

St. Francis of Assisi Primary School, Belmayne

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

Our School aims to provide a happy, secure, nurturing, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

The staff is committed to the realisation of the following objectives:

- Establish standards of behaviour in a caring, productive and safe learning environment where all pupils are valued and respected
- Create a supportive environment so that all members of the school community may work together in developing acceptable standards of behaviour from our pupils
- Encourage all pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour through the restorative approach.

Developing Our Code

Our Code of Behaviour was developed in consultation with the principal, teachers, special needs assistants, parents, pupils and Board of Management. An audit of the existing code was the starting point, with input sought from all the listed parties. An action plan was developed to address the areas that needed to be reviewed. The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement.

General Guidelines for Behaviour

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times. Respect must always be shown for the property of the individual and of the school. Follow the school motto "Be the best you can be".

The Foundation of Our Approach to Managing Behaviour

As part of our SPHE plan we follow the Weaving Well-being programme. This positive psychology programme enhances children's development of life skills using a multi-dimensional approach. It covers the areas of physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional development. It also empowers children to make a difference such as contributing to the wider community, helping others and making the world a better place.

A balance of approaches is used, from developing children's self-esteem through praise, encouragement and restorative practice to children taking responsibility for their words and actions. In this way children are helped also to recognise and manage their emotions and feel life's disappointments while at the same time being supported through these emotions and disappointments, in a safe way, in order to develop resilient and empowered children.

Approach to Managing Behaviour for Learning

In our school, we have a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive expectations for behaviour in class and out of class are modelled and explained to pupils at the beginning of the school year. Pupils are motivated to meet these expectations. Children learn through shared experiences and by following examples. It is for this reason that all members of our school community should always model positive and respectful behaviour towards one another.

All staff will aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Be mindful and respectful when using all forms of communication
- 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 contributions of all.

Positive Motivation to Prevent Misbehaviour

At St Francis of Assisi, we motivate our pupils to meet expectations with many positive incentives, in addition to praise, which help remind children of our school motto “Be the best you can be”. Consistent positive motivation is the key to success in our school.

The paragraphs below describe examples of the type of positive motivation teachers may choose to use with their class. This is not an exhaustive list.

In the Classroom

Within the classroom we have many ways of recognising good behaviour and achievement including:

- Star of the week
- Attendance Raffle
- Stickers, smiles and positive comments to recognise good effort for various reasons
- Pupils who have not received a yellow, orange or red card (detailed in the Sanctions section) at the end of a week will receive a green card for meeting expectations. Four green cards entitle them to a Homework Pass.
- Each class has a “Reaching for the Stars” board depicting an elevator that has 3 floors. Floor 3 is reaching the stars. At the start of each day all children’s pegs will be on Floor 3, as each starts with a clean slate and with the expectation that all pupils will strive to behave well and meet the school’s expectations. Children who receive verbal warnings for not meeting expectations will move down a floor. If real effort is made to improve on the misbehaviour, the child will move back up a floor. On reaching ground level the sanctions card system will come into effect.
- Pupils who prove to consistently “Reach for the Stars” will be awarded age- and class-appropriate privileges for their good behaviour.

Out of the Classroom

Out of the Classroom behaviour refers to behaviour lining up in yard or general behaviour around the school.

- Each class has a class award system, for example, a picture based 'Cookie Jar' for each time the class group meets a class expectation. The class agrees together on what the award will be.
- To motivate children to meet expectations while moving about in the school environment some teachers might nominate a 'Secret Walker'. A child's name is drawn from the pot and the teacher monitors the child's behaviour in terms of walking quietly, single file, holding handrails, facing forwards at all times etc. At the end of each day, if the child succeeded in meeting expectations the child is praised publicly and the class is given a class award (e.g. Cookie in jar). Because the identity of the child is unknown during the day, every child is motivated to meet expectations. If expectations are not met, the child's name is not made public.
- Some classes may select a 'Secret Student' which has a similar purpose but requires children to meet all expectations throughout the day in all situations. If successful, a class award is given.
- Should a class have no incidents reported from yard, for example (No arguments, fights, rough play etc.) a class award is given.
- Should an individual child be recognised for an act of kindness or using good initiative in a situation or exceeding expectations in any way, the child is praised within the class and the class could receive a class award and may be noted on the "Shout Out" wall. (Described below)

Assemblies

At Assembly, the class with the best attendance for that month will be praised and receive the attendance trophy.

Any pupil who has four green cards indicating they have received no sanctions for misbehaviour at all that month will be highly commended by the Principal and staff, in addition to receiving a homework pass at Assembly.

