

MAYO ABBEY N.S.

Code of Behaviour

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established 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.

Aims of the Code

- 1 To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- 2 To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- 3 To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- 4 To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- 5 To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- 6 To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- 7 To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- 8 To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's enrolment folder, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.
- 9 To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

School Rules

Safety: For my own safety and that of others;

- 1 I should be careful coming to and going from school.
- 2 I should always walk while in the school building.
- 3 I should remain seated at all times in class and while eating lunch.
- 4 I should always show respect and consideration for my fellow pupils in class and in the yard.
- 5 Complete the school absence slip following any absences. This applies to full day or part day absences.
- 6 I should never leave the school grounds without the permission of the Principal / teacher.

Caring for myself:

- 1 I should respect myself and my property, always keeping my school bag, books and copies in good order.
- 2 I should always be in school at 9.20a.m.
- 3 I should show respect for my school and be proud to wear the complete school uniform every day
- 4 I should always be aware of my personal cleanliness.
- 5 I should always bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, minerals, sweets or chewing gum are not permitted.
- 6 I should always do my best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as I can and by completing my homework.

Caring for others:

- 1 I should be kind and respectful to teachers and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, by taking turns and by remaining silent and orderly in my class line.
- 2 I should behave well in class so that my fellow pupils and I can learn.
- 3 I should always keep my school clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers etc home. I should show respect for the property of my fellow pupils, the school building and grounds.
- 4 Be truthful and honest at all times

Class Rules

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be 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 (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run'). 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.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Part of the vision of Mayo Abbey N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. 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 own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given;

- 1 A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- 2 A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- 3 A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- 4 A word of praise in front of a group or class
- 5 A system of merit marks or stickers
- 6 Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- 7 A mention to parent, written or verbal communication.

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

Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- 1 It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- 2 The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- 3 It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- 4 Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- 5 There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- 6 It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows;

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

- Reasoning with pupils
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Prescribing extra work
- Communication with Parents
- Temporary separation from peers and/or loss of privileges.
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal
- Note to parents
- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular 7/88).

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.

Procedures:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. **minor, serious or gross**, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows;

1. Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Interrupting class work/arriving late for school/running in the school building/leaving assigned seat without permission at lunch time/leaving litter around the school/being discourteous or unmannerly/not completing homework without good reason/not having homework signed by a parent/ endangering self and/or fellow pupils in the school yard at break time.

1.1. Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:

- 1 Verbal reprimand/reasoning with the pupil.
- 2 Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book.

1.2. Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours

Phase 1 (within the classroom):

- 1 Write story of what happened — to be signed by parent.
- 2 Temporary separation from peers if deemed appropriate.
- 3 Sending to another teacher/denial of participation in some class activity.
- 4 Note to parents concerning further misbehaviour.

If misbehaviour continues, progress to Phase 2

Phase 2:

Send to the Principal

Class teacher meets one/both parents

Principal/Deputy Principal meets with one/both parents concerning behaviour

2. Examples of serious misdemeanours:

Constantly disruptive in class/telling lies/stealing/damaging other pupil's property/bullying/back answering a teacher/frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission/leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission/not working to full potential/using unacceptable language/bringing weapons to school/deliberately injuring a fellow pupil

2.1 Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours;

- 1 Send to the Deputy Principal/Principal
- 2 Principal meets with one/both parents
- 3 Chairperson of Board Of Management is informed and parents requested to meet with the Chairperson and Principal

3. Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Setting fire to school property/deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on/aggressive/ threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil

3.1 Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours;

- 1 Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
- 2 Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) *“No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality”*.

It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.

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. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil’s reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil’s own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

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 certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ 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 be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents 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 have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are 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:

- 1 Informal parent/teacher meetings and Formal parent/teacher meetings
- 2 Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags)
- 3 Letters/notes/texts from school to home and from home to school
- 4 School notice board.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 9.10 a.m. or after the official closing time of 2.00 p.m. (infants) 3.00p.m. (other classes) except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- 1 Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- 2 Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- 3 Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- 1 Promote a positive climate in the school.
- 2 Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- 3 Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

Teachers' Responsibilities

- 1 Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- 2 Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- 3 Recognise and affirm good work.
- 4 Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- 5 Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- 6 Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- 7 Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- 8 Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- 9 Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- 10 Provide support for colleagues.
- 11 Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- 1 Attend school regularly and punctually.
- 2 Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- 3 Show respect for all members of the school community.
- 4 Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- 5 Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- 6 Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- 7 Include other pupils in games and activities.
- 8 Bring correct materials/books to school.
- 9 Follow school and class rules.

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

- 1 Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- 2 Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- 3 Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- 4 Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- 5 Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- 6 Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

Leaving the School

- No teacher, SNA or member of staff can guarantee to safeguard a child when he or she leaves the school unaccompanied or without permission.
- If a child leaves the school grounds unaccompanied or without permission the class teacher or designated teacher will follow and offer encouragement to the child to return.
- The parents will be contacted immediately.
- If the child fails to return, the gardaí will be notified.
- A child leaving school grounds without permission may be suspended.