

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement:

This policy was reviewed and updated December 2021

Relationship to Characteristic spirit of the school:

1. We seek to provide a sound academic education for each pupil, as well as developing the moral, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and creative faculties of each pupil.
2. We aim to develop and promote human and Christian values within the context of a Catholic community.
3. We acknowledge the individuality of each pupil and we aim to nurture self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-image.
4. Our school promotes cooperation and a strong sense of community so that all children experience acceptance. This sense of community is extended to all parents who are encouraged to participate fully in the education of their children.
5. A healthy balance is maintained between discipline and an atmosphere of openness and friendliness. We encourage all pupils to respect themselves, others and their property.

Aims:

1. To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
2. To enhance a positive learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
3. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.
4. To create a culture of respect, tolerance and consideration for others, fostering a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and supporting good behaviour patterns based on such a culture.
5. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their cooperation and involvement in the application of these procedures.
6. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
7. To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
8. To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
9. To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
10. To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.

Implementation – Responsibility of Adults

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our Code of Behaviour. The whole school community will endeavour to highlight positive aspects of pupil behaviour.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability or disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.

Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

In general, children react well to routines and boundaries. Establishing and maintaining rules and routines in the classroom can promote positive behaviour. Our school rules are designed to encourage self-respect and respect for others. Parents can be enormously supportive of the school's endeavour by discussing the rules with their children and helping them to understand why they should be observed.

- All children are expected to behave in a responsible manner showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times.
- Children are expected to show respect for all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Children must walk while in the school building at all times
- Children are expected to be in school on time and to stay until school ends. Children who come in late or need to leave early for whatever reason need to be collected by an adult and have a signed note from parents (this can be recorded on Aladdin).
- Children are expected to obey teachers' instructions and to work to the best of their ability
- Children should remain seated at all times while the class teacher is not in the room.
- Children should have a note from parents/guardians giving their permission to have a phone in school. (see Appendix A).
- Children with permission to have a phone in school, must have it switched off while on school premises and kept at the bottom of their school bag. If a child is found with a mobile phone switched on, the phone will be confiscated. The phone may be collected from the Principal's office by a parent/guardian. All other electronic gadgets are not allowed in school.
- The only instance where a pupil's mobile phone can be switched on during the school day is when the phone is used as a medical device (eg. glucose monitoring system etc.). Prior agreement between the principal and parents/guardians is necessary.
- Behaviour on School Tours – Children are expected to uphold the school's code of behaviour while on school tours and representing the school at various outings.



Caring for Self

School Uniform

A school uniform helps a child to feel that she belongs to a school. Children need to be conscious that when wearing the uniform they represent the school and should behave accordingly.

Our uniform consists of:

Green skirt / pinafore/ trousers

Green jumper / cardigan

Cream Shirt

Green socks / tights

Tie & Crest (available in school only)

School tracksuit with white polo shirt

- Children are expected to take pride in their appearance and to wear the school uniform /tracksuit on appointed days
- Long hair must be tied back at all times
- In the interest of safety, jewellery is limited to a watch, one small ring on finger and one set of studs or small sleepers in the ears.
- No make-up, nail varnish, false nails or fake tan

Healthy Food Policy

Please refer to our Healthy Eating Policy and encourage your child to eat a healthy lunch

Behaviour in Class

It is important that the classroom environment is such that the teacher may teach effectively and the pupils progress appropriately. Each pupil must therefore respect the right of others to learn. Any behaviour which interferes with this right is considered unacceptable and will incur sanctions. Bullying whether physical, verbal, psychological or cyber is not permitted. Each pupil is required to cooperate fully with the teacher's instructions. At the beginning of each academic year the class teacher in consultation and collaboration with the children will draft a list of class rules. These reflect and support school rules, while being applicable and appropriate to the children at each class level.

Behaviour on the Yard

Every effort is made to ensure the comfort and safety of the pupils in our care. Conduct which in any way threatens the safety and well-being of the individual or the group is therefore not permitted. This includes rough behaviour such as fighting, kicking, dragging, spitting etc. Pupils may leave the yard to enter the school only if the teacher on duty has given permission.

