

St.Attracta's N.S. Charlestown Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the school principal in consultation with all staff members, the members of the Board of Management and members parents committee.

Rationale

- The Board of Management of St. Attracta's N.S. decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school*. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:
 - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 - C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
 - E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

St Attracta's N.S. seeks to enable each child to develop his potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

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Through our school Mission Statement we seek to “instil” in our students “a deep respect for themselves and for all others and an appreciation of the beautiful environment created for them by God whose love for them knows no bounds”

Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. Our aim is to achieve an efficient and stimulating learning environment and the development of self discipline in pupils based on consideration, respect and tolerance for others. Our aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be –

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our mission statement;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function whereby children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community;
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code 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.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

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The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others and their property.

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings;
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
- Each pupil is expected to do his best both in school and for homework.
- Good manners are expected from all pupils.
- Pupils must play safely at all times. Anti social, dangerous or hurtful behaviour is forbidden.
- Pupils are expected to obey the bell rule, to line up quickly in the yard, walk quietly in the yard, walk quietly along the corridors and enter and exit the building in an orderly manner.
- Pupils are to remain in the yard/field at break times. Only with teacher's permission are they allowed into the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their appearance. Full school uniform is to be worn. Long hair should be tied back. Studs are the only acceptable earrings and for safety reasons the wearing of jewellery is discouraged.
- Mobile phones and hand held games are not allowed in school.

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School Rules

- 1. We are kind**
- 2. We are honest and fair**
- 3. We listen to others**
- 4. We show respect for ourselves and others**
- 5. We take care of property**
- 6. We work hard**
- 7. We are always silent on the line.**

Each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons. These rules will be displayed on the wall in the classroom.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during all school related activities.

If the school is to be a happy, secure environment which children can develop to their full potential, it is necessary to provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the ideal is that all pupils will acquire the skills of self discipline. There are times however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order, and to discourage offenders. The school recognises the variety of differences which exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

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If the school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules are clearly stated and enforced consistently and wisely. This is done very effectively at weekly assembly when the school rules are restated and good behaviour is highlighted and acknowledged. Disciplinary issues may also be discussed and addressed.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be allocated at one staff meetings per term for discussion regarding the implementation of the code. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

Teachers will use various strategies to promote good behaviour including:

1. Acknowledgement of rewards, for example – merit stamps, merit stars, homework pass, treats, class video, extra computer time, quiz, class outing.
2. Class privileges (special tasks to do in the class: e.g.(classroom organisation jobs)
3. Student of the week
4. A treat for all children who have no entry in class/yard book on a monthly basis
5. Golden Time(15 mins on a weekly basis)
6. Praise for specific acts of good behaviour
7. Feedback to parents of good behaviour – verbal or written in pupil's homework notebook

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly ;(Student of the week in Jnr-2nd and subject pass for senior students,
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;

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- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication;

To facilitate new members of staff become familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be included in the teacher's folder on our shared drive. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school and is also available on the school website. www.stattractasns.ie

SANCTIONS

The school manages unacceptable behaviour by adopting the following strategies in a staged approach:

(Note: The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the nature of the strategies employed.)

1. Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
2. Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
3. Time out (Age appropriate including advising child about reflecting on their behaviour);
4. Temporary removal from group (within the class);
5. Entry into the discipline/yard book
6. Verbal (Junior /Senior Infants) or Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent 1st -6th
7. Reflection sheet (signed by parent)
8. Prescribing extra work
9. Detention during breaks- remain on bench or walk with supervising teacher or SNA
10. Withdrawal of privileges;
11. Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
12. Formal written communication with parents/guardians;
13. Referral to the Principal

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14. Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;
15. Formal meeting with parents/guardians;
16. Suspension;
17. Expulsion.

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of minor misbehaviour:

- Interrupting class work
- Regularly arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing Homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Minor infringement of the school rules
- Talking out of turn.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Name calling
- Persistently not working to full potential
- Damaging others' property
- Bullying
- Answering back a teacher
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard. Using unacceptable language

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Deliberate, continual disobedience.

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Gross Misbehaviour

For gross misbehaviour or repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

Where there are repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools. In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained, and to secure the safety of pupils, the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the student (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal.

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Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case (see p.81, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's Homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may phone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Class teachers, or teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty, Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

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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 any one school year. 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)

Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to gross misbehaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Copies of communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific Discipline journal and are retained until students reach 21 years. Class teachers should shred personal records at the end of each year.

- Incident Book

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents must notify the school in writing or fill in the absence note on our website to notify a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

Children with Special Educational Needs:

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

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The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Children who are emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological assessment with the consent of parents.

- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
- E.N. personnel may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour.
- Some teachers may act as mentors for particular children or in assisting teachers in the creation of individual behaviour plans for specific children
- There is a mentoring system for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area.
- Professional development will be available to staff on an ongoing basis e.g. SESS, Colleges of Education, Education Centres etc.
- If physical restraint is used as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, school personnel will be advised to read Managing Challenging Behaviour – Guidelines for Teachers, INTO 2004: 11 and the BOM will consult competent legal advice. This should be communicated to all staff at the commencement of each school year.
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, a temporary exclusion will be enforced while consultation with the SENO and/or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing and/or alternative placement.

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Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty

The school recognises that the term EBD (Emotional and Behavioural Disorders) covers a wide range of Special Educational Needs. Children with an EBD diagnosis will have a behavioural plan in school.

Reference to other Policies

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Child Protection
- o Enrolment/ ASD Class Enrolment
- o Health & Safety
- o Special Educational Needs

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

This policy was first devised in April 2012. It is reviewed annually. It was last presented to our Board of Management on March 14th 2016.

March 14th 2016.