

Christ Church National School

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

Christ Church National School recognises that the atmosphere of a successful school is created by the positive actions and the behaviour of all its members. This code of behaviour will be most effective where there is co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. This code of behaviour has been prepared in accordance with NEWB guidelines - *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*.

Our Mission Statement

We are an inclusive school, in the Church of Ireland tradition; who seek to promote 'competence and confidence' in all of our learners.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning so that all pupils have opportunities to reach their full potential;
- promote mutual respect and responsibility among students, staff and parents;
- set high expectations which encourage and reinforce positive behaviours.

Strategies used to promote positive behaviour in the classroom:

- Modelling and explicitly teaching what respectful language and respectful behaviour *looks* like, *acts* like, *sounds* like and *feels* like, both in class and around the school;
- A word or gesture to show approval;
- A positive comment on a piece of work or in a homework journal;
- A visit to the Principal for commendation;
- A sticker or reward system;
- Delegation of a special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parent, written or verbal;
- Notice and acknowledgement of desired behaviours.
- Acknowledgement of positive behaviour in Assembly

We promote and reward positive behaviour on a whole school level by:

- Well Done cards for homework passes;
- Celebrating achievements in assembly;
- Celebrating birthdays at assemblies;
- Treats and prizes;
- Certificates;
- Homework passes;
- Golden time;
- Special outings;
- Notice and acknowledge desired behaviours in and around the school.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Classroom teachers may have their own systems in place also.

We promote positive behaviour in the playground by:

- Ensuring there is an adult supervising the playground;
- Encouraging senior pupils to set a good example to others.
- Verbal communication for kindness and helpfulness

Strategies parents and guardians may use to promote positive behaviour:

- ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually with the correct materials required;
- take an interest in your child's school work and homework;
- nurture in your child a positive attitude towards school;
- communicate in a courteous and respectful way;
- model positive behaviours in the home.

Expectations

The expectations stated in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are the responsibility of the school. These include school outings, going to and from church, fieldtrips and after school games, concerts etc.

Expectations of pupils

In our school, we will be:

- **Kind**- we care for each other;
- **Gentle**- we keep everybody safe;
- **Good listeners**- we listen to the teacher and to others;
- **Honest**- we tell the truth;
- **Hard working**- we try our best in all we do.

Expectations of adults

In our school we will:

- treat everyone with **respect and dignity**;
- set a **good example** to pupils;
- be **tolerant and understanding** of others;
- be **honest and fair**.

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

The seriousness of a misdemeanour will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal, based on a common sense approach and taking into account the gravity and frequency of such misdemeanours.

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Speaking out of turn, using inappropriate comments/ language, distracting others from learning, not presenting or completing homework, chewing gum, climbing or running inside the school, disobeying playground rules etc.

Repeated incidence of minor misdemeanours will then be considered serious.

Examples of serious misdemeanours:

Preventing others from learning, defacing other pupil's belongings, defacing school property, refusing to cooperate with instructions or advice, intentionally hurting others, abusive language to any member of the school community, inappropriate use of I.C.T. or social-networking, stealing, possession of illegal substances, violent or threatening actions, sexual harassment by word, action or gesture etc.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour will be approached in a manner that is appropriate, timely and proportionate. Due regard will be given to age and emotional development.

Strategies such as the following are used:

- Explicit teaching of acceptable behaviours;
- Behaviour reflection;
- Visual reminders and prompts;
- Removal from the classroom or situation;
- Time out;
- Prescribing additional work;
- Loss of privileges;
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal;
- Clear communication with parents regarding behavioural issues.

Challenging behaviour can be related to special circumstances or needs. Special additional measures and an individualised approach may be put in place to support a child with special needs; *“Fairness does not mean that everyone gets the same thing; fairness means that everyone gets what they need.”*

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of school staff:

- Teachers are responsible for addressing unacceptable behaviour when noticed;
- Teachers are responsible for notifying the Principal of repeated minor misdemeanours and all serious misdemeanours;
- Teachers are responsible for notifying parents of repeated minor misdemeanours and all serious misdemeanours;
- Teachers are responsible for identifying when it is necessary to plan and implement an Individual Behaviour Plan for a pupil.

Responsibilities of parents and guardians:

- Parents are responsible for notifying class teachers of concerns they have regarding their own child's behaviour;
- Parents are responsible for informing class teachers of external factors that may cause their child to behave inappropriately;
- Parents are responsible for notifying class teachers if another child has behaved inappropriately towards their child during school activities;
- Parents are responsible for reinforcing behaviour when misdemeanours are brought to their attention.

