

Code of Behaviour

V.1.2

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RATIONALE

It was decided to review the Behaviour Policy to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*, NEWB (National Education Welfare Board) , 2008. The staff, parents and pupils have an input into the policy review in school year 2023/24

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.

It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

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

Our Code acknowledges that the understanding of rules and consequences will vary, according to a child's age and ability.

The school is in the process of introducing Restorative practice in the 2023/2024 school year. This is a whole school teaching and learning approach that encourages behaviour that is supportive and respectful

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC ETHOS

St. Mary's seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are nurtured and valued. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.

The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents/guardians and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

The school is seen as the extension of the home, a place where children are not just taught but where staff and children work, play and pray together. The ethos of the school is Christian and Catholic with due regard for other religions. In this atmosphere of respect, the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth of the children is fostered.

The role of the parents/guardians as equal partners in the child's education is extremely significant. We see the necessity of involving parents in the education process which is not only to do with learning but with helping the children to become responsible, caring members of our community.

Every effort is made to ensure that all members of the school community (staff, pupils and parents) are aware that each school regulation or rule serves a particular purpose and is there to ensure the safety and well being of the child and to create an environment which is conducive to learning, teaching and development. Communication between home and school is highly valued and promoted in St. Mary's.

AIMS

- To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community;
- To assist the parents and children in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school;
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment;
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

PUPILS

Every child is subject to the Code of Behaviour (respecting the need for differentiation as appropriate for the child with Special Needs) during **all** school related activities, for as long as he/she is on the premises of St. Mary's or in the care of staff of St. Mary's outside of the school. If parents choose to send their children onto the school premises prior to the start of the official school day the child remains the responsibility of the parent.

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- Show respect for own property, the school's property and other children's property.
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual. A note should be presented to the class teacher on a pupil's return to school after an absence. A phone call, while not preferred, will be accepted.

- Try their best both in school and for homework (a written excuse should be presented if homework is not done).
- Wear the full school uniform every day except on P.E. day when tracksuits are allowed. The wearing of jewellery is not permitted aside from stud earrings. At dress up occasions/ non uniform day belly tops/hot pants/leggings are not permitted
- Tracksuit bottoms are considered to be part of school uniform. Leggings are not part of a school uniform.
- Leave his/her mobile phone at home. An exception is made for a child for whom his/her mobile phone is part of his medical devices as per medical report.
- Address teachers by their title (Mr., Mrs, Ms.) and surname.
- Adhere to the school's healthy eating policy.
- Observe that the use of Tipp-Ex and steel rulers is banned as is the eating of chewing gum.
- Students are not permitted to have possession of vapes/vapes not permitted on school grounds
- Children will watch the Three R's Training Video. (Restorative Practice)
- Children will sign the Three R's Agreement.

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to

- Be kind, helpful and friendly and not deliberately hurt people's feelings.
- Be gentle, keeping his hands and feet to himself.
- Follow the directions of staff and to obtain permission to leave the classroom.
- Listen to others while they are speaking and respect their opinions and beliefs.
- Work hard and avoid wasting his/her time and that of others.
- Be honest and truthful and not try to cover up the truth.
- Look after property and not deliberately waste or damage things.
- Be polite to all members of our school community and those who visit us.
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Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to

- Stay in the designated yard and not leave the yard without permission.
- Play safely on the yard.
- Follow the instructions of staff members.
- Behave with respect towards staff members and towards each other. Name calling and rough play are not permitted.
- Be aware that fighting, spitting, biting and inciting others to fight are regarded as serious misbehaviours.

Corridors/Common Areas Behaviour

Each class must

- Walk on corridors and move quietly through the school.
- Walk in single file.
- Stand back for adults.
- Use the designated door to enter and leave the school.

School Outings/Activities Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to

- Arrive punctually.

- Follow directions of staff members/facilitators.
- Remain with his/her group and supervisor/teacher.
- Be polite and respectful to all those he/she meets.

Acceptable Use Policy

In light of recent adverse national publicity regarding the abuse of using mobile phones in schools (cyber bullying, YouTube images, videoing others without their consent or knowledge), this school does not permit students to bring mobile phones/smart devices onto the school grounds. If a pupil brings a device to school it will be confiscated and held in a safe place by the principal until collected by the pupil's parent/guardian.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action e.g. warnings, withdrawal of access and in extreme cases: suspension or expulsion. The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the relevant authorities.

STAFF

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a consistent and fair way.

Each staff member is responsible for maintaining discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff - class teachers and support teachers - are responsible for the management of behaviour within their class.

It is expected that staff shall follow school policies and procedures at all times.

They will strive to

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class at the beginning of each school year (in an age/developmentally appropriate way).
- Ensure that the rules are displayed in their classrooms.
- Encourage self-discipline and actively promote good behaviour.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Keep a record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct on Aladdin.

PARENTS

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their child's attitudes.

They are asked to

- Support the work of the school.
- Engage with staff members in a mutually respectful manner.
- Encourage their child to abide by the school rules.
- Promote punctual and regular attendance. (Parents should write/email a note of explanation to the class teacher/office for all absences. The school will accept telephone communication concerning a child's absence. However a written note/email is preferred.)
- Ensure that homework is given due time and effort.
- Promptly notify the school of any changes in address, phone numbers, contact details or consents.
- Not to enter the school building to contact the school office in person, but to use the Outside Office Hatch instead. (located to right of main school door)

- First report an incident of concern to the school and permit the school to follow the Code of Behaviour. If a parent contacts another parent in relation to a school incident, this is not supportive of the school Code of Behaviour.
- Parents will watch the Three R's Training Video for Parents.
- Parents will sign the Three R's Agreement with their child.

