

# **New Quay National School**

## **Code of Behaviour**

# Code of Behaviour Policy

This policy superseded policy (10/17)

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop their skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education.

## Aims

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- 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 the safety and well being of all members of the school community
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

## Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school
2. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour
  - Staff
  - Board of Management
  - Parents
  - Pupils
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour
  - Classroom
  - Playground
  - Other areas in the school
  - School related activities

4. Rewards and sanctions
  - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
  - Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
  - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
5. Suspension / Expulsion
  - Suspension
  - Expulsion
  - Appeals
6. Keeping records
  - Class
  - Playground
  - School records
7. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school
8. Reference to other policies

## **1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

In line with the Education Welfare Act, Section 23, the following are the broad standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school. We have the following expectations of our pupils and these will be reflected in school and classroom rules and procedures.

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

In accordance with Section 23 (4) of the Act, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher provides the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and requests them to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

See Appendix A.

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, class teacher, and special education teacher. The teachers 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 may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs how to 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.

## **2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

The elements of the whole school approach to behaviour include

- Ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- A teamwork approach to behaviour
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

### **Staff**

#### **Responsibility of Adults (Teaching staff/Ancillary staff/Visiting teachers/coaches)**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
  - Promote, 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 and disability
  - Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
  - Discourage physical aggression and promote positive interactions
  - Inform ourselves about special factors that impact upon behaviour
  - SEN. information may be sought from support services such as NEPS and SESS
- The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

#### **Board of Management**

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared rests with the Board of Management. The Board and teaching staff has responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies. The Board should play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

The Board should ensure that all members of the school community have an opportunity to be involved in work on the Code of Behaviour. The Code of Behaviour and review of same is formally included in Board of Management meetings when appropriate and is recorded in minutes. The Board of Management actively supports the teachers in developing the Code.

#### **Parents**

The school maintains open pathways of communication with parents regarding the Code of Behaviour. Parents will be invited to examine a draft policy and to contribute any suggestions or amendments they feel worthwhile.

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour e.g.

- Parents ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents encourage their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested

- o Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- o Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school

### **Pupils**

Students are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and students can grow stronger through the process. In our school, children are consulted informally and formally through the SPHE curriculum on matters regarding behaviour. They are active in implementing the Classroom Code by drafting rules for the classroom.

### **3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

Various strategies are used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour. We have clearly stated achievable school rules.

These can be summed up as 6 main rules:

- o Respect/ Be kind
- o Always try your best
- o Be tidy
- o Be safe
- o Walk
- o Look, listen and learn

### **Classroom**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

### **Incentives**

Part of the vision of New Quay N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. 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 samples of how praise might be given:

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

### **Playground**

Positive behaviour is expected at all times in the playground. We support and encourage such behaviour by

- Organising activities in ways which minimise misbehaviour
- Creation of zones within the playground, providing sections for specific age groups, quiet activities etc.
- Careful supervision at each break time ensuring that all children are monitored
- An incident book is carefully maintained where necessary
- The children's movement to and from the yard is orderly and supervised
- On wet days, board games, jigsaws, cards etc are used in the classrooms

### **Other areas in the school**

There is an expectation that the school rules will be implemented in all areas of the school. Children are reminded of these regularly.

### **School related activities**

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour would usually apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school.

## **4. Rewards and Sanctions**

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

As we have already described, the school places great importance on active rewarding of positive behaviour. Teachers are careful to grant age appropriate rewards and incentives.

### **Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour**

#### **Sanctions**

In New Quay N.S. if a pupil fails to observe the standards of behaviour outlined in the school, certain measures and sanctions may be imposed.

The use of sanctions or consequences is 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 when a child behaves inappropriately. They 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. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges during break (sin bin)
6. Carrying out a useful task in the school
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to principal
9. Principal communicating 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, NEWB Guidelines 2008

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Teachers hold a common understanding of the type and severity of sanctions imposed. If any member of staff is in doubt about the suitability of a sanction, whole staff consultation occurs.

### **Involving parents in management of problem behaviour**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers have a shared 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 cooperation 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. Information can be shared by parents through the enrolment form.

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

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal
- Telephone Contact
- Emails from school to home and from home to school

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

Seriously violent or threatening behaviour is a rare occurrence in New Quay N.S. However, should a pupil's behaviour constitute a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school will take several steps. These include:

- Isolation of pupil//removal of the pupil to a safe place with a trusted member of staff
- Every effort will be made to calm the child
- Immediate communication with parents
- Immediate visit from parent if deemed necessary
- In extreme cases, child may need to be referred to external agency for psychological testing  
This would only be done in consultation with the parents.

## **5. Suspension / Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by email depending on the circumstances.

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 by the principal 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 the pupil, 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 the Rules for National Schools, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB guidelines 2008. Suspension must also be notified to parents in writing. Where the parents decline the offer of meeting the school authorities, the written notification is to be regarded as the notification of suspension.

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.

