



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised by staff in consultation with parents and members of the Board of Management of the School of the Divine Child. Consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of the individual children who attend this special school. This policy document should be read in conjunction with the school admissions and enrolment policies.

We aim to create a happy, secure, safe learning environment for all of our students. We aim to ensure that the individuality of each student is accommodated and that staff members are supported and able to fulfill their responsibilities in a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.

Rationale

This code of behaviour has been revised because:

- It is an area of concern identified by the school community
- The existing policy is due for review
- We recognise the need for an orderly climate for learning in the school
- We believe in building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- It is a requirement under DES Circular 045/2013 Anti Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline
- It is a requirement under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 23. 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.*

Relationship to School Ethos and Mission

In the School of the Divine Child we believe in a positive school climate where we ask staff and students to co-operate on a daily basis. Our mission statement is to provide a harmonious environment where each student's potential is nurtured. This Code of Behaviour is designed to allow us to continue to develop positive relationships and values and to act as a framework for good behaviour.

Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of the School of the Divine Child are-

- To provide guidance for students, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff and parents on expectations with regard to behaviour for individual students
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school
- To develop students' self-esteem and to help create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in students based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every student
- 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 help build positive support relationships among students, staff and parents
- To ensure that the schools expectations for good behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood
- To ensure that staff and parents have a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- To eliminate any possibility of using technology access to indulge in cyber bullying

Content of Policy

1. Implementation
2. Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour
3. Guidelines for Positive Behaviour
4. Bullying definition and reference to Anti-Bullying Policy
5. Rewards and Sanctions
6. Suspension/Expulsion
7. Record Keeping
8. Procedure for notification of a student's absence from school

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. We believe that a positive learning environment is based on the quality of relationship between teachers and SNAs and the ways in which students and staff members treat one another. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour

Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Rules are kept to a minimum (appendix 1). We emphasise positive behaviour. We ensure that students see that rules are applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the students and to individual difference.

When difficulties arise we inform parents and work with them if possible towards improving behaviour. In some instances we assign a team that will deal with the behaviour of an individual student. This team generally consists of the principal, class teacher and SNAs. We make everybody in the school aware of who is in this team and all incidences of misbehaviour are reported to, and dealt with by, this team. This ensures consistency and ensures that the student is given a clear message of how to behave and understands the consequences of misbehaviour.

Throughout the year we strive to improve and maintain our guidelines for positive behaviour in the following ways:

- Discussions at staff meetings
- Mentoring of new staff members
- Discussions with parents

The Board of Management and Its role

The Board of Management of the School of the Divine Child has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is prepared and revised in line with current legislation. It will deal with serious breaches of the code by meeting with all parties concerned. A number of strategies may be developed arising from such meetings and these may include suspension and/or expulsion. A pupil may be suspended only after a meeting of a quorum of the Board of Management'

Board of Management's responsibilities are to:

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify and review the code.

Principal's responsibilities are to:

- Promote a positive school environment
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner which also takes into account the different abilities of individual students
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers and their role

The school's Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our students develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. A number of teaching methodologies are utilised including circle time, Zippy's Friends, co-operative games and project work.

Teacher Responsibilities are to:

- Create a safe working environment for each student which includes classroom rules drawn up in collaboration with the children where possible. The positive is stated within the rules.
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Prepare school work and correct work done by students
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among students.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair

- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour and keep a record of repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues in managing students
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern
- Watch for situations or triggers that may cause misbehaviour
- Provide every child with the opportunity to verbalise their concerns and needs, in the case of a non-verbal student provide alternative method of communication

SNA Responsibilities are to:

- Work as part of the school team to encourage and promote good behaviour.
- Follow any behavioural programme that is being implemented with students that they are involved with
- Report to class teacher if there are behavioural issues involving students and consistently follow procedures laid down by the teacher and team
- Report instances of both good and bad behaviour to the other team members.
- Ensure that all students are safe at all times
- Be aware of the different methods that are being used with each student as regards behavioural issues
- Provide support for colleagues in managing students

Students' Responsibilities are to:

- Do their best to reach their full potential
- Listen to their teachers and SNAs and other adults involved in the school community
- Act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other students
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Include other students in games and activities
- Follow school and class rules
- Realise, as far as they are able, that they are part of a group and respect that each member of the group deserves equal attention

Parents and their role

Parents/guardians are asked to:

- Encourage students to have a sense of respect for themselves, for others, and for property
- Ensure that students attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect students' progress and behaviour

The following strategies will be used in reporting to parents

- Note in school journal for minor misbehaviour signed by parent
- Informal telephone calls or meetings with parents when staff are concerned about behaviour
- Formal meetings for repeated misbehaviours after which school will set up ways of monitoring situation and making reports to parents

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

1. All adults involved in the school community should be aware that everybody's actions have a significant influence on how the students act and should behave accordingly
2. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
3. Students are expected to treat all adults and fellow students with respect and courtesy at all times
4. Students are expected to be polite, listen and not to interrupt as far as they are able
5. Students and staff are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free
6. Students are expected to take pride in their appearance and to be in the right place at the right time
7. Students are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments appropriately
8. Students are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed by telephone or writing, stating the reason for absence

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. School rules are agreed together with all staff. Each student is made aware of the school rules and the reason that they are there.

