

# Behaviour Policy

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St. Anne's National School,  
Ardclough.



## Our School Rules

- Be on time and be prepared
- Be in the right place at the right time
- Keep unhelpful hands feet and comments to yourself
- Let you and your work be neat and complete
- Walk and talk when the time is right
- Show respect and care for people and property

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## **Introduction**

### **“MOL AN OIGE AGUS TIOCFADH SÍ”**

The motto of our school as above means “Praise the youth/young and he/she will come with you”. This is the theme of our approach to behaviour. School behaviour is based on the concept of respect. It supports a network of relationships where respect is the basic premise. In school, no more than at home, each child must have respect for all those with whom they come in contact. The process of developing “respect” for, self, others, property etc begins at home and is re-enforced and developed in school where there is an atmosphere which facilitates good teaching, and good learning.

## **Rationale**

Discipline is necessary to help children develop a positive attitude towards themselves and others and the world in which they live and also to equip them with the skills to deal with any problem they may have. This process begins in the family and is further developed in school. For children to achieve these skills they must first:

- a. See themselves as unique and deserving of respect from themselves and others. This has implications for respect for their bodies, their character and good name.
- b. Develop a good self-image and high level of self- esteem.
- c. Feel secure in the environment in which they live, work and play.
- d. Learn to distinguish right from wrong.
- e. Respect the rights of others “as they would like to be respected themselves”.
- f. Learn to share, work and play with others.
- g. Have the opportunity to develop themselves physically, intellectually, socially, spiritually and emotionally.
- h. Learn to enjoy themselves and to be happy with themselves and with others.
- i. Learn that they contribute, by their actions, to a safe and healthy school environment

Teachers in this school will endeavour to create as happy, comfortable and secure environment as possible. Every child has a right to happiness and acceptance at school, whatever his/her level of ability or whatever circumstances the child finds himself/herself in. In implementing this Behaviour Policy, staff will take into account many factors at work in the life of the child.

## **Guiding Legislation and Related Policy**

This behaviour policy was created in line with the Guidelines from the National Educational Welfare Board and complies with the following legislation

- Convention on Human Rights Act 2003
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Education Act 1998
- Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Equal Status Acts
- Ombudsman for Children Act 2002
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN Act)
- Disability Act 2005
- Health and Safety Legislation
- Data Protection Act 1988 and 2003 Amendment

Policies within the school that support the Behaviour Policy include

- Child protection Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy and Protocols for Online Learning
- Health and Safety Statement
- Response Plan (Covid -19)

### **Aims**

The aims of the Behaviour Policy in St Anne's School are:

- To provide guidance and transparency for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of citizenship, responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance 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 promote a positive and safe working environment for all staff, especially in each classroom, for each teacher
- To build on what the children have already learned at home about the difference between right and wrong

### **School Rules**

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly. All teachers, along with the principal, will enforce the school rules both with their own class and incidentally with children from other classes. At St Anne's, we show respect for our pupils by expecting high standards of behaviour at all times.

### **Our School Rules**

1. Be on time and be prepared
2. Be in the right place at the right time
3. Keep unhelpful hands feet and comments to yourself
4. Let you and your work be neat and complete
5. Walk and talk when the time is right
6. Show respect and care for people and property

### **Implementation – A whole school approach**

- The school's climate, ethos, values, policies, practices and relationships have a crucial role to play in influencing children's behaviour. Every member of the school community – staff, parents, children and visitors – should work as a team in order to create a positive, safe, happy school atmosphere and environment that supports and promotes good behaviour
- Positive behaviour is fostered by the purpose created by effective teaching and an inclusive and engaging curriculum
- Classroom management and teaching methods have a strong influence on pupil behaviour.

Clear consistent messages about pupil behaviour and teacher expectations creates consistent boundaries, in most cases preventing difficulties before they arise

- Everyone will treat each other with respect
- Expected behaviours will be taught and reinforced as necessary in each class. Individual classes may devise simple classroom rules which reflect the School Rules and are appropriate to their needs. Everyone is expected to commit to maintaining the high standards expected.
- Pupils will treat all staff and visitors with the same respect afforded to teachers.
- Teachers, parents and pupils have a vital contribution to make towards maintenance of good order and behaviour throughout the everyday routines of school life

### **General Guidelines for Positive Pupil Behaviour**

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
2. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
3. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance by wearing the school uniform each day (and tracksuit on designated days), to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time. If support is needed to cloth children appropriately or to provide the necessary material, the parent should approach Ms. Manley
4. Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
5. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed by parents or guardians in writing, stating the reason for absence.
6. Positive behaviour is expected in class, in the school building, on yard, on entering/exiting the building and when on trips from school

### **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. For effectiveness rewards must be meaningful, linked in time to the desired behaviour, given for effort, inclusive and consistent. Rewards will be for both individuals and groups.

