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Coralstown National School **Code of Behaviour**

Staff Review, Croke Park Tuesday 18th March 2025

Introduction

Our school aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment for our pupils in which there is a sense of order and a reasonable approach to discipline. In this way, a large group can be organised so that the school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all. Children, parent(s)/guardians, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

Under Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 the board of management of each school, following consultation with the principal, teachers and parents, must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school's Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) 2008.

The Act provides that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails to observe those standards.
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned.
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

Aims of the Code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- 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.
- 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 ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the school journal, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at home and 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.

Parent(s)/Guardians/Teachers should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment of all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage '*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet*'.

Parent(s)/Guardians are expected to:

- Ensure their children attend school and are punctual.
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
- Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/the principal through the office.
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same.
- Label pupil's coats and other personal property.

As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parent(s)/guardians are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on or in the vicinity of the school premises.

School Rules

- Respect for self and others.
- Respect for other's property.
- Respect other students and their learning.
- Kindness and willingness to help others.
- Follow instructions from staff immediately.
- Walk quietly in the school building.
- Courtesy and good manners.
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- Ask permission to leave the classroom.
- Do your best in class.
- Take responsibility for your own work.

These can be summed up as 6 main rules:

- Respect/Be Nice
- Do your best
- Be tidy
- Be safe
- Move safely
- Listen

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' instead of '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, parent(s)/guardians will be contacted at an early stage.

These can be summed up as 6 Golden Rules:

1. We listen. We don't talk over people.
2. We are gentle. We don't hurt others.
3. We are honest. We tell the truth.
4. We are kind.
5. We work hard. We don't waste time.
6. We look after property. We don't damage things.

Lunch Time Rules

- Children will be encouraged to use the toilet prior to going outside to play.
- Children will ask permission from an adult before entering the school to use the toilet.
- Only the toilet in room 3 opposite the staffroom will be used during break times. This is to ensure visibility from the staffroom window.
- Only one child may go to the toilet at a time.
- Children should report back to the adults that they got permission from to say that they are back outside again.
- Stay in classroom until teacher gives you permission to go out
- All waste lunch goes home
- Enter, exit and line up in an orderly fashion
- No food allowed onto the yard
- No bouncing/playing balls except in designated areas in the yard
- Grass bank are off limits in wet weather
- Children must have permission to re-enter the school building
- Play in designated areas – junior and senior infants in the back yard only
- All gates and doors are to remain closed during break times.
- No gymnastics outside at any time, i.e. cartwheels/handstands
- Children are not permitted to spin upside down on the climbing bars
- No rough games to include piggy backs or carrying or other children
- During cold weather, children will be reminded to wear a coat etc.
- Children must line up when they hear the bell
- Do not re-enter the school until teacher escorts the class back into the classroom

Relationships and Sexuality (R.S.E.) Policy

R.S.E. as a curricular area is treated somewhat differently from other subjects due to its sensitive nature. Teachers will only teach the topics laid down for the class or class grouping and will only answer questions on the programme for that year. **Discussion of sensitive topics is not permitted among peers and parent(s)/guardians will be contacted immediately if this occurs.**

Incentives

Part of the vision of Coralstown 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. 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. Good behaviour is promoted right throughout the school and is valued as highly as academic achievements.

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

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in pupil's exercise book
- A positive note home to acknowledge good behaviour
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent(s)/guardian, 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, parent(s)/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including all forms of bullying as outlined in our Bí Cineálta Policy 2025, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- The use of inappropriate offensive language
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

Sanctions

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

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

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this:

1. Reasoning with pupil, teacher proximity to the child, redirection non-verbally and verbally, distraction
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Use of Restorative Practice questions to address harm: template attached Appendix 3
 1. *What happened?*
 2. *What were you thinking of at the time?*
 3. *What have you thought about it since?*
 4. *Who has been affected and in what way?*
 5. *How could things have been done differently?*
 6. *What do you think needs to happen next?*
4. Writing out the story of what happened using Restorative Practice prompts above. Behaviour Reflection sheet to be completed by children from 3rd-6th class (Appendix 1 attached)
5. Appropriate consequences relating to a misbehaviour: e.g.: apologising to someone we have offended, tidying up a mess made, not partaking in soccer if not following the rules etc.
6. Promises of a change in attitude and behaviour going forward, written where appropriate and signed by students and parents
7. Communication with parent(s)/guardians by the class teacher
8. Referral of child to talk to Deputy Principal/Principal
9. Principal communicating with parent(s)/guardians
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules of National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) 2008.

In cases where a pattern of misbehaviour is identified on the playground, the teacher on duty or SNA as appropriate will complete Appendix 2 attached.

Children will be made aware on incident two that their parents will be contacted if a further incident occurs.

Parents are contacted by the class teacher if three incidents are noted on Appendix 2

Sanctions should always relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore, a child who does not do their work in class or has not completed their homework may be asked to complete it for homework

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

Suspension and Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parent(s)/guardians will be utilised. Communication with parent(s)/guardians may be verbal or by email depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parent(s)/guardians 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 parent(s)/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parent(s)/guardians 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. Procedures outlined with regard to suspension and expulsion in the Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) 2008 will be followed should the need arise within the school.

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 parent(s)/guardians.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules 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.

Suspension, Expulsion & the Right to Appeal

Schools are required, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to include their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour. Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a student. The Principal should notify the parent(s)/guardians and the student in writing of such decisions. At the time when parent(s)/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student should be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and should be given information about how to appeal.

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s)/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent(s)/guardians 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 parent(s)/guardians and the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, and or Principal who 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 and outside agencies will where appropriate be taken into account. The children in the class/school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parent(s)/Guardians

Communicating with parent(s)/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parent(s)/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 parent(s)/guardians have been established and are reviewed regularly.

Parent(s)/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 of communication are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/guardian teacher meetings and Formal parent/guardian teacher meetings.
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal-check bags).
- Email from school to home and from home to school.
- School notice board.
- Parents Council notice board
- School newsletter issued regularly throughout the school year.

Absences from School

The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

- All absences from school must be explained on Aladdin, by a note or filled in the homework diary. Teachers will record the reasons for absences on Aladdin when calling the roll electronically as soon as they are informed.
- Schools under the Education Welfare Act 2000 are obliged to report to the **Educational Welfare Service (EWS)** when a child misses 20 days or more.
- Parent(s)/guardians will receive notification texts at 10, 15 & 20 days and every subsequent 5 days automatically on the designated text number.
- A formal letter from the Board of Management will be issued to parents/guardians if a child misses over 20 days in any given year on the annual returns made to the EWS.

Conclusion

This code of behaviour has been considered by the Parents Association, Staff, and approved by the Board of Management. The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Enrolment Policy and Child Protection Policy. The essence of our code of behaviour is valuing people and encouraging them to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self-discipline. This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Council and is readily accessible to parents on request, and is available on our website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every year. Any staff member, board member, parent/guardian who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of this school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Formal review of this policy will occur in 2026.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on March 10th 2015.

This policy was reviewed by staff in term 3 2016 and by the B.O.M. on October 4th 2016.

This policy was reviewed and edited by staff in March 2025 and ratified by the B.O.M. as dated below:

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Appendix 1: Behaviour Reflection Sheet 3rd – 6th Class as appropriate

Appendix 2: Yard Sheet for monitoring potential behaviour of concern on the playground

Appendix 3: Restorative Questions to Address Harm