



St. Nicholas' Parochial School

Code of Behaviour Policy

September 2025

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Related Policies available on request:

1. Bí Cinéalta
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Admission (Enrolment) Policy
4. Child Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION

Our School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, and Board of Management work in partnership. Everyone is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

This will enable the child to live a full life and will equip him/her to avail himself/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

The staff are committed to the realisation of these Objectives. Our aim is to create a happy, secure environment for our pupils in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable approach to discipline. In this way, a large group can be organised so that the school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.

This revised Code of Behaviour came into effect 1st September 2025. The code has been considered by Staff, Education Welfare Officer and approved by the Board of Management.

ETHOS

- The Board of Management and staff of St. Nicholas' Parochial School seek to promote honesty, courtesy, punctuality and responsibility in each individual pupil. It is hoped to inculcate a proper regard for the rights and views of others and to promote a caring and tolerant attitude to other people and to the environment. It is expected that pupils will extend these values and attitudes in their dealings with other children, staff members and all visitors to the school.
- The school recognises the importance of teachers and parents working in partnership to educate the children according to Christian principles.
- The school aims to ensure that the individuality of each child is taken into account, while acknowledging the right of each child to be educated in a disruption free environment.
- All staff members shall endeavour to adopt a positive approach to discipline, with a greater emphasis being placed on rewards than on sanctions.
- The school recognises the variety of differences existing between children and the need to accommodate these differences where possible. The school will endeavour to make the curriculum as appropriate as possible to the needs of the children.
- Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as a community where all are entitled to live peacefully irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, ability, disability, intelligence or family circumstances.
- The school actively promotes gender equity.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS

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, 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 of all, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, ability, disability, intelligence or family circumstances
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- Discourage any use of physical aggression

SCHOOL RULES

- The school doors open at 8.30am. Children should not arrive at school before this time. The school accepts no responsibility for the safety of children arriving before 8.30am. School doors close after classes have been dismissed (1.20pm for infants and 2.20pm for all other classes). The school accepts no responsibility for children remaining on school property after this time. The only exception to this is when children remain in school for after school activities which are under the supervision of an after school lesson facilitator.
- Children may only leave the school premises with permission from a teacher/parent or guardian.
- We do not use bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades or scooters in the school yard.
- We only use personal electronic equipment in school with permission from a member of staff.
- We walk quietly in the school building.
- We keep our school environment clean and tidy.
- Our playground is a “no contact” playground. We do not get involved in rough play e.g. carrying other children, “mess fighting”, contact sports.
- We know that bad language, fighting, spitting, and other forms of antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated. We behave respectfully to others, using courtesy and good manners.
- We respect school property and the property of others.
- We respect the rights of others to education in a disruption-free and safe environment.
- In the case of all absences, parents/guardians must inform the school of the reason for the absence (in writing). The school is legally obliged to inform TUSLA if a child misses twenty days or more in a school year.
- Every child and his/her parents/guardians will be asked to sign a contract of behaviour at the start of the school year.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The following behaviour is regarded as unacceptable in the school, either in itself or in the interests of providing a safe, secure environment for all the children.

- Bullying of any description (See policy on bullying)
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Unexplained late arrival

- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Bad language
- Not following instructions
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Rudeness or disrespect to anyone in the school
- Wilful or malicious damage to school or personal property
- Possession of objects which could cause damage to school property or injury to people in the school
- Spitting
- Theft
- Truancy
- Leaving school/school activities without permission
- Any behaviour that is deemed inappropriate according to our ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Playing ball games/running in the school building – except under supervision in the PE hall
- Dropping or throwing litter
- Chewing gum
- Any activity on supervised trips with the teachers which would have a detrimental effect on the reputation of the school

CLASS RULES

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a set of class rules with the children based on Jenny Mosley's Golden Rules (See Appendix 1). These should reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should, where possible, emphasise positive behaviour. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

YARD RULES

- Pupils are always supervised by teachers and SNAs in the playground, at P.E. and break times. Pupils must obey the teacher/SNA at all times.
- Pupils must remain in the playground unless given permission to leave it by the teacher on duty.
- Pupils are to play safely, showing consideration and respect for others.
- Games which are not allowed in the yard are chasing and games which involve physical contact.
- Only authorised school equipment is allowed in the playground at playtime.
- Equipment will be taken from children who misuse it.
- When playtime ends children should:
 - Stop playing.
 - Collect their coats/tops and walk and wait quietly in their class line.
 - Walk in single file to class with their class teacher

BEHAVIOUR IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT & BEHAVIOUR ON SCHOOL OUTINGS

Respect and courtesy to others is essential. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse of other pupils is unacceptable. Use of foul language among pupils is unacceptable. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence. Pupils must show respect for school property at all times. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school in an orderly manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school. When on school outings pupils are expected to behave in an orderly manner and show respect for public property. They should always co-operate fully with their teachers and special needs staff.

ATTENDANCE/EDUCATION WELFARE ACT

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note on Aladdin or via phone call or email. Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to Education Welfare Board. Any child wishing to leave school early must notify the school. The Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues. Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to office secretary. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils.

MOBILE PHONES, SMART DEVICES, SOCIAL MEDIA & INTERNET SAFETY

Only those pupils travelling to school independently, have permission to bring a mobile phone to school with them. Use of mobile phones and other personal smart devices are not allowed be used during school hours. All phones must be switched off and handed to the class teacher at the beginning of the school day. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone or any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil. All interactions on social media or internet outside of school is out of our control. However, we do expect internet safety protocol to be upheld. Issues arising during school hours, due to children's use of social media outside school hours, may need to be addressed within school, if needs be.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The school does not have a school uniform however all pupils are expected to present neat and tidy during the school day. String tops and belly tops are not allowed to be worn. Permanent or semi-permanent hair dye is not permitted during term time. For health and safety reasons, we strongly recommend that pupils' hair be kept out of their eyes during PE, sporting activities and teaching and learning time. Make up is not permitted except on dress up days.

