



St. Columba's N.S.,

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Code of Behaviour

St Columba's N.S. Code of Behaviour was initially formulated in 2012. Following consultation with all the pupils, parents, teachers and members of the Board of Management, a review of the Code of Behaviour was carried out in June, 2019. It was reviewed in line with our Anti Bullying Policy 2019 and reflects the school's philosophy and ethos as outlined on our Aims and Ethos statement.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour 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 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.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.
- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. The emphasis will be on positive behavior and good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage. A copy of the code will be included in all teachers' documents. The code will also be signed by parents when children enroll in the school. This 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.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

Each member of the school is responsible for his/her behaviour. Responsible behaviour helps to create a secure, happy, working environment in which pupils can learn and grow in their understanding and knowledge. It builds up a pupil's self-esteem. Each pupil is entitled to a disruption-free environment where they can be happy and safe to grow and learn.

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

School Rules and Class Rules

School and class rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community to enable pupils to develop into mature and responsible individuals. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly. School and class rules are discussed regularly in classrooms and at whole school assembly. School and class rules will be displayed in classroom and the school yard.

School rules at St. Columba's N.S. are as follows:

Kind hands, kind words, kind feet

Practise good listening

Try your best

General School Rules

- Children must try their best in all school activities.
- Children must remain on the school grounds at all times, unless given permission.
- Children must complete their homework, unless a note is provided to explain otherwise.
- The Healthy Eating policy must be adhered to.
- Children must walk in the school building.
- Children must follow the classroom rules.
- English and Irish are the working languages of the school. Only these languages are to be spoken on the school grounds.
- Children must line up in their designated space sensibly when breaks are over.
- Children must leave the classroom clean and tidy.
- Children should let the teacher teach and the children learn.
- Children who have permission to have a phone, must give their phone to the class teacher at the beginning of the school day.

Classroom Rules at St. Columba's N.S. are as follows:

<u>Junior Room</u>	<u>Middle Room</u>	<u>Senior Room</u>
-Hands up to speak -Listen carefully -Sitting on chair while working -Own toys kept in bag -Sharing -Kind words - Kind hands	-Take turns to speak -Listen well to others -Kind words -Kind hands -Respect people and property -Try your best -Sit well on the seat	-Take your turn to speak -Listen to others and respect difference of opinion -Use appropriate language -Respect other people's right to space, and safety -Respect other people's property -Try your best -Sit on your seat when working

The school rules and pupils with Special Educational Needs

Parents of children with special needs 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, SEN 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 recognises 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. School rules will be adjusted to take into account the needs of each child.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. We use the following strategies to promote Positive Behaviour in each of the classrooms.

Strategies	
Individual Strategies	Whole Class Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A quiet word or gesture to show approval e.g. praise, stickers. ▪ A visit to another class or Principal for commendation. ▪ Praise in front of class group e.g. dojo points, marbles. stickers ▪ Individual class merit awards e.g. Student of the week, Gaelgeoir na Seachtaine ▪ Rewards for pupils with special needs, will take account of their particular learning style e.g. sticker chart ▪ Rewarding with some special responsibility or privilege e.g. sit beside a friend, use of laptops, homework pass, etc. ▪ Written or verbal communication with parent e.g. note in homework diary. ▪ Prize box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Golden Time ▪ Visual reward system e.g. sticker chart ▪ Group incentives- Marble jar (Reward-Prize box) <p>Children may choose an activity from a list of appropriate activities.</p>

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. The following table aims to outline some examples of minor, serious and gross misbehaviours. 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.