In the event that parents wish to speak to a class teacher, they are invited to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time through the School Secretary. If there is an urgent matter that a parent wishes to discuss with a class teacher during the school day, every effort will be made to accommodate this but it may not be possible for the Principal to arrange supervision of a class at short notice.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE

As part of our on-going efforts to promote effective implementation of the Code of Behaviour; St. Mary's will strive to

- Discuss regularly the Code of Behaviour with our pupils.
- Discuss regularly the Three R's Agreement.
- Use the S.P.H.E. programme, other curricular areas as appropriate e.g. drama, art and extra-curricular activities (choir, music lessons, sports, Be Active A.S.A.P., homework club) as opportunities for teaching skills for responsible behaviour and self-discipline.
- Allocate time at some staff meetings for discussion regarding the implementation of the code.
- Be given opportunities to share experience of both positive and negative behaviour and to learn from collective wisdom.
- Familiarise new members of staff with practices within the school by having discussion of the Code of Behaviour form part of the first staff meeting held each September.
- Make a copy of the code available to both parents and teachers on the school website.
- Give a copy of the Code of Behaviour to parents when they enrol a child in the school.
- Support students with SEN understand standards and rules through teaching and learning
- Review the Code of Behaviour annually.
- The school shall provide training and workshops when/if the need arises.

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

It is the policy of St. Mary's to actively promote good behaviour.

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging

behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication. Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate, which is supportive of positive behaviour. In St. Marys we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour. The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

The following are some of the strategies that will be used to promote positive behaviour in our school.

- Develop language and communication skills – including PECS, Lámh,
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions....
- The use of timers to plan for....
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Regular communication with parents
- The teaching of social skills
- The use of social stories
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the teaching and reinforcing of appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function for the child (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour).
- The use of social praise and acknowledgement
- The use of merit awards for achievements; token/points economies for work completed throughout the day
- Access to preferred items/ activities intermittently throughout the day following an appropriate request or the completion of a particular task
- Behaviour plans
- Group-based reinforcement contingencies for rule-following/ appropriate behaviour

Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a child's exercise book;

- A visit to another class, to another member of staff or to the principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or the class;
- A reward system – student of the week/occasional treats;
- Special mention at assembly;
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege;
- A mention to parents - either written or verbal communication.

CRISIS PREVENTION (CPI)®

CPI® is the system we use at St. Marys Primary School to train SNAs and teaching staff to manage potential and actual crisis incidents with pupils. CPI® skills have been assessed by BILD (British institute of Learning Disabilities) and ensures that all holds are non abusive or harmful: require the least possible force for the shortest possible time and allow the pupil the dignity and control in the situation. Staff working with pupils are trained to use CPI and attend yearly updates to refresh skills. Holds may be used for a variety of reasons by essentially fall into one of two categories, planned and unplanned.

Planned Holds

As part of some pupil's support plan he/she may require the use of Physical Support in order to get them through a difficult activity or situation. These will have been decided upon through negotiation with parents and agreed upon before use. Holds will be used to enable pupils to have normal access to a variety of situations and will always confirm to CPI® principles.

Because these holds would generally form part of an individual's support plan or behavior support plan and therefore agreed with the parents, detailed reporting of each instance of holding to parents would not be required but should be logged in school and reported to parents, usually when frequency is decreasing or increasing. Use of Holds should never be used for staff convenience but only as a part of a broad positive behavior programme

Unplanned Holds

Unplanned holds are reactions to emergency situations unlike the previously mentioned planned holds which are pro-active. Staff will adhere rigorously to CPI® principles and as such be non abusive or harmful, they will use the minimum amount of force necessary for the minimum time necessary to effectively manage the risk posed by a behavior.

Unplanned holds will be used in order to safely manage the risks being posed to the individual exhibiting the behavior, to other pupils, to adults or where damage to property might occur. Staff will continually reassess a situation to take account of changing risk and respond appropriately so, for example, a pupil may need to be physically guided away from a risk in a room like a broken glass, but could be quickly released as he or she left the room.

Staff are expected to use professional judgement whether an unplanned hold is an appropriate response. Staff are expected to consider a number of factors at this stage, most importantly the perceived risk of holding versus the perceived risk of not holding a pupil. At all times staff should take account of the pupil's level of understanding.

Unplanned holds will be used infrequently and must be reported and recorded in accordance with school procedures on an incident report form an Aladdin.

Where unplanned holds are used, incidents will be reported to parents/guardians concerned as soon as is practically possible and all reasonable efforts should be made to ensure reporting within 24 hours.

No holds should ever be used in anger, as punishment, or for staff convenience but solely as an act of care to control a dangerous situation effectively.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard for the age and emotional development of the child. Occasionally other prudent, unlisted steps may be taken.

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

In this Code of Behaviour, misbehaviour has been classified into three levels. The levels are based on the degree of disruption caused by the inappropriate behaviour. The disciplinary actions and supportive interventions are also specified.

LEVEL ONE

Level 1: Behaviours

Level 1 behaviour interferes with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom and common areas. Responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate. Children will be instructed in what is expected and how they should behave.

