



Maynooth Educate Together National School

Positive Behaviour Policy

The broad aim of the Positive Behaviour Policy is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in an environment conducive to learning. It is directed towards adopting a positive approach to the question of behaviour in our school. This means that there is greater emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions or punishments.

This policy is also adopted to promote a positive and safe working environment for all staff, including a positive and safe classroom environment for teachers.

This Positive Behaviour Policy applies while in the school as well as on school trips and any school-linked activities.

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Introduction

In order to fulfil the main aims of primary education an atmosphere conducive to learning must be maintained. This is best achieved by maintaining a respectful environment appropriate to the development of satisfactory attitudes and habits by the children.

Children who have no limits set for them are generally not happy children. They feel insecure and do not develop much self control, and they realise intuitively that parents/guardians or teachers who do not enforce any rules are less caring than those who do. Therefore children must understand what they can and cannot do. There should be as few rules as possible, with clear agreed consequences when rules are breached. Rules work best when they are appropriate to the child's age and within their capacity to follow without much strain.

We need to establish a code of behaviour to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment. It is very important that children understand that they have rights. It is essential that they understand that with these rights come responsibilities. Every effort is made by every member of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of the classroom situation.

This policy follows recommendations set in the relevant Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, 2008). It was devised in consultation with the teaching staff in our school and was submitted to the Board of Management. It will be reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process.

Expectations for students, staff and parents/guardians

We believe that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school. A high level of cooperation among members of staff is necessary. Equally necessary is a high level of cooperation among staff, pupils and parents/guardians. It is hoped that all pupils, parents/guardians and staff will share a sense of responsibility about good conduct within the school, and that where someone witnesses inappropriate behaviour, that that person will try to rectify the situation and not walk away from it. It is one of the aims of the school to produce responsible students so we hope that they will learn from the environment that they see around them.

Behaviour should reflect values such as:

- respect for self and others
- kindness and willingness to help others
- courtesy and good manners
- fairness
- readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict

Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

Expectations for students

The school expects commitment from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:

- attending school regularly and punctually
- doing their best in class
- taking responsibility for their work
- keeping the rules
- forgiveness
- helping to create a safe, positive environment
- respecting staff
- respecting other students and their learning
- participation in school activities

Class teachers and specialist personnel should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that is appropriate to the abilities of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.

Expectations for staff

The concept of promoting positive behaviour should be based upon an empowering approach, which nurtures a culture of self-discipline among children, rather than behaviour which is tailored to please adults. An atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect should be created as part of the philosophy of the school. All adults throughout their interactions with children should use communication strategies which foster co-operation, respect, tolerance and encouragement.

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. However each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within their own class. They will:

- Endeavour to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and needs of the child.
- Ensure that there is a high level of supervision at all times
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner
- Keep a written record of all incidents of serious or gross misconduct, sanctions implemented and the outcome.

Expectations for parents/guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce good behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can cooperate with the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance, by visiting the school, by talking to the members of staff and by ensuring that homework is allotted due time and effort.

School rules

Golden Rules have been drawn up for each class which are based on the rules below. The aim is to decide on a code which enables all to learn well and get on well together. These rules will be displayed in each classroom.

Golden Rules incorporate the principles of respect for others, sharing and caring, will encourage politeness, kindness, honesty, gentleness sharing, listening, etc. The wording of Golden Rules may change at the start of a school year, but they will always uphold the same underlying principles.

Classroom Golden Rules

1. **Rule number one:** be kind to everyone
2. **Rule number two:** listen when teacher is talking to you
3. **Rule number three:** be the best you can be
4. **Rule number four:** keep a tidy desk and a tidy floor
5. **Rule number five:** give visitors a lovely welcome when they arrive
6. **Rule number six:** on the playground play nicely and mix

Yard Golden Rules

Children will be encouraged to play together and to ensure that no child is excluded. Children are encouraged to remember the Golden Rules at line up time on re-entering the yard. Jostling and overtaking is not acceptable.

We always play safely – no rough play
We always ask permission to leave the yard
We obey the whistle

Reward system

Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their best. Rewards should be given for effort and not only for achievement. An approach which utilizes encouragement rather than praise should be developed.

Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school

Parents/guardians will hear good news on a regular basis about their child via the incentive systems. These include the following strategies: responsibility badges, sharing work with an audience, displaying work, verbal comments to parents/guardians, inviting parents/guardians to see work, stickers awarded by adults for behaviour and work, certificates, etc.

Positive Behaviour will be rewarded in **Golden Time** each week. Good behaviour on the yard will be taken account of in class Golden Time allocation. Golden Time lost may be regained by improved behaviour. If a child does not show improvement with the Whole School Reward System, at the Teachers discretion Parents/Guardians may be asked to meet with the Teacher to discuss the matter.