Minor	Serious	Gross
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Misbehaviour in the line -Mis-use of school property -Talking out of turn -Lack of general manners – saying please/thank you -Having chewing gum -Interrupting class work -Walking around classroom without permission -Persistent disruptive behaviour -Eating during class -Running in school building -Littering the school premises -Not responding the school bell in a timely manner -Disruptive behaviour in the bathroom -Throwing items around the classroom -Not completing homework without good reason. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bullying Use of electronic device in school, without permission -Isolation of others -Verbally answering back a member of staff -Foul, abusive and inappropriate language -Being dismissive of staff requests -Lying and dishonesty -Loss of temper -Incidental fighting -Damage to school property or other pupils' property. -Bringing inappropriate items to school -Misbehaviour en route to, at and returning from venues outside the school -Constantly disruptive in class -Stealing -Endangering self/others in the classroom / yard. -Leaving school without appropriate permission. -Showing a negative attitude towards learning -Deliberately taking responsibility for another pupil's misdemeanour. -Being deliberately or persistently uncooperative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Physical attacks on others -Wilful damage of property -Verbal bullying, comments and threats -Persistent bullying -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

Misbehaviour and Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development of the child. Sanctions will be fair, just, predictable and consistent. Pupils must realise what misbehaviour is and understand that such behaviour carries sanctions with it for all school related activities, including classroom, yard, swimming, school tours etc. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health / safety. The school operates the following staged procedure to deal with instances of general misbehaviour:

Stage 1: Class Teacher (For Minor Misbehaviour)

1. Proximity to child as a signal of inappropriate behaviour
2. Verbal reprimand/Warning including advice on how to improve behaviour. (possible movement of seat)
3. Loss of position on green traffic light, movement to amber. Loss of marble/ sticker
4. Movement to red light. Time out at break time.

Children will begin each day on green. Improvement in behaviour, will enable children to move towards the green light.

For continued disruptive behaviour, the following sanctions may occur depending on the misbehaviour.

Behaviour	Sanction
1- Disruption of classwork	Removal from classroom to another classroom/ principal. If continues, Reflection Sheet will be given and parents must read and sign.
2- Incompletion of classwork due to misbehaviour	Staying in at break time for half of the time. If continues, incomplete work sent home. If continues, Reflection Sheet will be given and parents must read and sign.
3- Damaging other people's property and school	Apology letter to person/people affected. If continues, Reflection Sheet will be given and parents must read and sign.
4- Misbehaviour outside in the yard	Time out given to child and apology given. Time appropriate to age and severity of behaviour. If continues, Reflection Sheet will be given and parents must read and sign.

If above behaviour continues, the following sanctions will incur:

1. Non- involvement in fun activities
2. Non-attendance on trips

Stage 2 - Class Teacher/ Principal Teacher (For Serious Misbehaviour)

1. The pupil is referred to the Principal.
2. Pupils records in detail the events which have taken place
3. Parents will be informed of their child's misbehaviour.
4. Class teacher will meet with Parents to discuss their child's behaviour
5. Parents/guardians will be requested to come to a meeting with the Principal and the Class teacher.

Stage 3: Principal Teacher /Board of Management (For Gross Behaviour)

1. Parents contacted and must collect child from school.
2. A formal report will be made to the Board of Management and shared with parents of child.
3. Parents are requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.
4. 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 of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality.

5. 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).
6. See Appendix A for the procedures for suspending and expelling pupils.

Every new school year represents a new beginning for sanctions. Every day represents a fresh start until the pupil reaches Stage 2 on the school procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management’s Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code

Principal’s Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required

Teachers’ Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school’s Code of Behaviour
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern
Parents / Guardians are always welcome to call to the school, but because of their duties, staff may not be at liberty to give immediate attention. If any Parent / Guardian wishes to discuss a matter at length, an appointment will be arranged.

Pupils’ Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Participating and doing one’s best at all times
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger themselves or others-in school rooms, play ground or on school buses-including wearing of seat belts
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities

- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules
- Avoid bringing toys or games to school
- Enter and leave the classroom in an orderly manner.
- Line up quietly in the yard at break times.

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

- Encourage each child to have a sense of respect for himself/herself and for property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Communicate to the school reasons for absences
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress / behaviour

Success Criteria

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, auxiliary staff, bus drivers and pupils
- Observation of positive behaviours in classrooms, in the yard and on buses and for all school related activities.

Implementation and Review

This Policy will be circulated to all members of the current school community and will be signed by all parents. Prospective parents will sign this policy before enrolment of their child. This policy will be implemented from December 2019. It will be discussed and reviewed annually by the school community.

Ratified by Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Neville Caldbeck, Chairperson, Board of Management

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
- 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:

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
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).

- 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
- 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