



**ST. BRIGID'S P.S. THE COOMBE, DUBLIN 8**  
**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**  
**Roll No: 16786H**

## **Introductory Statement**

Our School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable approach to discipline. It is our aim to help each student to learn well, live a full life as a child and to develop their full potential as both a learner and as a responsible citizen. In St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe we recognise that behaviour has a significant influence on the quality of learning and teaching. We endeavour to treat every child, irrespective of ability, creed, race or gender, with dignity, fairness and respect. Implementation of this Code of Behaviour is central to the provision of effective teaching and learning in St Brigid's Primary school.

The purpose of this school Code of Behaviour is to help develop the kind of ethos, relationships, policies, protocols and practices that promote positive behaviour. This Code of Behaviour is for the information of all members of our school community – pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management. Working in partnership with parents is essential for the effective implementation of the code. As part of its development, staff, parents, students and Board members have been consulted throughout the process.

This Code of Behaviour has been reviewed in accordance with the Anti-bullying policy, Child-Safeguarding Statement, Acceptable Usage Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Homework Policy, Safety Statement, Attendance Policy, Parental Involvement Policy, Complaints policy, and SEN Policy.

## **Aims of the Code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good 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 the availability of this policy and an ethos of open communication.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

## **Principles underpinning the Code of Behaviour**

Learning, behaviour and relationships are inextricably linked. Our School Code of Behaviour supports teaching and learning and thus encourages:

- children to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- children to mature into responsible, participating citizens
- members of the school community to build positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support
- the creation of a positive learning environment where the rights of others are respected.

Our code is informed by the principles of fairness and natural justice and encourages a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel. We aim to promote equality for all members of the school community, to prevent discrimination and allow for appropriate accommodation of difference. Our aim is to provide a well ordered, caring and happy school. Routine is important for Primary School children. This gives them confidence and the security of knowing what to do and what is expected of them. Thus, opportunities for disruptive behaviour are minimised.

Our School Code of Behaviour will also apply to all school related activities outside of school

- School tours
- Games and extracurricular activities
- Attendance at events organised by the school.

The Code of Behaviour will apply to incidents of serious misbehaviour outside school, when a child is not under the care and supervision of the school, only when

there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work. e.g., intimidation or bullying by means of the internet or mobile phones.

## **Understanding Behaviour**

An understanding of the facts that influence behaviour is essential in order to provide a sound foundation for a whole school approach to promoting good behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviour. When teachers, parents and students understand and subscribe to the school expectations and practices, they support the school in promoting an atmosphere which is conducive to good teaching and learning.

## **Whole School Approach**

School climate, values, policies, practices and relationships must support the Code of Behaviour. The elements of our whole school approach include:

- Ethos, policies and practices that will impact positively on learning and teaching.
- Team-work – a whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management will have a key influence on student behaviour. The skill of the teacher in managing the routine engagement with children is a critical factor in preventing problems.
- An inclusive and involved school community- teachers, school staff, parents and students have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school.
- A systematic planning and review process to ensure a harmonious, positive environment for learning and teaching.

## **Programmes and Interventions to Promote Good Behaviour**

We at St. Brigid's recognise the importance of facilitating and promoting positive wellbeing among our students through the curriculum and specific programmes of intervention. We understand how dimensions of children's wellbeing is linked to behaviour and educational outcomes. Below is a non-exhaustive list of programme and initiatives that aim to develop students' wellbeing, teach expected behaviours and develop emotional resilience to cope with different challenging situations.

