

Oola National School

Code of Behaviour / Discipline Policy

Introductory Statement

This Code was developed through a process of whole school consultation with reference to the National Education Welfare Guidelines for schools in “Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008)” and through reviewing the existing Code of Behaviour at a staff planning day in March 2011.

Relationship of Code of Behaviour to School Mission Statement

Our Code of Behaviour relates to the vision we have for our school. We want our school to provide a safe, friendly, effective and stimulating educational environment where the principles of respect, truth and equality are promoted and consideration is shown at all times for each other.

Aims of Policy

- To promote good behaviour in our school
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious manner
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To strive towards a system of rules, rewards and sanctions that can be implemented in a fair and consistent manner

Our Principles and Understanding of Behaviour

In devising this Code of Behaviour, the school recognises its major role in the academic education of our children as well as its responsibility regarding their moral and social development.

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Children bring to school a wide variety of social values and behaviours. As a school community, we will work towards behaviours based on the principles of honesty, respect, responsibility, consideration and trust. It follows that acceptable standards are those which reflect these principles.

We recognise that clear guidelines are needed so that children will feel secure and can develop skills for co-operation. Our school rules will be clear and logical, together with sanctions that are proportionate and relevant for any infringement of the rules. Rules will be age-appropriate and commensurate with their level of understanding.

The Code of behaviour will ensure that individuality, special educational needs and equality are accommodated, while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Parents will be given the opportunity to visit the school, to meet with staff and to familiarise themselves with the rules as outlined in the Code of Behaviour. Parents will then be encouraged to discuss the Code with their children and to support the school in its endeavours to implement it.

In order to make our school a safe place conducive to learning and to teaching, the expectations of our school will be reinforced regularly and in positive terms. Members of staff will strive to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in school. The Code provides a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers. Greater emphasis will be placed on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will yield the best results.

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

Whole School Systems

- Supervision is a key element in ensuring that our school is a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning. Our supervision procedures outline expectations with regard to supervision before, during and when leaving school.
- Modelling of good behaviour: 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 and demonstrates how they should behave.
- The pupils play in designated zones at break-time and lunchtime.

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- The Administrative Policies contained in our Whole School Plan ensure that our school runs in an orderly and safe manner.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for the effective running of our school by becoming members of our Green School and active School Committees. A School Council may be set up in due course to give pupils more responsibility in highlighting issues of concern for them.
- The Principal and the Special Education team will use behavioural management programmes to teach and reinforce the standards of behaviour we expect.
- Parents will be included in the review of our Code of Behaviour and will be regularly informed of their role in promoting positive behaviour.

Curriculum

- Pupils will learn about behaviour, rights, responsibilities and consequences through the SPHE curriculum. Human Rights Education will form part of this process.
- Circle Time, Physical Education, Drama and Religious Education will develop skills associated with good behaviour and respect.
- Keep Cool and other appropriate programmes will be used to promote positive behaviour and relationship building.

Classroom

- Pupils will be involved in the preparation of the classroom rules
- Each classroom will have clear and age-appropriate rules and routines.
- Rewards will be available to the pupils and should be closely linked to the positive behaviour.
- Pupils will have opportunities both for independent work and for participation in group work.

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School Rules

Rules of Good Behaviour

A high standard of behaviour and discipline within the school requires a strong sense of community and a high level of co-operation among staff, pupils and parents.

The general school rules are outlined as follows:

- (1) Pupils are required at all times to show respect to the school staff, to themselves and to one another.
- (2) Rough play, bullying and aggressive behaviour are always forbidden.
- (3) Pupils shall obey the directions of their teachers.
- (4) Pupils shall respect school furniture and property and are responsible for their own possessions.
- (5) Pupils shall wear the school uniform during school hours or school tracksuit during P.E. days.
- (6) School begins at 9.20 a.m. and concludes at 2.00 p.m. for the Infant classes and 3.00 p.m. for all other students.
- (7) Pupils shall remain in the school premises during the lunch period.
- (8) Homework must always be fully attempted to the best of pupil's ability and presented at the required time.
- (9) Chewing gum and fizzy drinks are forbidden in the school. A treat day once per month as per Healthy Eating Policy.
- (10) Pupils shall bring their lunches with them each morning.
- (11) Running and shouting are not permitted in the school building.
- (12) Papers and litter must be deposited in the bins provided.
- (13) Pupils shall play in the areas of the schoolyard allocated to their classes.
- (14) Bullying, exclusion, upsetting and intimidation are unacceptable forms of behaviour.
- (15) Spraying of water / drinks as per Anti-Bullying Policy is strictly forbidden
- (16) Bad language will not be tolerated
- (17) No congregating in the toilets during breaks.
- (18) Mobile phones are not permitted in the school.
- (19) Climbing on or walking on school boundary walls, fences or roof is forbidden
- (20) Make-up is not permitted by pupils

Rewards/Incentives

- Raise and positive feedback for good behaviour and achievements
- Star Pupil Award/Principal Awards

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- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- Positive feedback on behaviour to parents
- Class teachers will use age appropriate reward systems at their own discretion e.g. Golden Time, small prizes e.g. lucky dip, homework voucher, extra privileges, delegating special responsibility or privilege
- The Principal and staff will review any reward/incentive schemes periodically

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. Repeated instances of minor misbehaviour will be referred to the Principal. In cases of single or repeated serious or gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and will be invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss the child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Leaving assigned seat without permission
- Leaving litter around the school
- Not wearing the correct school uniform
- Being discourteous/unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason/not having homework signed by a parent

Examples of serious misbehaviour

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism and victimisation)
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Leaving the school without permission
- Repeated and continual cases of minor misbehaviour

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Examples of gross misbehaviour

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Seriously unacceptable personal conduct

The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games.

