



St. Peter's National School Code of Behaviour

The school Mission Statement

St. Peter's National School is a Church of Ireland Primary School under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath and Kildare. The school's characteristic spirit is a reflection of the ethos of the Church of Ireland, incorporating a mixture of faith and culture. We aim to provide a safe, caring, happy and disciplined environment where children's self-esteem, self-confidence, initiative, innovation and holistic development can be nurtured. Each child is unique and we wish to provide opportunities for children to reach their true potential. This we envisage occurring in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation. Our school's behaviour code plays a vital part in developing and maintaining this ethos within the school.

Our children's chances of success and happiness in life depend considerably upon their ability to make responsible choices. To assist in fostering maturity in our pupils, a whole-school approach to behaviour is necessary. All members of the school community will co-operate in a spirit of encouragement and enthusiasm to advance the talents of each child while recognising, accepting and celebrating diversity.

The development of St. Peter's N.S Code of Behaviour

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among and between staff, parents and pupils.

The Board of Management of St. Peter's National School has revised its existing Code of Behaviour of January 2013 in line with new guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board. This new revised Code of Behaviour is divided into sections, as recommended in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, issued by the NEWB in June 2008.

Purpose of the Code of Behaviour

The code of behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping students to behave well and learn well. The code of behaviour helps our school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

The code expresses the vision, mission and values of the school and its patron. It translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

The code of behaviour enables the Board of Management to strike an appropriate balance between their duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and their responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process. It is essential that the code of behaviour has the support of the school community in order for the school to meet this challenge successfully.

Principles underpinning our Code of Behaviour

1. *Providing Clarity*

Our code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community (students, staff and parents) will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. The code also describes how the school will respond to behaviour that interrupts, diminishes or prevents teaching and learning in the school.

An effective code makes clear that an orderly, harmonious school requires students to behave in accordance with the code.

2. *Affirming that everyone's behaviour matters*

The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of the adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how the child acts.

3. Focusing on promoting good behaviour

The code gives priority to promoting good behaviour. The tone and emphasis of the code is on setting high expectations and affirming good behaviour.

4. Balancing needs

The code makes clear that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students in the school.

5. Recognising that relationships are crucial

The quality of relationships between teachers and students is a powerful influence on behaviour in a school. Our school code fosters relationships of trust between students and teachers. Adults have more responsibility than students for building these relationships.

6. Focusing on personal responsibility

The code helps young people to experience the value of being responsible participating members of the school community.

7. Ensuring fairness and equality

The code is informed by the principle of fairness. It respects the principles of natural justice, and ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel.

8. Promoting equality

The code promotes equality for all members of the school community. The code prevents discrimination and allows for appropriate accommodation of difference, in accordance with Equal Status legislation.

9. Recognising educational vulnerability

The code of behaviour reflects the school's commitment to provide positive support, including active teaching of relevant skills, for those students who are more vulnerable to behaviour problems.

10. Attending to the welfare of students

The code of behaviour is based on a commitment to the welfare of every student, including the right to participate in, and benefit from, education.

11. Attending to the welfare of staff

The code helps to promote a positive and safe working environment for teachers.

12. Promoting safety and freedom from threat

The code promotes the conditions for learning and teaching, dignity and freedom from threat of violence for both staff and students.

Standards

General Standards

The Board of Management adhere to the following general standards for schools outlined in the guidelines issued by the NEWB 2008.

Standards signal positive values. Standards of behaviour shall reflect the values of:

- Respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Forgiveness

Standards describe the commitment that the school expects from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:

- Attending school regularly and punctually
- Doing one's best in class
- Taking responsibility for one's work
- Keeping the rules
- Helping to create a safe, positive environment
- Respecting staff
- Respecting other students and their learning
- Participating in school activities

Standards are also a way of signalling to members of the school community the kinds of behaviours that are not acceptable in the school, for example;

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

The purpose and content of school rules

The Board of Management have approved the following specific school rules developed by the teaching staff, in consultation with the pupils. School Rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard to health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. These rules are displayed in each classroom, discussed at the beginning of each year and will be included in the school's homework diary at the beginning of the school year for the ongoing attention of parents.

