

SUNCROFT NATIONAL SCHOOL

Policy Number: 15 - Code of Behaviour - Rev 1

AIMS

Given that this school aims towards our children, learning to live like God and learning to consider other children's feelings, we, as a community pray that, our children will be open to adult direction and take the right path in life.

By introducing this policy Suncroft National School hopes to:

1. To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement.
2. To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
3. To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
4. To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
5. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community
6. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
7. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

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The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify *“the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”*

Section 23 (4) of the Act further 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 make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour.

“A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers trust each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and help in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school” (Circular 20/90)

• Staff

In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils, and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour”It is important that the policy is accepted by all the staff”. (Circular 20/90)

We, the staff of Suncroft National School believe that children should be encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential in a suitable planned environment, where they know what is expected of them, and where clear limits are set, appropriate to their age and stage of development and any special needs they may have.

Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will always be acknowledged so as to promote the growth of self-esteem and self-discipline.

The staff will strive to manage behaviour consistently in order that children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up good patterns of self-discipline.

The staff Endeavour to be good role models by following rules and showing respect for each other and the children.

Rules that apply to all children and adults in the group will be discussed and agreed.

These rules will be made known to all adults, staff, parents, and to the children. Rules will be kept to a minimum.

It is recognised that the key to behaviour management is good observational skills in the adults.

Ongoing discussion, training and practice will be availed of to train staff in the skills in the adults.

POSITIVE STRATEGIES FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT USED BY THE STAFF

One to one adult support will be offered to the child that has misbehaved to help the child to see what went wrong.

Comfort and support will be offered where another child has been hurt in an accident.

Explanations for challenging unwanted behaviours and attitudes will be made clear immediately to the child/children.

It will always be made clear to the child in question that it is the behaviour and not the child that is unacceptable.

Staff will use simple language, while speaking calmly and quietly to the children dealing with these situations,

Staff members demonstrate respect and empathy by listening and being interested.

Children's participation will be encouraged, to promote independence and confidence.

By offering alternatives, positive behaviour is encouraged and helps to teach the children about the value of compromise.

Recurring problems will be dealt with in an inclusive manner following observations and involving the child's parents, and other appropriate adults.

Staff will provide children with manageable tasks, but will also be aware when a child is ready for new challenges.

Books and activities will be available to help the children explore and name their feelings, where appropriate, in conjunction with an adult.

The Parents Association communicates the approach to the rest of the parents. New staff are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour. All staff are aware of the code.

When a child presents behavioural difficulties arising from his/her Special Education needs his/her I.E.P. will contain behavioural targets.

The school SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communications 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.

This approach is maintained and improved from year to year, as needs when identified, are discussed during staff meetings and measures to address these needs are investigated through various support agencies and up-to-date literature.

The SPHE curriculum is taught by all class teachers. The lessons are highly organised using a wide variety of resources e.g. “Stay Safe Programme”, “Be Safe”, “Health” Prim. Ed., “Walk Tall Programme”, “Relationship and Sexuality Programme “(RSE). The lessons are recorded in fortnightly notes, Cuntas Miosuil and yearly plans. The SPHE policy and resources are available to new staff.

Parents of newly enrolled children are made aware by their class teacher of the SPHE curriculum at the beginning of the year and many lessons taught are accompanied by a parent linked follow on activity.

Specific activities are scheduled to develop these skills in the children such as Circle time and Drama Lessons.

- **Board of Management**

“The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school.”
(Circular 20/90).

The staff procures the draft of the code of behaviour and the Parents Association make the policy available to all parents. The draft and amendments are then given to the Chairperson who circulates a copy to all members of the school.

Ways in which the B.O.M. supports the code of behaviour in the school are prevalent in:

The presence of the Chairperson at school functions

The address of the Chairperson at assembly at the beginning of the school year.

Behaviour is addressed at each B.O.M. meeting during the year.

Every endeavour to support a positive code of behaviour is taken seriously by each B.O.M. member.

