

# **Dromin National School**



## **Code of Behaviour Policy**

# 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 safe, caring and happy environment.

## Aims

1. To value and respect the individuality, self-worth and dignity of each child
2. To encourage and motivate all children to achieve their potential
3. To provide a welcoming atmosphere to all parents/guardians and to ensure that they are kept well-informed
4. To cherish our Catholic and Christian values
5. To encourage all children to contribute to school life by taking an active part in school events and activities
6. To value each child's gifts and talents
7. To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
8. To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
9. To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
10. 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
11. To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
12. To enable teachers to teach without disruption
13. To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

## **School Rules**

1. Respect for others and for school property forms the basis of our Code of Behaviour. Pupils should behave with courtesy and good manners towards all other members of the school community.
2. Once the child enters the school premises at 9.20am, he/she may not leave again without permission. If a parent/guardian wishes a child to leave during school hours it is essential that the class teacher receives such a request in writing.
3. During playtime pupils are expected to behave in a manner which will not hurt themselves or another child or cause damage to school property.
4. All children are expected to line up and walk into class in an orderly fashion at the end of playtime.
5. Pupils are expected to pay close attention to class-work and to co-operate with the teacher in his/her work.
6. Homework must be completed every night and the homework signed by a parent/guardian.
7. Children are expected to walk and sit quietly in the hall area.

## **Implementation**

1. Every possible effort will be made to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour.
2. We will use assembly time to award the following and to reinforce good behaviour, e.g.
  - (a) Student of the week award for good behaviour or improvement in each room.
  - (b) Student of the week award for good behaviour during break time.
  - (c) Golden Time: Time set aside once a month when children are allowed free play time during class time as a reward for good behaviour.
  - (d) Homework vouchers.
  - (e) Award for good attendance.
  - (f) Award for pupils showing good leadership qualities.
3. Older pupils will be asked for comments on the rules and ideas for promoting positive behaviour. Circle time can be used for this.

4. Good behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation and respect among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
5. The overall responsibility for good behaviour lies with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline in his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises.
6. A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour. Examples of serious misbehaviour include violence and abusive language.
7. Teachers will keep a written record of all incidents of serious misbehaviour in a conduct book. The pupil will be informed of each entry into this book. Parent will be contacted on the third entry into this book.
8. Our rules will be kept to a minimum. They are based on respect for self, fellow pupils, staff and property.
9. The following strategies may be included as appropriate ways to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:
  - a) Reasoning with pupil e.g. Explain what he/she has done wrong
  - b) Reprimand
  - c) Temporary separation from peers
  - d) Loss of privileges
  - e) Detention during break-time
  - f) Prescribing additional work for home or school
  - g) Referral to Principal
  - h) Communication with parent/guardian
  - i) 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)

### **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 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 are to be used at all levels within the school:

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

## **Procedures Regarding Suspension**

A serious incident of serious misconduct is grounds for suspension.

Suspension can provide the student and parents with time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences.

No suspension will be open-ended.

Suspension should:

- Enable the school to set behaviour goals with the student and their parents
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour

### **Forms of Suspension**

#### **Immediate suspension:**

The Principal may consider suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school would represent a threat to the safety of pupils in the school.

#### **Automatic suspension:**

The following behaviours will incur suspension as a sanction

- Any violent/dangerous aggression to other pupils.
- Behaviour that is hurtful – bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Leaving school without permission

Examples of gross misbehaviour

- Assault on pupil or teacher
- Serious theft

- Serious bullying
- Serious damage to property

### **Procedures in respect of suspension**

Parents may be informed orally, by phone or in writing.

Where an immediate suspension is considered:

- A preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the suspension.
- A more formal investigation will follow.
- In the case of an immediate suspension, parents will be notified and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The reason for the suspension will be related to the parents. A link will be drawn between the seriousness of the behaviour and the importance of an improvement in behaviour due to the suspension.

### **Period of suspension**

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

Suspension of longer than three days will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval.

A ceiling of ten days on any period of suspension will be applied.

### **Engaging with student/parents**

Where a decision to suspend has been made, to maximise the impact and value of suspension, the Principal or another staff member delegated by the principal will meet with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the pupil to behave well when he/she returns to school.

### **Records and Reports**

Records will be kept of:

- The investigation
- The decision making process
- The decision and rationale for the decision
- The duration of the decision

**Report to Board of Management**

A report of all suspensions with reasons and duration will be made to the B.O.M.

**Report to N.E.W.B.**

A report will be made to the N.E.W.B. in accordance with reporting guidelines in Education Act 2000, Section 21(4) (a).

**Appeal**

Where the total number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act.

**This policy will be reviewed and amended if necessary on a regular basis.**

**Ratification**

**This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. of Dromin N.S. on \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson B.O.M.**