

# St. Brigid's National School Kill

## Code of Behaviour

### Introductory Statement

This code of behaviour was developed in consultation with all the teaching staff and the Board of Management and the Parents Association of Kill National School. This policy was drafted in May 2014 and approved by the Board of Management in June 2014.

### Rationale

This policy was drawn up in response to the new guidelines set out by the National and Welfare Board and in line with Section of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The previous Code of Behaviour was reviewed and amended as prioritised by the staff and Board of Management of St. Brigid's National School. This policy is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline.

### Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

This Code of Behaviour relates to the school's philosophy, ethos and in line with the school's mission statement as quoted below.

*"St Brigid's National School, Kill is a Catholic Primary School which welcomes children of all religions and nationalities.*

*We, the school community, believe in the education of the whole child.*

*Following a child-centred and holistic approach, we endeavour –*

1. *To recognise and acknowledge the talents and abilities of each child.*
2. *To nurture each child's talents and self-esteem in a caring and supportive environment.*
3. *To provide the learning opportunities which will foster and develop the life skills and resources necessary for his/her future role in society.*
4. *To uphold the catholic ethos of the school."*

### Aims

- In devising the code, consideration had to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- Every effort will be made by all members of the staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school, and the over-riding aims will be -
- 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
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

## **Principles**

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

## **Expectations of the Board of Management**

- To provide a comfortable, safe environment
- To support the Principal and the staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour
- To ratify the Code of Behaviour
- To arrange for review of the Code of Behaviour, as required

## **Expectations of Staff Members**

- To develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil and praise desirable behaviour
- To promote and encourage positive behaviour
- To create a safe, welcoming and positive learning environment for each pupil
- To be cognisant of their duty of care to all pupils at all times
- To be courteous and respectful to all
- To support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour in a fair and consistent manner.

## **Expectations of Parents**

- To encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, for their own property and that of others.
- To ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- To ensure their child wears a full, clean uniform daily
- To be interested in, support and encourage their child's school work e.g. signed homework diary
- To provide an appropriate note of lateness, undone or unfinished homework
- To be familiar with the school's Code of Behaviour and other school policies and to support the implementation of these policies
- To co-operate with teaching staff in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others

- To communicate to the school in relation to problems which may affect a child's behaviour
- To collect their child on time when school ends
- To make an appointment with the class teacher, in the first instance, to discuss any concerns.

### **Expectations of Pupils**

- To work quietly, safely and to the best of their ability at all times
- To listen to their teachers and act on instruction/advice
- To listen to other pupils and await their turn to speak
- To show respect for all members of the school community
- To respect the right of other pupils to learn
- To care for their own property
- To respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- To avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- To avoid all nasty remarks, swearing or name-calling
- To include other pupils in games and activities
- To move quietly around the school
- To keep the school clean and tidy
- To bring the correct materials and books to school
- To stay on school premises and within designated areas during school times
- To follow school and class rules.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

Whole school approach

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies for dealing with positive behaviour:

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following;

- 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 systems of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

### **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 regulation are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

## **Before/After School**

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils arriving before the time of 9.05am or after the official time of 3.00pm (infants 2.00pm) 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 behavioural policy during these times.

Safety: For my own safety and that of other:

- I should be careful coming to and going from school I should always walk while in the school building
- I should remain seated at all times in class and while eating lunch
- I should always show respect for my fellow pupils
- Bring a note of explanation following absences
- I should never leave the school grounds without permission of the class teacher or Principal

### **Caring for Myself**

- I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order
- I should always be in school before 9.20am
- I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day
- I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness and eating habits
- I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, minerals, sweets or chewing gum are not permitted
- I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

### **Caring for others**

- I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils my being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly in my class line
- I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn
- I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers etc home. I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds
- Be truthful and honest at all times
- I should always show courtesy towards adults by making way for all adults when I meet them in doorways, gateways and along paths
- I should show respect for all visitors to the school e.g. priests, gardaí, sports coaches etc.

### **Caring for School Property:**

- I must be careful in using the school building
- I must not throw litter
- I must not bring weapons and/or dangerous objects of any sort to the school or on school trips
- I must not bring a mobile phone to school
- I must adhere to the school's healthy eating policy and therefore should not bring crisps, chewing gum or lollipops to school

Where school property is wilfully or negligently damaged by pupils, the Board of Management may seek to recover losses from pupil's parents. Teachers may, at their discretion, inform the parents of a child, whose property has been damaged due to the irresponsibility of another pupil, in order that compensation can be agreed.

### **Bullying:**

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour or verbal psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Misbehaviour on the Yard**

Incidents of yard misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil's misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following procedure may be followed:

1. Ask the pupil/s misbehaving to accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard;
2. Impose a period of "reflection time" – 5 to 10 minutes – where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
3. Ask the student to go into the school and complete some work as punishment;
4. Inform the class teacher who will decide on the method of discipline;
5. Detention where the student is not allowed on the yard for playtime until some punishment is completed.

### **Sanctions:**

(The nature of the behaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy).