This sample list of Level 1 behaviours is not exhaustive.

- Deliberately littering classrooms
- Annoying others/making fun of others
- Running on corridors
- Disturbing others in class/at play
- Incomplete homework
- Leaving seat without permission
- Disrespectful language, tone or manner e.g. back-answering
- Ignoring staff requests
- Failing to wear school uniform

Level 1: Disciplinary Actions

Generally teachers will discipline pupils at Level 1. The consequences are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the misbehaviour.

Some examples of Level 1 actions are:

- Reasoning with the pupil including advising them about the consequences of their actions
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Temporary removal from group (within the class or on the yard)
- Carrying out a useful task within the classroom
- Reflection sheet
- Referral to Principal for repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Prescribed extra work (to be kept on file by the teacher)
- Withdrawal of privileges, responsibilities or extra duties
- Note in homework journal to be signed by parent/Email to parent requesting acknowledgement

Level 1: Supportive Interventions

Supportive Interventions include

- Classroom based interventions e.g. circle time, class meeting, “rule revision” sessions
- Discussion of behaviour with child
- Records kept regarding incident/intervention/date
- Informal consultation with parents/staff members
- Reminder of the Three R’s Agreement

LEVEL TWO

Level 2: Behaviours

Level 2 behaviours are those that interfere seriously with the orderly environment of the school. They are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the student himself, other students and staff members.

This sample list of Level 2 behaviours is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviours which have not been modified despite intervention
- Behaviour which endangers oneself or others e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting, fighting, throwing objects etc.
- Stealing
- Use of profane language
- Remarks of a derogatory nature about the race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin of another
- Disrespectful language or behaviour towards an adult
- Constant disruption
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment
- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Bullying behaviours
- Unacceptable use of school iPads
- Bringing a smartphone to school/Using a smartphone in school

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The Principal/Deputy Principal administer the actions at Level 2. Consequences and sanctions, at developmentally appropriate levels, depend on the severity and

frequency of the misbehaviour. They may include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation.

Some examples of Level 2 actions include.

- Carrying out a useful task within the school
- Weekend homework
- Phone call to parents
- Formal meeting with parents
- Formal written communication with the parents
- Implementation of a Behaviour plan
- Enter into a Behaviour Contract
- Suspension warning letter

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Some examples of Level 2 supportive actions include:

- Conference with class teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal or Principal
- Proceed with a Three R's Group Meeting (Step three)
- Records kept regarding date/incident/intervention/sanction
- Request for assistance from external agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.), Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education, National Educational Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) School Completion Programme (S.C.P)
- Referral of a child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with parental consent)

LEVEL THREE

Level 3: Behaviours

Level Three behaviours endanger the health, safety and personal well-being of the school's pupils and staff. They directly threaten the orderly operation of the school. They are considered to be the most serious violations of the Code of Behaviour.

This sample list of Level 3 behaviours is not exhaustive:

- Repeated or serious instances of Level Two behaviours which have not been modified by intervention
- Setting fire to or deliberately seriously damaging school property
- Deliberate possession or use of a weapon
- Threatening, aggressive, abusive behaviour towards, deliberate physical assault of or violence towards a member of the school community
- Threatening, aggressive and abusive behaviour (including verbal abuse) towards a member of the staff
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Activities or actions towards others that discriminate or prejudice on the grounds of race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin
- Coercing others to fight or to engage in very serious misbehaviour
- Being in possession of drugs/alcohol/cigarettes/vapes
- Use of smartphone within the school
- Unacceptable use of school iPad

- Inappropriate online behaviour outside of school that impacts on another pupil in the school.

- **Level 3: Actions**

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The duration of the suspension period will depend on the severity and frequency of the misbehaviour.

Level Three responses include:

- Formal meeting with parents
- Referral to the Board of Management
- Reduced Curriculum and Restricted Access
- If a student persistently prevents teaching and learning in his mainstream class and fails to respond to the remediation facilitated by the school; the school may decide to offer this pupil a reduced curriculum and restrict his/her access to the school by use of reduced school days in consultation with the parent/guardian. This decision is subject to review and the student may return to his/her mainstream class if the school feels his/her behaviour warrants it. The decision to recommend this course of action will follow a meeting of the Principal, Deputy Principal and the teacher in whose class the student is misbehaving. The pupil and his/her parents will be invited to attend the meeting and will have the opportunity to respond to the case as outlined by the Principal. The decision to suggest a reduced school day may be discussed with the School Attendance Officer.
- Suspension of up to three day period may follow the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity or frequency. The Board of Management may authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days.
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Suspension from school from five to ten days
- A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Chairperson/Board of Management.
- Repeated suspension will occur in certain circumstances to a maximum of 20 days. The National Educational Welfare Board Officer will then become involved.
- Expulsion
- A student may be expelled for repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour (in accordance with Rule 130 (6))

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

SUSPENSION

Decision to suspend

Factors which may influence the decision to suspend a student from school include

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is the appropriate response
- The possible impact of the suspension

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Authority to suspend

Immediate Suspension

The Board of Management has granted the Principal the authority to impose an Immediate Suspension. This may be for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the behaviour. An Immediate Suspension may be imposed if, after a preliminary investigation, the principal deems that the continued presence of the pupil in the school represents a serious threat to the well-being and safety of other members of the school community

Automatic Suspension

The Board of Management has granted the Principal the authority to impose an Automatic Suspension for named behaviours detailed in this Code of Behaviour. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three days depending on the severity of the behaviour.