The rules will be placed in a prominent part of the classroom where they can be referred to if needed. (See appendix 1)

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for students before official opening time of 9.20a.m. or after the official closing time of 3.00p.m, Except where students are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Students involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Bullying

The Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools defines bullying as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour. (see Anti-Bullying Policy, School of the Divine Child

Reward and Sanctions

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. We also believe that it is important for each student to receive regular positive reinforcement for good behaviour. We believe that this is important for the students themselves, but also important as it provides those who may misbehave with positive role models among their own peer group.

Incentives

- Star charts
- Reward charts
- Jobs
- Notes in student journal
- Golden time
- Homework vouchers
- Prizes
- Student of the Week
- Attendance certificates
- Student own documented charts in line with IEP statements

Strategies

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a students's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards such as stickers on work.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Reasoning with student.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class or removal from class under teacher led supervision
- Loss of privileges
- Communication with parents
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with parents

Note: Students will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of health and safety or interfering with the learning and well being of the other students

Suspension/Expulsion

On occasions, students may lose self control. On these occasions staff members will meet with the school team to ascertain what triggered this behaviour. School staff works closely with parents to ascertain how best we may manage this behaviour. Staff will, where possible, refer the student to a psychologist. Staff members work closely with psychologists in developing behaviour plans.

Policy on Suspension

Before serious sanctions such as suspension are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents as discussed above will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter 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 student may 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 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 student will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the student may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and members of clinical services, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, including sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information.

Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

In the case of serious misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the students, 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.

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

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the student reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a written undertaking that a suspended student will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the student's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the student's own safety or that of the other students or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the student if required and will re-admit the student formally to the class.

Keeping Records

Classroom

- Each teacher is expected to maintain a school/home journal and report positive and negative behaviours using this journal
- Serious misbehaviours must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal/DLP as soon as the opportunity allows and an incident sheet should be completed.
- Teachers and SNAs are expected to keep record sheets of recognised serious misbehaviours - these records are confidential.

Incident/Accident Record book

Incidents which impact on other students and adults are recorded by the Principal in the Incident/Accident record book which is kept in the office of the secretariat.

Procedures for notification of student's absence from school

Parents//guardians must inform the school in writing or by 'phone of their child's absence from school and the reason for the absence. All records of absence will be written into the secretariat diary. The principal/deputy will complete the standard form for 20 day absences and forward same to the Education Welfare Officer.

The following are used to encourage school attendance:

- A stimulating and attractive school environment
- Certificates of attendance for good or improved attendance
- Adapted curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to students
- Where necessary, making parents aware of the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and its implications

Success Criteria

The following are some practical indicators of the success of this policy

- Observation of positive behaviour in the school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are consistently implemented by teachers and parents
- Feedback from teachers, SNAs, parents and students

Appendix 1 School and classroom rules

Appendix 2 Strategies in use in School of the Divine Child

Appendix 1

General School Guidelines and Rules for Parents

1. School tracksuit is available. This is not compulsory.
2. The school cannot take responsibility for any student until 9.10am. In the case of children travelling by school bus, school staff greets children at the front door or see children off the premises at the front door.
3. Student's belongings should be clearly marked.
4. Fizzy drinks and junk food are discouraged for lunch.
5. The chewing of gum is expressly forbidden.
6. Lice are a problem in almost all schools. Parents are asked to check hair at least once a week.
7. Parents are asked to emphasise the importance of clean hands and hygiene.
8. It is very important that the school is informed of any factors that may affect the child's performance in school.
9. Following absence from school and in cases of unfinished homework an explanatory note or telephone call should be given to the teacher.
10. Students who are ill should be kept at home

School Rules

1. We are all friends
2. We are careful of others when moving around the school
3. We are kind and wait our turn
4. We do not use High Fives – we shake hands

Classroom Behaviour

1. We listen to the teacher and SNAs
2. We do what we are told to do
3. We work well
4. We mind our books and other things
5. We mind our friends

Caring for others:

- a) We are kind to all our friends, teachers and SNAs
- b) We take turns to speak
- c) We make sure that our friends can learn
- d) We tidy up after work and games
- e) We tell the truth

Appendix 2

Programme for work with pupils:

Zippy's Friends and the Stay Safe programme is taught to pupils attending the School of the Divine Child

Strategies in use in School of the Divine Child

Approval or Praise of acceptable behaviour may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet work or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's journal.
- A visit to another member of Staff or 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
- Boardmaker and other visuals around the school to remind students about positive behaviour

Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows:-

The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy

- Reasoning with pupils
- Advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers and / or loss of privileges.
- Referral to Principal / Deputy-Principal
- Note to parents
- Suspension / expulsion in accordance with procedures laid down by the Board of Management.

Risk Assessment

- We use daily risk assessments to make changes if staff members are absent for any reason
- Classroom risk assessments take place if and when needed for changes in behaviour or for managing learning
- We work with Therapists and Nurses assigned to the children when developing Feeding, Eating, Drinking and Swallowing (FEDS) passports and guidelines
- We work with Therapists and Nurses assigned to the children in developing passports for children accessing swimming and hydrotherapy
- All exit doors are checked daily

Behaviour and Learning strategies

- Sense of calm
- Visual timetables
- Reward systems
- Behaviour sheets
- Specified 'chill out' strategies
- Reflection sheets/books/discussion
- Communication books and devices
- Vecta multisensory unit