- SPHE Curriculum, Health Promoting Schools, SSE (2021-2024), DEIS Action Plan
- Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE, Friends for Life, Incredible Years, Get Up Stand Up, Weaving Wellbeing, Zones of Regulations, Talkabout Social Skills, Circle Time, Emotional Coaching Model.
- HSCL – Parenting Plus Programme, School Completion Programme

## **Relationships between students and teachers**

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is one of the most powerful influences on student behaviour. For many students their teachers may be a major source of support, adult empathy and pastoral care, and are hugely significant figures in their lives. This relationship should be one that is characterised by respect, trust and unconditional positive regard, thus enabling students to venture, explore and grow. At the beginning of each academic school year, a particular focus will be placed at a whole school level on building and developing these relationships, which will then be built upon, throughout the school year. When a new child joins our school during the school year, an emphasis will be placed on building strong relationships between students and students and teachers and students.

## **General Guidelines for Promoting Good Behaviour**

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect. Our School Code of Behaviour expects all members of the school community to behave in ways that show respect for others and for the property of the individual and of the school at all times.

Our school motto; *'Kind hands, kind feet, kind words'* encapsulates the basis for our schools' Golden Rules.

The Golden Rules below, set out the expected standards of good behaviour at St. Brigid's Primary School, The Coombe, in the classroom, school building, school yard and on school related trips/engagements. These Golden Rules signal positive values and reflect the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning.

Promoting good behaviour is the primary focus of our school Code of Behaviour. School management and staff will actively aim to foster a school ethos, school policies, protocols and practices geared towards promoting positive behaviour.

## **'7 Golden Rules' of Good Behaviour**

Our '7 Golden Rules' set out the expectations and standards of behaviour within our Code of Behaviour and apply during school time and during all school related activities. These are as follows:

1. Treat others with dignity and respect at all times
2. Behave well in class so that everyone can learn e.g., take turns, listen to teacher, follow instructions
3. Play safely in the playground and allow others to play too
4. Give of your best at all times
5. Have respect for the property of others.
6. Keep the school clean and safe for everyone
7. Be on time and be prepared

## **Behaviour in the Classroom – Class Rules**

In line with best research and practice, at the beginning of each academic year and at regular intervals throughout the year, the children and their teachers will draw up and review their own Classroom Charters/Rules, as an integral part of our Code of Behaviour. These will be based closely on our Golden Rules. The Special Education Teacher linked to each class will also be involved in the development of the class rules so that fairness and consistency is achieved. This will provide clear boundaries and practical guidelines about the behaviour expected of students. The class rules will be kept concise and easy to understand. They will be displayed in a prominent position in the classroom. They should be devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, and shall reflect the age and stage of development of the students.

## **Behaviour in the Playground – Yard Rules**

The Golden Rules apply also when playing in the school yard. The following is a sample of the type of behaviour that we expect from our students when specifically playing in the yard at break and lunch time.

1. Respect all others playing on the yard.
2. Stay in your designated area of the yard.
3. Always get permission from the teacher on duty before leaving the school yard (e.g., going to the toilet/to the office).
4. Play safely and gently.
5. Use playground equipment for its intended purpose.
6. Allow others to join in and play too.
7. Always use kind words.
8. Report any misbehaviour to the teacher on duty.
9. Keep the school yards clean and litter free.
10. Wear your coat if you bring it to the yard.
11. Line up in your class line when you hear the bell and wait for your teacher to arrive.

## **Behaviour during Wet Day Lunchtimes**

- Stay in your seat.
- Ask permission from the teacher on duty to go to the toilet.
- Use inside, quiet voices.

If it begins to rain while outside playing:

1. Line up quietly
2. Wait for the teacher's instructions to go inside.
3. Walk in a line quietly to the classroom.
4. Sit in your seat in the classroom.

\*Only children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> who have been assigned to helping accompany children back to their classroom have permission to do this job.

## **Behaviour in the School Environment and on School Outings**

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school. When on school outings pupils are expected to behave in line with our Golden Rules. Students must show respect for public property and to members of our community. All aspects of this Code of Behaviour are in place while partaking in any school business on or off the premises.

