

Foxfield School



Code of Behaviour Policy

Code of Behaviour Policy

St. Michael's House Special School Foxfield

This code is drawn up to ensure compliance with legal requirements and good practice set out in Developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines for School (NEWB 2008). In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

The purpose of this code is to promote positive behaviour and to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. Consideration is given to the particular needs and circumstances of the school with an emphasis on understanding that many types of behaviour are a form of communication. The aim is to create a predictable, safe, structured environment where pupils can make progress in all aspects of their development. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adapt a positive approach with a focus on supporting pupils to understand and change inappropriate behaviour rather than on punitive measures. The school recognises that differences exist between children and that these differences need to be tolerated.

Staff should be aware of modelling good practice in class, throughout the school and while on school trips. Staff should remind children of rules on a regular basis.

Aims of the Code

In reviewing and devising this code of behaviour, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. We are a school designated by the D.E.S. as catering for pupils with ASD and Complex Needs, including a Moderate to Severe and Profound GLD.

Our aims are:

- To provide a positive safe and secure learning environment for all our pupils.
- To ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruptive-free environment.
- To respect and safeguard the dignity and the particular needs of individual pupils.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote positive behaviour by providing opportunities and supports to enable pupils to make positive behavioural choices, thereby reducing incidents of challenging behaviour.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.
- To teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school and in the community at large.

- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To provide a total communicative environment for pupils

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.
- Discourage physical aggression.

General Principles underlying our rules are:

- All students have a right to learn
- All teachers have a right to teach
- Everyone has a right to be safe

School Rules

The School Rules are to be adhered to by every pupil in Foxfield Special School. They are set out by the Board on the grounds of:

- Health and Safety: Physical or verbal aggression towards staff or other pupils (please refer to the school's safety Statement and Anti-Bullying Policy)
- The constant disruption of learning within a classroom or school-wide setting
- The wilful damage of school property
- The use of phones/ICT that may invade the privacy of other pupils or staff (see Mobile Phone Policy)

The School Rules are as follows:

1. I will be gentle towards others – I will not hurt anyone
2. I will respect my fellow pupils learning
3. I will be respectful of school property
4. I will respect the privacy and dignity of others

Class Rules

Each class teacher will develop and maintain class rules appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. The teacher and SNA's will aid and assist the implementation of the class rules. Class rules should be kept to a minimum. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner and reflect school rules. A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly. Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

Examples of class rules

- Pupils will sit on their chairs
- Pupils will not run in the classroom or on corridors
- Pupils will work when requested.
- Pupils will listen to staff
- Pupils will take care of their equipment.
- Pupils will be gentle towards staff and fellow pupils.

The following are some samples of how incentive/praise might be given to pupils:

- Praise for positive behaviour (verbal, gestural, tangible, favourite activity)
- Reward systems such as token boards to encourage work and appropriate behaviour
- Use of visual aids
- Structured Environment based on the TEACCH approach
- Structured visual daily schedules for each individual pupil

General rules

Yard/Hall.

- Pupils will walk to and from the yard
- Pupils will be gentle, will not kick/punch/bite.
- Pupils will share toys/equipment
- Pupils will not leave play areas

Transition areas/toilet/corridors

- Pupils will walk
- Pupils will use toilet properly

- Pupils will wash hands

In the community

- Pupils will listen to staff
- Pupils will queue in shops/cafes
- Pupils will sit quietly in buses and trains
- Pupils will not shout or scream

Good behaviour will be acknowledged and rewarded. Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour may put pupils themselves and others at risk, may interrupt the daily routine of the classroom or prevent the use of facilities in the wider community. This behaviour may be in the form of aggression, self-injury, stereotyped behaviours, lack of engagement or disruptive and destructive behaviours.

Three levels of unacceptable behaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated unacceptable behaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal and multi disciplinary team to discuss their child's behaviour.

Sanctions

- A sanction is a form of positive intervention and should be used to help the pupil. The aim of any sanction is to try to stop the behaviour recurring again. All staff members should insure that in applying any sanction the duty of care to the pupil is maintained e.g. the pupil must be appropriately supervised at all times and child protection guidelines are observed. Consistency will apply in the use of agreed sanctions or consequences.

Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour and be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the pupil. Sanctions, as far as possible should relate to and be applied as near as possible to the unacceptable behaviour.