Pupils with Special/Behavioural/Emotional Needs

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgement in the application of the Code.

Teaching children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) the rules and helping them understand behaviour and its consequences will be a focus of teacher's work. Parents of these children will be kept informed of their child's behaviour on a regular basis and may be requested to work with the school in devising effective strategies to help the child to improve his behaviour.

This may involve working and co-operating with a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) if an SNA is deployed to assist a pupil/class and/or agreeing a behaviour plan or Individual Education Programme (IEP). Support services such as National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS), the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO) and the Special Education Support Services (SESS) may be involved in this context.

Particular support programmes may be used to support SEN children, such as Stay Safe, Keep Cool etc.,

Strategies for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

Problem Solving Approach

Process-Teacher, Principal, Parents, BOM, Other Agencies

Sanctions are applied in a respectful manner with the emphasis on helping children to understand the consequences of their behaviour and also to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Sanctions are used as consistently as possible by all teachers. When teachers are in doubt as to the appropriateness of a sanction, they will consult with colleagues and the Principal.

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

Teachers will investigate incidents of misbehaviour to clarify factors such as intent, provocation, the child's understanding of the misbehaviour and its consequences and particular context factors such as the emotional state of the child in order to apply the sanction proportionately.

Sanctions include

Verbal reasoning and/or reprimand

Changing seating arrangement

Children assigned particular tasks or projects relevant to the misbehaviour

Withdrawal at in-class level, withdrawal from class to another class or area

Withdrawal of privileges

Confiscation of any dangerous, distracting or banned items

Withdrawal from the lesson or peer group

Extra schoolwork or homework

Red card (for disrespecting staff members)

Detention (lunchtime or break time)

Referral to Principal

Informing parents by phone, letter or through the school diary

Temporary suspension

In extreme cases of serious misbehaviour, expulsion is an option

Involvement of Parents

Parents will be asked to give input to this policy. The Parents' Association will also be given time to discuss this policy prior to its ratification.

The Code of Behaviour will be published on the school website. It will be available to all families and included on the school Booklet for newly enrolled pupils.

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Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between his 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 from serious/gross misbehaviour where:

- 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 threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

Procedures for Suspension

The Board of Management and Staff of Oola N.S. will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12)

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents 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 to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73). Automatic suspension may apply in the event of a student engaging in gross misbehaviour (see above).

The Board of Management will also follow the factors to be considered before suspending a student (p 72) and the factors to be considered before proposing to expel a student (p 82).

In relation to suspension

- Communication to parents 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 by phone

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- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the Principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p 73). The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- A Written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians. 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.

The letter will confirm:

- a. the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin
 - b. the reasons for the suspension
 - c. any programme of study to be followed
 - d. the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
 - e. the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
 - f. the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29). (Applies only when the period of suspension totals over 20 days)
- 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 Principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
 - 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 Principal and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
 - If a pupil continues to misbehave he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.
 - As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.

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- 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 may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information regarding how to appeal.

Procedures for Expulsion

The procedures outlined on pages 83 – 86 of the Guidelines will be followed (see steps 1-6 below):

- Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management. In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence – see p.81.

Step 1 – A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

Step 2 – A recommendation to the Board of Management

Step 3 – Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

Step 4 – Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Step 5 – Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer

Step 6 – Confirmation of the decision to expel

Reference to other school policies

The Administrative policies contained in our Whole School Plan ensure our school runs in an orderly and safe manner.

- Other relevant school policies (eg. Health & Safety) will be referred to as appropriate.
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is attached to this policy.

Procedures for notification of a pupil's absence from school

1. A written excuse must be presented explaining absence from school for any number of days or part thereof.

If an explanation is not received a 'green slip' is issued asking for an explanation of absence.

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Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end-of-term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable and disruptive to the educational process for students to miss time out of school term due to holidays. The school requests advance notification in writing when such absence is planned.

2. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the NEWB. In the event of a child being absent for 15 days, a letter will be issued to parents. A phone call from the Principal or Deputy may follow.

Keeping Records

Incidents of misbehaviour or accidents that occur on the yard are recorded in the Incident / Accident Book by the supervising teacher or the SNA.

Each teacher will keep a record of any class or corridor incidents.

Reflection cards that the children use are kept on the children's file in the office.

Any letters to parents outlining concerns regarding behaviour are kept on file.

Children's behaviour is recorded annually for the end-of-year report card.

SEN children may have behaviour targets as part of their IEP or in some cases they may have a behaviour plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for managing the school on behalf of the Patron and has the overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is in place. It is also responsible for upholding the characteristics and ethos of the school and publishing a policy on suspension and expulsions.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented in the school.

Teachers and Special Education Team

Teachers are responsible for implementing this policy within each classroom. Teachers, and especially SETs, should teach and explain the rules to the pupils in their care.

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Ratification

This policy will be circulated to all interested parties prior to ratification including parents, pupils and the Board of Management. Following a suitable time for submissions, the policy will then be ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on _____.

It is subject for review by _____(Date)

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

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I / we have read the Policy in relation to Oola N.S. and I /we agree to support and co-operate in their implementation.

Signed: _____ **Parent / Guardian**

Address: _____

Date: _____

Pupil's Name/s: _____