Incentives and Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

All children deserve encouragement. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some examples of how praise might be given;

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents/guardian, written or verbal communication.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of **repeated serious misbehaviour** or **single instances of gross misbehaviour**, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful, bullying of any description - verbal, psychological, physical, or by any other means, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning.
- Threats or physical hurt to another child/person e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, spitting, tripping someone up, etc.
- Damaging or taking property in the classroom, yard or school.
- Repeated aggression (both verbal and physical or any nastiness to other children).
- Being disrespectful to any member of teaching or ancillary staff e.g. back answering, cheating, lying, using bad language or taking exception to correction.
- Using a mobile phone during the school day, other than as a medical device.

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a pupil or teacher
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Sanctions

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

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken if children behave inappropriately. The steps are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this.

1. Investigation and reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Formal communication with parents
10. 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)

***Pupils should not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be employed. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.



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

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved. Due regard will be made to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes. Any relevant medical information will also be taken into account. 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. The Board of Management as required by law will, at all times, follow fair procedure when proposing to suspend a pupil as outlined in paragraphs 10.3 and 10.4 7 of the National Educational Welfare Board's publication Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/guardian may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. They must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil 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 the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion

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

Procedures in respect of Expulsion



Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

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

Appeals

At the time when parents are being formally notified of a suspension or expulsion, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be given information about how to appeal.

Children with Special Needs

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

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

Methods of Communicating with Parents

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

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

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

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Communication through children's homework journal
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Contact via phone as required
- School website
- Newsletter

Methods for the recording of breaches of behaviour.

The Principal and teachers will note times, dates and incidents as necessary.

Further Procedures and Practices:

- If pupils cycle to school, we strongly advise that a cycling helmet should be worn.
- Teaching of the curriculum is adapted and modified to suit individual children's needs.
- Parents are requested to make an appointment with the class teacher to discuss any matters relating to their child.
- We recommend that mobile phones should not be brought to school for safety reasons. If a child brings a mobile phone to school, protocols and procedures must be followed as set out in 'Guideline for Positive Behaviour' (see above) and consent must be provided (see Appendix A).
- Parents who come into the school grounds may not approach pupils with regard to perceived problems. All such matters should be referred to the teachers.



Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from parents through informal communications and at parent teacher meetings.
- Positive feedback from pupils.
- Positive feedback from teachers based on teacher observation.
- That a pleasant and cooperative atmosphere continues to prevail and is noted by visitors to the school.

Roles and Responsibility:

- The Board of Management will provide a comfortable and safe environment, supporting the Principal and Staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- Each teacher will adopt the Code of Behaviour and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- Coordination and overall monitoring will be undertaken by the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Parents will be aware of the policy and will understand the importance of compliance and co-operation, encouraging and supporting their children in its implementation.
- Pupils will be encouraged to follow class and school rules, showing respect for oneself, others and for all school property
- Support staff will be aware of the policy and co-operate in its implementation.

The Code of Behaviour Policy for St Vincent de Paul Girls' School was reviewed by the Board of Management.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

Communication:

Policy to be provided to all new pupils on enrolment.

Policy to be made available to the Parents Association

Policy to be displayed on the school website.



Appendix A

Consent for your daughter/child in your care to bring a mobile phone to school

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School recommends that mobile phones should not be brought to school for safety reasons. If a child brings a mobile phone to school, protocols and procedures must be followed as set out in 'Guideline for Positive Behaviour' (as per our Code of Behaviour) and parental consent must be provided (this form must be signed by parent/guardian and your daughter/child in your care and returned to the class teacher).

I consent to my daughter/child in my care _____ to bring a mobile phone to school.

I agree that the phone must be switched off while on school premises and kept at the bottom of their school bag. If a child is found with a mobile phone switched on, the phone will be confiscated. The phone may be collected from the Principal's office by a parent/guardian. All other electronic gadgets are not allowed in school.

Signature of parent/guardian _____

Signature of child _____

Date _____ -