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Balla National School Code of Behaviour

Introductory statement

This policy was drawn up in November 2024 by the staff of Balla National School. The school is a mixed school with eight mainstream classrooms and one special class for children with autism .

Balla National School has approximately 200 children from a variety of backgrounds.

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up in order to promote a happy and safe school environment for all pupils, teachers and parents in order to ensure optimal conditions for effective teaching and learning.

Aims :

This policy aims to articulate our vision for positive relationships and behaviour in the school:

- To promote and maintain a happy and a safe school environment for all pupils, teachers and parents in order to ensure optimal conditions for effective teaching and learning
- To provide clarity with regard to expectations about how each member of the school community will promote positive behaviour and learning environment in the school.
- To focus on affirming good behaviour and setting high expectations for standards of behaviour throughout the school
- To recognise the variety of different needs that exist in our school and to accommodate these needs.
- To foster the development of relationships of trust and mutual respect between children, staff, parents and the wider school community
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes towards each member of the school community, to promote respect for diversity and allow for appropriate accommodation of difference in accordance with the equal status legislation
- To reflect that this school acknowledges that unacceptable behaviour may be linked to external factors. Positive support including active teaching of relevant skills will be provided for those children who are more vulnerable to behavioural problems



- To specify practical strategies to be employed within the school community to support high expectations of positive behaviour throughout the school, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference
 - To ensure that the principle of fairness, consistency and natural justice are adhered to by all members of the school community towards each other
 - To help each child to experience the value of being a responsible participating member of the school community
 - To outline procedures to be followed where a child fails or refuses to observe standards of behaviour expected and set out in this code of behaviour.

Roles & Responsibilities

This Code of Behaviour will provide a sound foundation for a whole-school approach to promoting good behaviour and for responding to unacceptable behaviour based on a shared understanding of what shapes the behaviour of children and positive strategies for affirming and promoting good behaviour. Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of this Code of Behaviour. Emphasis is on a holistic, preventative approach which involves all partners (BOM, Staff, Parents and Pupils) in understanding and implementing the School's Code of Behaviour.

The Board of Management ensures that the entire school community is involved in the development, implementation and review of the school's Code of Behaviour. The BoM provides a comfortable, safe learning environment conducive to supporting positive behaviour. It supports the principal, staff and parents in implementing the Code of Behaviour by providing opportunities for

- staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and help children to change behaviour
- dialogue among staff about the nature of behaviour, as the basis of a whole-school approach to promoting good behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviour
- Exploring ways of helping parents to understand how they can help children to behave and learn well at school
- Finding ways of helping children to understand their own behaviour, the reasons for it and ways they can manage their behaviour and relationships.

The School's SPHE Curriculum and programmes such as Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life and Stay Safe Programme are used to support the Code of Behaviour. These programmes aim to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.



1. Guidelines for Behaviour in the school

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and to show consideration and respect for other children and adults
- respect staff
- take responsibility for their work
- help to create a positive, safe environment
- show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- participate in school activities
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- do his/her best both in school and for homework.

Section 23 (4) of the Act states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal *'may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child'*.

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

Our whole school approach to behaviour involves:

- An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony
- A teamwork approach to behaviour
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management
- An inclusive and involved school community
- A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy

Staff

Positive and supportive leadership from the Principal /Deputy Principal promotes successful implementation of the Code of Behaviour across the school community.

The Principal/ Deputy Principal will

- 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 of Behaviour, as required.



Practical strategies for teachers and SNAs to encourage and promote positive behaviour in the classroom: A warm and accepting classroom climate is one where children feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other.

Board of Management

The Board plays an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities.

- The Board of Management is consulted in reviewing/drafting the code of behaviour and sanctions it.
- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school and the staff in its implementation e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development.
- Procedures are in place for the Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour in accordance with DES policy.

Parents

Parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

- familiarising themselves and their children with this Code of Behaviour and support its implementation
- encouraging their children to have a sense of respect for themselves, others and their property
- ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
- encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
- communicating respectfully with the school in relation to any problem that may affect their child's progress/behaviour
- informing the school of any issue/happening in the home/school or wider community which could result in a change in the child's behaviour in school or also on the child's ability to learn in class
- being aware of and cooperating with the school rules and system of rewards and sanctions
- attending meetings at the school if requested
- helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed to the best of the child's own ability



- ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school
- Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, a sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff
- 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 pupils coats and other personal property
- Strictly supervise pre-school children, when in the school
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

Pupils

Pupils are involved in formulating their own classroom rules at the beginning of each school year and these are on display.