The named behaviours include

- Physical assault/violence towards a member of the school community
- Threatening or abusive behaviour (including verbal abuse) towards a member of staff
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property
- Leaving the school during school contact time without parental consent
- Bringing dangerous weapons to school.
- Setting fire to or deliberately seriously damaging school property
- Being in possession of alcohol/drugs/cigarettes/vapes

In exceptional circumstances, permission to suspend for up to five days will be sought from the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Suspensions from five and up to ten days must be sanctioned by the Chairperson/Board of Management.

The Board of Management retains its authority to impose suspensions from school in all other cases/circumstances.

Procedures to be followed in respect of Immediate and Automatic Suspensions

- Parents will be informed by telephone and arrangements made with them to have the child collected from the school.
- Formal written notification will issue no later than 2 school days after the suspension has been imposed

The notification will detail

- Duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- Reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school
- Provision for appeal

The decision to impose an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

After a formal investigation has taken place, the parents and pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal on his/her return to school to discuss

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension
- Interventions to prevent a recurrence

Procedures to be followed in respect of other suspensions

The Principal, Deputy Principal and Class Teacher will convene a meeting. Fair procedures based on the principles of natural justice will be followed. These procedures apply to:

- The investigation of the alleged behaviour that may lead to suspension.
- The process of decision making as to whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and what sanctions to impose.
- Once the preliminary investigation confirms that the behaviour warrants suspension:
- Parents/guardians and the pupil will be informed about the complaint by phone or in writing.

The written notification will confirm:

- The period of the suspension
- The reasons for the suspension
- The study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school
- Provision for appeal
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond. A meeting will be organised to facilitate the same.

Period of Suspension

Parents can appeal both the Principal's and Board of Management's decision to suspend a pupil. Should the pupil be suspended for a total of 20 days in the year, parents may appeal the decision under Section 29 of the Education Act and be facilitated to do so if so required.

Re-integration of Pupil

The school will make every effort to help student to catch up with work missed. An opportunity to discuss feelings will be facilitated by the school's support team. The pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Ground for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

Records and Reports

- Formal written reports are kept re
- The investigation
- The decision and rationale for same
- Duration and any conditions attached to suspension
- All suspensions are reported to the B.O.M. and to N.E.W.B.

EXPULSION

The decision to permanently exclude a pupil from St. Mary's will be made solely by the B.O.M. Expulsion is a very serious step and is only taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour and only after the school has taken significant steps to address the behaviour. These steps include the following:

- Meeting with parents and pupil to explore ways of helping pupil change behaviour;
- Making sure that the pupil understands the possible consequences of his behaviour (if it should persist);
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried;
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service (N.E.P.S.), Health Service Executive Community Services (H.S.E.), National Behavioural Support Service (N.B.S.S.).
- The grounds for expulsion and the factors which need to be considered are similar to those for suspension. However where expulsion is concerned, the school will already have tried a series of other interventions (including suspension) which unfortunately haven't changed the pupil's behaviour.

EXPULSION FOR A FIRST OFFENCE

- The following kinds of behaviour may warrant such expulsion:
- A serious threat of violence against another pupil or staff member.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying of drinks/ drugs.
- Serious damage to staff/school property.

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION

STEP 1

A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

- Pupil and parents to be informed in writing re the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Parents and pupil will be invited to a meeting and given every opportunity to respond to the complaint before a decision is made.

STEP 2

A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the Principal to consider expulsion

- The Principal will inform parents and pupil that the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion. They will be given ample notification of the date of the hearing and invited to attend. They will also be advised that they can make a written or oral submission to the B.O.M.

STEP 3

Consideration by the B.O.M. of recommendation and the holding of a hearing

- The B.O.M. will be provided with the same records re investigation as the parents. The B.O.M. reviews the initial investigation and satisfies itself that fair procedures were upheld. It reviews all documentation. If the B.O.M. decides that an expulsion is warranted, it will hold a hearing.
- At the hearing, the Principal and parents put their case to the Board.
- After both sides have been heard, they leave the hearing to allow the B.O.M. make its decision.

STEP 4

B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing

- Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the B.O.M. to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if so whether or not expulsion is the appropriate action. The Board informs the parents re. its conclusions and the next steps in the process e.g. notification of decision to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- If B.O.M. deems it necessary to expel the pupil, the N.E.W.B. will be informed in writing by using A Notice to Expel Form. The intention to expel a pupil does not take effect until 20 days have elapsed after N.E.W.B. has received written notice. This allows the Educational Welfare Officer time to intervene before the decision takes effect.

STEP 5

Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer during 20 day period

- Individual consultations with all concerned where feasible.
- Arrangement of joint meeting of all concerned.
- The purpose of the consultation and meetings is to ensure that arrangements are in place for the pupil to continue in education. The B.O.M. may suspend the pupil during this process if there are concerns that the continued presence of the pupil will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils and staff.

STEP 6

Confirmation of the decision to expel

- Parents will be notified immediately by the B.O.M. and informed re their right to appeal the decision to expel. The standard appeal form will be given to parents. A formal record of the decision to expel will be made.

