

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR, DISCIPLINE AND CONDUCT

The N.D.N.S.P. Code of Behaviour, Discipline and Conduct has been developed within the context of the Core Curriculum of the NDNSP (it reflects the ethos of the NDNSP) and in the context of the Health, Safety and Welfare of all the school community. This policy should be read in conjunction with the NDNSP Anti-bullying Policy.

The aim of this code is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

It is very important that children understand that they have rights. It is essential that they understand that with these rights come responsibilities.

Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.

The school recognises the variety of differences that exists between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of large classes.

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

The rules are kept to a minimum and are at all times devised with health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community in mind.

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility of good order within the school premises. At the discretion of the class teacher a pupil may be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline, disruptive behaviour or repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

It is hoped that all pupils, parents and staff will share a sense of responsibility about the good conduct of the school and that where someone witnesses inappropriate behaviour that that person will try to rectify the situation and not walk away from it. It is one of the aims of the school to produce responsible pupils. We hope that they will learn from the example they see around them.

Responsibility of Adults

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 aim to:

- *Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.*
- *Promote positive behaviour, 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.*

- *To discourage physical aggression and encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'.*

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

Children's rules

1. We listen. We don't interrupt.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We are kind.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.
6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

These 6 "Golden Rules" will be the main ones used for infant classes. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities.

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the "Golden Rules". Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they 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.

Children with Special Needs

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 and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal 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 in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs 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.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- 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
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious Damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- 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:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil 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. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break or after 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)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

Communication with parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parents concerned may be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case and / or have the opportunity to seek a meeting with the teacher or principal.

Where there are repeated instances of misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management may be informed and the parents shall be invited to meet with the Principal and the Chairperson and the class teacher or any combination of the above as appropriate. If the parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools (see Department of Education and Science website).

In the case of serious misbehaviour the Board has authorised the Chairperson and/or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending discussing the matter with the parents.

Expulsion will be considered, where appropriate, in accordance with Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools (see DES website).

Every effort is made to have a child with significant emotional difficulties assessed and, where appropriate, placed according to their needs. However this has proved a slow process and the school will make every effort to get help for such children as rapidly as possible.

Good discipline in our school depends upon co-operation between parents and teachers and every effort is made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed. A consistent attitude between parents and teachers is essential to the well being of the pupils.

Where teachers wish to contact a parent they may do so by setting a meeting giving some idea of the matter to be discussed. Similarly if a parent wishes to meet a teacher it is appropriate to make

an appointment so that the teacher may give the parent their undivided attention. In this way it may be possible to make arrangements for the class to be supervised in the interest of their safety and the confidentiality of the matter / child under discussion. As with a meeting set up by a teacher it is appropriate for the subject matter to be outlined so that a teacher may prepare properly for the meeting.

This code has been placed before all the parents of the school for comment and suggestions and all submissions are considered by the Board of Management and the code is regularly reviewed. All members of the teaching staff have been involved in the planning of this code.

Reviewed February, 2015. To be reviewed during the school year 2017/2018/