The B.O.M. supports the staff by ensuring provision of opportunities for staff development.

The B.O.M. of S.N.S. follow the guidelines in the C.P.S.M.A. handbook re page 195

- **Parents**

“Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.”

“School needs the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline“ (Circular 20/90.

The Parents Association are committed to supporting the staff and vice versa. The parents voice their opinions and needs through the Parents Association.

Three representatives were involved in the formation of this policy before it went to the B.O.M.

To include those not directly involved, the circulation of the policy was left to the members of the representative committee to involve as many as possible. All staff members were involved. The final authority rested with the B.O.M. in accepting or rejecting such amendments.

The code of behaviour is included in the starter pack for all new entrants. It is expected that parents support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by their-

- Awareness of and their co-operation with the school system of rewards and sanctions.
- Ensuring children are at school on time.
- Attending meetings at the school when requested.
- Replying to communications from the school when requested.
- Helping children with homework and ensuring that it is completed.
- Ensuring children have necessary books and materials for school.

- **Pupils**

The code of behaviour and school rules are discussed and explained at home. This is the parent’s responsibility.

Pupils play an active part in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

Drafting rules for the classroom

Taking part in assemblies

Taking part in discussions during assemblies as to what measures work for them and why.

3. POSITIVE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

“The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place.” (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2005:5)

Positive strategies used throughout the school promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

- **Classroom**

The following strategies used by the staff to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom-

“**Ground Rules**” - behavioural expectations which are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning are discussed in the class setting and each child is involved in the discussion and understands fully what is expected of them and why.

Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to 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.

Within each classroom setting such rules may include the following include the following to ensure that every child has a fair and an equal opportunity to achieve his/her/the teachers goals without interference from others.

- Put their hand up when you need the teachers assistance
- Leave your chair when you have permission.
- Respect the fact that the other children in the classroom also wants to do their best
- Assist the teacher in his/her job by co-operating with his/her requests.

Teachers ensure that the pupils understand and are regularly reminded of how they must behave.

Systems of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour are at the teacher’s discretion.

They include the following:

- Pupils are sent on messages or are trusted with jobs of responsibility.
- Communication - verbal or in the homework journal praising the child’s efforts.
- Reward stamps/stickers/certificates and postcards for good behaviour
- Treats i.e. games time/ D.V.D.
- Catching them being good.

Teachers are involved in ongoing self assessment to ensure the most effective classroom management techniques, activities and methodologies are used to sustain pupil interest and motivation.

Timetabling is also devised to ensure maximum stimulation is provided for each child.

- **Playgrounds**

The playground rules are explained to the children at the beginning of the school year at assembly and children are regularly reminded of these rules. They are actively involved in decisions made regarding these rules.

Each class has its own zone on the playground, providing sections for specific age groups.

Exceptions are made to this rule where a child gets on better in a different area. The exception is a joint staff decision.

Children must stay within view, must keep away from sides, front and back of the school. Respect for each other when playing is expected.

It is made quite clear to children which games are acceptable and which are not.

Children are only allowed to leave yard with the teacher's permission.

Supervision of yards and classrooms is dealt with in the Lunchtime Supervision Policy.

If there is a need to supervise a particular child/children all staff members are informed.

On rainy days some children may be asked to accompany the supervising teacher at his/her discretion.

Games are organised to minimise behaviour.

Older children teach the Junior Infants new games.

Any child who leaves the yard to go to the toilet must use the toilets outside the staff room where the teachers can hear what is going on.

A yard duty book is kept by on yard to record incidents of misbehaviour. It is at the teacher's discretion whether to/not to use any of the following measures.

- Time out for 10/15 minutes.
- Off yard for rest of the break.
- Off yard for the rest of the day.
- Off yard for the rest of the week.
- Extra homework and parents informed.
- Formal detention including notification of parents.