JEWELLERY

Students are allowed to wear stud earrings and digital/analogue watches only.

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 or in keeping certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher/learning support teacher/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 also be taken.

The children in St. Nicholas' Parochial School may be taught strategies to assist pupils with special needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting difference in all individuals.

REWARDS

The school recognises that children are usually well behaved, promotes good behaviour, and rewards instances of good behaviour. These rewards will include:

- 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
- Praise in front of the class/school
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class or special mention at assembly
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Informing parents/guardians of good behaviour (written or verbal communication)
- Reward systems adapted to suit the needs of individual classes/children

SANCTIONS

For instances of unacceptable behaviour, it is necessary to have sanctions in place. In all cases it is important that the child knows that it is the behaviour the school is objecting to and not the child.

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 sanctions will be used when a child behaves inappropriately:

- Reasoning with the child, explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable
- Reprimands, including direction on what is unacceptable behaviour
- Referral to the Principal
- Child observation conducted by member of the SEN team (See Appendix 5)
- Communication with parents/guardians
- Separation from peers/friends
- Loss of privileges
- Additional work/homework
- 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 and as outlined in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB, 2008))

The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures, bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour in hard copy and on Aladdin.

When there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Board of Management will be informed. The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for school discipline. Anyone with an unresolved grievance or concern may refer the matter to the Board.

In situations where there is evidence of serious ongoing emotional and behavioural difficulties, teachers will work with parents/guardians to have the child referred for assessment with the relevant services.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- The school endeavours to keep a welcoming atmosphere and to keep parents/guardians informed of good behaviour as well as misbehaviour
- Parents/Guardians will be informed at an early stage of instances of misbehaviour.
- Communication with parents/guardians will be verbal or written depending on the circumstances
- Parents/Guardians will be invited to come to school to discuss their child's case, where there is continual disruption or serious misbehaviour such as bullying or other violent / aggressive / threatening behaviour.
- For repeated cases of serious misbehaviour, the Principal will inform the Board of Management.

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. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow on from serious/gross misbehaviour when:

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

The Board of Management and staff of St. Nicholas' Parochial School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' (NEWB, 2008).

Summary of Procedures in relation to suspension:

- The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student but may delegate responsibility for suspension to the Principal (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', p. 70 (NEWB, 2008)).
- Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', p. 67 (NEWB, 2008)). Accordingly, pupils and their Parents/Guardians will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at any time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupil or staff of the school, or any other person.
- Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in very serious/gross misbehaviour and this suspension by the Principal is authorised by the Board of Management.
- In determining the appropriateness of suspending a pupil, the Staff and the Board of Management, will refer to the factors to be considered before proposing to suspend a student (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', p. 72 (NEWB, 2008)).

- Communication to Parents/Guardians regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact Parents/Guardians by phone.
- The Parents/Guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- In the case of immediate suspension, the formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. The Parents/Guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified and arrangements made for the child to be collected.
- A Suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective
- A ceiling of ten days should normally be placed on any one period of suspension imposed by the Board of Management
- A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to Parents/Guardians.
- The letter will confirm:
 - The reason for the Suspension.
 - Any programme of study to be followed (if appropriate).
 - The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the Parents/Guardians (for example, the pupil and Parents/Guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
 - The provision for an Appeal to the Board of Management and the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1988 Section 29).
- The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB 'Student Absence Report Form' (when applicable).
- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the class teacher or principal. The school will help the pupil to catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- A suspension may be removed and a pupil readmitted to school for any reason at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management or if the Secretary General of the DES directs that it be removed following an appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
- **Section 29 Appeal:** When the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the Parents/Guardians may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

Summary of Procedures for Expulsion:

- Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meeting with Parents/Guardians, if serious incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. The ground for expulsion include the following:
 - The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
 - The pupils continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
 - The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
 - Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management.

- In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil, the BOM will refer to the factors to be considered before proposing to expel a student (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', p. 82 (NEWB, 2008)).
- In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be expelled for a first offence.
- Steps to be taken in respect of expulsion:
 - A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
 - A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
 - Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing.
 - Board of Management deliberation and actions following the hearing.
 - Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
 - Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- **Section 29 Appeal:** A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). A form for such an appeal is available from the DES.

Note: Further details on suspension and expulsion are available in Chapter 12 of the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour. This is available in the school office or can be accessed on the NEWB Website – www.newb.ie

AUTOMATIC EXPULSION

The Board of Management (BOM) may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Sexual Assault
2. Possession of illegal drugs
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
4. Actual violence or physical assault
5. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT TO EXPULSION

1. Detail investigation by school principal
2. Recommendation by principal to BOM
3. BOM considers Principals recommendation and holds hearing
4. BOM decision, is expulsion appropriate? If BOM recommends expulsion, the BOM will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
5. Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
6. Parents of the pupil are informed of rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
7. Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
8. Confirmation of decision.

DISCIPLINE FOR LEARNING (DFL)

In our school, we have a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive rules for behaviour in class and out of class are learned by pupils at the beginning of their school year. Pupils are disciplined by being motivated to keep these rules.

We have many ways of recognising good behaviour and effect including stickers, stamps, positive cards and positive comments. Good behaviour and achievement will be recognised. Consistent positive influences are the key to success in our school.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

THE ESSENTIAL OUT OF CLASS RULES

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
4. Stay clear of fire alarm and respect all school property
5. Line up quickly and quietly and leave and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.
6. No contact in the playground

CONCLUSION

The essence of our code of behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self discipline.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed in October 2026.

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by a member of the school Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____