The following strategies will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour:

1. Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions
1. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
2. Removal from the group in class e.g. timeout/thinking chair, or on yard
3. Withdrawal of privileges (class privileges, extra-curricular privileges, golden time in the evening, reduced breaktime)
4. Note to parents in pupil's journal

5. Referral to Principal
6. Phone call to Parents/Guardians
7. Meeting with Parents/Guardians
8. Use of Individual Behaviour Plan
9. Report to the principal/and chairperson or other member of Board of Management
10. Meeting with Parents
11. Suspension
12. Expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88)

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to 'catch' repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management.

### **Classification of Misbehaviours**

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

#### **Examples of minor misbehaviour:**

- Interrupting class work.
- arriving late for school.
- running in the school building.
- talking in the class line.
- leaving assigned seat without permission at lunch time.
- leaving litter around the school.
- not wearing the correct school uniform.
- being discourteous/unmannerly.
- not completing homework without good reason/not having homework signed by a parent.
- talking out of turn/answering back.
- not working to full potential.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with minor misbehaviour:

- Verbal reprimand/reasoning with the pupil.
- Note in journal from teacher to be signed by parent.
- Temporary separation from peers (within class).
- Carrying out a useful task within school.

**Serious Misbehaviour** – continuous minor misbehaviours automatically become serious misbehaviours. The following are examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Telling lies.
- Name calling.
- Stealing.
- Persistently not working to full potential.
- Damaging others' property.
- Inappropriate behaviour and rude gestures.
- Using unacceptable language.
- Deliberate, continual disobedience.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with serious misbehaviour

1. Child will be sent to another class
2. Child will be sent to the principal
3. An account of the incident will be entered in the relevant Behaviour Record Sheet
4. Formal letter from school principal informing parents of misbehaviour. At this point Behaviour Plan may be necessary.
5. Class teacher or yard duty teacher and principal will meet with one/both parents.
6. Chairperson of Board of Management informed and parents requested to meet with chairperson or other designated board member and the principal.

**Gross Misbehaviour** – continuous serious misbehaviours automatically become gross misbehaviours

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Bullying
- Deliberately endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community
- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps (fire hose) etc. turned on
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting).

**One occurrence of gross misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows**

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with gross misbehaviour

1. Principal and chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned pending discussion with parents/guardians. The Board has empowered the principal to sanction suspensions of up to 3 days without the necessity for an emergency meeting of the Board of Management.

2. Expulsion will be possible in an extreme case or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).
3. Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998). Under section 29 of the act parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including permanent expulsion from a school and suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or more in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

### **Procedures in respect of suspension (as per page 70 of the NEWB guidelines)**

The Board of Management and staff of Kill NS will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the guidelines for schools on developing a code of behaviour.(chapter 10-12). Fair procedures (ie. The right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person. The BoM will also follow the factors to consider before suspending a student (p.72) and the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student (p82).

While the BOM has the authority to suspend, they may delegate this authority to the principal, for periods of up to three days.

1. Investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour
2. Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident
3. Parents will be given an opportunity to respond

If suspension is still decided upon:

1. Principal notifies parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm
  - The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
  - The reasons for the suspension
  - Any study programme to be followed
  - The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (commit to uphold Code of Behaviour)
  - The provision for appeal to the Board of Management

- The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES. (only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days)

Note: Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

- If a pupil continues to misbehave he/she may be suspended for a major fixed period ( up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
- Section 29 Appeal- when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

### **Procedures For Expulsion (as per page 83-86 of the NEWB Guidelines)**

- Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meeting with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence (p.81)
  - Step 1- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal
  - Step 2 –A recommendation to the Board of Management
  - Step 3- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
  - Step 4-Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
  - Step 5- Consultation arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
  - Step 6- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

### **Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour**

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction, parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour.

**Please refer to attached complaints procedure.** Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet class teachers and/or the principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal meeting at the school. Class teachers, or teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard

duty, may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

## **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See circular 22/02)

## **Keeping Records**

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupil's behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific journal and are retained until students reach 21 years.

## **Procedures for notification in writing of pupils absences from school**

The school must be notified of all absences in writing. This note must be written on note paper and not in the child's homework diary as it must be kept on file (as per NEWB guidelines). The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides a new framework for promoting regular school attendance, tackling the problem of absenteeism and early school leaving. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) was established under the Act as the single national body with responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular school attendance.

Under Section 21 of the Act, the Board of Management of each school is required to submit a report of the level of school attendance at the school each year. Also individual absences have to be reported to the NEWB. Once a pupil misses 20 days in a school year this has to be reported to the NEWB. This may be followed by a visit by the NEWB to the parents to establish the reasons for high absenteeism.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Any parent/guardian who has a grievance with the school must follow the school's complaints Policy.

## **Implementation**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due respect to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

## **Reference to other Policies**

List and check other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- SPHE Plan
- Anti-bullying
- Harassment
- Enrolment
- Record Keeping
- Health & Safety
- Equality
- Special Educational Needs

- **Success Criteria**

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

#### **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2014. A copy of this policy will be given to the Parents Association and all parents on request.

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

Chairperson of the Board of Management

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

Principal