Golden Rules Junior Infants – 2nd Class

1. I will be polite; I will say excuse me and thank you.
2. I will show respect and kindness.
I will share, help others and take turns and not distract other children.
3. I will listen; I will put my quiet hand up to talk out.
4. I will respect property; I will keep my place tidy.
5. I will be safe; I will walk indoors and stay in my seat.
6. I will work hard and I will do my best.
7. I will stay in my line.

Behaviour Charter 3rd – 6th Class

I am expected to-

1. Respond quietly and greet others respectfully.
2. Show respect to teachers, other students and to property in and around the school.
3. Listen and follow instructions given by all staff members.
4. Work hard, participate fully and take my turn.



5. I will try my best to sit on my chair during work time.
6. Walk and use an indoor voice on the corridors.

Staff will undertake to :

- Teach the Golden Rules (Junior Infants to Second Class) and Behaviour Charter (Third-Sixth Class) using role play, modelling and practice at the beginning of the school year and revise at regular intervals throughout the year.
- Be alert to what is going on in the classroom at all times
- Praise and reinforce positive behaviour e.g. by saying “I like the way you are/did/said ...”, use appropriate reward systems at the teachers discretion
- Establish and clearly communicate expectations for behaviour, class routines and boundaries. The Golden Rules and Behaviour Charter will be clearly published and displayed in every classroom/ main porch and on the front door as a reference for the children and the staff.
- Explain the connection between a child’s behaviour and its consequences e.g. removal from disruption if distracting others to appropriate focus /restorative table
- Keep children actively involved in their learning, vary teaching methodologies e.g. mixture of whole class collaboration, group work, pair work and individual work with a focus on active learning methodologies.
- Ensure smooth transition between subjects and classroom ensuring time for movement and regulation breaks using Go Noodle, Bizzy Bodies, Brain Breaks
- Enforce classroom rules promptly, consistently and equitably
- Refer to the rule being broken when warnings are given.
- Give warnings (when appropriate) using the system outlined below.

Code of Behaviour steps for Balla National School

The following steps are to be taken if a child breaks the Golden rules/Behaviour Charter

1. First warning with reason for warning
2. Second warning with explanation and reminder that third warning leads to time out
3. Third incident leads to Time Out (in the front porch during break time).

(Time at teacher’s discretion depending on the severity of misbehaviour/needs/age of student.)

OR



no warning - immediate Time out, if a staff member deems the misbehaviour to be of a serious nature. (Thinking/ calm down time)

* A phone call home may be required at this stage if the teacher feels that it is necessary.

1. Record incident that led to “Time Out” on Aladdin behaviour document.
2. A second “Time Out” in one week or in close succession requires a phone call to the child’s parents.
3. A Restorative Practice sheet is to be filled out by the child, signed and dated.
4. A Disciplinary Letter to be sent home to the child’s parents / guardians following the phone call

Behavioural support and sanctions to be used in Balla National School

Rewards and Sanctions

Good Behaviour

Good behaviour is regularly praised and acknowledged. It is rewarded with a selection from the following options, according to class and teacher requirements:

- stickers
- star charts
- a mention at assembly
- examples of positive behaviour from individuals in each class being displayed in the library
- being given a special responsibility or privilege
- an occasional subject or night off written homework
- golden time

Inappropriate Behaviour

Strategies

Some or all of the following strategies may be used, at the discretion of the staff, to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour and to modify the same. Examples of misbehaviour are included in the Appendix

- Reasoning with the pupil



- Restorative Practice/Reflective sheets
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Support Teacher to go through Golden Rules/Behaviour Charter rules with the child.
- Temporary separation within class (focus table/restorative table)
- Loss of privileges e.g. Golden Time
- Meeting with the Principal/ Deputy Principal with the child's parents.
- Detention (lunchtime)
- Formal report to the Board of Management
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school