New Quay N.S. will follow fair procedures in the event that it is proposing to suspend or expel a student. These procedures have two essential components

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

These fair procedures apply to

- The **investigation** of alleged misbehaviour
- The process of **decision making**

In exceptional circumstances, the principal and chairperson of the Board of Management may extend a 3-day suspension to a 5-day period without full Board of Management sanction (e.g. if the Board of Management is unable to convene at short notice).

The Board of Management will normally place a ceiling of **10 days** on a single suspension. Any extension of this will be considered as another suspension and due procedures should be followed.

Where a period of suspension exceeds 20 days, the parents of the child have the right to appeal this under section 29 of the Education Act. A section 29 appeal can be made by contacting the Secretary General of the DES. An application form for this procedure can be downloaded from the DES website. See appendix B.

### Removal of Suspension

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s 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 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. The school will make every effort to help the student reintegrate into school life – academically and socially.

The student will be given every opportunity and support for a fresh start.

### Records and reports to be kept in respect of suspension will include –

<b>Records of investigation and decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The investigation (incl. all interview notes)</li> <li>· The decision making process</li> <li>· The decision and rationale for same</li> <li>· The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension</li> </ul>
<b>Report to the BOM</b>	The principal will report all suspensions to the BOM with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.
<b>Report to Tusla</b>	The principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the Tusla guidelines.



Use of suspension will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools the National Education Welfare Act 2000 and the NEWB Guidelines 2008. The grounds for expulsion will be similar to the grounds for suspension. However, it will only be considered when all other interventions have been exhausted.

### **Grounds for Expulsion include**

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

### **Procedures in respect of expulsion**

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal (similar to one carried out in the case of suspension)
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the principal
- Consideration of the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberation and action following the hearing
- Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer (this should occur within the 20 day period between the Board decision and the start of expulsion date)
- Confirmation of the decision to expel

### **Appeals**

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

### **Records and reports to be kept in respect of expulsion will include –**

<b>Records of investigation and decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· The investigation (incl. all interview notes)</li><li>· The decision making process</li><li>· The decision and rationale for same</li></ul>
<b>Report to the BOM</b>	The principal will report to the BOM with the and records of all relevant communication will be maintained.
<b>Report to Tusla</b>	The BOM is required to report expulsions in accordance with Tusla reporting guidelines and the Welfare Officer is required to liaise with all relevant parties within that period.( Ed .Welfare Act 2000, section 21(4) (a)

## **6. Keeping records**

All serious incidents on the playground are recorded factually in the School Incident Book. Teachers include a record of individual children's behaviour on the annual school report.

## **7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

The school informs the parents every September that The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. This notification must be written. A careful record of all absences and reasons for such will be kept. This information is reported to the Tusla on the standard forms. Records will be kept until the end of the school year unless a child's absences have exceeded the twenty days and these records will be retained by the school until the welfare officer advises otherwise.

## **8. Reference to other Policies**

New Quay N.S. has an extensive range of policies which support and consolidate the school's Code of Behaviour. These include:

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Admissions
- o Health & Safety
- o Special Educational Needs

## **Success Criteria**

Our school Code of Behaviour will be considered successful if the following criteria are satisfied:

- o Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment
- o Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- o Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

## **Roles and Responsibility**

All members of the school community have responsibility in upholding the School Code of Behaviour.

The Board of Management has a vital role to play in supporting the school Code of Behaviour, especially in extreme situations such as suspension and expulsion.

# **Code of Behaviour (Appendix A)**

## **New Quay National School**

- 1. Children are requested to treat each other with respect, to be kind to each other and to make new students feel welcome.**
- 2. Children should be mannerly and courteous to teachers and visitors.**
- 3. It is expected that children will obey teachers at all times.**
- 4. Kicking, punching, pinching or striking another student is absolutely forbidden on the school premises.**
- 5. Verbal abuse of any kind including name calling or hurtful remarks by one student to another or others is contrary to school ethics and will not be tolerated.**
- 6. The use of bad language is forbidden in the school grounds.**
- 7. Children are asked not to pass by if they see someone being unfairly treated; they should try to stop it and inform their teacher.**
- 8. Children who feel that they are being unfairly treated by others should immediately inform their teacher.**
- 9. On school outings, children will act in a way which brings credit to their school.**
- 10. If a parent wishes a child to leave school during school hours, it is essential that the class teacher be informed in writing.**
- 11. Children may not leave the school premises without permission from the class teacher.**
- 12. School property and equipment will be treated with respect.**

- 13. Other children's property will be treated with care and respect.**
- 14. Any parent of guardian who has any concern about their child's welfare should discuss it with the principal by appointment**

***Failure to adhere to school rules will result in disciplinary action.  
The following strategies will be used:***

**Reasoning with pupil.**

**Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).**

**Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.**

**Loss of privileges.**

**Prescribing additional work.**

**Referral to principal.**

**Communication with parents.**

**Suspension (Temporary).**

***I have read the School's "Code of Behaviour" Policy Document***

***Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_**

## Ratification and Communication

The **Code of Behaviour Policy** has been amended and ratified by The Board of Management of New Quay N.S.

Gerry Naughton      Chairperson

Mary Reidy          Principal

This policy will be communicated to all relevant parties.

This policy will be reviewed when deemed necessary.