

St. Brigid's National School



Code of Behaviour

Introduction

St. Brigid's National School is a school, which by its nature is an ordered community where the educational and religious activities offered are designed to help develop the talents and gifts of each pupil in our care.

A positive atmosphere, where children are valued and positive behaviour and achievements are celebrated, is the cornerstone of the Code of Behaviour of St. Brigid's National School.

St. Brigid's National School forms part of a school community who all have a role to play in promoting positive behaviour and respect amongst the children who attend the school. Parents and families are a key part of the culture of respect and learning which our Code of Behaviour supports.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with Parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and Staff to ensure that Parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards Parents and that Parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but also when they have behaved particularly well.

A Code of Behaviour is essential in order that each member of our school community may be valued and respected and may benefit from participation in the school's work and activities.

The strict observance of such a code should be easy to understand, reasonable, fair and consistent in its implementation. This will ensure that a stimulating and happy atmosphere conducive to learning will permeate the life and work of the school and create a proper environment for teaching and learning.

It will also promote an essential part of the education process, namely the training of young people in socially useful behaviour, which will enable them to lead decent lives as self-directing adults in society.

The Code of Behaviour which follows determines the rules of conduct expected of each pupil, whether within the school or as a recognisable member of school community outside its bounds. It is an essential part of the organisation and management of the school and one in which Parents, Pupils, Management and Teachers are involved.

St. Brigid's National School recognises the need to educate all children in the school on what constitutes good behaviour. Explicit teaching of the rules of the school and of positive behaviour strategies, at an appropriate level, is a part of the core work which teachers undertake.

Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

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The basis of our Code of Behaviour is **RESPECT**

- Respect for adult members of the school community.
- Respect for myself and my fellow pupils
- Respect for school property, the belongings of others and the environment of the school.

Respect for others takes many forms and its absence betrays a lack of manners, consideration and Christian/moral virtues in the offender. Disrespect is a matter of the gravest concern to the school and will be judged to be a breach of the Code of Behaviour, while always being mindful of the age, development, individual needs and circumstances of the pupil concerned.

Respect for Adult Members of the School Community

- Pupils shall speak of their Parents/Guardians and the Parents/Guardians of other pupils with respect and show them every courtesy in person.
- Pupils, as recognisable members of the school community, shall show due respect and deference to all members of the public.
- Pupils shall show respect for Teachers and all School Personnel (including visitors) and where appropriate, shall obey them in the lawful exercise of their authority.
- Pupils shall not engage in behaviour directly or indirectly, which may prevent, interrupt or interfere with Teachers in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities.

Respect for Myself and My Fellow Pupils

- Courtesy towards and respect for others, avoidance of unbecoming or abusive language, personal cleanliness and tidiness and neatness in appearance and dress are some of the more obvious ways of showing respect for self and for other pupils.
- Pupils shall not engage in any activity which might cause upset or harassment to another pupil or pupils or interfere with other pupils' rights to engage in school work or recreation without interruption or disturbance.
- Pupils shall not engage in bullying, i.e. repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.
- Pupils shall behave in an orderly fashion when going from place to place within the school so as not to distract others from their work.
- Pupils shall always observe the highest standards of sportsmanship in every game they play. Opponents must always be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Pupils shall be mindful of their own safety and that of others and never do anything which might endanger that safety.
- To endeavour to make the best possible use of school time, pupils should be punctual and come fully prepared for each day's work with the necessary books, writing materials, gym gear, etc. and with all written and oral homework prepared.

Respect for School Property, the Belongings of Others and the Environment of the School

- Pupils shall respect the property of the school and that of each member of the school community.
- Pupils shall not take without permission, deface, damage or write on property which does not belong to them.
- Pupils shall keep their classroom tidy and free from litter.

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- The school grounds also shall be kept free of litter, which should be placed in the containers provided.
- Pupils shall not misuse, neglect or interfere with school equipment, especially that which is provided for their safety.
- All breakages or damage (accidental or otherwise) shall be reported immediately.

Key Rules which must be followed in the school are set out in **Appendix 1**. In addition, each class teacher will have a set of class rules tailored to the circumstances of their own class.

