



St. Columba's N.S.,

Tullow,
Co. Carlow.

Roll Number: 13607M
Telephone & Fax: 059-9151873

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Website: stcolumbasnstullow.com

Code of Behaviour

Development of Code

This Code of Behaviour was initially revised by the school on a whole-staff basis. A steering group was established and parents were then invited to lend their views to the revision. The Code of Behaviour then went to the Board of Management for discussion and ratification.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights 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
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

When does the Code of Behaviour apply?

The school's Code of Behaviour applies during school hours and at all events organised by, on behalf of, or in the name of St. Columba's N.S.

The operations of this code are not limited to school hours. The code of behaviour may be referred to in certain circumstances if it is required.

Responsibility of Adults

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
- Provide a caring and effective 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 and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all



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- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

School rules

The school have a number of rules which are applied on a whole-school basis to behaviour on the school premises, school trips and any time when children are representing the school. These rules are divided into three sections: Safety, Caring for Myself, Caring for Others.

Safety:

For my own safety and that of others-

- a) I should be careful coming to and going from school
- b) I should always walk while in the school building.
- c) I should remain seated at all times in class and while eating lunch
- d) I should never run in the school and always show respect for my fellow pupils.
- e) I should bring a note of explanation following absences
- f) I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal/Mainstream Teacher.

Caring for myself:

- a) I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- b) I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- c) I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.
- d) I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Chewing gum is not permitted.

Caring for others:

- a) I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns.
- b) I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- c) I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers, etc. home and put them in the bins. I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- d) I should be truthful and honest at all times.

The school rules are condensed to language which is accessible to all of the children. There are six condensed rules, namely:

1. Kind hands, kind words, kind feet
2. Do your best
3. Be tidy
4. Be Safe
5. Walk
6. Listen



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The school rules and pupils with special educational needs

Pupils with Special Educational Needs will be required to follow the school's Code of Behaviour but teachers will use their professional judgement in relation to regularity and level of sanctions. While teachers must be seen to be fair in the eyes of other children who may have exhibited the same type of misdemeanours, they will also show leniency and understanding in relation to children with specific learning / behavioural / emotional difficulties.

Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to improve his/her behaviour. This may involve agreeing a behaviour plan/contract or working and co-operating with the Class Teacher, Resource Teacher and a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class. The devising of such strategies may also entail contacting and meeting with relevant out of school agencies.

Teachers are encouraged to undertake professional development as the school recognise that they may need support in understanding how best to help a student with special educational needs to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' instead of 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Incentives for Good Behaviour

Part of the vision of St. Columba's N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers



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- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Misbehaviour on the Yard

Incidents of yard misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil(s) misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following procedure may be followed:

- Ask the pupil(s) misbehaving to accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard;
- Impose a period of “time out” – 5 to 15 minutes – where the pupil will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
- Inform the class teacher (who may decide to impose a further sanction depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour);

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. Regular communication, in the form of a written log, will be completed by the class teacher, in order to provide continuous feedback between parents and teachers on the child's behaviour, in addition to regular verbal communication.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and 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.

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated misbehaviour or single instances of serious or gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Minor Misdemeanors

Examples of Minor Misdemeanors:

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and these are examples only. Other types of misbehaviour will also incur sanctions.

- Interrupting class work (e.g. walking around classroom without permission; talking out of turn; making noise; fiddling; eating during class)
- Running in the school building
- Littering the school premises
- Not responding to the school bell in a timely manner
- Disruptive behaviour in the bathroom
- Being discourteous, unmannerly or answering back



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- Defacing/scribbling on property
- Throwing items around the classroom
- Not completing homework without good reason.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:

Phase 1 (within the classroom)

- Verbal reprimand
- Discussion / reasoning with pupil
- Noting instance of the behaviour in class diary
- Giving a behaviour warning
- Write story of what happened **or** one copy of school rules to upper limit of 20 times
- Write the relevant rule / reminder of acceptable behaviour
- Note in homework journal to be signed by parent
- Denial of participation in a class activity, should the behaviour be the cause of a health and safety risk (Please note - Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety.)
- Discussion with parents about misbehaviour

Phase 2:

- Temporary separation from peers
- Sending to another teacher
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)
- Referral to the Principal;
- Class teacher meets one / both parents to discuss behaviour.