## **Other Expectations as part of the Code of Behaviour**

### **School Uniform**

At St. Brigid's Primary School, we are very proud of our school uniform and recognise the uniform as a symbol of unity, belonging and respect. All students must wear their school uniform each day to school. This includes appropriate black/navy shoes. On the student's PE day, they may wear their PE uniform with runners. Throughout the school year there may be other occasions where the students are requested by their teacher to wear their tracksuit (e.g. school outing, sports day). On the rare occasion that a student is unable to wear their school uniform to school, a written note/phone call from the child's parent must be provided to the school stating the reason.

### **Other Items**

Health and safety are of paramount importance for all our students. For this reason, students are only permitted to wear one pair of stud earrings and a watch on their wrist. Necklaces, bracelets or any type of hoop earrings are not permitted as part of the school uniform. Similarly, on health and safety grounds, students are not permitted to wear false nails at school. This includes the self-adhesive/gel/acrylic nails. Long hair must be tied up when attending school. This measure is to help reduce the spread of head lice.

## **Strategies to affirm and promote good behaviour**

A range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and school level are needed. We aim for consistency across the teaching team in the promotion of good behaviour.

Strategies to promote and affirm good behaviour include:

- Actively teach/model good behaviour
- Specify clearly what constitutes good behaviour and praise accordingly — “Catch them being good.”
- ‘Behaviour Focus of the Month’ - Reinforce expectations that constitute good behaviour consistently, e.g., behave in a respectful manner towards all, uniform code, need for punctuality in class and assembly, play safely in the yard etc.
- Verbal affirmation
- A visit to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation.
- Happy Gram Note home re. positive/improved behaviour
- “Token Economy”- the use of a merit system, stickers, stars, smiley faces, points etc. to earn privileges based on positive behaviour for an individual, a group or a class.
- Student of the Week – Principal’s Award
- Playground Power Award – Principal/Deputy Principal Award for good behaviour in the yard.
- Whole School Reward system – ‘Fill your Bucket’
- Golden Rule of the Month
- Parents Plus - HSCL

## **Affirming and motivating students: use of reward systems**

- Reward systems may be part of our overall school or class system, or may form part of a planned intervention by a teacher or school staff to help individual students manage their own behaviour.
- Rewards for students with special needs must take account of their particular learning style. The reward should be communicated in ways that reflect this understanding e.g., a child with specific needs would be allowed a period of activity having completed a given task.
- Awards must be closely linked in time to the behaviour that is being rewarded.
- Rewards must be positive in nature and attainable by all.
- Rewards will focus on effort and not solely on achievement
- Rewards must avoid unhelpful competition.
- Rewards must not become the goal of learning.
- The rewarding of achievement is also a valid means of affirmation.

## Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

Despite the promotion of good behaviour, the school recognises that on occasion unacceptable behaviour happens. It is important to distinguish between unacceptable behaviour and behavioural problems that are associated with behavioural or learning difficulties. A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. Parental involvement will be sought when/where appropriate. In cases of extreme misbehaviour, it may be necessary for the Principal or the B.O.M. to become involved immediately.

We use a whole school approach to respond to inappropriate behaviour. Elements of this approach include;

- The use of a problem-solving approach when dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- The implementation of sanctions where necessary, using a 'Ladder of Intervention'.
- An agreed arrangements for recording behaviour.
- An agreed arrangement for communicating misbehaviours both minor and serious with students and parents.
- The identification of examples of unacceptable behaviour – minor and serious.

## Problem Solving Approach

- Gather information. It is imperative that the context and factors that may be affecting behaviour are understood. Consultation with parents may be necessary.
- Generate ideas about possible solutions. Parents may also have input to this process. Consultation with senior members of staff may also be appropriate.
- Decide on agreed and specific strategies to address the problem.
- Implement agreed strategies consistently.
- Review Progress.

## Use of Sanctions - Ladder of Intervention

A sanction is a form of positive intervention. Our school Code of Behaviour promotes a whole school approach to the use of sanctions. This approach will provide for:

- Clarity about the object and purpose of sanctions
- Help the student to learn and recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- Help students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- Help them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Bring about a change in behaviour.
- Reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour.
- Signal to other students and staff that their wellbeing is being protected.



- Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- Keep the students and/or adults safe.

Good practice in the use of sanctions:

- used as part of a plan to change behaviour,
- all members of staff use agreed sanctions,
- sanctions are proportionate to the seriousness of the misbehaviour,
- are appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the student
- take account of the cultural background of the student

The decision to apply agreed sanctions and the manner of using sanctions will always be guided by professional judgement and discretion.

## Ladder of Intervention/Sanctions

1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Positive Verbal Redirect using distractions and re-engagement strategies.</li> <li>● Defuse the situation – The teacher will try to defuse any behavioural issue that is emerging by facilitating a movement break/carrying out a useful job for the teacher/changing of the setting/activity. Emotional coaching strategies will be employed.</li> </ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reason with the pupil – focus on positive reinforcement and the positive behaviours we expect as part of our school rules.</li> <li>● Opportunity for whole class reminder of the class rules.</li> </ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbal reprimand– teacher will discretely remind the child of the rule he/she is breaking.</li> <li>● The teacher will explain to the child what will happen if they choose to continue to misbehave. E.g., “you are making a choice to misbehave, if you continue to choose to misbehave you will be removed from the group and have to do Time Out.</li> <li>● If the child is upset/becoming frustrated the teacher will encourage them to go to the Chill Out Zone*. Emotional coaching strategies will be employed.</li> </ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child is removed from the group and quietly asked to do Time Out.</li> <li>● After a period of time, the teacher will engage and discuss the behaviour with the student before returning to the class activity.</li> <li>● Class teacher speaks to parents on collection/calls home to communicate the misbehaviour and the rule broke.</li> <li>● If a child misbehaves while in the yard, they will do Time Out by walking beside the teacher on duty or sitting on a bench within the yard (age appropriate).</li> </ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Child is removed from the group – Time Out.</li> <li>● Child is asked to complete a classroom/yard behaviour reflection sheet (age appropriate) and/or written class work.</li> <li>● Teacher discusses the reflection sheet and discuss ways to improve behaviour.</li> <li>● Once a commitment is made by the student to try to improve the behaviour, the child is allowed to re-join the group.</li> <li>● Class teacher calls parent(s) to communicate the misbehaviour that took place.</li> </ul>
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting between the class teacher and parents to devise a Behaviour Action Plan between home and school in the aim of understanding the behaviour and subsequently improving the behaviour.</li> </ul>
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student is referred to the principal.</li> <li>● Loss of privileges, e.g., school trip, classroom job, class treat, no free play.</li> <li>● Principal discusses the misbehaviour and the school rule being broken.</li> <li>● The principal reminds the student of the next steps if the misbehaviour continues.</li> <li>● Class teacher communicates with the parent.</li> </ul>
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student is referred to the principal.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunchtime detention with the principal/deputy principal.</li> <li>• Principal contacts the parents by phone to explain and discuss the behaviour and ways to improve.</li> </ul>
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are called to a meeting with the principal and teacher to outline the misbehaviour, discuss the behaviour action plan and devise next steps with the aim of improving behaviour.</li> </ul>
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspension (further details below).</li> </ul>
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expulsion (further details below).</li> </ul>

\*Whole school positive behaviour strategy whereby a 'Chill Out Zone' is created within the classroom that allows the child a place to go to reflect, calm down, wait or space. All children are taught how to use the space and it is seen as a positive space within the classroom that children can use to help regulate their own emotions or a space that a teacher might encourage them to go to for a short period of time to calm down or reflect on their behaviour. Within the space there will be sensory toys/equipment, visual cues to promote calm down strategies, identifying feelings (Zone of Regulation), etc.

There is an increasing level of seriousness built into the above list of suitable sanctions. However, it would be inappropriate to stipulate a rigid ladder of intervention, to be applied in all cases, as such an approach would not take account of both context and individual children's circumstances. In certain instances of serious misbehaviour, the principal, in consultation with the class teacher and/or Board of Management may choose which of the above sanctions are most appropriate to the level of misbehaviour.