Sanctions

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is respected while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

Where there has been a breach of discipline, the degree of severity will be assessed by the teacher in the first instance and will be dealt with at class level. When appropriate, the Principal or Deputy Principal will be informed and will assist in dealing with the incident.

The assessment of the seriousness of the misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal or Deputy Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours, the circumstances of the incident and the context.

- The overall day to day responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal.
- The Board of Management of the school plays a key role oversight role in the maintenance of discipline in the school.
- Other agencies, such as Túsla, NEPS etc, may be involved in matters pertaining to discipline and behaviour from time to time.
- Each Teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom and class while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school.
- A pupil shall be referred to the Principal for breaches of discipline and for misbehaviour.

Note: Bullying (Serious Breach of Discipline)

(See Anti-Bullying Policy)

Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, cyber-bullying, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Reports of bullying will be investigated thoroughly and parents will be informed and consulted with at the earliest opportunity. Parents will be expected to assist in investigations and to work with the school towards a solution in cases of suspected or proven bullying. The degree and nature of the bullying will be assessed and acted upon in line with the procedures outlined in the Anti Bullying Policy.

Suspension and Expulsion

As in any school the most serious sanctions are reserved for the most serious misbehaviours and actions. The steps which may be taken in relation to suspension and expulsion are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

At all times the Board of Management will be kept informed of and consulted on decisions relating to suspension and expulsion.

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Review

This Code of Behaviour is reviewed annually. The Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with the school Anti-Bullying Policy and the school Child Safeguarding Statement.

This Policy was considered and approved by the Board of Management on **13th November 2019**.

The Policy will be reviewed in **November 2020** or earlier as deemed necessary by the BOM.

Chairperson

Sean Doris

Principal

Kenneth Kerins

St. Brigid's National School



Appendix 1

School Rules

Safety

For my own safety and the safety of others –

- I should be careful coming to and going from school;
- I should always walk while in the school building;
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils;
- I should bring a note after every absence;
- I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of a teacher.

Caring for Myself

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order;
- I should always endeavour to have my uniform clean and tidy;
- I should be in school by 9.15 am every day;
- I should always line up at 11.10 am and 1.30pm every day when I hear the school bell;
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing homework;

Caring for Others

- I should be kind and respectful to the Principal, to the teacher, to other school staff, fellow pupils and visitors to the school by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and remaining orderly in my class and in the line;
- I should listen and behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn;
- I should obey my specific class rules and all rules and policies agreed by the school community;
- I should always show respect for my school by being careful not to damage furniture or any part of the building or the school grounds. I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks etc. home and by placing litter in the appropriate bins;
- I should show respect for the property of the staff and my fellow pupils;
- I should be truthful and honest at all times.

Classroom Rules

- Be prepared, be on time and be in full uniform.
- Have a healthy lunch and your homework done.
- Do as you are asked directly by all members of staff.
- Always raise your hand and wait quietly for attention before you act.
- Listen, pay attention, and always do your best work.
- Be helpful and respectful to all in the classroom.
- Be friendly, mannerly and kind to your classmates.
- Try to show a positive attitude at all times, you can do it!
- Respect school property and the belongings of others.
- If you have a problem, let a teacher or an adult know as soon as possible.

The school rules can be summed up as:

- Be respectful and be kind
- Do your best
- Be positive
- Be safe
- Listen

Appendix 2 Suspension and Expulsion

In cases where serious and repeated misbehaviour and disruption is present, and where attempts by the class teacher, principal and parents/guardians have failed to resolve the problems, it may be necessary for further steps to be taken.

Suspension

The decision to suspend a pupil is only taken when:

- the pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- the pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the pupil has shown blatant disregard for school rules as outlined in the school Code of Behaviour
- the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

For very serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be grounds for suspension.

A single incident of very serious misbehaviour may in rare circumstances be grounds for suspension. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Examples of very serious misbehaviour include: (As per Appendix 2)

- Repeated 'Serious Misbehaviours'
- Repeated bullying.
- Serious Vandalism.
- Stealing from the school, an adult or a child.
- Verbal abuse/threatening of an adult.
- Repeatedly refusing direction from an adult.
- Possession/use of illicit materials/drugs/alcohol.
- Leaving school without permission.
- Accessing/sharing inappropriate material online in school.
- Deliberately causing serious harm to a child/serious fighting.
- Striking/kicking/assaulting an adult.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal will review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. (It is envisaged that immediate suspension without this process will rarely arise in St. Brigid's National School).