St. Peter's National School Rules

General:

1. Treat visitors, teachers and fellow pupils with kindness, courtesy and respect. Pupils should be truthful and honest at all times.
2. Keep the school tidy. Be careful with all property in the school.
3. Be punctual and prepared for class. Parents must email the office if requesting permission for their child to leave school early or if returning after an absence.
4. Show good manners at all times. Bad language is not acceptable.
5. Walk; do not run in the classrooms.
6. Only bring medicines to school with written consent from their parents in compliance with the school policy on Administration of Medicine.
7. Fireworks, dangerous toys, weapons, matches, lighters, strong smelling markers/ glues, solvents, aerosols, alcohol, tobacco or drugs are not permitted in school and should not be brought to school or any school function.
8. Knives should not be provided in lunch boxes. All food items should be prepared for eating.
9. Pupils shall have written permission from a parent when bringing a mobile phone to school. Phones shall be turned off before entering school grounds and can only be turned on upon leaving school grounds. Phones may only be turned on during the school grounds with explicit permission from a member of school staff. They must be placed in the school bag and must not be used during class time. Pupils bringing phones to school do so at their own risk. All SMART devices, including watches, may only be worn/used in accordance with our Acceptable User Policy.
10. Bullying is always unacceptable. Pupils shall not bully others or allow others to bully them. You should report all incidents of bullying to the principal or class teacher.

Play Periods and yard time:

1. Respect other people in the yard – no fighting, bullying, teasing or unkindness.
2. Do not leave the yard without permission from the teacher on supervision duty.
3. When break ends, line up quickly and walk quietly to your classroom.

In the Classroom:

1. Respect the right of all pupils to an education. Do not be a distraction to others.
2. Look after your possessions carefully, keep them clean, tidy and in good condition.
3. Present work neatly, accurately and in accordance with the teacher's wishes or instructions.
4. Do not leave the classroom without permission.
5. Remain seated during class and while eating. Put your hand up to speak to the teacher.
6. Respond to individual classroom strategies.

Homework:

1. All homework must be attempted seriously.
2. If homework is not completed a note must be furnished from the child's parent/ guardian.
3. Homework is valued and respected by all stakeholders in school and completed, reflecting the child's best efforts.

In addition to the school rules above, each teacher may supplement these rules with additional rules specific and appropriate to their own classroom practices. Additional rules should reflect the ethos and spirit of this policy.

Responsibility for upholding standards

The following sections below outline how students, teachers, all staff members and parents can help to promote a happy school.

Roles and responsibilities of staff members in relation to behaviour

The Board of Management expects that all teaching staff will maintain standards as outlined in this Code of Behaviour. This Code of Behaviour applies to all school organised events, on or off the premises.

Ancillary staff (secretary/caretaker/classroom assistants) SNAs those on work experience, volunteers and adults involved in extra curricular activities should be familiar with the Code of Behaviour. These adults are also expected to maintain standards but should always refer problematic behaviour to the relevant class teacher.

This Code of Behaviour also applies to adults. Staff and parents are expected to not only enforce this policy with children but to abide by it themselves. Staff must be familiar with this document, along with the school’s policies on harassment, sexual harassment and the anti-bullying policy.

Roles and responsibilities of parents in relation to behaviour

The support and cooperation of parents plays a vital role in the effective implementation of our Code of Behaviour. Some parents may feel that the matters to which their attention is being drawn are of a trivial nature, and that there was no necessity to have informed them that their children were misbehaving. The response to this is that while the misbehaviour may appear to be of a trivial nature, it is the cumulative effect of such breaches of the rules that is important and not the offence itself.