STEP 7

Appeals

- Parents may appeal the decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. The appeals process under Section 29 of

the Education Act 1998 begins with the appointment of a mediator. An appeal may also be brought by N.E.P.S. on behalf of the pupil.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (Appendix 4)

Should a parent wish to make a complaint, it should be done in accordance with the following procedures. In the vast majority of cases, issues will be resolved at Formal Stage 1 or Formal Stage 2.

In the case of a serious complaint, the concerns should be specifically detailed in writing to enable the matter to be examined and a reply made.

- Formal Stage 1: Discussion
- Formal Stage 2: Written
- Formal Stage 3: Board of Management
- Formal Stage 4: Decision of the Board of Management.

PROCEDURES RE NOTIFICATION OF CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Under the Education and Welfare Act 2000, schools are required to monitor school attendance and report on pupil attendance in certain circumstances.

The school reports 4 times a year to the National Educational Welfare Board. The Board was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

When does a school report to the N.E.W.B.?

The school reports when

1. A student is absent for 20 days or more.
2. The Principal is concerned about a student's attendance.
3. The B.O.M. decides to expel a student.
4. A student has been suspended for 6 days or more.
5. A student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason e.g. a student moves to another school.

Strategies to encourage good attendance

St. Mary's has put the following strategies in place to foster an appreciation of learning and good attendance.

- Morning activities e.g. Aistear for junior classes, chess and educational games for senior classes.
- Acknowledgement of punctuality and good attendance.
- Breakfast club
- Class responsibilities and duties

School Attendance action plan

Suggested Timescale	Attendance profile	What needs to be done	Who by/ Who with
Day 9	Any absence without reason	Contact made with parent/ guardian via phone	Class teacher who then reports to DP
Day 10	Any absence without reason	Message sent via Aladdin	Auto message Aladdin
Day 11-15	Concern in relation to explanations or no explanations	Call to Parents	Deputy Principal/Principal
Day 15	Any absence without reason	Message sent via Aladdin	Auto message Aladdin
Days 15-20	Concern in relation to explanations	Contact made with parent/Guardian	HSCL
Day 20	Any absence without reason	Message sent via Aladdin	Auto message Aladdin
Days over 20	Any absence without reason	Contact made with parents to inform re referral to NEWB	Deputy Principal/Principal/ Assistant Principal 1
Days over 20	Concern in relation to explanations	Meeting with Parents	HSCL

Role of Parents

- Parents must write a note of explanation for all absences. The school shall accept telephone communication or email to admin@stmarysmullingar.ie concerning a child's absence.
- The class teacher takes a roll call at 9.40a.m. Pupils not in attendance by then are marked absent. Teachers legally cannot change an absent indicator to a present indicator.
- If a child arrives late, the child shall be marked present and the minutes late are recorded on the child's attendance record on Aladdin
- Medical certificates should be passed on to the school. If a child has had surgery/broken limb/serious illness etc. a medical certificate shall be required stating that the child is fit to return to school.
- The reason for the absence is then noted.
- Do not take holidays during school term as they count as absences from school.
- Make sure their child understands that they do not agree with his /her missing school unless it is for a valid reason.

When are parents contacted by the school?

- By text after roll call if pupil has cumulatively missed 10, 15, 20,30,40 plus days
- If the pupil is at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- Phone call to parents to discuss absences when 15 days absences have been recorded
- If the parents fail to explain a pupil's absence.

- If the pupil is regularly late for school.
- If the pupil's name is being passed on to the N.E.W.B.

Attendance records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school as soon as notification of transfer has been received.

Attendance records of children who transfer to St. Mary's will be sought from previous school.

Attendance records of pupils transferring to Second Level schools will be sent to the school as soon as enrolment has been confirmed.

Important

The term "parent(s)", as used in this document, is understood to mean the person(s) caring for/appointed to care for the child at home.

This policy was reviewed in the 2023/2024 school year and was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 13/12/2023 . .

Signed Barbara Anne O'Callaghan
 Date 13/12/23

Chairperson of Board of Management

Bernie McWeigh
 Date 13/12/23

Secretary of Board of Management

APPENDIX 1

CRISIS PREVENTION at St. Marys

Guide for parents and carers

At St. Marys Primary School we welcome children with a wide range of special needs. The first right of every child and member of staff is to work in a safe and supportive environment. This guide is intended to help parents and carers better understand one of the tools we use to help us to ensure this, CPI®.

What is CRISIS PREVENTION®?

Wherever a child's behaviour becomes a risk to either themselves, somebody else or, sometimes, when damage to property is being caused, members of staff have a duty of care to act to reduce that risk. CPI® is the training model we use to do this in the safest way possible.

CPI® is a graded response model. This means that staff are trained to use the least restrictive hold, for the shortest amount of time needed to manage the risk being posed. We do this because it is the best way of keeping everyone safe, and because it is what the law expects us to do.

Why do we use CPI®?

Very occasionally a pupil may be acting in such a risky way that staff have no option but to manage that behaviour. When staff are faced with this difficult decision they have to decide what might happen if they hold or escort a pupil, versus what might happen if they don't.

CPI® has been very carefully developed by experts who teach techniques which reduce the risk of injury to both staff and pupil. If staff hold a pupil they will adopt a comfortable position which avoids putting stresses and strains on joints.

Great care is taken by staff to make sure that at all times the pupil is treated with dignity and respect and that under no circumstance is a hold used as punishment or to force a child to do something against their will.