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour.

The suspension period will:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents/guardians
- give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Procedures in respect of suspension

- In the case of immediate suspension, the parents/guardians of the student will be informed by phone (and will be recorded in writing) and arrangements made with them to meet the principal and for the student to be collected immediately.

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- In other cases the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend a meeting with the Principal where the case will be outlined and parents given an opportunity to respond.
- Where parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal will write to them advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. The school will record the invitations made to parents and their response. This written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension
- In the event that a parent is unable to attend at the school, a letter will be issued to the student and a copy will be forwarded by registered post to the student's parents/guardians.

The period of suspension

- The Principal has been granted the authority by the Board of Management to suspend a student for a period of up to three days.
- The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- The Board of Management may authorise further exclusion of the student up to a maximum of ten school days to enable further consideration of the case.
- The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal the Principal's decision to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management an appeals process may be provided by the Patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007. At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the pupil will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the suspension

- ❖ The Principal will notify the parents and the pupil **in writing** of the decision to suspend.

The letter will confirm:

- the **period** of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the **reasons** for the suspension
- any **study programme** to be followed
- the **arrangements for returning to school**, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents (i.e. parents and pupil will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- the provision for an **appeal** to the Board of Management

And may state:

- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998*, section 29) if the suspension in question leads to the cumulative number of days suspended in a school year to surpass 20.
- ❖ It is school policy that any pupil serving a suspension must complete assigned school-work for the duration of his/her suspension and will be re-admitted to the school on the following conditions:
 1. That the work is completed to the best of their ability and checked.
 2. The pupil returns to school with either/both parents/guardians.
 3. The pupil and parents/guardians reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour.
 4. Pupils (and guardians on occasion) may have to agree to attend a course or counselling in order to support their re-integration and prevent further problem behaviour.

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Records and Reports

1. Records of investigation and decision-making

Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

2. Report to the Board

The Principal should report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

3. Report to Túsla

The Principal is required to report suspensions where pupils have been suspended for 6 or more days, cumulatively, in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a))

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.

Expulsion

A pupil is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the *Education(Welfare) Act 2000*.

Authority to expel

The authority to **expel** is reserved to the Board of Management. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

The grounds for expulsion

Expulsion should be a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour. Expulsion of a pupil is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a pupil including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find ways of helping the pupil to change their behaviour
- making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

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- the pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the pupil is responsible for very serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

Forms of expulsion

'Automatic' expulsion

A Board of Management may judge, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and pupils, that particular behaviours may be sanctioned by amongst other things expulsion. However, a general decision to impose expulsion for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include, but not exclusively:

- a serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- actual serious violence or physical assault

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a pupil.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions (See "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools").

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

Review of use of expulsion

The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.

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INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date of Incident: ____ / ____ / ____

Time of incident: _____

Misdemeanour _____

Details of incident:

Staff members present: _____

Other witnesses: _____

Was incident a health and safety risk: Yes ____ No ____

If yes, to whom? _____

If physical hurt or injury was caused, please describe injury briefly:

Action Taken:

Principal informed Yes ____ No ____

Parents informed Yes ____ No ____

Parents asked to visit school Yes ____ No ____

Teacher/Parents meeting held Yes ____ No ____

Principal/ Parents meeting held Yes ____ No ____

Further action:

Was child suspended? Yes ____ No ____

Date(s): _____

If child was suspended , was suspension reported to TUSLA ? Yes ____ No ____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

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Behaviour Report:
Please reflect and discuss.

Behaving in class	
Behaving in yard	
Hurting others	
Listening and paying attention	
Having respect for all	
Having respect for property and belongings	

Teacher comment:

Child's Name: _____

Date: _____

Why were you given this report?

What is the school/classroom rule which could have helped you?

What should you have done?

What will you do differently in the future? _____

Pupil to sign:

Parent /Guardian comment: _____

I have spoken about this with my child and discussed what behaviour is expected in future:

Signed: _____

- Be respectful and be kind
 - Do your best
 - Be positive
 - Be safe
 - Listen