



north bay

EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

GREENDALE AVENUE, KILBARRACK, DUBLIN 5.

## Positive Behaviour Policy

May 2003

### **Background Information**

The philosophy behind the review of the school behaviour policy was outlined to the parents of the pupils at the Class Curriculum Meetings held in October 1997. Subsequently, all parents received a copy of this document (draft 2) and were asked for comments and suggestions. These were considered by the staff and the Board of Management and draft 3 took account of these responses. In addition, in 1998 we focussed on behaviour around the school and in the yard. Draft 1 of this code of behaviour was outlined and circulated to all parents for consultation. We welcomed your responses and suggestions on these two new drafts and these are incorporated in the present draft

The education Act (1998) and the Educational Welfare Act (2002) has placed statutory obligations on Boards of Management to include in the Schools positive discipline policy, sections on suspension /expulsion procedures and the schools absences policy (see Appendices 1 and 2). This draft now contains these additions.

### **Introduction**

The aim of the policy is that the behaviour of the pupils should reflect the ethos of the school - i.e. respect for peers, adult carers and the school environment.

The ultimate goal of moral education is that children are intrinsically motivated to behave in a positive manner. However, in order to bring this about it is necessary to highlight and reward positive behaviour. Negative behaviour needs to be dealt with in a consistent way according to agreed procedures, which operate throughout the school and should, therefore, be transparent and understood by all pupils.

In order to reduce rules and regulations to a minimum, the teachers did some research on a list of possible negative behaviours, which were not in keeping with the ethos of respect. **The emphasis was on making class and the school a comfortable and happy learning environment for all pupils.** As a result of this research, seven

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classroom rules and six corridor and outdoor rules were chosen which it was hoped would bring this environment about. **These rules will be carried out within the context of a caring environment, and will allow for a consideration of the individual needs and situation of each child.**

These rules were discussed with the pupils at class discussion time and have been adopted throughout classes First to Sixth. Because of the age difference, the approach in the junior classes has been to use simple language to get the same message across.

### **Classroom Rules**

1. Talk at appropriate times.
2. Respond co-operatively to the teacher, adult helpers and peers.
3. Have everything you need for class.
4. Settle down to work quickly.
5. Keep your personal space and belongings tidy.
6. Use positive body language.  
i.e. listen attentively and respectfully to adults and peers.
7. Work and collaborate positively with other children.

For adherence to these rules and for effort on schoolwork, pupils can receive the following rewards:

### **Rewards**

1. Verbal praise
2. Tokens for a night free from homework - these are earned according to a classroom system of points or stars.
3. Given the opportunity to go to the Principal/other teacher to show exemplary effort/work and behaviour.
4. Gold slip - this is a record of particular effort or achievement and for parents and the Principal to see.
5. Certificates of Merit - these are handed out for effort, deed of kindness or achievement in various areas (e.g. for a well-presented project)

Sanctions for infringement of the classroom rules have been set out in an agreed procedure. This should have the advantage of standardising sanctions across classes and make it easier for pupils to accept the fairness of the sanctions.

Each day pupils begin with a clean sheet and only lose privileges if they infringe the rules on that day. As can be seen from the procedure set out below repeated misbehaviour in class carries an increasingly serious sanction. However, in the case of an instance of serious misbehaviour, steps 1 to 3 will be skipped.

### Sanctions

1. For the first instance of rule infringement the pupil is given a warning (i.e. a reminder of the rule he/she has broken) and his/her name (or initials) is recorded.
2. If there is a second instance of misbehaviour, the pupils misses five minutes of playtime. He/she has to stay apart for that five minutes before joining peers in play.
3. For a third instance of misbehaviour, the pupil is removed from his peers (Time Out for 10 minutes approximately). This would normally involve removal to a quiet or isolated part of the classroom. If the behaviour was disruptive of class, the pupil would spend the Time Out in an adjacent classroom.
4. For four instances of misbehaviour in the same day or for a serious instance of misbehaviour, the pupil is given a blue slip. The pupil records on this slip an account of what he/she did wrong and an account of what he/she should have done in the situation. This is for the information of the parent/guardian who is asked to sign it. It is then filed in the Principal's office.
5. In the case of continuing misbehaviour within the classroom, parents will be informed.
6. For certain instances of serious misbehaviour the pupil goes to the Principal to arrange a meeting between his/her parents, the class teacher and the Principal.
7. *Suspension is considered only as a last resort where serious difficulties exist and when regular sanctions and strategies have not been successful. The rules governing the suspension of a child are the same as those covered in the Irish Teachers Handbook (1987 edition). See appendix 1.*
8. *Expulsion will only be considered in extremely serious circumstances when all other sanctions and strategies have failed.*

Pupils are reminded that the teacher or the principal will listen to them at appropriate times (for example while the class is eating lunch or at a quiet time when the class is engaged in independent work).

Instances of serious misbehaviour are defined under the following headings and pupils who engage in them are sent to explain the occurrence to the Principal, who will issue a blue slip and inform the parent/guardian of the serious misbehaviour.