In the reception area a "Shout Out" board will be on display and children's photos will be posted to this board. It will also include other types of achievements or notable acts of a positive nature that we would like to acknowledge and praise. These will also receive mention at Assembly.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal damaged relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where

suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Please note that these questions will be tailored appropriately to the age, language ability or need of a child in order to ensure complete understanding for each unique individual.

Implementing the Code of Behaviour in our School

- At the start of each term all class teachers will dedicate an SPHE lesson to the express teaching of the Code of Behaviour in order to familiarise the children with the expectations of the school.
- The Code of Behaviour will be sent to all parents at the start of each school year through Aladdin Connect and we will ask parents to discuss the details of the Code of Behaviour with their child at home so that all parties are familiar with and support the Code and its expectations.
- Parents will be asked to confirm on Aladdin that they have read and accept the Code of Behaviour on behalf of their child. The Code of Behaviour will be available on the school website for ease of access by all members of the school community.

If a parent becomes aware of an incident that they feel needs to be dealt with (e.g. bullying, cyber-bullying, destruction of school property etc.) they should first approach the class teacher who will follow the relevant practices and procedures and will escalate to the Principal, if necessary.

No parent should approach a child, other than their own, to discuss, interrogate or admonish a child for a behaviour. The class teacher will address the situation appropriately and relevant parents will be informed of the outcome.

Code of Behaviour

The Code of Behaviour covers the following areas:

- Behaviour in class
- Behaviour in the yard
- Behaviour in the school environment and behaviour on school outings
- Attendance at school/Education (Welfare) Act
- Homework, after school and extra-curricular activities.

Behaviour in class

Courtesy and respect are essential. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards staff (e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence) are unacceptable. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with the right of others to learn is considered unacceptable behaviour e.g. constant disruption of the class, persistent distracting of others.

In order that pupils benefit from their work in class, full co-operation is required at all times. Pupils must co-operate with instructions given by a member of staff.

The Essential Classroom Expectations

1. Be ready for class
2. Good manners are expected at all times
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same
4. Raise hand, wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property and the property of others
6. Ensure you are safe in class and keep it safe for others

Behaviour in the Yard

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour including pretend wrestling and fighting games that involve kicking, punching, grabbing someone around the neck or by their clothes or holding someone down are not permitted. Any games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited.

Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the yard for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervising staff member, this includes re-entering the school building.

The Essential Out of Class Expectations

- Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly manner.
- Walk quietly on the stairs and hold the handrail on the stairwell to and from the classroom.
- Stay within the agreed boundaries in yard.
- The seated circular area is for sitting/chatting/reading only.
- Only equipment agreed by staff is allowed on the yard.
- Food and drinks are not permitted in yard.
- Talk to the teachers on yard duty if a problem or issue arises that needs immediate attention, do not wait and take the problem to the class teacher.
- Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated.
- Do not spoil others' games.
- Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy.
- Respect all school property.

- Freeze if teacher blows the whistle.
- When the bell rings in the yard, playtime is over – walk to the line-up area.
- Line up quietly and in single file, facing forward with hands down by your sides.
(Children who do not meet this expectation will be asked to stand aside until their class teacher comes to the yard)

During break and wet day yard times children are expected to:

- Stay seated at their own table
- Ask permission from a supervising adult to leave their place for any reason including toilet and disposing of rubbish
- Maintain acceptable noise levels.

Behaviour in the School Environment & Behaviour on School Outings

- Respect and courtesy to others is essential.
- Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is unacceptable.
- Use of bad / inappropriate language among pupils is unacceptable.
- Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence.
- Show respect for school property at all times.
- Move about the school in an orderly manner i.e. single file, facing forward, walk quietly on the right-hand side of the corridor. (This is for safety and to minimise accidents)
- Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school.
- On school outings pupils are expected to behave in an orderly manner (walk in pairs safely, respectfully and quietly) and show respect for other members of the public and for public property.
- Pupils should always co-operate fully with their teachers and special needs staff and are expected to follow staff instructions for a safe experience.

Anyone who is unable to behave on an outing and is creating an unsafe environment for themselves and/or others, will be removed by a member of the staff and contact will be made with the school who will, in turn, contact the parent / guardian.

Anyone who has proven, from previous behaviour, that they cannot be trusted to behave on a school outing will not be permitted to go on the school outing,

Attendance/Education (Welfare) Act

Under the Education (Welfare Act) 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief written note (in school journal and signed by parent / guardian for classes 1st to 6th / written note signed by parent / guardian of children in Junior and Senior Infants). Absences of 20 days or more will be referred to the Educational Welfare Services of Túsla. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues.

Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to the office secretary. Parents/Guardians must sign out pupils who are collected early from school.

Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in their line in the yard at that time. Parents / Guardians will be able to check on their child's attendance through Aladdin Connect. When a pupil has been absent, a note from the parent/guardian must always be given to the class teacher upon the pupil's return to school (see above). When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 2.30pm) a note from parents must be brought to the class teacher stating the time at which the pupil is to leave.

Attendance is reviewed regularly and meetings with parents / guardians will be sought to discuss repeated absences or poor punctuality records. If a child is late more than 3 mornings in a week, the parent/guardian will be called by the class teacher to discuss the issue. If this becomes a repeating pattern, the principal will call the parent / guardian to arrange a meeting to discuss the ongoing problem. Similarly, if there is a repeating pattern of being collected early from school.

Homework

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from child to child. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parents / guardians should sign the homework journal to confirm that the work has been fully attempted.

Written work should be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is discouraged.

If for some reason homework (or part thereof) cannot be completed, parents / guardians are asked to write a note in the homework journal to explain this.

Homework is not given at weekends.

School Uniform

All pupils must wear the complete school uniform, including black shoes and school tie. On PE days, pupils must wear the school tracksuit and a white polo shirt with runners.

School Journal

The school journal is an important communication tool between parents / guardians and the school in classes 1st to 6th. Parents/guardians should read and sign the journal each night. The personal information page in the school journal should be completed.

Accessories

Pupils are permitted to wear stud earrings and a watch only. Acrylic nails, nail varnish and makeup are not allowed.

Mobile Devices / Electronic Games

Use of mobile devices and electronic games during school hours and afterschool activities is not permitted. All phones must be switched off and kept in school bags at all times until children have left the premises. Any infringement of this expectation will involve the confiscation of the phone / other electronic equipment which will be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil only.

Responsibilities of Parents / Guardians:

As important members of the school community, parents/guardians are encouraged to support the school and their children:

- by making their children aware of the behaviour expected by the code and encouraging their children to abide by it
- by ensuring that children arrive on time for the start of the school day at 8:50am with their lunch and schoolbag
- by ensuring their child/children's names are on coats, jumpers etc.
- by ensuring that their children give due time and effort to homework and by providing a suitable environment, free of distraction to enable the children to give their best effort to their work
- by actively engaging in discussions with members of staff on behavioural issues as necessary.
- by visiting the school when requested to do so by the Principal or by another member of staff
- by consulting the school policies available on the school website www.stfrancispsbelmayne.com.

Responsibility of Children

In our school we believe that no child is an outsider. Children are actively encouraged to help each other keep the school a pleasant and safe place to be, to learn and to grow:

- by being kind and thoughtful
- by listening and giving others an opportunity to talk
- by including others in what they do
- by making new pupils feel welcome
- by avoiding acting in ways that are hurtful to others e.g. fighting, name-calling, teasing, bullying, swearing or hurting other people's feelings
- by being mindful and respectful when using all forms of communication, including social media
- by showing courtesy to all members of staff
- by listening to all members of staff in the school environment and when outside the school on school trips.
- by following the practice of "ONE VOICE"
- by treating others the way they would like to be treated themselves.

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 / guardians and the class teacher / SEN teacher, and the Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Adjustment of some expectations and consequences may be agreed as part of the behaviour plan to accommodate the needs of a child.

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 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.

Misbehaviour Sanctions

When unacceptable behaviour occurs, students must experience predictable consequences. Our school seeks to ensure that responses to unacceptable behaviour are consistent and proportionate to the nature of the behaviour.

Misbehaviours will be categorised into ***Minor, Moderate and Serious*** Incidents.

Parents / Guardians are kept informed of misbehaviours through a card system. Cards are coloured yellow, orange and red. All cards are to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher. A message will be sent via Aladdin to notify the parent/guardian that a card has been issued to their child.

- Yellow cards are sent home for minor incidents and are issued by the class teacher.
- Orange cards are for moderate incidents or repeated yellow cards and are issued by the class teacher.
- Red cards signify serious incidents or repeated orange cards and are issued by the Principal.