Our Code of Behaviour prohibits inappropriate sanctions or responses which include:

- 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 groups wrong doing
- leaving a student in an unsupervised situation
- persistent isolation of or ignoring a student in class
- depriving a student of access to any part of the curriculum, as a sanction, unless such action is warranted due to safety reasons
- sanctions that are used in a discriminatory way; the Equal Status Acts require that schools do not discriminate in the use of sanctions and also forbid victimisation because of assertion of rights or involvement in proceedings under the Acts
- physical punishment or threat of physical punishment. Physical punishment, chastisement of a student is illegal under section 24 of the Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997

## Recording Behaviour

Teacher records behaviours at each class level anecdotally, while verbally keeping parents and the principal informed verbally at an early-stage. A written account of incidents of serious misbehaviours will be kept by teachers. Depending on the nature

of the misbehaviour, these records may include a description of the behaviour, the context of the behaviour, action taken and sanctions incurred, interventions tried if any and how the pupil has responded to them, and copies of any correspondence with parents. These records will be stored in a class folder which will be returned to the principal at the end of each school year. The principal will record and retain all records of Suspension & Expulsion.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour during break times must be reported by the teacher on yard duty to the class teacher at the end of yard time. Together the teacher on duty and the class teacher will decide where on the ladder of intervention the behaviour incident lies and will act accordingly.

In some circumstances where there is a behavioural or learning difficulty, an Individual Behavioural Plan will be drawn up by the SET, class teacher, student and parents. Records will be kept in the child's file along with any reviews of the plan. Similarly written Behavioural Action Plans record behaviours and strategies and steps to improve the targeted behaviour as part of the Ladder of Intervention.

## Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

\*This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to identify and categorise misbehaviours within our school setting.

Minor Misbehaviour	Serious Misbehaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Breaking Golden Rules</li> <li>● Breaking Yard Rules</li> <li>● Disrupting the class</li> <li>● Interrupting the teacher/class work which prevents others from learning</li> <li>● Not following teacher instructions</li> <li>● Leaving seat without permission at lunch time</li> <li>● Chewing gum</li> <li>● Not completing teacher set tasks/activities.</li> <li>● Running in the school building</li> <li>● Wearing of necklaces, bracelets, hoop earrings, false nails.</li> <li>● Rough play</li> <li>● Failing to line up</li> <li>● Isolated acts of disrespect to community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any minor misbehaviour that persists</li> <li>● Giving cheek to the teacher/staff member</li> <li>● Passing notes around the class</li> <li>● Using a mobile phone while at school (See Mobile Phone Policy)</li> <li>● Constant and deliberate interruption of the class</li> <li>● Name calling and objectionable comments</li> <li>● Refusal to comply with class rules, routines and class activities</li> <li>● Physically hurting another student - Hitting/ Kicking/ Spitting</li> <li>● Use of inappropriate language/cursing</li> <li>● Consistently not completing teacher set tasks/activities</li> <li>● Throwing objects that could cause harm to others/property</li> <li>● Deliberately lying</li> <li>● Deliberately endangering self/fellow pupils/staff</li> <li>● Leaving school building/premises without permission</li> <li>● Frequenting the building/premises without permission</li> <li>● Bringing inappropriate substances/weapons to school</li> <li>● Inappropriate displaying of body parts (age appropriate)</li> <li>● Racist/Sexist/Homophobic Behaviour</li> <li>● Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any staff member/pupil/parent/visitor</li> <li>● Threatened assault and /or actual physical/verbal assault on teacher or other</li> <li>● Vandalism to property—school property, class property or pupils' property</li> <li>● Theft</li> <li>● Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)</li> <li>● Persistent infringement of school rules</li> </ul>

# Suspension

Suspension is defined as “requiring the pupil to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days “. During the period of a suspension, the pupil retains their place in the school. Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.

