniform.
* Punctual arrival to school expected.
* Orderly and mannerly behaviour in classrooms, corridors and all school areas is expected by all pupils.
* Polite language is expected from pupils at all times.
* Pupils are expected to walk on right of corridor at all times.
* Pupils are expected to follow teachers instructions in class at all times and to show respect for their teacher and other pupils in their class.
* No items or material that can be offensive, dangerous, distracting or inappropriate are to be brought to school by any pupil.
* It is expected that at all times school property and equipment will be treated with respect and the defacing of such is forbidden.

**4) Rewards and Sanctions**

* In order to encourage desirable behaviour in the school, the emphasis is on encouraging children to behave well and praise is given for commendable behaviour.
* At our end of year assembly, awards are given out to pupils for various achievements e.g. sport, attendance. Parents of these pupils will be informed of the award and asked to attend the assembly.
* Reward time is used regularly it encourages good behaviour.
* Teachers have their own classroom reward systems in place also.

**5) Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour:**

* The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.
* The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. It is hoped that all pupils, parents and staff will share a sense of responsibility about the good conduct in the school.
* The following strategies may be used in response to incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
1. Reasoning with the pupil.
2. Advice on how to behave.
3. Reprimand.
4. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
5. Use of Safety room with adult supervision for incidents of physical harm or safety concern to themselves or others
6. Loss of privileges.
7. Use detention/Sin Bin at lunch break – Ms. Cadam’s Room.
8. Prescribing additional work for home or school.
9. Referral to principal.
10. Communication with parents.
11. Suspension.
12. Expulsion.
* When an incident is referred to the Principal teacher, he/she will then take over the responsibility of dealing with the pupil.
* The strategies from a-g will be applied by the class teacher or teacher involved in the situation. The Principal will only be requested to take over if the teacher deems it necessary.
* The Principal may also apply these strategies to deal with the incident that is referred to him/her.
* Teachers will communicate with parents at their own discretion as the need arises.
* Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parents concerned may be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case.
* Where there are repeated instances of misbehaviour, the chairperson on the Board of Management may be informed and the parents shall be invited to meet with the Principal and the chairperson as appropriate.
* If the parents and where appropriate the pupil do no give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the rules for National Schools.
* The Principal shall inform the Educational Welfare Officer, by notice in writing when a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days. (Education Welfare Act Section 21 (4) a).
* Parents will always be brought in for a meeting with the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated.
* Suspension will only be considered where a very serious incident of misbehaviour occurs and when all other means of dealing with the behaviour have been tried.
* When a child is to be suspended, the parents will be informed of the decision having had previous knowledge that suspension was being considered. The parents will be asked to collect the child from school.
* When the period of suspension is over, the parents and child will meet with the Principal on the morning of the child’s return to school. The child will be reminded of the behaviour that is expected by all pupils and the manner in which he/she is expected to behave in the future. He/she will be made aware of the consequences of the behaviour being repeated and why such behaviour cannot be tolerated in the school. The Principal will end the meeting on a positive note by encouraging the pupil to try his/her best in future.
* **Expulsion (permanent exclusion):**
* Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, ‘A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an Educational Welfare Officer’ Section 24(4). It is the right of a Board of Management to take ‘such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured’. Section 24(5). Expulsion will only be considered as a case of action when all other strategies have been exhausted.
* **Appeals**
* 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 Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including:
* 1) Permanent exclusion from a 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.

Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See circular 22/02).

**6) Keeping Records:**

 **Class Level**

* Each class teacher will keep antidotel records of incidents of misbehaviour in their class as they deem necessary. Children who repeatedly misbehave will have all incidents recorded in case further action has to be taken.
* Teachers will write a note to child’s parent if additional homework is to be given and the parents will be asked to sign the work.
* Teacher will make reference to each child’s behaviour at our annual parent/teacher meetings and also in our end of year school reports.
* The class teacher will report serious misbehaviour to the Principal.
* Ground Rules/ Behavioural expectations in each class will be drawn up by the class teacher and pupils. These rules will be consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and will also set a positive example for learning.
* The school operates a Good Choice/Poor Choice Behavioural System throughout the school and this system is based on four pillars statements in each classroom which are
* **Safety**
* **Learning**
* **Communication**
* **Respect**
* All children are expected to adhere to these pillar statements with regard to themselves and others and any incidents of misbehaviour are referred back to these rules.
* A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour operates in all classes in the school and teachers will strive to be consistent with this system.
* Rules are displayed in each classroom and rehearsed every morning with the focus been on promoting good behaviour and obtaining good choices throughout the day.
* Each class will receive 10 minutes reward time at the end of the day for the good choices made by pupils during the day.
* This will consist of a variety of activities at the discretion of the teacher and with discussion with the pupils and will be encouraged to take place outdoors sometimes especially in good weather.
* In addition teachers may have their own motivational reward systems in place in each class to promote good work and co-operation among peers.
* The sanctions for poor choices in each class are as follows:
* Two poor choices= Sit and Think on designated chair in classroom
* Maximum of 10 in Junior Infants
* Maximum of 8 in Senior Infants/First Class
* Maximum of 6 in Second/Third Class
* Maximum of 4 in Fourth- Sixth Class

