

Windfield National School Code of Behaviour

This policy was reviewed during the last term of the school year 2011-2012. The Principal and staff were responsible for amending this policy. This was then brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

Rationale

It was thought necessary to review the existing policy:

- As the existing policy is due for review/amendment.
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
 - B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
 - C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
 - D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
 - E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.
 - F. To ensure the existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as outlined in developing a code of behaviour/ Guidelines for schools- NEWB 2008.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

This policy is in keeping with the school's ethos of mutual respect, co-operation and creating a caring, safe, happy and positive environment as outlined in our aims below.

With this policy, we hope to achieve the following aims:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Mission Statement.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- 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.

Principles underpinning this policy:

- This Code of Behaviour clearly 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 gives priority to promoting good behaviour.
- 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.
- The school code fosters relationships of trust between students and teachers.
- The code helps young people to experience the value of being responsible, participating members of the school community.
- The code is informed by the principle of fairness. It respects the principles of justice and ensures a consistent approach to behaviour on the part of all school personnel.
- The code promotes equality of all members of the school community.
- The code prevents discrimination and allows for appropriate accommodation of differences, in accordance with Equal Status legislation.
- 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.
- The Code of Behaviour is based on a commitment to the welfare of each student, including the right to participate in, and benefit from, education.
- The code helps to promote a positive and safe classroom environment for teachers.
- The code promotes the conditions for learning and teaching and dignity and freedom from threat of violence for both staff and students.

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
- 4. Rewards and Sanctions**
 - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
 - Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
 - Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
 - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
- 5. Suspension / Expulsion**
 - Suspension
 - Expulsion
 - Appeals

6. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

7. Reference to other policies

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

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 standards of behaviour that the school wishes to promote are listed below and these guidelines are based on the characteristic spirit of the school.

- 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.
- Each pupil is expected to comply with the day-to-day rules of the school thus ensuring, a safe and positive school environment.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

‘A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school (Circular 20/90.)

The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour includes:

- A clear policy on behaviour and anti-bullying that has been devised and discussed with the school community i.e., Pupils, Teachers, Parents and Board of Management.
- Pupils have an input in devising and reviewing day to day school rules which are stated positively and displayed throughout the school.
- Through the SPHE programme, positive behaviour is fostered and developed through nurturing self-esteem.
- Positive interactions between adults within the school community are in evidence.
- Clear boundaries and everyday routines are established and familiar to all pupils.
- A climate of fairness that is evident having due regard for outside factors that can influence behaviour in school.
- Effective listening/communications skills are taught on an on-going basis.

New parents, pupils and staff members are made aware of this code. A copy of this policy will be distributed to every parent and any new parent in the school. They will be asked to sign a document acknowledging that they have read the code.

There is climate of open communication between all members of the school community and a clear Complaints Procedures Policy is in place.

Parents

‘Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.’

‘Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.’ (Circular 20/90)

Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

- Parents ensure their children are at school in time.
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested.
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed.
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Parents familiarise themselves with this code and discuss it in a positive manner at home.

Pupils

Pupils play an active part in the ongoing implementation of the Code of Behaviour by:

- Drafting rules for the classroom and revisiting these on a regular basis.
- Pupils are encouraged to review the Code of Behaviour and bring any issues they may have to their teachers or parent.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect and assess their own behaviour thus allowing them to become independent learners.

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

Classroom

Positive classroom strategies which are used to manage behaviour effectively:

- "Ground rules"/ behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the Code of Behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupil input in devising the class rules.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- A clear system whereby positive behaviour is affirmed and acknowledged and sanctions for misbehaviour are in operation.
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Timetabling.
- Effective listening skills are taught from junior infants – 6th class.

Playground

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted are in operation and consistent.
- At break times pupils are supervised by the teacher on duty.
- Pupils are aware of play areas appropriate to their class. This may vary at certain times of the year depending on weather or events.
- Pupils are encouraged to play suitable playground games.
- Arrangements for wet days are as follows: children from the junior room will play suitable games in the learning support room and children from the senior room will remain in their own room.

4. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

Good behaviour is acknowledged in the following ways:

- 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.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.
- Reference is made to it at parent/teacher meetings and in end of year reports.

Children are constantly praised and thanked for their co-operation in following the school rules.

Incidental treats are distributed at various times throughout the year.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Please see our policy on sanctions. It incorporates sanctions to deal with bullying.

5. Suspension / Expulsion procedures

Please see our policy on Sanctions

6. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

- The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, "*the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*" Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Parents/guardians are required to send in a signed and dated note informing teachers of the reason for their child's absence.
- These notes are recorded and the record is kept until the end of the year.

When children miss more than 20 days the N.E.W.B. is notified using the on-line system a record is brought forward to the following year

7. Reference to other Policies

Policies that have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour:

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Sanctions Policy
- o Enrolment
- o Record keeping
- o Health & Safety
- o Equality
- o Complaints Procedure
- o Supervision Policy

SUCCESS CRITERIA: *(by which the policy will be judged)*

- *Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment*
- *Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers*
- *Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils*
- *Atmosphere of discipline within the school*
- *Children are aware of school rules*
- *Staff apply school rules*
- *Growth in self discipline*
- *Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.*
- *Comments or compliments on behaviour.*
- *Children working to the best of their ability*
- *Class working to the best of their ability*
- *Improvements in behaviour*

Roles and Responsibility

As stated in the policy. It is the duty of the all the members of the school community to ensure this policy is working. The responsibilities of each group are stated in the policy.

The code of Behaviour and in particular the use of suspension and expulsion will be reviewed every 3 years by the Board of Management.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified on _____ at a B.O.M meeting

Signed: _____ Chairperson B.O.