The Board of Management delegates the authority of suspension up to three days to the principal. The period of suspension must not be longer than three days, except in exceptional circumstances. Where the principal considers that a suspension period longer than 3 days is necessary. He/she will refer the matter to the Board of Management for their consideration.

Serious Grounds for Suspension:

- The student’s behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others in class.
- There is a real and immediate threat to the safety of others or that of the student by continuing in the school or classroom at that time.
- Serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

The process of determining whether suspension is an appropriate response to a student’s behaviour should include a review of:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- the context of the behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour on the learning of other students and on the teaching process
- the interventions tried to date
- whether suspension is a proportionate response to the student’s behaviour
- the possible impact, positive or negative, of suspension
- achieving a balance between the needs of an individual student and other students will require the application of professional skill and judgement, on a case-by-case basis, drawing on factual and objective information.

## Procedures for Suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

1. The pupil and their parents will be informed about the complaint, that it will be investigated and that it may result in suspension. Parents will be informed in writing and where practical by phone.
2. The parents and pupil will be called to a meeting with the principal to discuss the incident and to be given the opportunity to respond before any sanction is imposed.
3. If a pupil and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the principal will inform them in writing, advising them of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities will be to make a decision in response to the negative behaviour.
4. Any decision to suspend will be given in writing to the parents.

### **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where 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. Where an immediate suspension is considered by the principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, will be open-ended. In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. The school will have regard to its duty of care for the pupil. In no circumstances will a pupil be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

### **Appealing a Decision to Suspend**

A parent has the right to appeal this decision to the Board of Management. If a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of that appeal, they may make a Section 29 Appeal against the decision to suspend their child to the Dept. of Education and Science, if the suspension would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

### **Inappropriate Use of Suspension**

Students should not usually be suspended for:

- poor academic application
- poor attendance or lateness
- minor breaches of the school Code of Behaviour
- breaches of the uniform code

It is not appropriate to use suspension on the grounds that resources have not been provided to address the needs of a student with behavioural difficulties.

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

A suspension will usually be removed when:

- the given period of time has elapsed
- the B.O.M. decides to remove the suspension
- the Secretary General of the Department of Education directs that it be removed on foot of a Section 29 Appeal.

Following a period of suspension, the parents must give a satisfactory written undertaking that a suspended student will behave in accordance with the school Code of Behaviour 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 other pupils or staff. The principal, in consultation with the class teacher will facilitate the preparation of a new/revised behavioural action plan for the student and will re-admit the pupil to the class.

# Expulsion

A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. 9.1

The authority to expel a student is reserved to the Board of Management. In cases where the exclusion of a student may be considered, the B.O.M. will ensure that fair procedures are followed and the principles of natural justice are upheld.

The investigation itself should be free of bias. A principal, class teacher or other staff member involved in the behavioural matter in the first instance, should not be involved in conducting the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, or making the decision to impose a sanction, when expulsion is considered.

## Grounds for Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

1. The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
2. The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
3. The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
4. The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, the Board of Management will have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

## Expulsion for the First Offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

1. A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
2. Actual violence or physical assault
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
4. Sexual assault

## Procedures for Expulsion

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. The student and parents are informed of an allegation of serious misbehaviour and that an investigation will follow.
2. The student and parents will be given details in writing about the allegation made.
3. The right to reply is central to fair decision making. Both the parents and the student must be facilitated in presenting their views on the allegations made. The B.O.M. will take steps to make sure that the parents understand the purpose and process of this hearing.

4. A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the principal.
5. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
6. Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
7. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing\*.
8. The Board of Management informs the parents, in writing about its conclusions and next steps in the process.
9. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Within 20 days, the EWO must make all reasonable effort to hold individual consultations with the principal, parents, students and anyone else of assistance.
10. The EWO convenes a meeting of those parties who agree to attend with the sole purpose of looking at the possibilities of the pupil continuing in the school or to look at alternative educational possibilities.
11. Confirmation of the decision to expel. Where the BOM remains of the view that the student should be expelled, a formal record of the decision is made and the parents are informed in writing that the expulsion will now proceed.
12. Parents and the student will be informed of their right to appeal under the Education Act 1998.