If maximum is reached or exceeded any day by a pupil, they are withdrawn from reward time at the end of the day and sent to Ms. Harten’s classroom for 1st-6th and any Junior/Senior Infants in Ms. Harten’s are sent to Ms. Killian’s.

If a lot of poor choices are received by a pupil in a given day, they may also be given a timed Sin Bin in Ms. Cadam’s Room at Lunchtime.

Maximums are subject to change in each classroom using teacher discretion and taking into account behavioural difficulties/issues that some pupils may have.

Pupils who present with challenging behaviour will have their own individual Behaviour Plan in place and the above limits won’t apply.

With regards to classwork/homework, if a child’s work is not done or completed correctly or to a satisfactory standard, children will be given a lunchtime Sin Bin to complete work in Ms. Cadam’s room under supervision.

Minor incidents of physical misbehaviour, for example, If a child hits another child in class or in the playground, they will first be given an automatic sit & think timeout and reminded of our safety rule.

For serious incidences or If a child intentionally and continuously harms another child physically in any way or puts themselves in danger by their own actions, they will be given a safety room.

Our school’s **Safety Room** is only used for incidents of serious physical misbehaviour which break our safety rules. Every child in our school has a right to feel safe and to ensure the safety of others at all times.

 A Safety Room involves an immediate withdrawal of the pupil from the classroom or playground to our safety room for a time out to sit and contemplate their behaviour and calm down if necessary. This is always supervised by an adult staff member. The secretary Annette or our SEN Teachers will accompany the child to the safety room during class time and another teacher will be called from staff room at break/lunch if the teacher on duty gives a safety room and they will stand at the door while time out is completed.

**Playground:**

* Teachers on duty will deal with minor incidents of misbehaviour.
* Teachers will be encouraged to record incidents of misbehaviour in the incidents book in the staff room or take note of them in diary in case issues arise from the incident.
* Our Good/Poor Choice behavioural system is also in place in the school yard and carries the same rewards/sanctions as in the classroom.

**School Reports:**

* Teachers will record incidents in their individual pupil records.
* A copy of any written communication to parents will be kept in office.

**7) Procedures for Notification of Pupil Absences from School:**

* The school has a personalised standard form that has to be completed by parents on the child’s return to school following as period of absence.
* If a child is to be withdrawn early from school, a written note must be given to the class teacher. The note can be written in the child’s homework notebook.
* Child must be signed in or out using our Sign In/Sign Out book at reception.
* Our school rewards good and improved attendance at our end of year assembly where certificates are given out to pupils with good attendance.
* All parents are made aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
* The school fulfils its statutory obligation to inform the Education Welfare Officer of a child’s absence by filing the necessary reports at various stages during the school year.

**8) Reference to Other Policies:**

The following school policies will all have an influence on the School’s Code of

 Behaviour.

* SPHE Policy
* Anti-Bullying Policy
* Homework Policy
* Child Protection Policy
* Enrolment
* Record Keeping
* Health and Safety
* Home/School Links
* Equality
* Special Educational Needs
* Attendance

**Success Criteria:**

* Teachers and Staff will observe positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment.
* Teachers will be advised and encouraged to consistently implement the practices and procedures listed in this Policy.

**Roles and Responsibility:**

* The Principal has overall responsibility for discipline in the school.
* The Board of Management will be involved in the sanctioning of pupils, where serious incidents of misbehaviour have occurred.
* The Principal, staff pupils, parents and Board of Management have responsibility for the implementation of the Policy.
* The Principal and staff will co-operate and monitor the implementation of this Policy.
* Pupils will be expected to abide by the rules of behaviour in this Policy at all times.

**Time for Review:**

This Policy will be reviewed and updated annually. The review will take place in June 2019.

**Ratification and Communication:**

This Policy was reviewed and ratified at our Board of Management meeting on 8th March 2018.

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**Padraig Brady**

**Chairperson Board of Management Date:……………………….**

**……………………………………………………….. ………………………………..**

**Edel Cadam**

**Principal Date:……………………..**