St. Paul's N.S.

Introduction

The staff of St. Paul's National School came together to audit our current code and ensure that it complies with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the TUSLA document 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools' .

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

St. Paul's National School shares in and promotes the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Church of Ireland. Through our Code of Behaviour we hope to reflect this ethos. We aim to create a positive learning environment where each child is valued and nurtured. This is fostered through co-operation between staff, pupils and parents, creating a sense of respect for and belonging to the community. Effective discipline helps to promote this environment, allowing all students to work to their full potential.

Aims

Our aims include

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development and teachers can teach without disruption. 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 throughout the school
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- We recognise the importance of the school community and a high level of co-operation is needed between all parties to maintain a positive working environment.

This revised Code of Behaviour came into effect on May 2017
The code has been considered by the Parent Body, Staff and approved by the Board of Management. It was ratified by a unanimous vote of parents in May 2017.
Since then, the Code of Behaviour has been reviewed annually by the BOM. In 2025, it was updated to reflect the implementation of the new Bí Cineálta procedures.
The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health and Safety Statement, Bí Cineálta Policy, Enrolment Policy and Child Protection Policy.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify 'the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school'. The following are agreed standards of behaviour that we strive for:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to respect and courtesy for the other children and adults. Behaviour that interferes with the right of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school (as per school calendar year) on a regular basis and to be punctual, unless there is a genuine reason for absence in which case the school must be informed in writing stating the reason for absence.

Each pupil is expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.

The school recognises that there may be external factors influencing children's behaviour that may sometimes need to be considered and accommodated.

Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

AFFIRMING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self –discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives rather than on sanctions. A clear system of acknowledging good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour is outlined.

Strategies / Incentives

A quiet word of gesture to show approval.
A comment on a child's exercise book / homework journal.
A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
Praise in front of class group.
Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
Written or verbal communication with parent.
Acknowledgment of a pupil by other pupils / teachers.
Display work.
Reward of effort and improvement
Prize Box and stickers.
Homework tokens and passes

Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. The degree of misdemeanours ie. minor, serious or gross and the sanction thereof will be judged by the teacher and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/ frequency of such misdemeanours. These may include

Reasoning with pupils
Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
Prescribing extra work/write an account of the incident.
Communication with parents.
Temporary separation from peers and/or loss of privileges.
Detention on breaktime or lunchtime or part thereof.
Referral to Principal.
Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).

Examples of Minor misdemeanours

Interrupting class work, being discourteous and unmannerly, talking in class, regularly failing to complete homework and schoolwork, endangering others eg. through rough play or deliberately throwing an object, telling lies, back answering a teacher.

Steps which may be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours

Depending on the nature of the misdemeanour, especially in the case of repeated misbehaviour, the teacher or principal may move directly to a higher step as deemed appropriate.

Reasoning with pupil/Remind of school rules.
Note in homework diary, to be signed by parent/guardian.
Move place until next break.
Move place until end of the day.
Move place for rest of week.
Report to Principal to caution pupil.
Contact the pupil's parents to report incidents.
Student completes a Student Behaviour Reflection Form. (Appendix 3)
If a pupil receives three of these reflective accounts, the parents/guardians will be asked to come to school for a meeting regarding the pupil's behaviour.
Individual Behaviour Plan to be devised between teacher, pupil and pupil's parents/guardians.
Case Conference to include Parents/Guardians, Principal, teacher and child
Letter to the Board of Management.
Suspension by Board of Management.
Expulsion by Board of Management

When resolving conflicts between pupils, we will have an emphasis on Restorative Practice. See attached questions (Appendix 2)

Examples of serious misdemeanours

Repeated examples of minor misdemeanours, telling lies, stealing, damaging other people's property, bullying, leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission, regular use of unacceptable language, bringing dangerous objects to school, bringing mobile phones or other Smart devices to school, deliberately injuring a fellow pupil, misusing the IT devices at school e.g. to make inappropriate searches or to take pictures or videos of staff or pupils without permission, using images from St. Paul's website or Facebook page without permission.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Smoking, drinking alcohol, aggressive and threatening behaviour, violent language, sexual language or behaviour.

