



St Fiachra's Junior School Code of Behaviour

Introduction

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school.

In St. Fiachra's Junior School, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Aims of the code

- 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



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- 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 without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies on the school website and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this code

Responsibility of Adults in the school

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 should 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.



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Responsibility of Parents

It is the role and responsibility of parents to work with the school in the interests of the children. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules and a code of behaviour. As The Board of Management is responsible for the Health and Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand a child who is not their own, on the school premises. For Health and Safety reasons also dogs/pets are not allowed on the premises. Parents /guardians should accept that all matters taking place outside of school grounds and school hours are outside the jurisdiction of the Board of Management. It is school policy to inform parents/guardians at an early stage if problems occur.

We expect that parents will:

- Reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that a conducive to a happy school.
- Instil a strong sense of pride in the school.
- Ensure that their child has all books and equipment relevant to their class year.
- Take an active interest in their child's homework and ensure that it is completed.
- Equip their child with full uniform and ensure they wear it every day.
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff.
- Make appointments to meet with a teacher/Principal through the school office.
- Label their child's coats and other property.
- Respect school property and encourage their child to do the same.
- Supervise their children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school.



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Responsibility of Pupils

All pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teacher and act on instructions.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, bad language and name calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials / books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.
- Walk in the classroom / corridors and to and from the yard.

Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These will be based loosely on the “Golden Rules” listed in the box below. 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. The emphasis will be on 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 pupils and individual differences.

Golden 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.



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In the interests of Health and safety on yards all pupils are expected to observance and obey the yard rules listed in the box below.

Yard Rules

1. We play safely.
2. We stay inside the yellow lines on the yard.
3. We never leave without permission.
4. We respect others when we play.
5. We stay in the "Active Zone" on our appointed day.
6. We freeze after the 1st bell and walk to the line after the 2nd bell.

Incentives/Reward System

Part of the vision of St. Fiachra's Junior School is to help children achieve their personal best – academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Individual teachers are free to devise and operate reward systems which provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates 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 copy or homework journal
- 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
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class



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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:

- Taking items without asking
- Not wearing appropriate uniform
- Not following instructions
- Pushing in the line.
- Kissing inappropriately.
- Telling tales.
- Rudeness.
- Leaving seat at inappropriate time.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- All minor misbehaviour when on a continuous basis
- Unprovoked acts of aggression
- Serious fighting involving kicking/hitting
- Biting or spitting
- Bad/inappropriate language directed at someone
- Belittling comments
- Refusal to cooperate with instructions.
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Repeated serious misbehaviour



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- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious damage to property
- Serious bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional – conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.



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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. It will be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus. 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. Loss of privileges
4. Time out from play
5. Temporary separation from peers
6. Communication with parents



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7. Referral to Principal
8. Principal communicating with parents
9. 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)

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents 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 pupil will 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 pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, 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 gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate



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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 pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare 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 pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. 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.

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.



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Communicating 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.

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 being reviewed regularly.

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.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board
- Newsletters/school web-site
- TextaParent service.

Monitoring and Review

Each member of staff is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within their sight or sound and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The Principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy at staff level on a regular



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basis and reports any review, the staff deem necessary, to the Board of Management.

In registering children in St. Fiachra's Junior School, parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school.

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