



St. Matthew's National School
Cranfield Place, Sandymount, Dublin 4

Tel 6603145 Email: secretary@stmatts.ie Web: www.stmatts.ie

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

It is a condition of attendance of St. Matthew's N.S. that pupils abide by the rules and regulations specified in this Code of Behaviour. Please note, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying/Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy.

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development, just as it does in their academic development.

Children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour; 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 the skills needed for co-operation. Rules will be age appropriate, with clear consequences.

The code embodies the principles of the school's ethos statement.

AIMS

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- 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 with minimal disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood by parents through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN

School rules apply to all pupils during school time or at any school related activity. The rules which inform pupil behaviour can be summed up by the term 'Respect', that is, respect for one's self to include learning, respect for others and respect for the school and school property.

- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict
- Respect for self and others and their property
- Respect for own learning and the learning of other students
- Show courtesy, good manners and an inclusive spirit
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Follow instructions from staff
- Try your best in everything you do

- Take responsibility for your own actions and work
- Pupils should bring only school related items to school – no toys.
- Walk quietly in the school building

Golden Rules

The behaviour expectations listed above can be summed up in seven main rules – ‘The Golden Rules’ – please see Quality Circle Time Document.

Be respectful	Don't be rude or impolite
Be gentle	Don't hurt anyone
Be honest	Don't cover up the truth
Be kind and helpful	Don't hurt people's feelings
Work hard	Don't waste time
Look after property	Don't waste or damage things or take things that don't belong to you
Listen to people	Don't interrupt

INCENTIVES/REWARDS

Part of the vision of St. Matthew's N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, socially and behaviourally so that children can reach their full potential in life. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. All children deserve encouragement to attain their best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Levels of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- 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
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- A mention to the child's parent

Some strategies used to promote positive behaviour:

- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly, equally and firmly
- Matching work with pupil's abilities.
- Teachers creating moments of success and then acknowledging them.
- Teachers record improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil
- Implementation of Programmes such as 'Circle Time' to promote positive behaviour
- Individual Teachers' Motivation Charts

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

While we strive as a school to promote a positive atmosphere in as many positive ways as possible, clear, age appropriate guidelines must be in place to set standards of behaviour and sanctions in place to deal with inappropriate actions. Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher.

Classroom & Yard

Each classroom teacher has the responsibility for his/her classroom. The aim in each classroom is to cultivate a happy atmosphere conducive to learning; each class teacher will devise their own approach to behaviour management within their classrooms in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Quality Circletime Document. Each child has the right to an education which for the most part should be free from disruption. Good effort will be recognised and praised. Pupils will be encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions (consequences) and belongings in the classroom.

A number of examples of Minor Misbehaviour are listed below. The Board of Management shall discern as required the severity of an incident.

<p><u>General Behaviour in the Classroom</u></p> <p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show respect and manners to other pupils and their teacher • Carry out instructions given by teachers • Always have their own materials – pens, pencils, colours etc • Complete all tasks assigned to the best of their ability. • Listen, pay attention, sit appropriately and put up their hand if they have something to say 	<p><u>General Behaviour in the Yard</u></p> <p>Pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show respect for other children using the playground • Be mindful of other children while playing so as to not cause another child to fall or be hurt • Not leave the playground without the permission of the supervising teacher • Line up in a quiet, orderly manner before returning to the classroom • Look after our yard equipment
<p><u>Examples of Minor Misbehaviours in the Classroom:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary talking in class – causing disruption to others e.g. speaking out of turn • Shouting or talking loudly • Unnecessary movement about the classroom causing disruption to others • Non-completion of assigned class work without good reason • Poor presentation of work • Displaying defiant, cheeky or sulky behaviour 	<p><u>Examples of Minor Misbehaviours in the Yard:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games considered dangerous to oneself or others • Causing annoyance and/or bodily harm to other pupils by fighting, pushing, kicking, tripping etc • Showing disrespect to the supervising teacher • Retaliation from a pupil if hurt by another pupil – if a child is hurt, he/she should report the matter to the supervising teacher

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is rude or shows a lack of respect
- Use of bad or inappropriate language
- Use of mobile phones or other electronic devices
- Behaviour that is hurtful
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour and physical harm to oneself or another person
- Damage to property and mistreating the school environs

- Theft
- Repeated displays of minor misbehaviour

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil (written/physical/verbal)
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Substance abuse
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Repetition of any of the serious misbehaviour listed above

SANCTIONS

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus
- 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
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of Health & Safety.

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. These steps are listed in order of severity and are seen as a ladder of intervention with early steps for dealing with minor misbehaviours and later steps for dealing with serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive; however, please note these steps serve as a general guide. Judgement as to the level and stage of intervention may vary from situation to situation and steps may be skipped at the Principal's discretion. These sanctions apply to all areas of school life (classroom, corridors, yard, extra-curricular activities, trips etc).

Sanctions:

1. (Minor) A Four Step Approach (in line with positive motivation already in place):
 - Verbal warning including advice on how to improve behaviour e.g. John, please stop talking and finish your task.
 - Visual warning
 - Pupil moved to a 'Break Space' away from their peers in their classroom. This period of time out will vary from an age based time to the completion of task or lesson at hand.
 - Pupil sent to the School Principal with a slip (Appendix 1) indicating the reason for their removal from the classroom for a period of time out. Again, the period of time out outside of their classroom will vary from an age based time to the completion of task or lesson at hand. If a pupil reaches this stage, he/she will be in the Time Out Room for a period during their lunch break (the pupil's class teacher will set a 'Student Reflection Worksheet' (Appendix 3&4) or extra work from their classroom for completion during this time. If a pupil reaches this stage, it will be communicated to their parents (verbally/Behaviour Communication Slip: Appendix 2). If a pupil reaches this stage three times during a term, the class teacher will meet the child's parents to discuss the matter. If it happens a further