Classroom & Playground

- Reasoning with pupils. Initial warning to include self-appraisal, discussion of consequences and restitution where possible.
- Temporary separation within the class or on the yard
- Loss of privileges e.g. golden time/prescribed additional homework/detention during a break/withholding from a class trip.
- A pupil may be required to complete a Reflection Sheet to be signed by parents and kept on school file.
- Withdrawal from class.
- Referral to Principal.
- Class teacher informs parents with the letter included in the Appendix
- If misbehaviour continues a second letter will be issued requesting a formal meeting with the parents, class teacher and Principal. (Sample in Appendix)
- Formal meeting of Principal and class Teacher with parents with a view to seeking a solution.
- In the event of continuous misbehaviour a Daily Report Card/Journal may be used to monitor child's behaviour signed each day by parent(s) and teacher. The child will be expected to sign a commitment to improving his/her behaviour.
- In the event of a child's behaviour having a detrimental effect on their own education/safety or that of others the BoM has authorised the school authorities to contact the parents to have the child removed from school for the remainder of that school day.
- Formal report to the Board of Management

Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

Children who are emotionally disturbed are referred to the Special Educational Needs Organiser and/or to the National Educational Psychology Service. Appropriate



support is sought from services available e.g child's GP/Paediatrician/Psychiatrist/CAMHS/Health Service Executive/NCSE/ ISPCC.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, steps will be taken to remove the other children from the scene and another member of staff will remain with the pupil until the situation is in hand. Parents will be notified.

5. Suspension

Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g., suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort. Communication with parents depends on the nature of the offence.

The Grounds for Suspension:

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- That the pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others in the class and to the teaching process
- That there is a real and immediate threat to the safety of others or that of the pupil by continuing in the classroom at this time
- Serious damage to property.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of school staff will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.
- 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 BOM may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension.
- 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 terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6).



The Appropriateness of Suspending a Pupil:

The following should be reviewed:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour on other pupils' learning and on the teaching process
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour
- The possible impact (positive or negative) of suspension

Rule 130(5) Rules for National Schools read:-

5(a) Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to suspend a pupil, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school-days.

5(b) A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school-days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians.

5(c) In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

6. Expulsion

This will be considered in extreme cases and the following aspects of the case will be reviewed in order to make this decision:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour on other pupils' learning and on the teaching process
- The interventions tried to date
- Preliminary investigation
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response to the pupil's behaviour
- The possible impact (positive or negative) of suspension

If necessary, please refer to page 70 & 71 of the NEWB "Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour".



Suspension/expulsion procedures in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000

- (A) Schools are obliged to notify TESS where there is an intention to expel a pupil and also must notify TESS where the expulsion has been confirmed. Where a student has been suspended for a period of six consecutive days or a cumulative total of 20 school days a notification must be sent to TESS. These notifications are currently paper based .
- (B) Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1988), parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Dept. 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. The school will advise parents/guardians of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

Rule 130(6) Rules for National Schools read:-

6. No pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

The Code of behaviour will be communicated to every parent on enrolment. The Board of Management will review the use of expulsion in the school as required.

Keeping records

Class level



Teachers will maintain written records of any ongoing behaviour which is a cause of concern. Improvements will also be noted. These records will be kept securely by each teacher. Where necessary a written record is kept of communication between school and home, with outside agencies, Board of Management etc.

Playground

A record of misbehaviour is kept by supervising staff on Aladdin.

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 requires the school to inform the Education Welfare Board where a student is absent from school for 20 school days or more in a school year, using the standard form. Parents are requested to notify the school in writing or preferably on Aladdin of a pupil's absence at all times and the reason for this absence.

Code of Behaviour at Break times

Break time 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 wisely.

1. Pupils leave and enter the school building in an orderly fashion.
2. Pupils must not behave in any way, which endangers themselves or others. Rough play comes into this category.
3. Any form of threatening behaviour is unacceptable.
4. Any instructions or directions given by the supervising teacher, secretary and/or by the SNA must be complied with.
5. Pupils line up in an orderly manner at the end of breaks.
6. Pupils are not allowed to run on corridors.
7. Pupils may not re-enter the school building during breaks without the express permission of a teacher.
8. If, due to inclement weather, the pupils are allowed to remain indoors normal classroom behaviour rules apply.
9. Show courtesy to adults in the yard, teachers and supervisors.