Following consultation with the school Multi-Disciplinary Team and Behaviour Analyst, there may be times when unacceptable, inappropriate behaviour is ignored by staff. Any staff member who deals with an incident of inappropriate behaviour must report to/consult with the class teacher. Parents should be informed of serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Incidents will be logged on a standardised report form. (Appendix 2)

These records are made available to school Multi-Disciplinary Team and Behaviour Analyst for analysis. Patterns of behaviour will be analysed with a view to identifying "triggers". Functional Analysis will be carried out. Data on behaviours will be used to draw up individual positive behaviour support plans. (Copy of template Appendix 3) Behaviour plans drawn up by school team – teaching and MDT – must be adhered to and reviewed regularly. Once agreed, staff must be aware of these plans and be familiar with implementation guidelines.

Application of sanctions

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- It must be made clear what change in behaviour are required to avoid further sanctions
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

Ladder of Referral

The following steps will be taken by member of teaching staff when a pupil behaves inappropriately. The school will use/apply sanctions in accordance with the level of understanding of the pupil

The steps are listed in order of severity

1. Reasoning with pupil based on communication and level of understanding of pupil
2. Verbal reprimand based on communication and level of understanding of pupil
3. Temporary removal to a safe area or quiet room.
4. Loss of privileges e.g. going on a local trip
5. Communication with parents to advise of behaviour and elicit support
6. Meeting with parents to outline behaviour and agree management plan for behaviour
7. Contact member(s) of clinic support team and elicit support as necessary
8. Principal communication/meeting with parents
9. Suspension/expulsion in accordance with Rule 130 of 16 Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000.

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area as a sanction, except on the grounds of health and safety. Suspension may be considered for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour leading to a health and safety risk

Strategies may be developed and implemented to assist the pupil and may include individual timetables, individual behaviour management programmes with specific incentive schemes, and development of appropriate management techniques. These measures will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis for individual pupils. For serious incidents where the health and safety of others is compromised, suspension/expulsion needs to be considered by the principal and the Board of Management. Procedures in relation to Suspension/Expulsion can be found in Appendix 1.

While sanctions may have to be put in place, we are working very hard in collaboration with our MDT and BA at focussing on proactive strategies to find the

message behind the communication and teaching alternative, functionally equivalent skills. We are focussing on a low-arousal approach and creating as therapeutic an environment as is possible so that our students feel content and safe in their school setting.

Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording Behaviour

A standardised system of Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording Behaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will enable the school to balance subjective opinion with factual information about what is actually happening. It will use consistent terminology.

Regular monitoring will:

- Alert school staff to emerging problems for a particular student.
- Show trends and patterns, for example, the time of day, location or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or instances of particularly good behaviour.
- Provide information about successes and what is working well
- Avoid the risk of labelling a student unfairly from class to class or year to year, by providing factual data for any judgement about behaviour

A standardised record system will allow the school to track an individual pupil's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the pupil to deal with unacceptable behaviour will also be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed.

A written record of behaviour may be kept in relation to a pupil's behaviour in class or when engaging in any other school activity.

Behaviour will be recorded on individual record sheets. Current behaviour record sheets will be kept by the class teacher. At all times records of behaviour will be treated as confidential but may need to be shared with the St. Michael's House Multi-Disciplinary Team or external bodies such as Tusla.

The Principal will examine the information gathered from the monitoring of the code on a regular basis. The information will be relayed to the B.O.M

Records will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Notification of a child's absence from school

A pupil's attendance in school is part of the code of behaviour. The procedures to be followed by parents in relation to a child's absence are:

- Parents must let the school know of their child's absence for any reason
- Parents must inform the school on the first day of absence by phoning the school or informing the bus escort to relay the message to the school.
- Parents can inform the school in the communication book, or phone the school, if they know in advance of the absence.

- Parents need to give detailed information to the school about the reasons for absence following a period of absence
- Failure to notify the school about a pupil's absence will be followed up by phone call. The actual reason for absence should be given by letter to the school regarding the absence (Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23(2)(e) and Section 18). However, as many of our pupils have significant medical issues and the reason for absences is usually due to these issues, we feel that it would be very insensitive to require such a letter from our parents and this requirement will not be sought.
- Parents will be notified when their child's attendance is a cause of concern.
- Tusla will be notified when a child has been absent for 20 days

Review, Time Frame, Roles, Responsibility

The school will be happy to deal with any concerns a parent/guardian or staff member may have about behaviour and about any aspect of this Code of Behaviour. Members of the school community can do this both formally and informally by contacting the Principal or Chairperson of the B.O.M.