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

\*A student is excluded from school when a B.O.M. makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000. The B.O.M. is required to inform the NEWB in writing of its opinion. This information is required under the Act and allows the NEWB to intervene before the decision takes effect. The intention to exclude a student does not take effect until 20 days have elapsed after the NEWB has received written notification. However, the BOM may consider the sanction of suspension during this period should the continuing presence of the pupil in the school be likely to seriously disrupt the learning of other students or represent a threat to the safety of other students and staff.

### **Appealing a Decision to Expel**

As in the case of suspension, a parent has the right to appeal this decision to the Board of Management. If a parent is dissatisfied with the outcome of that appeal, they may make an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of the student.

The appeals process begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education).

## **Students with Special Educational Needs**

St. Brigid's Primary School requires all students to comply with the Code of Behaviour. Students with special educational needs will be provided with appropriate support to help ensure they understand our school rules. Individual behavioural plans will be put in place, in consultation with parents, the student, the class teacher, SET and the principal to promote and reinforce positive behaviour. The school will work closely with home to ensure optimal support is given and a collaborative approach is taken. Cognitive development and individual needs will be taken into account at all times. Professional supports and advice will be sought and acted upon when available.

## **Notification of a child's absence from school**

Our Code of Behaviour stresses the importance of notifying the school of a child's absence for any reason. This will normally be done through:

- parent/guardian speaking directly to class teacher
- parent/guardian telephoning the school office/HSCL
- letter from parent/guardian to class teacher
- note in homework journal
- provision of a doctor's certificate for significant absences due to illness

Parents/Guardians are obliged, by the Education Welfare Act 2000, to explain their child's absence from school. Notification of such absences can be given in advance (e.g. going on holidays, on the first day of absence), or when the child returns to school. If a parent/guardian fails to notify the school about a child's absence, then the matter will be pursued by the school. The school must inform the NEWB if a child is absent for 20 days or more throughout the school year.

## **Implementing and Communicating the Code of Behaviour**

The essential elements of our implementation plan will be:

### **1. Communicating the Code**

- Communicating with parents, staff and students is central to maintaining a positive culture towards behaviour management within the school. A high level of cooperation and open communication is seen as an integral factor in encouraging positive behaviour in the school.
- The policy will be circulated to all parents/guardians for consultation and feedback.
- On ratification of the policy, all parents will be requested to sign and agree to the policy. This will be a requirement for all children enrolling into the school.
- Our school will define and teach the behaviours we expect from students and the skills they need to manage their own behaviour and to respond appropriately to the behaviour of others.
- All staff members will be provided with a copy of the Code. This policy will be brought to the attention of new staff members in their induction. The Code will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.



- The Code will be available to view on the school website by members of the school community or in hard copy from the principal.
2. Providing supports for teachers, students and parents.
  3. Monitoring behaviour in the school to gather reliable, factual information about good behaviour as well as poor behaviour. Regular monitoring will inform the school of any emerging trends or patterns, for example, the time of day, the location, or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or particularly good behaviour.

We aim to offer students a range of opportunities to have a say in decisions that affect them and to practice active citizenship e. g. use of class charters.

## **Reviewing the Code of Behaviour**

The Code will be reviewed after an initial period of three years to establish if the goals and targets, set out as part of the plan for promoting good behaviour in the school, are effective and, if not, to identify the barriers to making progress towards these goals.

## **Ratification of the Code of Behaviour**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Signed: Niamh Hanna (Acting Principal)

Date: 19/01/21

Signed: Amanda McGarry (Chairperson of the B.O.M)

Date: 19/01/21