

Our Lady of Mercy National School *Stradbally, Co. Waterford*



Code of Behaviour

We understand good behaviour in our school as mutual respect and cooperation and respect for the school environment, based on agreed objectives. Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of this code.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy School are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To inform parents of procedures if this code is not adhered to.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum; emphasis will be on promoting positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

All members of the school community:

- are expected to treat one another with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn, work, play and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- are expected to work to the best of their ability. Pupils are expected to follow a teacher's instructions.
- are expected to be fair and inclusive in the playground.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the Code. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. Students will behave responsibly if the rules and standards are clear, consistent & widely understood. Normal everyday interaction between adults and pupils will be as positive as possible. The adult community within the school recognizes that theirs is the greater duty in the promotion of positive behaviour by their actions.

Strategies/Incentives

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.

- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Sensitive use of praise in front of class group.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly. Pupils will be given an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of school rules and class rules.

The Code of Behaviour refers to the following areas:

- Behaviour in class
- Behaviour in the playground
- Behaviour in the school environment and behaviour on school outings
- Bullying (refer also the school's Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Attendance at school/Education Welfare Act.
- Homework (refer also to the school's Homework Policy)
- Electronic Devices
- Uniform
- Covid 19 Response

Behaviour in class

Courtesy and respect are essential. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards other pupils or towards a teacher (e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence) are unacceptable. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour which interferes with the right (e.g. constant disruption of the class persistent distracting of others) is considered unacceptable behaviour.

In order that pupils benefit from their work in class full co-operation is required at all times. Pupils must co-operate with instructions given by the teacher.

The Essential Classroom Rules

1. Be ready for class.
2. Good manners are expected at all times.
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same.
4. Raise hand, wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking.
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property.
6. Ensure you are safe in class and make it safe for others.

Behaviour in the Playground

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited.

Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without permission of the supervising teacher, this includes re-entering the school building.

The Essential out-of-class Rules

1. Stay within the boundaries in the yard.
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like to be treated yourself.
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.

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 around the school in an orderly manner, walking rather than running.

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.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Attendance/Education Welfare Act

- Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. School opens to receive pupils at 9.10am each morning. Teaching begins at 9.20am. 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 this Code of Behaviour during these times.
- When a pupil has to leave school early (i.e. before 2pm for Junior/Senior Infants, or before 3pm for 1st – 6th Class) a note from parents must be given to the class teacher stating the time at which the pupil is to leave.
- Absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in school journal and signed by parent.
- Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to Education Welfare Board.
- Any child wishing to leave school early must have a note signed by their parent.
- Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to the school secretary.

Homework

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take between 30 minutes and one hour. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parents should sign the homework journal to confirm that the work has been fully attempted.

If for some reason homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal.

Generally, homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the school Homework Policy for further information.

The homework journal is an important communication tool between parents and the school. Please read and sign the journal each night. Please ensure the personal information page in your school journal is completed.

Mobile phones/IPods/Electronic Games

Mobile phones, IPods and electronic games are strictly forbidden in school. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

School Uniform

Uniform is compulsory for all pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

- Uniform: Navy jumper or cardigan, navy trousers, skirt or pinafore, blue shirt, red tie.
- Sports: Blue sweatshirt, white polo shirt, navy tracksuit bottoms or shorts.

Covid 19 Response

- Pupils are required to comply with all measures outlined in the Covid 19 Response Plan.
- A pupil who consistently fails to comply with these measures will be subject to the sanctions outlined in this policy to ensure their safety and the safety of others, and to encourage compliance.

Discouraging Misbehaviour

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

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention during break.
- Referral to Principal.
- Communication with parents.
- Principal & teacher communicating with parents.

- 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).
- In the case of malicious damage to school property or property of others, parent/guardian will be required to reimburse the school for the cost of repairing or replacing the property.

Suspension/Expulsion

Suspension/Expulsion will be considered if...

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

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Such communication may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. Parents and pupil will have the right to a fair and impartial hearing. 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 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.

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. 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.

Appeal

Following the suspension of a pupil the parent/guardian must be notified of their right to appeal the suspension to the Board of Management and the Department of Education and Skills under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

The parent/s 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.

Date of Ratification _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management.