Examples of Misbehaviour

A. To refuse to obey an instruction from a teacher.
To make a gesture to, or behind, a teacher or any other staff member signalling defiance.
To make rude noises or obscene gestures when a teacher passes.
To use bad language.
To turn away when spoken to by a teacher.
To give cheeky replies to a teacher.
To interrupt class work through constantly talking.
To disrupt class by making rude noises.
To disrupt class by throwing objects across the room.
To refuse to co-operate with teachers or other children in the general organisation of class work.

B. To use indecent words to other children.
To threaten another child.
To make obscene drawings in notebooks.
To cover notebooks, desks, walls or grounds of school with graffiti.
To play in areas of school grounds in which it is forbidden to do so.
To use bad language towards other children.
To spit at other children.
To fire missiles from elastic bands or catapults of any description.
To bring any dangerous or obnoxious substance, (alcohol, drugs etc.) into school.
To bring any dangerous articles (knife etc.) into school.
To make, do, or say anything with the object of disrupting the efficient running of the school.

C. To deface school property by writing, vandalising, standing, walking or running on it.
To deface school bus by writing or vandalising it in any way.
Misbehaviour on the School bus
To interfere with school equipment, (chromebooks, ipads, school equipment etc.) without permission.
To deface other children's property.

This list of examples is not exhaustive.



Children with Additional/ Behavioural needs

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour; however, the school recognises that children with additional/behavioural needs may require assistance in understanding the rules. Individual behaviour plans may be put in place after consulting with parents, class teacher, special education teachers and/or Principal who will all work closely with home to ensure that the optimal support is given. Cognitive and emotional development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from other services and from psychological assessments will be sought.

Bullying:

The children at Balla National School will never bully or encourage people who bully others. They will always tell their parents and their teachers if someone tries to bully them or others. Bullying is always unacceptable. Balla National School strives to be a bully free zone. (Please refer to Schools Anti-Bullying Policy).

Parental involvement in encouraging and promoting positive behaviour in school:

Parents are encouraged to support children to have a sense of respect for themselves, others and for property and to

- Ensure that children attend school 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.
- Cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect a child's progress/behaviour.

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school do not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 8.50 a.m. or after the official Infants closing time of 1.30 p.m. and First to Sixth classes closing time of 2.30pm. The Board of Management and school community will ensure that systems are in place to acknowledge behaviour, progress and effort, through reward systems as outlined previously, under positive strategies for promoting positive behaviour in the school.

Most children behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school. Occasional minor misbehaviour will be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. Some children



need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally.

Success Criteria:

- Parents/Guardians, pupils and teachers will know agreed strategies
- Trust will exist between pupils, school staff and parents.
- Pupils will feel valued and responsible.
- Golden Rules/Behaviour Charter will be displayed throughout the school and adhered to.
- Balla National School will be a positive and safe working/ learning environment for all involved.
- Pupils will feel that they are being treated fairly by each other and all staff.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed each year.

Ratification & Communication

This policy is subsequently communicated to the school community via the school's website and is then reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Balla National School.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____



Restorative Practice Steps

What happened?

What were you thinking of at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected? In what way?

How could things have been done differently?

What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Name: _____



Stage 1 Disciplinary Letter to Parents/Guardians

Pupil's Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Class Teacher: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that your child's behaviour has been unsatisfactory as indicated below.

Disruptive in class

Has shown lack of respect towards school staff

Has shown a lack of respect towards pupil

Has shown a lack of respect for property

Behaviour on playground unsatisfactory

I would appreciate it if you would discuss this matter with your child. Please sign & return.

Yours sincerely

Class Teacher

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) signature:



Stage 2 Disciplinary Letter to Parents/Guardians

Pupil's Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Class Teacher: _____

Dear Parents/Guardians

I sent you a note previously on ___/___/____. I would like to draw to your attention that your child's behaviour has again been unsatisfactory as indicated below and his/her name noted again on a number of occasions.

Disruptive in class

Has shown lack of respect towards school staff

Has shown a lack of respect towards pupil

Has shown a lack of respect for property

Behaviour on playground unsatisfactory

I would appreciate it if you could contact the school to make an appointment to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Class Teacher

Principal



Restorative Practice

Name _____ Date _____

What happened?

What were you thinking?

