

Lawrencetown National School.

Code of Behaviour.

1. Whole School Approach.

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up with the help and support of all parties involved in the school: Pupils, staff, parents and Board of Management. The purpose of the code is to allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way and to enhance the learning environment. It embraces the philosophy and ethos of our school. The Aims of the Code of Behaviour in Lawrencetown N.S. are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child by enabling teachers to teach without disruption.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.

Implementation

- Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour: Staff, Board of Management, Parents and Pupils.
- Positive behaviour will be emphasised.
- Rules will be kept to a minimum and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference.
- Some staff members completed "The Incredible Years Programme on Good Behaviour Practice."

2. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

Positive Reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self discipline.

- In our school we have drawn up a set of Rules based on the Acronym "Behave" (Appendix I) and "Show me Five" (Appendix II). We also explain sanctions to the pupils (Appendix III).
- In September, Rules are explained and taught in each classroom.
- A copy of these rules is visible in each classroom and in the P.E Room, where we assemble regularly to review the Code.
- Parents are given a copy of the "Code of Behaviour" and are asked to read and support its implementation. (Appendix IV).
- School Rules apply on school related activities (See appendix V).
- New parents will receive a copy of this in their Enrolment Pack.

3. Rewards and Sanctions.

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the code. We reward and acknowledge good behaviour. Rewards are age appropriate and given immediately for effort. They will be used consistently by all staff.

Examples of rewards may include

- A quiet word to show approval
- Comment in child's diary
- Praise in front of class
- Individual pupil reward system for consistent good behaviour subject to change throughout the year and age appropriate.

Sanctions

A sanction is a form of positive intervention.

A sanction should

- Defuse and not escalate a situation
- Preserve the dignity of all parties
- Be applied in a fair and consistent way
- Be timely

Sanctions are proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour.

- The frequency, duration and persistence of the behaviour
- Whether it is a part of an escalating pattern of poor behaviour
- The context of the behaviour

Please refer to Appendix III - sanctions.

Examples of Sanctions

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. The list is not necessarily in order and is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this;

- Reasoning with pupil
- Reprimand – explain the rule broken/advice on how to improve
- Removal from group to another classroom
- Separation from peers during break/lunchtime in a specified area.
- Prescribing extra written work
- Referral to Principal
- Communication with parents, depending on seriousness of behaviour.
- Suspension or expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

The sanction is to help pupils take responsibility for misbehaviour.

4. Suspension/Expulsion.

The school will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. Fair procedures have two essential parts

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

In this school the Principal has the authority of the Board of Management to suspend a pupil for up to three days.

This is delegated to the principal formally and in writing. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

The suspension should

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with student and parents
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a student and parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

1. Immediate suspension may be necessary where there is a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school or actual violence or physical assault. Parents will be contacted to take pupil home.

Procedures in respect of suspension;

The school will observe the following procedures

- Inform the student and their parents about the complaint (by phone or in writing)
- Give parents and student an opportunity to respond.

The school will record the invitation made to parents and their response.

In the case of immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for student to be collected. The school must have due regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances will a student be sent home without notifying Parents.

Period of Suspension:

1. A student should not be suspended for more than three days; except in exceptional circumstances.
2. Suspension of longer than three days, must be approved by the Board of Management (up to maximum of 10). A meeting will be called. In circumstances where a meeting cannot be convened in a timely fashion, the principal, with the approval of the chairperson, may impose a suspension of up to five days.

Appeals.

Where the total number of days for which a student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. When parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they will be told of the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Written Notification:

The Principal shall notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reasons for the suspension
- The conditions for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents e.g. parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science where total number of suspension days reaches twenty days accumulatively

Records and Reports

Records of investigation and decision-making:

Formal written records shall be kept of

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

The Principal shall report all suspensions to the Board of Management.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification.

Clean Slate

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student should be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

5. Expulsions

The Board of Management has sole authority to expel a student. It will only be used in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school should have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

Grounds for Expulsion

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- The student is responsible for a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- The student is responsible for actual violence or physical assault

Automatic expulsion

This Board of Management decides, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and having consulted with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction

- **Possession of illegal drugs**

- **Sexual assault**

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student.

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal. (give parents and students every opportunity to respond).
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer. (Board of Management will have notified Túsla of expulsion).
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Parents should be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know.

The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which Túsla have been informed.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 9). An appeal may also be brought by Túsla on behalf of a student.

6. Keeping Records.

More serious interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to other agencies. Positive responses by a student, and evidence of changed behaviour, should be recorded, as should any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed. Records should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988, the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

The eight rules of data protection apply to personal records kept in school:

1. Obtain and process information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes.
3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date.
6. Ensure it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes.
8. Give a copy of their personal data to an individual on request.

7. Notification of pupil absences:

In accordance with the Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23, parents must notify the school if a pupil

- (a) will be absent or has been absent
- (b) wishes to leave school during school hours

Parents can do this by signing the appropriate note in the school diary, by letter or by phone.

All notifications will be recorded and kept on file. Where children exceed twenty days absence in a school year TÚSLA must be notified.

8. Reference to other policies

Other school policies which have a bearing on this code include:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection
- Data Protection
- Supervision
- Enrolment
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- S.P.H.E. Plan

Success Criteria

- Positive behaviour observed in classroom, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

Timetable for Review

This Code of Behaviour was reviewed on August 30th, 2016 and was discussed in Term 3 of 2016 to assess the success of the new Acronym BEHAVE.

The policy was reviewed and updated in Term 2 and 3 of 2017/18.

Ratification and Communication

This Code of Behaviour was ratified by a meeting of the Board of Management in June 2009 and was circulated to Parents in September 2009 through Parents Association. It will also be available to parents on request.

The amended policy was ratified on June 12th 2018.

Signed: _____

Chairperson