

**Code of Behaviour**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy was drawn up by the staff of Ballydesmond National School. It is based on the policies previously drawn up by the Board of Management and staff. This policy was reviewed by the staff of Ballydesmond National School in March 2009, January 2015, March 2020 to ensure that the code was in line with NEWB Guidelines Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools (2008). A copy of the draft Code of Behaviour will be made available to all parents and guardians on our website or by request through the office and any proposed amendments will then be discussed at the BOM.

**Rationale**

* It is necessary to formulate a policy at this time to ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legislative requirements and good practice as set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008 (pp7-9).
* The code of behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.
* It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2008 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:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards:
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child’s absence from school.

**Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

* Our Code of Behaviour expresses the vision, mission and values of this school and its patron.
* We in Ballydesmond National School foster a sense of pride in our school and wider surroundings and thus develop a sense of civic awareness. The whole school community are expected to uphold the ethos of the school in an atmosphere of self-discipline, mutual respect and tolerance for others. The basic principles underpinning our Code of Behaviour are outlined in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School, NEWB, 2008 (pp22-23) and are as follows.
* Affirmation that everyone’s behaviour matters
* Focus on promoting good behaviour
* Focus on personal responsibility
* Recognition that relationships are crucial
* Fairness and Equity Promoting Equality
* Recognition of educational vulnerability
* Attention to the welfare of students
* Attention to the welfare of staff
* Promotion of safety and freedom from threat

**Aims**

* It is our aim to provide a happy and secure environment which is conducive to both the academic and personal development of each child.
* To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
* To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
* To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
* To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
* 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 ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

**Content of policy**

The policy is addressed under the following headings taken from **Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008 (p8 and page 59).**

1. Standards of Behaviour expected in schools
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

* Staff
* Board of Management
* Parents
* Pupils

1. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

* Classroom
* Playground
* Other areas in the school
* School related activities and outings
* Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

1. The way in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour

* Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
* Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
* Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

1. Procedures for notifying the school about reasons for absence from school
2. Suspension/Expulsion

* Suspension
* Expulsion
* Appeals

1. Keeping Records

* Class
* Playground
* School records

1. Reference to other policies
2. **Standards of Behaviour in School**

As required by Section 23(4) of the Education Welfare Act, prior to registering a pupil the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that the principal, may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

The standards of behaviour expected in the school reflect the following values of respect for self and others, kindness and willingness to help others, courtesy and good manners, fairness, readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and forgiveness. Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools, NEWB (Ch 6 p.36)

In Ballydesmond National School:

* Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
* Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
* Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework
* Children must respect their own property and the property of others i.e. the property of their teachers and fellow pupils and all school property
* Doors open at 8.50 and class begins at 9.00. The day ends at 1.40pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 2.40pm for all other classes. All pupils are expected to be present between these times. The school is not responsible for the safety of children on the premises outside of these hours.
* All children will be escorted to the school gate by their class teacher, or another assigned teacher. Parents, or another named adult on their enrolment form, must be present at the gate to collect their child.
* Full uniform must be worn at all times with the possible exception of sports events. All items should be clearly marked with the child’s name.
* Pupils are required to speak and behave in an orderly manner while on school premises and to obey staff members at all times
* Pupils are expected to be attentive in class and complete all assignments. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to oversee homework. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign the homework diary (or worksheets in Infant classes) when they deem it to be successfully completed.
* The school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to report absences in excess of twenty days to the National Education Welfare Board. It is **imperative** that notes are sent to the class teacher via Aladdin to explain absence. All of these to be retained in pupils file for a year. Children need written permission to leave school early. If pupils need to be collected early a parent/guardian or designated person must collect child from the office and sign out.
* **To avoid disruption of classes parents who wish to speak to the teacher are asked to make an appointment through the Secretary or contact the teacher in advance via Dojo**
* Mobile phones are strictly forbidden in school.
* Playground rules are devised with regard to the health and safety of all pupils. Rough and unfair play and coarse language are always forbidden. Coarse language is defined as any language that is offensive, degrading or insulting to another person and is contrary to the school’s ethos.
* In the interest of health, a high standard of personal hygiene is expected and infectious illnesses should be notified to the school immediately.
* Glass bottles are not allowed in school.
* Our school has a healthy eating policy that the children are expected to abide by.
* All forms of bullying, either verbal or physical are strictly forbidden and will be dealt with very severely in accordance with the school policy. Parents and pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to the class teacher and the principal. All members of the school community are expected to be particularly vigilant and mindful of such behaviour. Any incidence of bullying behaviours are reported to the Board of Management in the Child Protection Oversight Report.
* All pupils are expected to co-operate in keeping the school clean and its environs litter free.
* Generally, there is no homework at the weekends as a reward for co-operation and good behaviour but occasionally it is given at the discretion of the teacher.
* Pupils should not engage in creating, disseminating or sending texts or images, which are unbecoming, inappropriate or possibly indecent, or which could be construed as undermining the ethos of this school.

1. **Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

In our school, we aim to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour and discipline. This involves a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. (Circular 20/90).

**Staff**

Through systematic planning, staff confirm that all school policies and practices support the aims of our Code of Behaviour. We have a team work approach to behaviour and we review the Code of Behaviour as required. Our code caters for children with special needs who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their special educational needs. These behavioural difficulties are addressed through the child’s IEP. Through professional development the staff as a team has opportunities to deepen our understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help students to change their behaviour. All staff are sensitive to various factors, particular circumstances and cultural differences that may affect individual children’s behaviour. Each new and or temporary staff member is asked to familiarise themselves with both the approach and the content.

