

Saint Catherine's National School



Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

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Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Name of School:	Saint Catherine's National School
Address:	Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.
Telephone No.:	(051) 389368
Type:	Diocesan mixed national school, under the patronage of the Bishop and funded by the Department of Education
Enrolment:	66 (2023/2024)
Description:	Currently comprising of 3 class teachers, 1 Special Education Teacher and 1 EAL Teacher.

INTRODUCTION

This policy was devised by the staff of Saint Catherine's N.S. on the School Development Planning Day on the 22nd of October, 2001 and subsequently approved by the Parents' Association and Board of Management of Saint Catherine's N.S., Ballyhack. This policy was reviewed and amended in 2005, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2016, June 2019, November 2021, October 2022 and February 2024.

Children in our school are generally very well behaved, co-operative and pleasant to work with. In order to maintain the high standard of behaviour presently enjoyed, we are obliged to outline examples of misbehaviour and the sanctions that would apply in the event of a breach of discipline. We aim to provide a safe and happy environment for all children where they can make the maximum progress without interference or disruption. The staff recognises that the values of the home and of the wider community may differ

from the values that the school is trying to promote and that a high level of co-operation is best achieved through good relationships. The staff recognises the need for the support of parents/guardians and pupils in order to meet our legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.

All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil. This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.

AIMS

The code of discipline aims to achieve four things:-

- 1) The efficient operation of the school and the structuring of in-class discipline so that there exists an efficient and stimulating learning environment.
- 2) The maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for the school environment.
- 3) The development of self-discipline in pupils based on consideration, respect and tolerance for others.
- 4) To ensure a safe school environment for all.

SCHOOL ETHOS

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour. This points to the importance of a strong sense of community within the school and the existence of a high level of co-operation among teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents/guardians, Parents' Association and the Board of Management. This school places a great emphasis on the need to give the children every possible opportunity to develop patterns of good behaviour. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is respected while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

PRINCIPLES

If the school is to achieve a happy, secure environment in which children can develop to their full potential it is necessary to provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. Our school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions and the idea is that 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 that exist between children and the need to respect these differences. School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

GUIDELINES

This policy has been devised in line with all current guidelines available at the time. The policy was implemented with effect from January 2002 and will be reviewed every three years.

Each parent/guardian will receive a copy of this code upon enrolment of their child/children and will be invited to sign acceptance of same.

FRAMEWORK

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

The following are examples of misbehaviour:-

Minor:

- Eating in class.
- Showing off.
- Showing disrespect for the school environment e.g. toys, equipment, litter in both classroom and school grounds, goal posts, etc.

- Failure to keep personal space i.e. desk clean and tidy.
- Spitting.
- Chewing gum.
- Making excessive noise in school building.

Serious:

- Eating in class
- Messing in corridors, toilets, or playgrounds.
- Telling lies and blaming others.
- Making little of children.
- Personal remarks, name-calling.
- Engaging in behaviour that could harm themselves and/or others

Very Serious:

- Aggressive response towards staff, both verbal or physical, e.g. answering back, rolling eyes, staring, making noises, deliberate slow response to requests, failure to complete tasks.
- Talking in class and interrupting the teacher unnecessarily thereby interfering with the learning experience of the rest of the class.
- Leaving premises without permission during school hours
- Deliberate physical violence against others.
- Threatening or abusive language.
- Vandalism to property of school or others.
- Bullying – as per Anti-Bullying Policy
- Stealing.
- Smoking / Substance Abuse – see separate Policy on Substance Abuse.
- Failure to adhere to guidelines as outlined in school Acceptance Use Policy.
- Throwing items within the school building.
- Making rude noises e.g. snorting.
- Use of vulgar language.

Low-level disturbance in the classroom includes the following examples:

- not listening to teacher's instructions
- consistently interrupting
- demanding attention
- not following or ignoring teacher's directions

- fidgeting in class
- making inappropriate noises/gestures, etc.
- poor attitude to classwork and school activities
- failure to apply oneself to one's work
- failure to produce homework of an acceptable standard

Constant low-level disturbance leads to an interference in other students' learning and enjoyment of their schooling:

Circumstances will often affect the category into which the misbehaviour falls. Minor misbehaviour/low-level disturbances may become serious and serious become very serious if repeated frequently. This is not an exhaustive list and will be reviewed and added to if and when deemed necessary.

Mobile phones, Recording/Electronic Equipment

Mobile Phones are not allowed in school or on any school related activities e.g. tours, sports events, etc. If a child needs to have a mobile phone on a particular day for use after school the **parent/guardian** must hand the switched off phone to the class teacher. The phone will be stored in the filing cabinet in the staff room until home time. The parent must sign in the phone and the child sign it out.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BREACHES OF DISCIPLINE

STAGE 1

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

- a) Reasoning with the pupil.
- b) Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
- d) Loss of privileges.
- e) Detention during a break or after school hours.
- f) Prescribing additional work.
- g) Referral to Principal.
- h) Communication with parents/guardians.
- i) Suspension (Temporary).
- j) Expulsion

Rewards for good behaviour are as follows:-

- Oral and written praise.
- Merit stickers.
- Treats (e.g. small prizes)
- Homework off when class effort merits same.

School trips. Occasionally class given option of choosing school activity.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g., suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

STAGE 2

Communication with parents/guardians will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. When a teacher meets parents it may be necessary to have another staff member present.

STAGE 3

If the behaviour does not improve to the satisfaction of the teaching staff, despite repeated interventions, the situation will move to the next level where parents will be invited to meet with the chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal. Parents may be advised at this stage of a possible suspension pending a decision of the Board of Management. All efforts will be made by School Authorities to resolve the difficulties at this stage.

STAGE 4

If the parents/guardians 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 the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools and the National Education Welfare officer will be informed.

STAGE 5

Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with a serious breach of discipline it may authorise the

Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school. The maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school-days. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school-days to allow for consultation with the pupils' or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

No pupils shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

Where the Board of Management decides that a student should be expelled the Board of Management will inform the National Educational Welfare Board of its decision and the reasons why in writing (see attached NEWB INDEX 1). The decision to expel a student will not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received verification in writing (via a letter of acknowledgement issued by N.E.W.B.). A student's expulsion will be reported on the Student Absence Report Form. The N.E.W.B. will also be informed if a pupil is suspended for a period of six days or more.

APPEALS

Parents and the N.E.W.B. have the right to appeal a suspension, expulsion or refusal to enrol a student. Facilitation from the Department of Education and Skills may be used in an effort to avoid the matter reaching the appeals committee. If the Board of Management is not happy with the decision of the appeals committee they reserve the right to take the case to the High Court.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6). See Section (c) in N.E.W.B.

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

REVIEW

The code will be reviewed every three years and more frequently if needed.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for the discipline in our school - Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools (as amended by Circular 7/88).

Mark Murphy Chairperson

5-3-24 Date

Eva Murphy Secretary

5/3/24 Date