The following are examples of sanctions that may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

Examples of actions that may be taken by staff members when dealing with minor misbehaviours:

- Reasoning with pupils
- Verbal warning from a teacher or supervising adult
- Temporary separation from peers to another area in the room or yard
- Temporary separation from peers to another classroom

- Yellow card sent home to parents/guardians requiring signature
- Loss of privileges

When minor misbehaviours become a repeating pattern, the following additional actions may be required:

- An orange card will be sent to parents / guardians requiring signature
- A written reflective account of the incident that happened may be sought from the pupil and/or an apology written by the pupil and signed by the parent / guardian
- Withdrawal of children from any activities in or outside the school if their behaviour during this activity poses a risk to themselves or others or prevents other children from learning
- A meeting between the teacher (and SNA if required), the parents/guardians and/or Principal will be arranged

Examples of actions that may be taken when a pattern of moderate poor behaviour persists or when a once off serious incident occurs.

- Red card sent home to parents / guardians requiring signature
- A meeting between the Principal and the parents/guardians including the teacher and if necessary, SEN Teacher and SNA
- A written account of the incident that happened may be sought from the pupil and/or an apology written by the pupil and signed by the parent / guardian
- Behaviour Management Plan agreed between parents / guardians, teacher, child and/or SNA
- Reporting incidents of a serious nature to the Board of Management
- Suspension/expulsion from school for a period, agreed by the Board of Management

A record of all cards issued will be kept by the class teacher.

At the end of each term the children have a chance to "Start from a clean slate".

Sanctions for Serious Misbehaviour

Red cards are issued for one-off serious incidents or 3 repeated orange card incidents.

Stage 1 – Single Red Card / Warning

Red Card – Pupil sent to Principal. Principal will request parents /guardians to attend at the school for a meeting with Principal, class teacher / other relevant staff members.

Stage 2 – Internal Suspension

Internal Suspension is when a pupil is removed from their own base class and is placed in another class for up to three school days. If the child has been given work to complete and set expectations for the days of suspension, and the child fails to meet these expectations, the internal suspension may be extended or a Stage 3 suspension considered with the consultation of parents / guardians.

Stage 3 – Suspension

This procedure is used in the case of gross misbehaviour and/or on health and safety grounds:

- a) If Stage 2 is exhausted or in the case of a single incident of gross misbehaviour, the Principal requests a meeting with the parents / guardians. If considered warranted, the Principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for 3 days initially. This power of suspension is delegated to the Principal by the school's Board of Management.
- b) In certain circumstances the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, may suspend a pupil for 5 school days.
- c) A meeting of the Board of Management may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days.
Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds:

- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety for themselves, other pupils, staff members
- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property or has engaged in assaultive behaviour.

Re - entry

A planned re-entry to school is convened after enforcing a suspension to minimize recurrence of unacceptable behaviour and disruption to the pupil's education. Parties who may be involved in this process are: Principal, Parents / Guardians, Teacher, staff members involved in the incident.

A meeting will be scheduled to take place on the day of re-entry. The Pupil will be expected to return to school with a positive attitude, and to bring with them a written apology that relates to the incident. Parents / Guardians must bring to the meeting the signed letter that was sent home explaining the reasons for the suspension. At this meeting, a review of the school's expectations will take place, and where necessary, a behavioural contract may be drawn up.

Appeal

Parents / Guardians of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

Stage 4 – Expulsion

This procedure may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare Act) 2000.

Grounds for Expulsion

- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety

- Behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

Automatic Expulsion

Board of Management may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

- Sexual Assault
- Possession of illegal drugs
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff.
- Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

Procedures in Respect to Expulsion

- Detailed investigation by school Principal
- Recommendation by Principal to Board of Management
- Board of Management considers Principals recommendation and holds hearing
- Board of Management decides if expulsion is appropriate. If Board of Management recommends expulsion, the Board of Management will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
- Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
- Parents / Guardians of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
- Confirmation of decision.

Methods of Communicating with Parents / Guardians

Communicating with parents / guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents / Guardians 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 / Guardians 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 of communication are used at all levels throughout the school

- Informal parent-teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings by appointment
- Through children's homework journals - Classes 1st to 6^t) (Junior and Senior Infants bags should be checked for notes)
- Messages through the Aladdin App from Teachers, Office or Principal
- Letters / Notes from school to home and home to school

- Email from Office (office@stfrancispsbelmayne.com) or Principal (principal@stfrancispsbelmayne.com)
- Policies and other information can be viewed from our website www.stfrancispsbelmayne.com

Related Policies available on request:

1. Anti-Bullying
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Enrolment Policy/Admissions Policy
4. Safeguarding Statement

Conclusion

The essence of our Code of Behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop life-long self-discipline.

Review

This Code of Behaviour will be reviewed as required.

This Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on 27th May 2020.