### **Instances of Serious Misbehaviour**

1. Verbal abuse of a teacher or others.
2. Very aggressive behaviour (particularly if it is intentional).
3. Behaviour that poses a serious danger to the pupil him/herself or to others.
4. Theft - because this can occur for a number of reasons, each case will be dealt with individually.
5. Serious damage to property.
6. Bullying/alienation/intimidation, either physical or non-verbal.

### **Positive Discipline Policy/Corridor and Outdoor rules.**

The following five behaviours are the ones which were identified as a result of recorded observation over a number of weeks:

- Lining up
- Stairs
- Running from front door to playground
- Boundary lines (boiler house/shrubbery at St. Michael's House)
- Litter
- Home time: climbing fence

The following rules were agreed at a staff meeting:

### **Corridor and outdoor rules**

1. Walk on the stairs, hold the banisters.
2. Walk from the exit door to the playground
3. At the end of break walk quietly to your line and stand in the correct order.
4. Stay within the boundary lines of your play area during yard time.
5. Keep our school a litter free area.
6. At home time leave the school premises calmly.

## **Sanctions**

1. Verbal correction with warning.
2. Verbal correction and time off play depending on seriousness of misbehaviour.
3. Sent into the school/to the principal for serious misbehaviour.

In the event that the teacher on duty feels that a blue slip should be given she/he confers with the class teacher in making a decision. Depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour, the principal may be involved in this decision.

## **Conclusion**

The spirit of the behaviour policy in the school is that pupils will be given encouragement and strategies to improve any inappropriate behaviour. Ability level, emotional maturity and special circumstances are taken into account when correcting pupils. In order to preserve a pupil's self-esteem the emphasis is always on the behaviour and how it can be changed. Pupils are not ridiculed in front of others, rather each pupil is encouraged to take responsibility for his/her own behaviour. The emphasis during correction is on what he/she will do in similar situations in the future which will be more appropriate.

There will at times be pupil behaviours which do not interfere with others, but which impede a pupil's progress academically or socially. In these cases, teachers will deal with pupils on an individual basis and have agreed means of communication with parents/guardians and agreement on rewards and sanctions, which are considered, suited to the individual pupil.

(Appendix 1)

## Suspension Procedure

1. The procedure followed prior to and during the period of suspension should be seen to be reasonable and scrupulously fair.
2. The Principal of the school, when the Chairperson is not available, to the Board of Management may authorise the Chairperson of the Board or suspend a pupil.
3. Pupils may be suspended for a single instance of gross misbehaviour or for a repeated instances of serious misbehaviour.

### Procedure

1.0 A record should be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils.

2.0 Repeated instance of serious misbehaviour.

2.1 If there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils, their parents and the Chairperson of the Board of Management should be informed by letter.

2.2 The parents should be requested to meet the Principal and the Chairperson at the school at a specified time. The parents should be required to give an undertaking, in the presence of the Principal, the Chairperson and the class teacher that the child will behave in an acceptable manner in future. In appropriate cases, the child should also be required to give such an undertaking.

2.3 If the parents fail to attend the school to meet the Principal and Chairperson and fail to provide a reasonable excuse for not doing so, the child may be suspended until they do so.

2.4 In the event of the parents and/or child failing to give such an undertaking, the procedure outlined in clause 6 should be followed.

3.0 Single instances of gross misconduct.

3.1 If a pupil is guilty of gross misbehaviour, the Principal should advise the Chairperson of the Board and ask that immediate suspension be sanctioned, pending a discussion with parents.

3.2 The Principal should advise the parents by letter and invite them to meet the Chairperson and him/herself to discuss the incident at a specific time.

**3.3** If the parents fail to attend the school to meet the Principal and Chairperson and fail to provide a reasonable excuse for not doing so, the child may be suspended until they do so.

**3.4** In the event of parents and/or the child failing to give an acceptable undertaking, the procedure outlined in clause 6 should be followed.

**4.0** Letter to Parents.

**4.1** In either of the instances referred to in 2.1 or 3.2 the letter should be hand delivered to a parent, or sent by registered express mail and should warn that if the visit does not take place at the specified time and date, the child may be suspended, or remain suspended pending. Copies of such letters should be sent to the Board of Management.

**5.0** When a parent has visited the school and has given an acceptable undertaking, the Principal should give the parent, as soon as possible thereafter, a statement in writing of the terms of the undertaking and the date of the termination of the suspension.

**6.0** When the parent has visited the school and has failed to give an acceptable Undertaking, the Principal should inform the parent in writing as soon as possible thereafter, that a period of suspension has been imposed, or that the existing period has been extended until the Board of Management has considered the matter. The Board should meet within 10 days and the parent should be informed that they have a right of appeal to the Board.

**7.0** When the period of suspension ends, the pupil should be admitted formally to the class by the Principal.

**8.0** Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the Board and of the Principal.