One of the central values of the CPI® model is the safety and care of our pupils. We work hard to build good relationships between adults and pupils in school and because of this we rarely need to hold or escort pupils. On the occasions where we do have to, however, staff will usually have tried every other strategy available to them before making that decision.

Where a pupil regularly presents behaviour where holding or escorting are likely to be needed more than very occasionally, this will become part of the pupils' Care plan. We use the CARE plan in school to help meet a pupils needs most effectively. When a Care plan is written it is shared by all staff to make sure we can all work with the pupil in the way that helps them best. If the school feels that planned holding is in the best interests of your child we would, of course, contact parents or carers to discuss the plan.

We understand that the thought of your child being held by staff at school can be worrying but parents and carers should be reassured that staff will always act in what they believe to be the best interests of the pupil.

Should you have any additional concerns or questions regarding CPI® please do not hesitate to call me at school.

Bernie McVeigh
Principal

APPENDIX 2

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

What are Behaviours of Concern?

Behaviours of concern can be defined as “behaviours that indicate a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the people who exhibit them or to others”.

What is a crisis situation?

A crisis situation can occur when behaviours of concern present serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student concerned and/or others within the school environment.

Our Rationale

Sometimes students may have such highly complex and challenging behaviour, social or education needs that they need extra help and support. This policy aims to support the student exhibiting Behaviours of Concern, other students, staff, and the relevant parents. This policy is complimentary to the school Child Safeguarding Statement, Code of Behaviour, and Health & Safety Statement.

Code of Behaviour

Our school Code of Behaviour aims to positively support students in the first instance but reserves the right to impose sanctions particularly when the health and safety of students and staff are a concern.

Child Safeguarding Statement

Our school Child Safeguarding Statement places a statutory responsibility on registered teachers to report child protection concerns that are at or above a threshold of harm. An accompanying Risk Assessment identifies possible situations where students may be at risk and the control measures that our school puts in place to address such concerns.

Health & Safety Statement

Our school Health & Safety Statement underpins the entitlement of all students and staff to coexist in a safe environment.

Training of staff took place on 24th Feb 2023 by Mason Hayes and Curran.

How we react to a Behaviour of Concern Incident?

Make sure everyone is safe

Prevent the situation deteriorating further . Put an immediate plan in place that will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan

Support Services

Here is a list of State Agencies (not exhaustive) that we consult for advice, assistance and additional supports.

- Túsla
- CAMHS: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- Department of Education
- Education Welfare Officer: (Attached to EWS)
- Education Welfare Service (Now part of Túsla)
- Gardaí
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Special Schools National Behaviour Support Service (SESS now part of NCSE) • Special Education Needs Organiser (member of NCSE staff)

We may also contact our relevant Management Body and or Principal's Association for advice and guidance.

Possible underlying causes of behaviors of concern

There is always a reason for, or purpose to behaviours of concern

such as:

Anxiety and Stress: Students may become anxious for a myriad of reasons. Worries about friendships, home situations etc. can be overwhelming for a student, leading to stress. While most children are able to identify the cause and put in place strategies to reduce their stress levels, some cannot.

Communication difficulties: These can range from not being able to speak at all, shyness, social inhibition to being very articulate but not understanding the social variations and conventions in a conversation. Behaviours of Concern are often a substitute means of communication for such students.

Sensory issues: Some students can be over- or under-sensitive to any of their senses. This is often referred to in the literature as hyper (over) or hypo (under) sensitivity.

Social understanding: Not all students have the same understanding of social rules. Not all students grow up in environments with social rules like those in most schools

Inflexible thinking: We all adapt to routines and can find them comforting. Some students struggle with changes in routine.

Recording of Behaviours of Concern

Where behaviours of concern are an issue, we ensure that the parents are aware of the

school's policy and procedures on recording such behaviours. Parents should understand that the school seeks to record and analyse these behaviours to understand what the triggers are and to put in place a plan to support the student to develop more socially acceptable behaviours. Parents should be assured that they will be fully included in this process. It is important to emphasise that students who exhibit behaviours of concern make life difficult for themselves and inhibit social interaction with their class peers.

Examples of Behaviours of Concern (not exhaustive):

- Student with a weapon and intent on using violence
- Physically attacking another or about to
- Throwing furniture or breaking glass close to others
- Putting themselves in danger, running onto a road or trying to self harm

When will our school use restraint?

We will only use restraint when there is a crisis. CPI® is the system we use at St. Marys Primary School to train SNAs and teaching staff to manage potential and actual crisis incidents with pupils. CPI® skills have been assessed by BILD (British institute of Learning Disabilities) and ensures that all holds are non abusive or harmful:

A physical intervention: is the use of a physical act or restraint to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of a student's body. (CPI)

Examples of physical intervention:As Per CPI

(1) Presence

Standing in front of a student

(2) Touching

Lead, guide, usher, block-door handle

Student retains a lot of mobility

(3) Holding

Student's hand held by one adult but retains a level of mobility

(4) Restraint

Completely restrict mobility -2 adults holding legs & arms

(Am I using minimum force for the shortest time?)

Restraint:

- (1) Cannot be used in schools except in the case of a **crisis** where there is a **serious risk of imminent physical harm** to the pupils concerned/others
- (2) Should not be the first option and if used should be timely, measured, and proportionate
- (3) It should be carried out by appropriately trained persons if possible
- (4) If used should be documented, reported to the board of management

	Name	Signature
Principal		
Chairperson		

Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review

Student: Location:

Date: Time:

What happened?