### **Some examples of rewards used in our school**

#### Teacher – child (rewarding self-discipline)

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on a child's exercise book
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class group
- Written or verbal communication with parent
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Individual class merit awards, stamps, stickers, jellies, raffle tickets, class dojo, homework passes etc
- Student of the week award

### Teacher – group (rewarding team-work)

- whole-school reward systems which foster continuity, target specific school behaviours and reward compliance with school rules: Reward system beginning on yard and added to by bonus points awarded incidentally for “catching class groups being good”

### **Discouraging Misbehaviour**

In our school, we place a greater emphasis on acknowledging positive behaviour but at times misbehaviour must be discouraged. Minor breaches of the Behaviour Policy can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehavior can disrupt the student’s own learning and that of others, and can cause distress and anxiety to students and teachers.

The principal will be kept informed of any ongoing minor behavioural issues and any serious behavioural issues. The principal may speak to the child at any point to discuss their behaviour both as a preventative measure and to deal with issues arising

The purpose of sanctions is to help students to learn about inappropriate behaviour and to recognise its effect on others. Sanctions also help students to take responsibility for their behaviour by understanding that they have choices about their behaviour and that all choices have consequences.

To support the child in following the school rules, we create an atmosphere of predictability and security by teaching clear boundaries (rules) provide objective consequences in the event that the child chooses inappropriate behaviour.

There are many subtle ways in which a teacher can guide a child to redirect their behaviour e.g. eye-contact, proximity to the child, an agreed signal (tap on the board/desk), asking the child a question, seating the child to avoid distractions, highlighting the child’s positive choices. At times, this will not sufficient to redirect behaviour.

In the event of a child choosing inappropriate behaviour, within the classroom/school building, the following steps will be followed

- Step 1:* Reasoning with the pupil (within class or outside room; as a group or as an individual) *‘You are now on step 1’*
- Step 2:* Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve (within the class or outside the room)-  *naming the rule and noting initials on board*
- Step 3:* Temporary separation from peers within class or moving to another class OR withdrawal of privileges
- Step 4:* Extra work to be completed at home to be signed by the parent-  *short exercise in addition to homework- rule/step noted and signed*
- Step 5:* Parents invited to school to discuss the behavioural disruption –  *formal meeting*
- Step 6:* Detention during break. Parents are informed by letter that the child has reached sanction 5 and was detained for 20 minutes at lunchtime to complete a reflective exercise designed to help the connect the behaviour with the unwanted outcome-  *supervision by Principal /Post holder*
- Step 7:* Referral to Principal with consequence
- Step 8:* Principal communicating with parents
- Step 9:* Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Steps taken will be relative to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development i.e. minor misbehaviours (e.g. talking out of turn) will begin with step one, more serious misbehaviours (e.g. intentionally damaging school property) will move straight to step 4, 5,

Where there is a pattern of daily repetitive minor misbehaviours (step 1,2,3 etc), the child will begin their day on a higher step until the teacher has seen evidence of improved behaviour. Where there is no improvement, parents will be invited to the school to discuss the matter with the class teacher.

Where there is a pattern of regular serious misbehaviours, the child will begin on a higher step and a **behaviour contract** (or behaviour plan) may be created to be signed by the child, the teacher and the parent. In the event of this, the parent will have visited the school and will be aware of the gravity of the situation.

Please Note: Pupils will not be consistently deprived of engagement in a curricular area in general, but they may be removed from lessons for serious misbehaviour or for the health and safety of others i.e. when other children may be affected physically or emotionally by the child's behaviour. Should the child refuse to leave the room upon request, their parents will be expected to remove their child from the premises in view of the health and safety risk.

A parental visit to the school is vitally important as it shows the child that all parties care about the child's behaviour, that they are willing to give time to help the child to solve the problem and also gives a valid opportunity to the parent to raise the Behaviour Policy with the child outside of the school setting in their role as the primary educators of their children. All interactions between parents and teachers should be respectful and in line with the Health and Safety Policy and Dignity at Work Policy in the school. It is the parents' responsibility to engage fully with any attempts to help the child within the school and to follow up with recommended outside agencies. If it is found that parents are unwilling to support their child in this way, the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer designated to the area.

### **Yard Behaviour:**

In line with the approach for classroom behaviour, respectful behaviour is expected in the yard and field area and when children visit locations outside the school.

Sanctions are implemented to help students learn about inappropriate behaviour and to maintain a safe environment for all to play in.