The school’s SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

**Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board of Management formally records the adoption of the code of Behaviour, the commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed. The Board of Management is consulted in reviewing/drafting of the code of behaviour. It looks at the recommendations of staff and parents and amends the code accordingly to see that it is line with the NEWB Guidelines. The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour. The Board follows the procedures outlined in this policy which deal with serious breaches of behaviour.

**Parents**

We in Ballydesmond National School believe that the code of behaviour will be more likely to work where parents and staff co-operate together.

* Prior to enrolment a copy of the Code of Behaviour is given to each parent/guardian.
* Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:
* Ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
* Encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
* Be aware of and co-operate with the school’s rules and system of rewards and sanctions
* Attend meetings at the school if requested
* Help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
* Ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

**Pupils**

Pupils are involved in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

* Accepting the Code of Behaviour
* Discussing the rules for the classroom in collaboration with the teacher
* Discussing the rules for the playground and corridors in collaboration with the teachers

1. **Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

‘The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place’. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

In Ballydesmond National School we have adopted the following strategies for promotion of good behaviour

* A quiet word or gesture to show approval
* A visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation
* A word of praise in front of a group, a class or the whole school
* Delegating some special responsibilities or privileges
* A mention to parents, written or verbal communication
* Age appropriate merit systems are used by the teachers at their own discretion for example - no homework, assigning responsibility, treats, classroom awards.
* Rewards systems

**Classroom**

* “Ground rules”/behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
* Pupil input in devising the class rules
* Rules of the classroom are displayed in a prominent place in the classroom
* Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
* A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour
* Visit of the principal to the classroom to reinforce the rules of the school
* Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

**Playground**

\* We have a concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted. The following rules apply.

**Playground Rules:**

* Each class will leave in an orderly fashion to go out to break. In the interest of safety and courtesy teachers will encourage pupils to walk quietly along the corridor. If a pupil runs or shouts while walking to and from break a sanction will be imposed.
* All staff note misbehaviour in the yard book.
* Children must wait at the entrance to the play area until an adult goes in first.
* Children are not permitted to pick up stones or use them as part of their play.
* Children are not allowed to leave the play surface area of the yard without permission from the teacher on yard duty.
* Children have to ask the teacher on yard duty to go into the school building to use the toilet during break-time.
* Pupils are made aware of the off limits areas in their assigned play areas.
* When the bell rings at the end of break all pupils go to their designated line on the playground, and are expected to be in their class lines in an orderly fashion – three rules are emphasised regularly – quickly, quietly and in a straight line.
* Any foul or abusive language is not permitted.
* As per school rules, all forms of bullying, either verbal or physical are strictly forbidden.
* One teacher is on duty each day per yard along with SNAs. SNAs will draw the attention of the teacher to any misbehaviour he/she notices on the yard. The teacher will then deal with the incident.
* On wet days the children remain in their classrooms. In each classroom, for health and safety reasons, children are asked to remain seated, and supervised by the teacher on duty.

**Other areas in the school**

As a staff we prevent behavioural problems in corridors and halls by ensuring that children have access to these areas at designated times only.

**School related activities**

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour would usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. Our school code of behaviour and expectations for students apply to school tours, games and extra-curricular activities and all school-linked events.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of 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.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

• Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school

• Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum

• Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

• Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)

• Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning

• Threats or physical hurt to another person

• Damage to property

• Theft

• Bringing dangerous equipment to school

• Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

• Assault on a teacher or pupil

• Serious Theft

• Serious Damage to property

• Serious bullying

• Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

• PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.

• VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.

• EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. “Cyber/text” bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.

1. **Rewards and Sanctions**

**Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour**

Good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged in the school by using the strategies we outlined in point 3 of this code. We also acknowledge pupil achievement by;

* Inviting the principal to the classroom to commend the behaviour
* Rewards are given at class levels
* A comment of positive behaviour may be entered in the child’s homework diary or message sent home via Class Dojo.
* Acknowledged at our assemblies

**Procedures for dealing with misdemeanours**

**Stage 1**

1. Child’s name and class recorded: nature of incident noted.
2. Report to class teacher.
3. Written exercise set as punishment and signed by parents.

**Stage 2**

If there are three such incidents in a week a standard note will be sent home.

This note should be signed by at least one parent, and returned to the school.

**Stage 3**

If misbehaviour continues a note will be sent to parents requesting a meeting to discuss the child’s behaviour. Detention during lunch break is a possible option at this stage.

**Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour**

The Education (Welfare) act 2000, section 23, states that a school must outline ‘the measure that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined’.

Our school has agreed ways of describing behaviour, arrangements for recording behaviour and a ladder of intervention-

* The teacher records the misbehaviour of the pupils.
* Any foul or abusive language is not permitted. Pupils who use this type of language will have their name entered into a school incident book.
* The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy employed by the teacher
* Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
* Reasoning with pupils
* Removal from the group (in class)
* Withdrawal of privileges including school trips, school activities etc.
* Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group
* Prescribing extra work
* Carrying out a useful task in the school
* Detention
* Referral to Principal/Deputy Principal
* Note to parents
* Formal report to the Board of Management
* Suspension (in accordance with Rule 130 of Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88 and as outlined in NEWB Guidelines pp-70-78)

Under no circumstance will a child be asked:

* To stand outside the door of a classroom for any period
* To do lines
* To remove themselves from a lesson or curriculum-based activity, unless the teacher deems it necessary.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management and staff of Ballydesmond National School on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Paddy Fleming (Chairperson)