What triggered the incident?

Whom/what was at risk? Student WELFARE

List any de-escalation/ positive intervention strategies that you used to diffuse the incident (see over).

Did you need to use a restrictive practice or physical intervention?

Why was this in the best interests of the student?
(See over)

How effective was it? to recover/ repair Was the student distressed? with staff/other students? How can we reduce the risk of this happening again?

Consult with staff/parents - YES/NO

STAFF WELFARE

How many staff were needed to manage this incident safely?

Were you or another staff member hurt?

Describe:

Did you or another member of staff find this incident distressing?

Yes/No Yes / No

If yes, rate this on a scale of 1 to 5: (1 = little or no distress, 5 = very distressing)

Signed:

Date:

Please review form and ensure all questions are answered before submitting to Principal/Deputy Principal

Review by Principal / Deputy Principal

Parents notified: Yes / No

Medical intervention needed/sought: Yes / No

Signed by Principal or Deputy Principal:

Dated:

Appendix 3
Three R's Manual for Teachers
The abi Method
The Three Rs Training Manual for Leader / Teacher / Trainer / Coach

Introduction

The abi Method Three Rs Training is a restorative Anti-Bullying Training and Intervention Methodology that can be used by any individual who works professionally or voluntarily with children in education, youth work, and crèche or after school care or sports settings. It focuses on rebuilding fractured relationships justly to restore peace within social groups that have been affected by a bullying problem.

Induction

At the beginning of the activity that you are about to engage in with children or at the beginning of the sports/school year, bring the group together and show them the Children's Three Rs Training Video that accompanies this pack. Alternatively, you can send the video in a link to parents and ask them to show it to their children.

After the children have watched their training video, you can forward parents a link to the Three Rs Parents' Training Video.

Send or email the Three Rs Agreement which accompanies this pack to parents to be signed after parents have watched the Three Rs Parents' Training Video.

The Three Rs Agreement

I agree to try to care about everyone in this class/group/team.

If I see anyone who is not behaving in a caring way and may be behaving in a bullying way towards another student, I agree not to stand and watch.

I agree to tell an adult so that the person who is being bullied will not suffer any longer and the bullying will stop.

I agree to take part in the Three Rs Steps with my group if anyone may be feeling bullied.

I agree that I will try not behave in a bullying way towards anyone in my class/group/team. If I do, I agree to take part in the Three Rs Steps to solve the problem.

_____ (name of child) has undertaken the Three Rs Training

Module.

Class:

Teacher:

I have watched the Three Rs Parents' Training Video.

Parent's Signature:

Date:

The Three Rs Steps at a Glance

Step One

Record – Disclosure of alleged bullying issue by child or parent. The Three Rs Information Sheet is completed by child and parent and given to teacher, group leader, coach, trainer, who will then engage in a fact finding mission with identified group members.

Step Two

Review – Fact finding mission, talks with those mentioned in the Three Rs Information Sheet. If a bullying cycle is discovered, a Three Rs Group Meeting is announced.

Step Three

Repair / No Retribution – Meeting takes place. No Blame-No Shame approach to work with the group concerned towards repairing any harm done and rebuilding peaceful relationships. Group designs and agrees to new ground rules.

Three Rs Steps in more Detail

Step One – Record

Parent(s) alert the adult in charge of their child's group or class that they are concerned there may be a bullying issue and that their child may be being targeted by other children in the group. The adult gives the parent the Three Rs Information Sheet. Parents then work with targeted child to help them describe the repeated pattern of the bullying behaviour by recording an account of it, who within the group was playing what roles, and by mapping one issue to the next. As much detail as possible must be given, including dates, times and places where bullying behaviour may have taken place, and also including names of anyone who may have engaged in bullying behaviour. Parents then meet with the adult in charge and deliver their account. THE Three Rs INFORMATION SHEET SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE ADULT WITHIN THREE DAYS.

Three Rs Information Sheet

Parents please work with your child and help them to describe the repeated pattern of alleged bullying behaviour by writing an account of it, who was playing what roles, and by mapping one issue to the next. As much detail as possible should be given, including dates, times and places where bullying behaviour may have taken place, and also including names of anyone who may have engaged in bullying behaviour.

- the arrest of the establishment of a bullying cycle
- reaching agreement on how to go forward peacefully
- monitoring of the situation for a period of time
- The adult could show the group the Three Rs Training Video again

What to do if the outcome of the fact finding mission produces evidence of a bullying cycle amongst the group

Outcome Three - If the adult through their fact finding mission discovers evidence of an established bullying cycle within the group concerned, they

will call a group meeting to begin Step Three of the Three Rs Approach. This process brings together the group of individuals who have been affected by the bullying behavior to participate in a structured dialogue with the goal of creating understanding, accountability, and repairing harm with community support.

It may take more than one meeting depending on the amount of time the bullying issue has been in existence. It is important to remember that a bullying cycle takes time to establish itself, that roles can fluctuate in this time, and that, if it is a deeply embedded bullying cycle, it may take time to interrupt. Multiple meetings or conferences may be needed.

Prompts & Questions for Fact Finding Outcome Two

Suggested key questions in Outcome Two

To alleged perpetrator of bullying behaviour

What happened?

Why?

What were you thinking about when you/when this happened.....? What have you thought about since it happened?