- two times, a meeting will be called with the child's parents, teacher and school Principal to discuss further sanctions in the Code of Behaviour.
2. In the case of uncompleted/unsatisfactory class work without good reason, children will be asked to complete the work to an appropriate standard either during a period of their lunch-break in the Time Out Classroom or at home as additional homework.
 3. (Serious/Gross) A Three Step Approach:
 - Referral to Principal with a slip (Appendix 1) indicating the reason for their removal from the classroom. The period of Isolation will be determined by the incident. The matter will be communicated to the child's parent's verbally. The child will attend the Time Out Room for the next session.
 - If another serious incident takes place that term, the matter will be discussed with the child's parents in a formal meeting. The child will attend the Time Out Classroom for five school days and may work towards earning their breaktime back in full at the Principal's discretion.
 - If a third serious incident takes place that term, the school Principal and Chairperson will proceed with formal exclusions in line with this Code.
 4. (Serious/Gross) Daily report card (Appendix 5):
 - Class teacher marks the level of the child's behaviour, effort and attitude throughout the school day.
 - Report Card signed by the class teacher, the Principal/Deputy Principal and his/her parents.
 - A Report Card is usually issued for an initial period of two weeks with a formal report being made to the Board of Management.
 5. (Serious/Gross) Exclusion from classroom/peers (Loss of yard time with peers, Internal Suspension, External Suspension or Expulsion) from school.

SUSPENSION & EXPLUSION

(Please see Appendix 6)

Exclusion is a rarity at St. Matthew's N.S. where pupils are generally well behaved and steps undertaken by staff with the support of parents result in positive outcomes. There are three types of exclusion:

- Internal suspension: child is removed from their own classroom for a period of up to three days. In this case the class teacher devises a programme of work to be completed by the child.
- Formal Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension:

The purpose of suspension is to demonstrate the seriousness of the misbehaviour to both parents and the pupil concerned with a view to agreeing steps to modify the behaviour(s) concerned. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the welfare and education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety or the student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The matter is in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Where there are grounds for suspension:

- The Chairperson of the Board of Management, the student and his/her parents will be informed about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension.
- The matter will be investigated by the relevant school staff and detailed records are kept.
- Parents of the child concerned are requested in writing to attend a meeting with relevant school staff where they are provided with details of the complaint(s) and are afforded an opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made and a sanction is imposed.
- In cases where parents/guardians do not agree to attend such a meeting, a formal letter will be issued advising parents of the gravity of the matter and the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of the school authorities to arrive at a decision in response to the pupil's negative behaviour.
- Following the investigation and discussion with the parents, the principal then addresses the matter at a Board of Management meeting.
- The parents are informed of the decision reached by letter and where possible by phone.

In the case of gross misbehaviour or a single incident of serious misconduct, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board of Management 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.

Length of Suspension

- A student will not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that this is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective following discussion with the Board of Management.
- During the period of suspension the school will afford an opportunity to the parents and child to meet with the Principal, relevant school staff and a representative from the Board of Management with a view to agreeing procedures/strategies to be implemented on the child's return to school.
- The Board of Management normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension.
- 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.
- A second period of suspension immediately following the initial period will only be applied if the pupil concerned engages in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension.

Expulsion (permanent exclusion):

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES 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 (DES Circular 22/02). The Principal and designated Board member will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science. (Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

ROLE OF TEACHERS & AUXILIARY STAFF

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 adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations and ample opportunities for praise
- Promote, through example, honesty, courtesy and respect
- 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
- Co-operate in implementing this policy in a consistent and fair manner
- Give pupils in their care the opportunity to explore and further understand the behaviour expected of them in school and throughout society.
- To place the emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions
- To foster and encourage a strong sense of community and co-operation between staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.

The Principal under the direction of the Board of Management has overall responsibility in ensuring that this Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and positive manner.

Staff will use the school's SPHE Curriculum to support the Code of Behaviour. This programme aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

'The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school' (Department of Education and Science Circular 20/90). The Board supports the implementation and review of this code in an open and inclusive manner.

ROLE OF PARENTS

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. Parent – Teacher communication is a key element of children's behaviour and attitude in school.

- To be available to discuss and listen to any issues which may arise
- To explain the Code of Behaviour and Golden Rules to their children
- To show support for teachers in their implementation of this Code of Behaviour
- To keep in contact with teachers regarding their child's progress
- To support their child in their schoolwork and homework. Check up on their child's homework on a daily basis and provide a written note if homework has not been completed for a valid reason.

- To ensure their child's punctuality and regular attendance
- To promote respect for teachers and other school personnel
- Communicate with the school regarding factors which may affect their child's behaviour

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to addressing children's behaviour. Parents and teachers can work together to develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties. A high level of co-operation 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 reviewed regularly. Please see the Parent-Teacher Communication Policy.

Parents are 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. If a parent has any concerns or queries, we would ask that these are communicated with the class teacher in an open-minded manner sooner rather than later.

The following communication strategies may be used:

- Formal parent/teacher meetings
- The homework journal
- Informal message at home-time
- Telephone call home
- Slips - Detention Informing slip, Behaviour slip (three of these in a term result in a formal meeting between the class teacher and parent) and Extra Homework slip
- Individual Daily Report Cards

RECORD KEEPING

- Serious accidents and incidents which take place while a pupil is in a teacher's care are recorded in the school's Accident/Incident Book in line with the school's Health & Safety Statement.
- In line with the school's practice on record keeping, and data protection legislation, factual records are kept in relation to pupils' behaviour and meetings with parents following a standard format.

Signed: _____ *Chairperson of Board of Management*

Date: _____

Signed: _____ *Principal*

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2017