Unacceptable misbehaviour and its consequences

Where a student's behaviour disrupts the teaching and learning of other students, school authorities have to weigh the needs of that student with the needs of other students and staff. Even minor breaches of the rules can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent.

Maynooth ETNS will use problem-solving approach when dealing with inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

Sanctions will be applied in order 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.

Applying sanctions will also reinforce the boundaries set out in the rules and 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, and keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

Sanctions should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. Sanctions should also be appropriate and the duty of care to the student always needs to be maintained.

The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs. Sanctions may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. However, teachers should take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Minor Misbehaviour

Addressing Repeated or Persistent Minor Misbehaviour in Classroom

- **Step 1:** Verbal Warning
- **Step 2:** Lose some Golden Time & Moved to another area within the Classroom
- **Step 3:** Moved to another classroom, Parents/Guardians informed in Homework Journal or by note
- **Step 4:** Principal reprimands pupil. Principal meets with teachers, Parents/Guardians & pupil

Addressing Minor Misbehaviour on Yard

Step 1 Verbal Warning,

Step 2 Yellow Card,

Step 3 Red Card & Time Out (5 Mins Juniors/10 Mins Seniors).

Addressing Repeated or Persistent Minor Misbehaviour on Yard

Child will be removed inside by SNA to Teacher on Indoor Supervision. If a child is brought inside they will have to do an indoor period of reflection the following day to review the rules. If a child has to be removed from the Yard on 2 occasions in the same week, Parents will be contacted to meet with the Principal to discuss the matter.

Serious misbehaviour

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Bullying (including alienation and intimidation)
- Racism
- Verbal /physical abuse of adults or children
- Theft
- Damage to property
- Any behaviour which poses risk of injury to the pupil or others
- Any other misbehaviour which continuously interferes with teaching and learning process.

Only in cases of repeated serious misbehaviour and failure to improve after meeting(s) between parents/guardians, teacher and principal will temporary suspension be considered. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

The Board of Management will adopt policies to deal with bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

Gross misbehaviour

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil or any staff member or visitor to the school
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Suspension

Examples of grounds for suspension:

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

After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to suspend a student can be made.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Expulsion

Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

Repeated serious and gross misbehaviour

It is recognised that serious/gross misbehaviour is often the result of a child being emotionally disturbed. In these cases every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment. Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible.

Persistent serious or gross misbehaviour

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Science guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for national Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal
- If parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period
- In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board authorizes the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils

parents/guardians

- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed
- Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services.
- When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:
 - 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 deliberations and actions following the hearing.
 - Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
 - Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.

Methods of communicating with parents/guardians

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents/guardians 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/guardians are being established and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be 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 are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings
- Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (1st-6th class)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board

Raising a concern/bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter

Any parent/guardian who has concerns about a behaviour matter should bring this concern to the attention of the school principal. The school principal will then in turn bring this to the attention of the class teacher. Together they will investigate the matter and report back to the parent/guardian. All behaviour matters will be dealt with in compliance with this Positive Behaviour Policy.

Notifying the school about absence from school

Regular attendance at school is important for a child's progress. Children must not be absent from school unless they are ill or for some unavoidable reason.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to inform the school on the first day of the child's absence, by text message, phone call or email. A note of explanation should always follow a child's absence on the first day of their return to school. The note should be given to the class teacher and will be kept on record in the Roll Book.

A standard letter (see Appendix 1) will be sent to parents/guardians if a child is absent from school for more than 15 days. This letter will remind them, that the school are obliged to report any child that is absent for 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board.

If there are repeated instances of absenteeism following the letter, the Principal will meet with the Parents/Guardians in relation to the matter.

Plan for reviewing the policy

This Positive Behaviour Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and any training needs arising from implementing such a policy will be addressed.

Approved by the Board of Management: 23 November 2011

Date: 23 November 2011

Signature:



Appendix 1 - Letter to parents/guardians if a child is absent from school for more than 15 days

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Regular attendance at school is important for your child's progress. Children must not be absent from school unless they are ill or for some unavoidable reason.

I am writing to inform you that your child has missed _____ school days in the school year 2008/2009.

The school is legally required to report any child who is absent for 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board.

If your child has recorded a large number of days due to medical reasons, a Medical Certificate should be furnished to the school. A copy will be kept on file.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie Hand,
Principal



Certificate of Co-Operation with the Positive Behaviour Policy

The safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Positive Behaviour Policy has been put in place and ratified by the Board of Management.

We request that parents/guardians read the policy carefully with their child/children and discuss the contents. Please sign the following undertaking and return this form to the school by:

Date: _____

I confirm that I have read this policy with my child:

Child's name: _____

We have discussed the contents together and we agree to uphold this policy during the coming year.

Signed by Parent/Guardian:

Name (please type): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.