The school will provide parents with a copy of the Code of Behaviour before registration of their child as a pupil of the school. Parents will be asked to confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them. The code will be issued to all existing parents and a similar request will be made.

Appendix 1

Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension may be considered for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour leading to a health and safety risk. For serious incidents where the health and safety of others is compromised, suspension/expulsion may need to be considered by the principal and the Board of Management.

Definition of Suspension

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil. This authority has been delegated to the Principal, formally and in writing. The authority delegated to the Principal in respect of suspension has limits and the Principal is accountable to the B.O.M. for his/her use of that authority. Suspension is defined as: requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days. During the period of a suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school.

Immediate Suspension:

The Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school and at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. The period of suspension will not exceed three school days.

Informal/unacknowledged suspension/voluntary withdrawal: The Principal may consider the exclusion of a student for part of the school day, or ask parents to keep a child from school, or arrange to have the pupil taken home early from school to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Parents may wish to co-operate in a voluntary way with this form of suspensions because of the schools needs of their child, none the less, any of these requests are in effect a suspension and will be recorded as such.

Procedures in relation to Suspension

Before serious sanctions such as suspension/expulsion are used, communication between the school and parents will take place. Suspension will be in accordance with rules for national schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter. Written notification will be signed by the Secretary to the B.O.M. and has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having informed parents. It also ensures that parents are clear about what their son/daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.
- Except in the case of immediate suspension, parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision to suspend is made and before any sanction is imposed. This meeting will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the misbehaviour, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

- A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days by the Principal. If a proposal in excess of 3 days is being considered, the matter will be referred to the B.O.M.
- A period of up to 5 days may be sanctioned by the Chairperson in circumstances where a meeting of the B.O.M cannot be convened in a timely fashion
- The BOM can place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it
- 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 year to 20 days or more.

Written Notification

The Principal will inform the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- Period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- Reasons for the suspension
- Arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student.
- Provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- Right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, section 29)

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case. A pupil is expelled from school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The B.O.M has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion of a pupil will only be undertaken in extreme cases of serious wilful behaviour and where there is a significant risk to the health and safety of others. This measure will only be undertaken after every effort has been made to support, help and address the behaviour so as to avoid the expulsion. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

The procedural steps will include:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal to permanently exclude a student
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing

- Board of Management will deliberate on a decision following a hearing
- Where the BOM recommends expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision and that a period of 20 school days will elapse before the decision of the BOM is confirmed
- The school will participate in any consultations with the Education Welfare Officer regarding the decision to expel

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions. (NEWB Guidelines p79-87)

The Board of Management will ensure that:

- Fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of these procedures
- Fair procedures are accessible to those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- There are no undue delays in an investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion
- All matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour are dealt with in confidence
- However in circumstances of particular complexity, school authorities may need to seek legal advice to support their decision-making.

Appeals

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, gives parents (and pupils over 18) the right to appeal decisions made by a B.O.M (or a person acting on behalf of the Board) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills.

The following decisions may be appealed:

1. Refusal to enrol
2. Decisions to suspend made by the Board of Management where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days
3. Permanent exclusion from school

The Appeals procedure is detailed in Circular 22/02. Appeals must be lodged within 42 calendar days from the date the decision has been notified to parents

There are basically three layers to these procedures:

- a. Both parties will be asked if an accommodation can be reached at local level
- b. Should that fail and where the Appeals Committee considers that it may be possible to facilitate agreement between the parties, a facilitator will be appointed to contact the parties at the earliest opportunity.

- c. Finally, an appeal may be referred for hearing by an Appeals Committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills.

An internal appeal can be facilitated if a parent writes to the Secretary of the B.O.M. In response, the Secretary will inform the parent/guardian of the date of the B.O.M meeting and the process that will follow.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour management plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to his/her class. The parents must commit to full co-operation with the school. A letter of reinstatement will be issued to facilitate the return of the pupil to school

Removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Clean Slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. A record of the behaviour and any sanction imposed will be kept but once the sanction has been completed the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students. The school will arrange for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Ratification and Review

This policy has been approved by the Patron Body and was ratified by the Board of Management on The policy will be made available to all parents/guardians and educational professionals on our website and on request from the school. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Signed:

Chairperson, BOM.