A system of yellow and red cards is used. Yellow cards are for more minor offences with red being given in cases of more serious behaviours.

Children are asked to stand out of games for a short period to reflect on their actions and re-join the games when the time elapses/directed by the teacher. In the case of a very serious behaviour in which there is a health and safety risk or when serious disrespect is shown to staff or other children, the principal will be informed.

The cards are given to children /placed in homework journals for parents to see. Red cards are signed by parents. Children with a number of cards may receive a letter detailing incidents to bring home. We ask for parents support in talking to their child about the incidents and supporting them in refraining from further actions. In the event of ongoing infringements, further discussions will be had with parents.

### **Children with Special Educational Needs (mainstream and ASD Class)**

It is the aim of this school to provide a safe and supportive environment, which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students.

In accordance with our Special Educational Needs Policy, a Continuum of Support is used whereby children identified with Special Educational Needs or Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties may be supported with Individual Behaviour Plans. The Continuum of Support guidelines encompass a problem solving approach to understanding and developing interventions for pupils experiencing a range of learning and behavioural difficulties.

In some instances challenging behaviour may occur. Challenging behaviour is *“behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; significantly reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger”* (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996)

In supporting the child with special needs and dealing with any challenging behaviour, cognisance is taken of the individual child’s context (eg, sensory sensitivities, cognitive abilities etc) and this will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce problematic behaviours.

In the event of ongoing serious and challenging behaviours, or a single serious event that endangers health and safety of the child/children/member of staff, it is at the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with the BOM, to move to serious sanctions as outlined in the general policy.

### **Suspension/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. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehavior by the child (e.g. aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil etc), the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend 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, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes 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 Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

After a period of suspension, of one to three days, the pupil will return to the school. The Principal may facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil and will re-admit the pupil to the class. The class will be provided with appropriate supports to deal with impact of the child's behaviour if necessary. Following the child's return, the parents will be invited to meet with the principal and/or class teacher to support ongoing efforts made by the child to behave in accordance with the school's Behavioural Policy.

The parent/s must

- give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will endeavor to 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.
- make themselves available to remove the child should the child become aggressive or unmanageable
- engage with the relevant professional services when it is advised that the behavioural difficulties lie outside of a teachers' professional remit

### **Bullying**

In general, bullying is **repeated** verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. In contrast, cyber-bullying is **one instance** of defaming another person using social media. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation, taunting and cyber-bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

As a school, we aim to support the child in identifying consequences to behaviours and to feel confident in reporting misbehaviour.

## **Responsibilities re Behaviour Policy**

### **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Ratify the policy
- Support the implementation of the policy
- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the policy

### **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Support the implementation of the policy and ensure that it is implemented in a fair, transparent and consistent manner
- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Communicate regularly with teachers and children regarding behaviour
- Arrange for review of the policy every two years

### **Teachers' Responsibilities**

- Acknowledge and encourage positive behaviour
- Support and implement the school's Behaviour Policy
- Ensure that students are adequately supervised
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Explicitly and incidentally teach expectations related to the school rules
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of misbehavior (sanction sheet , yard record, own behaviour journal, yard book, Record of Suspected Bullying Incidents form). This behaviour record will be filed by the principal at the end of the year and will be destroyed 6 years after the child leaves the school
- Use the Continuum of Support Stage 1 (SEN Policy) document A) to identify problem behaviours and interventions early and B) to create a record for teachers in following years
- Enlist support from and provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern

### **Other Staff (SNA, Secretary, Caretaker, Cleaners, Visiting teachers etc)**

- All ancillary staff will actively support our Behaviour Policy through their interactions with pupils and other staff members
- Staff will report behavioural issues to the duty teacher who will then deal appropriately with them.

### **Pupils' Responsibilities**

- Treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- Support the implementation of the policy

- Abide by the school rules
- Follow the classroom rules
- Be a positive role-model for other children within the school
- Be mindful of their role as a representative of the school at all times
- To abide by advice around social/physical distancing, hygiene routines and etiquette

### **Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Sign up to the Behaviour Policy
- Be familiar with the Behaviour Policy and support its implementation (eg signing notes and cards in journals, talking to children about behaviour/incidents)
- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others and for property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate promptly with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour
- Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before 9 a.m. or after the official closing time of 1.50 p.m. (infants) and 2.50 p.m. (other classes) except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times

**Other agencies-** parties who hire the school premises are asked to sign up to adhering to the ethos of the school and school standards of discipline/behaviour

### **Consultation and Review**

- The final Draft has been presented to the Board of Management for Ratification
- The Behaviour Policy will be reviewed, regularly.