

**St. Gabriel's N.S.
Cowper St.
Dublin 7**

Code of Behaviour

**GROWTH THROUGH
EDUCATION**



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Introductory Statement

This draft Code of Behaviour has been devised by the staff of St. Gabriel's N.S. in consultation with a PPDS Advisor and the members of the Board of Management. It was devised during the third term of the 2010/2011 school year.

Rationale

- The Board of Management of St. Gabriel's N.S. decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
 - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
 - B. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
 - C. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
 - D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
 - E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

St. Gabriel's N.S. seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

In devising this code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. This code of behaviour describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community will help to make the school a good place for teaching and learning. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and the over-riding aims will be:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others;

- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community;
- To assist the parents/guardians and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school;
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment;
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents/guardians and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner. The limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour beyond these limits. The over-riding principle governing this code is respect - respect for ourselves and others; our own and others' property and the environment. The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults;
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings;
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual;
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each pupil is expected to wear their correct uniform to school every day.

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules", each class is required to draft their own class rules or charter, through consultation and discussion within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will be kept to a minimum, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively, telling students what to do as well as what not to do. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own classes and for the general school population when on yard duty or on any organised out-of-school activity. Senior students have a role to play and parents or other members of the school community may make comments or suggestions through their representatives on the Board of Management or directly to the Principal. The school values the support and co-operation of parents in the promotion of this strategy. The policy shall apply to all students during *all* school related activities.

It is the policy of this school to actively promote good behaviour. Children learn best by being rewarded. It is more positive to praise a child doing the proper thing than to constantly scold the child who misbehaves. As part of our on-going efforts to promote positive behaviour, time will be

allocated at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code. Staff will be given opportunities to share their experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.

Teachers will use various strategies to promote good behaviour including “Golden Time”, star/reward charts, stickers, homework passes, weekly lottery/raffle, lucky dip, group competition (groups compete, if someone misbehaves other groups get extra point), extra responsibilities in class and in the school, singling out for exceptional worthwhile achievements and efforts, pupil of the week, pupil of the year, best line, attendance raffle, attendance competition, and other incidental means of praise or reward.

To facilitate new members of staff become familiar with practices within the school, discussion regarding the implementation of the code will always form part of the first staff meeting held each September. A copy of the code will be available to both parent and teachers on the school website. The code will also be given to parents whenever they enrol a child in the school.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The Following strategies will be used by all teachers:

Praise

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child’s exercise book;
- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly;
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication;

Disapproval

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to the age and emotional development of the child.

The following stages will be used to show disapproval of inappropriate behaviour – they are not always followed in the format listed.

- Reasoning with pupils including advising them about the consequences of their actions;
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard);
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Reflection sheet (kept on file by teacher);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;

- Restorative Circle
- Verbal communication with parents/guardians;
- Prescribing extra work;
- Supervision during lunch break in designated area;
- Withdrawal of privileges, responsibilities or extra duties;
- Recording instances of repeated misbehaviour and referral to the Principal;
- Formal written communication with parents/guardians;
- Referral to the Principal and the Chairperson or other member of the Board of Management;
- Formal meeting with parents/guardians;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion.

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

Occasionally, other prudent, unlisted steps may be taken.

Initially instances of misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher. This will include children being advised about their behaviour and about how to improve. Discussion about behaviour and its consequences will form part of SPHE lessons at all class levels. ‘Good Friends Week’ takes place at the start of every school year to promote positive relationships among the children. Teachers will actively promote good behaviour and aim to “catch” repeated offenders at activities where they can give positive feedback, thus promoting better behaviour.

However, where these strategies have failed and where misbehaviour is more serious or persistent it will be necessary to involve others including the Principal, parents/guardians and the Board of Management. The Principal and staff may also seek assistance from NEPS, NCSE, HSE or other agencies.

Classification of Misbehaviours

Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories – minor, serious or gross. Teachers and/or the Principal will make judgements based on a common sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour as follows:

Minor Misbehaviour

The following are examples of possible minor misbehaviour:

Interrupting class work / Regularly arriving late for school / Running in the school building / Littering around the school / Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian) / Talking out of turn.

Teachers will take the following steps when dealing with Minor Misbehaviour

Phase 1

- Reasoning with the pupil

- Verbal reprimand;
- Time out;
- Note in journal from class teacher to be signed by parent;
- Noting instances of yard misbehaviour in the incident book and informing class teacher.

Regular occurrences of Minor Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

Phase 2

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom);
- Referral to another teacher/classroom;
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents/teacher/student (kept on file by teacher)
- Referral to the Principal;
- Discussion with parents/guardians about misbehavior;
- Loss of privileges eg: some of their Golden Time.

Phase 3

- Child will be sent to the Principal;
- Formal letter from school Principal informing parent/guardians of continuous misbehavior (Yellow Card);
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour;
- Class teacher and/or Principal will meet with one/both parents;
- Chairperson of the Board of Management informed and parents/guardians requested to meet with Chairperson or other designated Board member and the Principal.

Serious Misbehaviour

The following are examples of possible serious misbehaviour:

Constantly disruptive in class / Telling lies / Stealing / Damaging others' property / Bullying / Answering back a teacher / Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard / Using unacceptable language / Deliberate, continual disobedience / discourteous or unmannerly behaviour / leaving school premises without permission.

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the school's Anti-bullying policy. (See separate policy)

Teachers will take steps as outlined from Phase 2 above, but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with Serious Misbehaviour

- An account of all incidents will be entered in the relevant Incident book;
- Suspension will be used as a sanction where all attempts at reasoning with the pupil have failed and where all other efforts of the school in consultation with the parents or guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion. Following formal verbal

discussions a letter outlining items discussed will be sent to parents/guardians. Communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence will be retained)

Regular occurrences of Serious Misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

- Parents/guardians will be invited to meet class teacher, the principal and/or the chairperson to discuss repeated serious incidents of misbehaviour.

