

St Columba's N.S. Code of Behaviour Policy

Introduction:

The Code of Behaviour of St Columba's NS, North Strand was developed in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, and The Equal Status Act 2000. This policy has been further informed by "Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools" (NEWB 2008). The policy will be reviewed annually at the earliest board of management meeting in each academic year.

Aims:

This school aims to provide education for all its pupils, to the best of its ability, in accordance with the revised curriculum provided by the Department of Education and Science. This school also aims to ensure that this takes place in a calm, supportive and purposeful manner. Good behaviour will be encouraged, acknowledged and praised. To achieve this, it is necessary to have an open and clear understanding of acceptable behaviour and attitudes towards each other both at work and at play. When problems arise, the whole school community aims to work in a restorative manner to address issues in a fair way. It is necessary that there be agreed guidelines for all those who study or work in this school so that it will help us:-

- To allow the school to function in an orderly manner
- To enhance the learning potential of all children
- To foster an understanding of others' needs and abilities
- To ensure the safety and well-being of children and adults
- To give each child a positive experience of the education system.

It is important that children, teachers and parents/guardians support each other to achieve the above aims. The code of behaviour applies during the school day and during organised school activities. **Outside of these times, responsibility for the behaviour of the child reverts to parents/guardians.**

The school is responsible for dealing with matters of behaviour which occur within the school or during school-related activities and may assist where matters of behaviour occur outside the direct school context where they impact on the life of the school. Parents/guardians should consult with teachers when matters arise inside or outside the school which impact on school life. Parents/Guardians should not approach other parents/guardians or children (other than their own) to discuss matters of behaviour relating to school.

The right of privacy of each child in the school is of paramount importance, so discussion of behavioural matters relating to the school or individual children on social media is not an appropriate approach to solving school related issues.

Behaviour Code

Each child is expected to:-

Personally

- Attend school every day
- Do his/her best in both schoolwork and homework
- Take care of his/her belongings

Towards others

- Be well-behaved and exercise good manners with other pupils and adults
- Exercise respect for the property of the school
- Exercise respect for each other's property
- Respect the rights of all children to an education and not to interfere in any way with that right.
- Respect all persons in the school community.

Adults are expected to treat all members of the school community with fairness and respect and to support and encourage positive behaviour in the school.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Anti-Social behaviour will be deemed “unacceptable behaviour”, this includes but is not limited to:

- Name calling/Identity abuse
- Ganging-up/Exclusion of children from groups
- Abusive or bad language
- Spitting
- Stealing
- Rough play
- Damaging property
- Preventing other children or teacher from working
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones or IT devices (all children's personal communication devices must be switched off from 8.50am – 2.10pm).

Strategies for acknowledging and promoting positive behaviour: -

- Teacher will use verbal praise and encouragement to highlight positive behaviour.
- Teachers will use a reward strategy such as stickers, reward charts, small prizes and privileges to encourage good behaviour.
- Positive behaviour and participation in a variety of activities will be publicly acknowledged at regular intervals through the use of certificates and awards presented to pupils.
- Continuous reinforcement of positive manners and attitude through programmes such as Good Manners Challenge.

The following strategies will be used to help a child to reduce incidences of unacceptable behaviour: -

- An official warning will be given to stop; child(ren) will then be moved to a safe place such as the ‘Thinking Step’ and asked to “think” about their behaviour. The teacher/SNA who initiates this thinking period should engage with the child at the end of the period to discuss the issue.
- The child(ren) will be moved temporarily to another seat or another room.
- Teachers can set additional work and / or the child(ren) can be detained during a break-time or activity to consider their behaviour or asked to shadow teacher or SNA for part of their break.
- The teacher will keep an account of the frequency of the occurrence.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed of such occurrences.

- An agreement may be entered-into with the child, to help towards improvement.
- An appropriate restorative event may be held under the guidance of the principal, a teacher or an external facilitator. The parties to such an event may include children, teachers, parents or other interested parties as deemed relevant to the specific situation.
- A range of SPHE programmes will be used to encourage a positive attitude on the part of all children in the school.

Serious misbehaviour

Incidents of serious misbehaviour will be reported immediately to the Principal and/ or the Board of Management. Examples of serious misbehaviour may include but are not limited to:

- Violence or assault
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Smoking (possession, supply or use of)
- Alcohol (possession, supply or consumption of)
- Illegal Substances (possession, supply, or consumption of)
- Threats
- Dangerous Weapons (possession, use, or threat of use)
- Use of phones or electronic devices during school hours in an inappropriate manner (see “ICT Acceptable use policy”)
- Bullying (see “Anti-bullying” policy)

Should the Board of Management deem that the misbehaviour is grievously affecting the school order, then the following may apply:

- Re-negotiating expectations with the child and parents/guardians. This may include a restorative approach where appropriate.
- Asking the child to enter into an agreement to improve behaviour.
- In extreme circumstances the Principal may find it necessary to impose immediate suspension pending consultation with the child, parents/guardians, staff and Board of Management.
- Should suspension or expulsion be deemed necessary, the Principal or Board of Management will send a registered letter of this decision to parents/guardians. In the case of serious misbehaviour, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. The school will endeavour to work with parents/guardians to help the child to improve their behaviour.
- The school shall advise parents/guardians regarding appropriate supports such as medical/psychological service which are available and shall work with the parents and those services to assist the child in modifying their behaviour.
- The school apply such sanctions as are appropriate to the needs of the child and the common good of the whole school community. These sanctions may include reduction of school day, restriction of access to items or places within the school without full individual supervision, suspension from the school for a period of time or in extreme situations expulsion from the school.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, parents/guardians (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science if (1) permanent exclusion from a school or (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year, has been decided.

Appeals must be made within 42 calendar days from the date of the receipt of the decision notification by parents/ guardians.

Sanctions for serious misbehaviour: -

- Extended reflection period
- Loss or withdrawal of privileges
- Sanction designed in conjunction with parents (class teacher, principal, chairperson and/or Board of Management) where appropriate
- Suspension
- Expulsion

This policy was reviewed in September 2025 and will be reviewed annually or where circumstances or legislation require immediate review.

Signed: Rev'd Garth Bunting
Rev'd Garth Bunting
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 30/9/25