Parents are expected to:

- Support the school Code of Behaviour and encourage children to do so.
- Support the school authorities and staff, who work in the best interest of the children in their care.
- Follow up requests for parent/teacher meetings and keep such appointments.
- Ensure that their children come to school on time, correctly dressed and refreshed, having had enough sleep and eaten a proper breakfast.
- Ensure that children are equipped and prepared for the day.
- Email the school on the morning of their child being absent explaining their absence and their expected return date.
- Ensure that their child/children complete homework assignments to the best of the pupil’s ability.
- Ensure the school is kept up to date with new phone numbers, new addresses, medical conditions, and changes in family circumstances, which may affect child’s learning or behaviour, custody situations and court orders.
- Ensure that children have written permission to bring required medicines to school, in line with our Health & Safety Policy – Administration of Medicines:
- Ensure that children have written permission to have a mobile phone in school and that Smart watches are worn/used in accordance with our Acceptable User Policy.
- Ensure that their child knows how he/she is going home, who is collecting them and that they are collected promptly at either 1pm or 2pm.
- Ensure that their child has a sensible, nutritious, balanced lunch, with adequate drinks for the day.

This Code of Behaviour is distributed to all parents enrolling students as part of the enrolment process. *In signing the enrolment form, parents indicate that they have read and are committed to co-operating with the school’s Code of Behaviour.*

Communication between teachers and parents

Good communication is very important to co-operation between teachers and parents in implementing the Code of Behaviour. Teachers and parents are expected to keep each other informed of good and problematic behaviour. Most of this communication will be verbal, either face to face or over the phone.

Ongoing minor misbehaviour or serious misbehaviour will require a formal parent/teacher meeting. At this point strategies to encourage future good behaviour will be agreed. Teachers and parents are expected to be courteous and respectful of each other.

Systems for acknowledging good behaviour, progress and effort (e.g. reward systems)

St. Peter’s National School utilises a combined approach of individual, class and whole school reward systems. Encouragement takes the form of reward systems and strategies to promote good behaviour.

Good behaviour and rewards

Use of rewards	
Effective use of rewards	Ineffective use of rewards
<p>Rewards systems are more likely to motivate students when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They are meaningful to the individual student or group ● The student understands what the reward is given for ● They acknowledge behaviour that is valued and wanted ● They are closely linked in time to that specific behaviour 	<p>Care is needed to ensure that rewards do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Become the goal of learning ● Result in unhelpful competition ● Repeatedly reward the same students ● Seem unattainable to some students and, as a result, de-motivate them.

- They are based on a knowledge of the individual and are sensitive to personal, developmental and cultural factors (for example, teenagers may prefer private acknowledgement to public praise)
- They are given for effort and not only for achievement
- They are used consistently and by all staff
- They are used in an inclusive way. Rewards must not be used in a way that discriminates against any student or group of students, for example, students from a particular background, gender or ethnic group.

Rewards in our school include the following:

Individual:

- Verbal praise
- Written praise in copy/note/homework journal
- Stickers, stars or stamps on work
- Homework pass or small gift
- Special recognition at assembly in the form of 'Star of the Week' Award or verbal praise for specific achievement. 'Star of the Week' Award will be rewarded for very specific achievements meaningful to the child or recognition of good behaviour/work.
- Award displayed in classroom
- Visit to another member of Staff or Principal for commendation.
- Privilege for individual/group/class (e.g. extra golden time/extra iPad time/favourite lesson/story time/video/tour/term party)
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

Whole class:

- Whole class reward – Balls of Behaviour (BOB) Jar – Ball rewarded for cooperative behaviour
- Points system in each class
- Points for lining up quickly at yard time – the class with the highest points on Friday get 10 minutes extra play time.

Whole School:

- House system – each house endeavours to win points for their house for end of year reward. House names: Yellow Cheetahs, Red Pandas, Blue Whales, Green Turtles.
- Individual rewards also gain points for their house – this encourages whole school encouragement and praise across all class levels

As part of the curricular area of SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) teachers will teach citizenship and social responsibility. If needed, the staff will engage with one of the many educational programmes available commercially to encourage good behaviour. Examples of these are included in the Teacher's Resource Library in the school.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour: responses and sanctions

While every effort will be made to encourage and praise good behaviour, it is accepted that there is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. **Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and feel safe is unacceptable.** Misbehaviour is checked immediately and parents are kept informed from the early stages.