Gross Misbehaviour

The following are examples of gross misbehaviour:

Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school / Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous or inappropriate / Leaving school premises without permission / Deliberately injuring any member of the school community / Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff or a pupil; (e.g. physical violence, striking, nipping, biting, spitting). Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour.

Teachers will take the following step when dealing with Gross Misbehaviour

- Principal and Chairperson are informed immediately and suspension sanctioned.

Suspension

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. When all efforts have been made to communicate with parents/guardians and they refuse or fail to engage with the school, a referral will be made to the HSE.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents/Guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. 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, teacher and the principal. If the parents (and the pupil) 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 health and safety of pupils and teachers, the Board has deferred responsibility to the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. However, if it is not possible to make contact with the parents/guardians, the child will be removed to another class for the remainder of the day and will take home with them a letter (Red Card) detailing the reason for suspension, length of suspension and requirements for readmission to school.

Further suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

- When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

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 /guardians (and pupil) 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 **and** will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

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 the principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case (see p.80/81/82, Developing a Code of Behaviour; Guidelines for Schools) e.g. where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 8.50a.m. or after the official closing time of 1.30p.m. (infants) 2.30p.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.

Parents/guardians who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate and the person to escort them should not be at the school not later than 1.30pm or 2.30pm as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after this time. If a child is continually being left after school hours their parents/guardians may be asked to meet with the Board of Management.

Breakfast Club

If you would like your child to attend the Breakfast Club please note that children should not arrive at school before 8.20am. Supervision is provided by the workers who run the Breakfast Club.

Lunch Time

Lunch is from 12.30pm to 1.00pm.

Those parents/guardians who wish their child to go home for lunch must sign an indemnity form, available from the school. Children who are late back from lunch may lose their lunch privilege.

Children Leaving School Early

If a child needs to leave school early for any reason eg: dental, doctor's appointment etc... they must be collected from the school and signed out by an adult.

Misbehaviour on the Yard

Incidents of yard misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows:

The teacher on duty who notices misbehaviour will reason with the pupil/s misbehaving. If no improvement occurs the following procedure may be followed:

- Ask the pupil/s misbehaving to accompany the teacher on duty as they patrol the yard;
- Impose a period of "time out" – 5 to 15 minutes – where the student will be asked to remain in a specified place until told to return to play;
- Inform the class teacher (who may decide to impose a further sanction depending on the seriousness of the misbehaviour);
- In some cases the teacher on yard duty may issue a Yellow Card or refer the matter to the Principal.

Involving Parents/Guardians in Managing Problem Behaviour

Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour both in school and in the wider community. Class teachers will refer to repeated episodes of minor misbehaviour in the pupil's Homework journal which parents/guardians are requested to sign each evening. Parents of infants will receive a short note from the teacher. In cases where pupils are required to complete some extra work as a sanction,

parents/guardians will again be requested to sign the relevant work. Class teachers may occasionally request parents/guardians to visit them in school to discuss some aspect of a pupil's behaviour. The Principal will be informed of these meetings and may be invited to attend. Parents/guardians are encouraged to make appointments to meet with class teachers and/or the Principal at the earliest opportunity in an effort to prevent any escalation of inappropriate behaviour. The school will remind parents/guardians of the procedures for contacting the school at every opportunity.

Where pupils are found to be involved in more serious misbehaviour the Principal may telephone or write to parents/guardians to request them to attend an informal/formal meeting at the school. Class teachers, teachers who witness misbehaviour while supervising on yard duty, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management may also attend these meetings. The pupil may also attend all or part of these meetings if deemed appropriate.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. Regular communication, in the form of a written log, will be completed by the class teacher, in order to provide continuous feedback between parents and teachers on the child's behaviour, in addition to regular verbal communication.

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, formal records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure location. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. Records of more serious incidents are recorded in a specific journal. All such records are retained until students reach 21 years. Class teachers shred personal records at the end of each year.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Parents/Guardians must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence even if verbal communication with the school has taken place.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management's Responsibilities

The Board of Management is expected to

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment;
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code;
- Ratify the code;
- Ensure the code is communicated to the whole school community.

Principal's Responsibilities

The Principal is expected to

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

Teachers' Responsibilities

Teachers are expected to:

- Teach the code;
- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour having regard to decisions made on a whole school basis;
- Be cognisant of their duty of care;
- Create a safe and welcoming working environment for each pupil;
- Develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil;
- Praise desirable behaviour;
- Facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential;
- Listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour;
- Recognise and affirm good work;
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils;
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils;
- Be courteous, consistent and fair;
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum;
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour;
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour;
- Provide support for colleagues;
- Communicate with parents when necessary and
- Provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils

- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Bring correct materials/books to school
- Follow school and class rules
- Wear their full uniform and school tracksuit on PE days only.

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are expected to

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for their own and other people's property
- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for their own and other people's property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate in writing to the school the reasons for children's absences
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Provide their child with the correct equipment for school
- Support their child in completing homework assigned
- Ensure their child comes to school well rested
- Encourage good personal hygiene in their child
- Communicate in writing the reasons for child being late for school
- Ensure their child wears correct uniform to school.

Reference to other Policies

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour include

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Tours
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational Needs

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- *Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment*
- *Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers*
- *Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.*

Implementation Date September 2011

Review

The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

Ratification and Communication

The policy will be posted on the school website and all parents notified by text message. Any parent who does not have access to the internet will be advised to call to the school to obtain a hard copy.