



St. Francis of Assisi

Primary School, Belmayne, Dublin 13

Code of Behaviour

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. Learning, relationships and behaviour are linked. Good behaviour is an outcome of effective learning and good relationships also impact positively on how pupils learn. The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a disruption-free environment.

Underpinning this Code of Behaviour is the philosophy that discipline comes from within and, as a Staff and as a school, we strive to enable each child to develop an awareness of an understanding that they alone control their own individual actions and behaviour and that behaviour can be changed.

The Code of Behaviour applies at all times that the children are in the care of the school, including on school trips or events.

The Code has been prepared in accordance with Guidelines produced by the National Educational Welfare Board.

Principles

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School, Belmayne, is a Catholic, co-educational school which seeks to ensure that all children are educated and nurtured in an environment that is caring, considerate and tolerant. We help children to develop skills, attitudes and values that will bring the greatest happiness and fulfilment to their lives. We seek to enable the children to develop morally, socially, physically and cognitively to the best of their ability. We prioritise the safety, security and well being of all pupils as a prerequisite to their growth and development.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces high standards of behaviour
- To try to prevent negative 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 an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

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
- To discourage physical aggression.

School Expectations

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Wear the full school uniform on uniform days and school tracksuit and white polo shirt on P.E. days
- Show respect for own property and the property of others
- Respect other students and their learning
- Be kind and demonstrate a willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff immediately, or to indicate in a courteous manner any reason why this cannot be done.
- Walk quietly in the school building
- Be courteous and exhibit good manners
- Show readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Raise their hand if they wish to speak in a group situation during class time
- Raise their hand if they wish to leave their seat during lessons
- Ask permission to leave the classroom
- Do their best in everything they do
- Take responsibility for their own work

These can be summed up as follows:

- Remember the Golden Rule '*Treat other people as you would like them to treat you*'
- Remember the school motto: '*Be the best you can be*'
- Be tidy
- Be safe

Class Expectations

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class expectations with the children. These reflect and support the school expectations (see above), but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class expectations 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' and not "Don't run"). Expectations 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.

Yard Expectations

- Classes should go out to and come in from the yard in an orderly fashion.
- No items or toys are to be brought to the yard.
- Children are to be encouraged to play fairly and to allow others to join in with games/play
- Remember the Golden Rule: *Treat other people as you would like them to treat you.*
- Children should be encouraged to make up their own games.
- No rough play is allowed in the yard. Games such as Power Rangers, Ben 10, Star Wars, Wrestling etc., that involve rough play, kicking, punching, holding a person down, grabbing a person around the neck, holding a person's coat/jumper/shirt etc. are not permitted.
- Remind children that if someone is doing something to them that they do not like, they tell that person they don't like it and ask them to stop. If they don't stop, they tell the teacher on the yard.
- No feet are permitted on the green fence.
- The grass verge in the Senior Yard is out of bounds, as is the bicycle shed. No child is permitted to be in the car-parking area.
- The small stones between the cobbles are not to be touched.
- Children should respond appropriately to the 'freeze' and 'walk' signals at the end of yard time.
- No child may be collected from the yard by a parent/guardian without reporting to the Office beforehand.

Incentives for positive behaviour

Part of the vision of St. Francis of Assisi Primary School, Belmayne, is to help children to achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially i.e. to be the best they can be. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that, similarly, 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 personal best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times 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
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

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. 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 unacceptable behaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats to another person
- Assault on a person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain expectations. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, and the Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the class or school expectations and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Specialist personnel i.e. Learning Support Teacher and Resource Teacher should check from time to time that class/school expectations are communicated in a way that the children in their care can understand, particularly when the children are behaving in a way that would be described as contrary to expectation.

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- A sanction must defuse and not escalate a situation
- A sanction must preserve the dignity of all parties and must be applied in a fair and consistent way
- A sanction must be age/developmental level appropriate
- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences. The seriousness of the offence will depend on a number of factors besides the behaviour itself, including frequency, persistence and context of the behaviour
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and nine being for serious or gross misbehaviour.

The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this:

1. Reasoning with pupil, including advice on how to improve. This will involve an effort to understand the pupil's behaviour and why it may be occurring. It may also involve setting behaviour targets for the pupil and monitoring them in a supportive way, as distinct from a sanction.
2. Verbal reprimand
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
4. Writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Communication with parents
7. Referral to Principal
8. Principal communicating with parents
9. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Education Welfare Act 2000)

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore, a child who does not do his/her work in class or has not completed his/her homework may be detained at break time to finish the work. The class teacher will consult with the Principal to make arrangements for supervision.

Sanction at yard time

- Reprimand the child and remind him/her of correct behaviour
- For a repeated misdemeanour, appropriate 'time out' should be given
- Repeated inappropriate behaviour after time out sanction, inform Class Teacher and Principal at the end of yard time.

Inappropriate sanctions

- physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment
- ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a student's self confidence
- public or private humiliation
- applying sanctions to whole groups or classes in cases of individual or small-group wrongdoing
- leaving a pupil in an unsupervised situation (e.g. a corridor) while in the care of the school
- persistent isolation of, or ignoring, a pupil in class
- sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way
- consistent denial of access to the curriculum through removal from the lesson/class

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, interventions used and their outcomes, sanctions and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the local Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Parents are 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.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings by appointment.
- Through children's homework journal (Infants do not have a homework journal – bags should be checked for notes regularly)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school