Phase 3

- Child will be sent to the Principal;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent of continuous misbehaviour;
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour;
- Class teacher and/or Principal will meet with one/both parents;
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

Serious Misdemeanours

Examples of serious misdemeanours

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and these are examples only. Other types of misbehaviour will also incur sanctions.

- Constantly disruptive in class
- Telling lies (Interpreting what is a "lie" will relate to the age/development stage of the child)



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- Stealing – intentional taking of items. (Interpreting what is “stealing” will relate to the age/development stage of the child)
- Damaging other pupil’s property
- Endangering self/others in the classroom / yard.
- Bullying (Dealt with specifically in the Anti-Bullying Policy)s
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Not working to full potential
- Use of bad or suggestive language, or continuously making hurtful or racist remarks.
- Deliberately taking responsibility for another pupil’s misdemeanour.
- Being deliberately or persistently uncooperative.
- Bringing weapons to school

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:

Teachers will take steps as outlined from Phase 2 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour:

- 1) Send to Principal
- 2) Pupils records in detail the events which have taken place
- 3) Principal meets with one/both parents
- 4) Chairperson of Board Of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal
- 5) An account of all incidents will be recorded and a copy placed on the pupil’s file.

Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. Following formal 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 Misdemeanours

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Setting fire to school property

Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil

Deliberately injuring any member of the school community

Possession of, or use of, or supply to others of legal or illegal drugs

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours

- Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e. “ No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent



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of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality”.

- See Appendix A for the procedures for suspending and expelling pupils.

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.

Review

The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

Appendix A – Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils

Suspension

General

For the purposes of this Code of Behaviour, suspension is defined as requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil and may do so for up to 10 consecutive school days at one time.

Procedure for Suspension other than for an automatic suspension

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the principal will:

- Inform the student and his/her parents about the complaint either by phone or in writing
- Conduct or arrange for the conduct of an investigation of the matter
- Give the pupil and his/her parents an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed
- Convey a decision regarding suspension to the pupil and his/her parents

While this process is being undertaken, the principal will decide whether it is in the best interest of the offending pupil or any other pupil that the offending pupil will be held in isolation from his/her peers until the matter is finalised. The principal will have regard to the following factors in deciding on the best course of action:

- Whether the presence of the offending pupil on the yard is likely to lead to further incidents of misbehaviour or intimidation
- Whether the presence of the offending pupil on the school yard is likely to inflame the situation



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- Whether it is possible to provide the level of supervision required to prevent further incidents, an inflammation of the situation or intimidation without this becoming oppressive

The parents of any pupil upon whom it is proposed to impose a suspension may appeal the suspension to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management will not impose a suspension of more than 10 consecutive school days on a pupil at any one time.

The Board of Management will formally review any proposal to suspend a pupil, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year to 20 days or more.

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the suspension to the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

Procedures for Automatic Suspensions

The Board of Management authorise the principal to impose an automatic suspension where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person or for any one of the named behaviours listed below:

- The use of a knife or replica knife or gun or replica gun or glass or any other offensive weapon or replica weapon or instrument or piece of equipment other than those specified by the school or a teacher to inflict injury or harm on another person or to threaten to inflict injury or harm on another person
- The defiant refusal to carry out the instruction of a teacher or principal
- To protect the safety of the pupil or other pupils or staff

In the circumstances of an automatic suspension, the parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. No pupil will ever be sent home alone.

In the circumstances where an automatic suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for one or more of the named behaviours, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of an automatic suspension.

Reintegrating the pupil and starting with a clean slate

The principal will arrange for a member of staff to provide support for any pupil who has been suspended during the reintegration process. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Recording and Reporting

A record of the behaviour and sanction imposed will be kept which will include:

- The investigation



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- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The school will then expect the same behaviour of this pupil as of all other pupils.

The principal, if acting on the written delegated authority to suspend, will report all suspensions to the Board of Management with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

The principal will report all suspensions to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 21(4)(a)).

The principal and 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

General

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil. This authority is a reserved function of the Board of Management and is not delegated to the principal.

Before expelling a pupil, 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 student to try to find ways of helping the student to change his/her behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of the behaviour, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies, if appropriate

A proposal by the Board of Management to expel a student requires serious grounds, such that:

- 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 serious damage to property.

Procedures for expulsion other than for a first offence

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

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



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5. Consultations arranged by an Education Welfare Officer of the National Educational Welfare Board
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Expulsion for a first offence

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel pupils for a first offence for the following behaviours:

- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supply of illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault

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 Skills 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).