The degree of misdemeanour i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours. The school recognises the variety of differences, which exist between students. These differences will be taken into account when reprimanding a child. Parents are asked to ensure that the school is informed of any grounds, which may affect a child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school on a regular basis
- Running in class
- Talking while lining up
- Leaving seat without permission
- Leaving litter around school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason
- Endangering self/fellow pupils in the schoolyard at break time.
- Copying class work or homework

Examples of serious misdemeanours

- Constantly disruptive in class

- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Marking furniture or school property/building or damaging any equipment or building rented or loaned to the school
- Damaging other pupil's property
- Bullying
- Back answering a member of staff
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Not working to full potential
- Using unacceptable language
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil.
- Copying/cheating in a test

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

- Setting fire to school property
- Deliberately leaving taps turned on
- Deliberately using fire extinguishers inappropriately
- Bringing fireworks, dangerous toys, weapons, knives, matches, lighters, strong smelling markers/glues, solvents, aerosols, alcohol, tobacco or drugs to school or to any school function.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil

It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours.

Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions
The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable ● Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others ● Helping 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 ● Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour
A sanction may also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour ● Signal to other students and to staff that their well-being is being protected.
In instance of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning ● Keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The nature of the misbehaviour will determine the strategy chosen. In choosing a sanction teachers will consider the age and stage of development of the pupil, the understanding of the pupil and the possible need for differentiated objectives for that pupil.

Only Teachers, the Principal or the Board of Management will issue sanctions.

Part-time special education teachers and substitute teachers will use many of the sanctions listed below but shall consult with the class teacher or the Principal before selecting a more serious sanction. This in no way undermines the professionalism of our part-time teachers but acknowledges that the class teacher will have an overview of that child. He/she may have a specific approach or behaviour management programme in use with that child.

Ancillary staff (secretary/caretaker/classroom assistants) SNAs those on work experience, volunteers and adults involved in extra curricular activities should point out, and stop, bad behaviour witnessed but should refer all misbehaviour to the relevant class teacher.

Sanctions in our school include the following:

- Reasoning with a pupil
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers
- Time out in a different classroom
- Loss of privileges
- Undertaking cleaning chores in relation to a relevant offence
- Partial loss of yard time

- Child writing report of incident, which will be signed by parents
- Completion of weekly behaviour report card
- Note in diary (senior classes) or in folder (infant classes)
- Referral to Principal
- Communication with parents
- Note to parents
- Referral to Board of Management
- Suspension or expulsion

Record Keeping

Teachers will keep records of incidents where a child is continually defiant or disruptive. In such cases, a daily record may be kept which may be sent home regularly for parents to sign.

Teachers will also record incidents of serious and gross misdemeanours. Pupils are also encouraged to write out their own accounts of their behaviour and how they feel this could be improved upon. Such reports should also be signed and kept in the child's file.

Procedures for Suspension and/or Expulsion

The school reserves the right to suspend immediately any child who is in serious breach of our Code of Behaviour, or who is a danger to him/herself or others. The NEWB guidelines *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, issued in June 2008 list specific instructions if contemplating suspension or expulsion. The Board of Management will refer to chapters 10, 11 & 12 of that document when needed.

The Board of Management have delegated responsibility for a decision on **immediate suspension** to the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management (or if unavailable, the other Patron's Representative). The Principal and the Chairperson will report to the Board of Management as soon as possible after the event.

In the event of a need for immediate suspension, the Principal will isolate the child in a safe environment. Supervision of the child/children involved and the Principal's class will be organised as possible on the day, with due regard to best practice. The Principal will endeavour to contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management, or if unavailable, the other representative of the Patron on the Board of Management. An immediate decision will be made. In such incidents the child's parents will be contacted and asked to remove their child from the school premises for the rest of the day.