- **Other areas of the school:**

Children are informed at assembly and on a regular basis how they should conduct themselves in corridors, halls, cloakrooms, toilets etc. All teachers are responsible for the upkeep of these rules. Teachers praise the good behaviour to highlight to the other children what is expected of them.

4. REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Good behaviour is publicly recognised and acknowledged is the school at assembly. The

children are openly praised and the whole school gives them a cheer. Certificates are awarded weekly. Rewards at class level are outlined above. Parents are informed verbally/ in a note of “good news”. The teachers ensure that all the staff and the Principal are informed of improvements made through verbal communication on a daily basis.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school must outline “*the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined. The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious, or gross, will be judged by the teacher and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/ frequency of such misdemeanours.*”

Behaviour are categorised in the school under the following headings:

- Minor
- Serious
- Gross

The teacher/Principal judges the degree of misdemeanour on the following criteria:

- ◇ Gravity
- ◇ Frequency
- ◇ The degree to which the behaviour is affecting the smooth running of daily teaching/learning.
- ◇ The influence the behaviour has on the other children.
- ◇ The effect the behaviour has on the class teacher in his/her efforts to be there for all his/her pupils.

The teachers deal with all minor incidents themselves.

Any serious misdemeanours are communicated to the Principal and a whole staff decision is made to deal with the matter.

Strategies used in managing incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

- a. Reasoning with the pupil
- b. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- c. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others - within the classroom/during breaks.
- d. Loss of privileges
- e. Detention during a break
- f. Prescribing additional homework
- g. Referral to Principal Teacher
- h. Transferring a pupil to Principal’s classroom
- i. Extraction from class to be shared by the whole staff to reduce the stress that the teacher and his/her class may be experiencing.

Gross misbehaviour is immediately reported to the Principal who makes the decision with the staff to arrange a meeting with Parents and discuss what measures the school intends to take.

Warnings and advice will always be considered as a first step (Circular 20/90). However, more serious or persistent misbehaviour will involve the Parents.

The Chairperson of the B.O.M. is immediately informed of more serious and gross behaviour. A B.O.M. decision is made if the Principal requests it. The staff ensures consistency in the application of sanctions by daily discussing the steps they have taken with each other and the Principal.

- **Involving parents in management of Problem Behaviour.**

“Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort” (Circular 20/90)

The class teacher writes a note to the parents informing them of the child’s behaviour and requests that the parents have a word with their child at home. If matters don’t improve the teacher requests the parents to ring the school secretary and make an appointment at both parties convenience. Any teacher has the option to request the presence of the Principal if he/she needs it.

When parents arrive every effort is made to maximise a co-operative approach i.e. the language, tone used is intended to be sympathetic yet firm

Children are not normally present but if parents/teachers request it, it can be arranged. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher if they have any concerns.

- **Managing aggressive behaviour/violent behaviour**

Strategies that are used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems: Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment. However, N.E.P.S. provides an educational assessment and are severely under staffed. The school is only allowed 2 assessments per year.

The Principal recommends a referral to the Child and Adolescence Services in Athy. Parental consent is needed for this.

Parents may also pursue other relevant assessments e.g. Psychological, Educational, Medical and Emotional. Paediatric Psychiatric Assessment. If the Parents agree, the Principal requests any appointment dates kept and any relevant information to be

communicated to the school.

Advice and support for Principal and Staff is sought from the S.E.N.O. and N.E.P.S.

Advice is also sought from S.E.S.S. in Cork.

Professional development is available to staff e.g. S.E.S.S., Colleges of Education, Prof. Dev. courses, Education Centres.

If the school proposes to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour, it will consult competent legal advice.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, temporary exclusion while consultation with S.E.N.O. and or E.W.O. takes place about appropriate resourcing, alternative placement, may have to be effected.

5. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURE

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify *“the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled for the school concerned”* and *“the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.”* (Sections 23 (2)c,d)

See also NEWB Guidelines p74 to 78

Suspension

The Principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended for a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.* (Section 21 (4)a)

Circular 20/90 states that *“Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated.”*

Categories of misbehaviour that warrant suspension (also see above)

- Gross misbehaviour
- Violent behaviour
- Repeated acts of non-compliance
- The student’s behaviour having serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student’s continued presence in the school at this time constituting a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The B.O.M. may authorise the Principal and Chairperson to exclude a pupil for school from school for a maximum of 3 school days (Rule 130, Section 5, Rules for National Schools).

Where a longer suspension is being contemplated the approval of the B.O.M. should be sought.

Immediate Suspension: in exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary, where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school or any other person.

Procedures to be followed when actually suspending a pupil.

1. Child is supervised in a safe environment pending collection by an approved adult.
 2. Parents/Guardians are informed and requested to make collection arrangements for the child.
 3. Phone call to advise the chairperson of the B.O.M.
- The child may be given work to complete during the suspension.
 - Following the child's return from suspension, the Principal and teacher will meet with the parents and child. A strategy for improved behaviour will be agreed upon by the Principal, teacher, parents and child. The child will give verbal assent to a contract of good behaviour which must be signed by the child and/or parents/guardians.
 - It may be necessary for the parents or guardians or another adult to take the child from the premises at break time.
 - A shortened day may be decided upon.

Parents will be given the opportunity to be heard by the B.O.M., to appeal the suspension but not before the implementation.

When the period of suspension is over an effort from the child to improve is expected.

- **Expulsion**

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, "*A student shall not be expelled from a school before passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer*" (Section 24 (a)) It is the right of a B.O.M> to take "...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good

order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.” (Section 24(5))

- **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1999, 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 B.O.M., 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.

If a child is suspended for over 20 days or expelled, the Principal will inform the parents of their rights to appeal and a copy of Cir. 22/02 and related forms will be enclosed. Appeals will generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date of the decision of the school was notified to the parents (Cir. 22/02)

The Chairperson of the B.O.M. is responsible for a reply, if and when an appeal is made and is being investigated by the Department of Education and Science. (Section 12, Cir. 22/02).

6. SCHOOL RECORDS

Each teacher keeps his/her own incident book which holds individual records.

Verbal communication with parents is noted in the staff’s own diaries.

Communication with outside agencies is recorded in the Principal’s and secretary’s diary.

Documentation pertaining to appeals under Section (29) is also filed in the secretary’s office. A yard duty book is kept which records serious incidents of misbehaviour on yard.

Class teachers and the Principal are informed before the pupils go back into the class.

The staff talks on a daily basis exchanging opinions and advice to ensure consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules.

7. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION OF PUPIL ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2) (e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, “*the procedure to be followed in relation to a child’s absence for school*”. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student’s absence and the reason for this absence.

The following is a list of strategies that are used to encourage school attendance.

- All staff endeavour to make school and its environment as stimulating and attractive as possible.
- There is a system in place for acknowledging/rewarding/improved attendance.
- The curriculum content and methodologies are adapted to maximise relevance to pupils.
- Parents are made aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- School policy requests a written explanation of pupil’s absences. Notes must be signed and dated and are kept for the duration of the school year.
- The principal co-operates fully with the N.E.W.B. and all children’s absences over 20 days (Section 21) are reported.

8. REFERENCES TO OTHER POLICIES

The following policies are in place in Suncroft National School.

- a. S.P.H.E
- b. Anti-bullying
- c. Enrolment
- d. Record Keeping
- e. Health and Safety
- f. Equality
- g. L.S./R.T.
- h. N.E.W.B. - Code of Behaviour - Guidelines for Schools.

9. SUCCESS CRITERIA

Observation of 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.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Management supports the implementation of this policy (see how above).
The whole staff of Suncroft National School have the responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.

Implementation date. _____

The new policy was reviewed in October 2010 (and amended where necessary).

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management officially ratified this policy on _____

The policy was made available to parents on _____

I have read and agree to abide by the School's Code of Behaviour.