Steps to be taken when dealing with serious/gross misdemeanours

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used the steps for dealing with minor misdemeanours will be implemented. Communications with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. For repeated instances of serious misdemeanours suspension may be considered. Parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Where children have serious emotional, behavioural or other special needs, the teaching staff including learning support personnel will endeavour to work with parents and access support from relevant bodies/agencies e.g. HSE, NEPS. An IEP and specific behavioural plan may need to be put in place and each child's needs will be examined on an individual basis.

Suspension and expulsion

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that

The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
The students continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. (Reference page 71 of Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools)

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such at that
The student' behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. (Ref: Pg 81 Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools)

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents concerned 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, 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 Rules for National Schools and 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 Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act. (With regard to suspension the Principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognized school for a period of not less than 6 days (section 21 (4)a)

Appeals
Under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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 one school year.
All schools in Ireland must abide by the procedure for suspension and expulsion as laid down in the National Education Welfare Guidelines and in accordance with the Education Welfare Act.

Removal or Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians 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 and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupils 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.

School Rules

School Rules are kept to a minimum and are advised 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. As well as a set of general school rules (see Appendix 1) each teacher devises a set of age appropriate rules for the classroom.

Attendance Policy

Parents of pupils who are absent from school for one or more days must inform the school in writing.

Please note that in accordance with the Education Act 2000, Section 21 4(b) the principal of the school concerned shall forthwith so inform, by notice in writing an educational welfare officer" when the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during a school year" is twenty or more. The school is obliged to notify TUSLA, the child and family agency.

When a pupil has to leave school early or when engaging in extra in extra – curricular activities a note from parents/guardian requesting permission for absence from school must be given to the class teacher. The parent/guardian must call the school office phone number to notify when they have arrived to collect the pupil. A teacher or SNA will accompany the pupil to the gate.

Pupils are required to attend punctually and should be collected promptly at the end of school.

Before/ After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 9.05am and after the official closing time of 1:45pm (infants) and 2:45pm (other classes). When children are being collected from school by someone other than a parent or guardian, the school must be formally advised of this arrangement by letter or telephone call.

Distance/ Blended Learning

Pupils are expected to abide by this Code of Behaviour should they be required to engage in distance learning/ blended learning, through various platforms. Distance learning would be synchronous or asynchronous learning. Blended learning would include a mixture of in school and distance learning. See Acceptable Use Policy.

Keeping Records

Records of incidents are kept within the school.
Records of any investigation into serious/gross incidents are kept.
Notifications of suspensions/expulsions and communications with TUSLA are kept on file.

Reference to other policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour include the following:

SPHE plan

Bí Cineálta
Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)
Enrolment policy
Homework policy
Health and Safety
Special Educational Needs

Success Criteria

The success of this document will be evaluated through:

Observation of 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.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
Provide opportunities for the staff to obtain training to support the code where necessary
Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibility

Promote a positive climate in the school.
Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner. Arrange for review of the code as required

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support, implement and review the school's Code of Behaviour.
Promote positive behaviour through a variety of strategies and curriculum areas eg. SPHE , Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RE: Follow me, Assembly.
Discuss school/class rules at beginning of each term or as necessary.
Recognise and affirm good work.
Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
Keep a written or typed record of instances of serious or gross misbehaviour.
Provide support for colleagues.
Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

Attend school regularly and punctually.
Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/ advice.
Show respect for all members of the school community.
Respect all school property and the property of others.
Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name- calling.
Include other pupils in games and activities.
Bring correct materials / books to school.
Work to the best of their ability and be responsible.
Follow school and class rules.
Take part in assemblies which can be used to promote positive behaviour and communicate school rules

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually

Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work and homework.
Encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work.
Ensure their children have necessary books and materials for school.
Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/ behaviour.

Ratified by Board of Management on 19th October, 2026

Signed Canon Andrew Ison, Chairperson.

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Signed Clodagh Redican, Principal.

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