If an event is serious enough to consider suspension, an extra-ordinary meeting of the Board of Management will necessarily proceed with very short notice. After that meeting the school insurance company may need to be informed. The Principal is required to inform the National Education Welfare Board of all suspensions under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Following discussion with the child's parents, the Chairperson and the Principal, the child may be suspended for a further two - nine days (*more than three days' suspension requires prior Board of Management approval*).

A decision to expel a child will always be made at a meeting of the Board of Management. Expulsion will be in accordance with the NEWB guidelines *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, issued in June 2008

SEN and particular/exceptional circumstances

The Board of Management, Principal, teaching and ancillary staff recognise the educational vulnerability of children who are at a higher risk and more vulnerable of behavioural problems. They appreciate that in some exceptional cases the behavioural approach outlined may be insufficient to meet the needs of these children and an alternative approach may be needed. In such cases the advice of the NCSE, SESS, HSE services and other relevant therapists (Clinical and behavioural psychologists, play therapists, SLT and OT, etc.) may be needed and sought by school and parents. In line with expert advice from these services, individual behavioural plans will be developed, monitored and reviewed by the Principal, Teacher, SET, parents and SNA (if applicable) on a regular basis. A communication strategy will be devised between home and school to ensure transparency of progress. Follow-up, consistent review and approach between home and school will be crucial for the success of the behavioural plan.

Further detailed processes for behavioural plans and accommodations for children with SEN are outlined in St. Peter's National School's Special Educational Needs policy.

Welfare and absences

Many of our school rules fall under the category of the Education Welfare Act 2000. Parents have a responsibility to their children to take care of their health, safety and happiness.

The Dept. of Education & Science issued Guidelines and Procedures for all schools in relation to Child Protection Welfare. These guidelines promote the welfare of children. **If there is a matter of concern in relation to any form of abuse/neglect of children we are obliged to report this to TUSLA.**

Neglect of children may take many forms, these include:

- *constantly late for school*

- *no suitable lunch*
- *continually coming to school hungry, dirty, unwashed*
- *constantly tired in school/sleeping in class*
- *no books/pencils/equipment*
- *no show of parents for parent/teacher meetings*
- *continued failure of parents to meet with Principal/teacher when asked for a meeting*
- *inadequate clothing*
- *homework continuously not done*
- *no explanation for absences from school*

Under the Education Act 2000 and the Education Welfare Act 2000, schools must report absences of 20 days and over during the school year. Regardless of the fact that the school may know that a child was genuinely ill, we are obliged to report these absences. All absences must be explained in written form. For convenience the school asks parents to email the school on the first morning of the child's absence, with the reason for absences and the expected return date. The office will print these emails and place them in the child's file.

The school may be required to contact the relevant authorities where staff are concerned for a child's welfare. The school may also be required to pass on any necessary information to such authorities if/when it is requested or when the school feels it is prudent to do so.

Complaints Procedure

If a parent or child has a complaint about the manner in which a behaviour issue has been handled by a teacher, the Principal or the Board of Management; he/she is referred to the standard complaints procedure agreed by the Department of Education & Science, the Catholic Primary School Management Association, the Church of Ireland Board of Education and the Irish National Teachers Organisation; as outlined in the CPSMA Handbook. This procedure is currently readily available from the Principal and will be incorporated into a school policy on complaints.

Appeal of a decision to suspend/expel a child

Under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents may wish to appeal a decision to suspend or expel a child. Appeals follow procedures laid out in Primary Circular 22/02, available in full from the Principal.

Details of who to contact about behaviour matters

The person to contact in the school about behaviour matters is the Principal. This policy has been written in plain language and should be accessible to all. Any questions about it should be directed to the principal, on behalf of the Board of Management.

Date the code was approved by the Board of Management and Patron and the future review plan

This revised Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Peter's National School on the 21st of September, 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

Ratification & Communication

The Code of Behaviour is available to view in the Plean Scoile and on the school website. A copy of the Code can be requested at any time. It is distributed to all parents as part of the enrolment process. In signing the enrolment form, parents indicate that they have read, understood and are committed to co-operating with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Signed:  (Chairperson) Date: 19 September 2023

Signed:  (Principal) Date: 19/09/23