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Pupils are expected to take personal responsibility for their own behaviour and appreciate how that influences the wellbeing of those around them.
- Older children have a particular role in modelling positive behaviour for younger children.
- Children with SEN will be helped to understand fully what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and will be supported towards achieving this behaviour.

As part of our Code of Behaviour, the Board of Management is required to outline procedures for suspension (Appendix A) and expulsion (Appendix B) as in accordance with NEWB guidelines.

This Policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis.

Policy ratified by the B.O.M. of Christ Church National School on

Signed _____

(Chairperson, Board of Management).

DRAFT

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Parental Agreement form

I, _____, have read this code of behaviour and understand its contents.

I agree to abide by its contents and procedures and to ensure that my child _____ does likewise.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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APPENDIX A

Suspension

Suspension is requiring a pupil to absent him/herself for a specified limited period of school days. During suspension the pupil retains his/her place in the school.

Authority to Suspend

For serious misbehaviour or continuous misbehaviour, pupils may be suspended by the Principal for a maximum of three days. Internal or external suspension will be at the discretion of the Principal. This period may be extended at the discretion of the Board of Management. (B.O.M.)

Suspension may occur when:

- The pupil's behaviour had had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The pupils continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension as part of a Behaviour Plan

Suspension should:

- Enable the school to set behaviour goals with the pupil and parents/guardians.
- Give the school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- Impress on the pupil and parents/guardians seriousness of behaviour.

Procedures in respect of suspension

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the school should:

- Inform the pupil and parents/guardians about the complaint by phone followed by a letter (writing has the benefit of ensuring that there is a formal and permanent record of having let the parent/guardians know what their child is alleged to have done).
- Give the pupil and parents/guardian an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

Appeals

The B.O.M. should offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision.

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal should notify pupil and parents/guardian in writing of decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- Period of suspension and dates when suspension will begin and end.
- The reason for suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- Arrangements for returning to school
- Commitment by pupil and parents/guardian to follow the code of behaviour
- The provision for an appeal to the B.O.M.
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills

Re-integrating the Student

The pupil should be given the opportunity and support to a fresh start. The school should expect the same behaviour of this pupils as all other pupils.

Records and Reports

Formal written records should be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of interviews)
- The decision making process
- The decision and rationale for the decision
- The duration of suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal should report all suspensions to the B.O.M. with the reasons for and the duration of all suspensions. The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) guidelines.

APPENDIX B

Expulsion

A pupil is expelled from school when the Board of Management (B.O.M.) makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The B.O.M. has the authority to expel a pupil. As a matter of best practice that authority should be reserved to the B.O.M. and should not be delegated.

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step and should only be taken by the B.O.M. in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and avoid expulsion by:

- Meeting with parent/pupil to try and find ways to change behaviour.
- Making sure parents/pupil understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it persists.
- Ensuring all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies.

Grounds for Expulsion

- The pupil's presence constitutes a significant threat to safety.
- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in school.
- Sexual assault.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

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.*

The Principal should:

- Inform pupil/parents of the alleged misbehaviour in writing, how it will be investigated and that it could lead to expulsion.
- Give pupil/parent every opportunity to respond to the complaint before decision is made and before sanction is imposed.

2. *A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the Principal that expulsion may be warranted.*

The Principal should:

- Inform pupil/parents in writing that the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion.

- Ensure parents have records of the allegations against the pupil, the investigation and written notice of the grounds on which B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion.
 - Provide the B.O.M. with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents.
 - Notify the parents of the date of hearing by the B.O.M. and invite them to the meeting.
 - Advise parents they can make written and oral submission to the B.O.M.
 - Ensure parents have enough notice to allow them prepare for the hearing.
3. *Consideration by the B.O.M. of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.*
At the hearing the Principal and parents put their case to the Board in each other's presence and should be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly.
4. *The B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing.*
If expulsion is recommended the Board must notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing and give reasons for this opinion. Pupil cannot be expelled for 20 days. The Board should inform parents about its conclusions and the next steps in the process.
5. *Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.*
Within 20 days of notification from the B.O.M. the Education al Welfare Office must
- Make reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, parents and pupil and anyone else who may be of assistance.
 - Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend to ensure arrangements are made for the pupil to continue in education.
6. *Confirmation of the decision to expel.*
When 20 days have elapsed following notification of the Education Welfare Officer and the B.O.M. still agree that the pupil should be expelled the pupil's parents should be notified immediately. The parents and pupil should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to expel a pupil.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of the pupil.