Who has been affected by what you did? In what ways?

To alleged target of bullying behaviour

What happened?

Why?

What did you think when this happened to you?

What have you thought about since it happened?

How has this affected you? Have things changed for you as a result? What has been the most difficult thing for you?

To the alleged perpetrator of bullying behaviour

What do you think now about what you did?

What could you say that might fix things?

To the alleged target of bullying behaviour

What would you like to happen to fix things?

To both children

Should we make an agreement?

What should that be?

What can I do to help?

Why don't we meet again on..... to see how things are going? Do you think we can now move on and put this behind us?

Step Three – Repair/ No Retribution

Facilitating the Three Rs Group Meeting

1. The facilitator will run through the Three Rs Meeting Ground Rules and will secure agreement from the group that they will adhere to them.
2. The facilitator will have established a clear repetitive cycle of bullying behaviour on their fact finding mission and will introduce their findings to the group including information outlined in the account written by the alleged target.
3. The facilitator might like to use the Three Rs Bullying Roles Diagram which can be displayed in the meeting space and allow a discussion to develop on self-responsibility, looking at one's own role in the issues as active or passive. How to begin the discussion

After the adult has outlined the results of their fact finding mission they can begin discussions amongst the group using the following questions -

1. What did you think when you realised what happened? 2. What impact has this had on you and others?
3. What has been the hardest thing for you?
4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Using a no blame approach the group can work towards unveiling the bullying cycle and look at who in the group could be assuming the roles of perpetrator/ initiator/ and bystander / observer and who in the group may have joined with the perpetrator / initiator.

When the bullying problem has been unveiled and the group has identified the roles they were playing in it, the adult can then

1. Support / Allow the group to decide how to resolve the issue and how to acknowledge the harm that may have been done to other members.
2. Support / Allow the group to agree on how to move forward healthily.
3. Write the Three Rs Group Rules with the group – in simple sentences.
4. Ask the group to individually reaffirm their Three Rs Agreement.

Private Discussions with alleged perpetrators

If the adult sees a need after the group meetings, discussions can take place with individual perpetrators of bullying behaviour to support them in acknowledging their role and the harm they may have caused. A sanction can be applied, but not a punishment.

A review date can be agreed with the alleged perpetrator to discuss how they are working towards changing their behaviours.

Review should take place within 20 days of intervention.

Follow Up

Follow up should take place with the affected group, the targeted individual and the perpetrators after an agreed period of time subsequent to doing the Three Rs Steps in the form of

- A meeting
- Redoing the Three Rs Training
- A re-signing of the Three Rs Agreement

Step Three - The Three Rs Meeting Script

for opening the meeting, questions to group and closing the meeting.

Starting the meeting

Hello everyone, thanks for coming. Before we start I'd like to explain why you have been invited to this meeting today. When you did your Three Rs Training you agreed that you would come to a meeting to work out a bullying problem in our group if we thought there might be one. It looks like there is a problem. This problem that has happened has been hard for all of us. I'm hoping that by coming here today we will understand what has happened better, who has been affected and how and what we can do to repair the harm.

We are going to talk about the problem and how people's behaviour may have affected others. We are not here today to blame or shame anyone or to judge anyone in any way. We are going to work with each other to try to reach an agreement on how this group will be towards each other from now on so that we have healthy relationships in the group. We will write this agreement down and everyone here will get a copy of it which you will also share with your parents. No one has to be here in this meeting and you are all free to leave at any time, but if you do that, there will be a different way to work out the problem between you and the school/club etc.

If we can't make an agreement today, we will arrange to meet again so that we get to make an agreement as soon as we can.

I'd like to go through the Three Rs Ground Rules now. (Please see Three Rs Ground Rules Page...)

Now I'd like if we could all look at the Bullying Roles Diagram and think to ourselves if we have taken up any of those roles. We know from the training that we did at the start of this term / group / program that when a bullying problem begins, the group can very often divide into these roles when one person becomes the Person Using Bullying Behaviours.

Beginning to unveil the problem – Persons Using Bullying Behaviours

Is there anyone here who thinks that they might have been in the Persons Using Bullying Behaviours Role? Thank you for being honest, that's really helpful. So that we can understand what happened a little better, can you tell us how or why you

began to use bullying behaviours?

What were you thinking?

What were you hoping might happen?

What do you think was going on in your head?

What do you think about what you were doing now?

What do you think it may have been like for anyone who was in the Person/s Feeling Bullied Role.

Is there anyone here who you think may have been affected in this way? How?

Exploring the harm that may have been done – Persons feeling bullied

What did you think when this began to happen?

What kind of things were happening?

What have you thought about since?

What's it been like for you?

What have been the worst parts of it?

Persons seeing the bullying behaviour

What did you think when you heard about or saw what was happening?

How do you feel about it?

What kind of changes do you think you may have seen in (person feeling bullied)?

What have you done to help?

What do you feel you could have done to help if you didn't? Why did you decide not to help?

What is the most difficult thing about all of this for you?

Persons who may have joined in or agreed with what the Person Using Bullying Behaviours was doing

What did you think when you first saw what had been doing to?

How do you feel now about what you saw?

What are the main issues for you here?

What's the most difficult thing for you ?

Repairing harm done – Person Using Bullying Behaviours

Is there anything that you have heard or learned today that you didn't understand before?

How does that feel?

What could you say to (person feeling bullied) that you didn't understand before?

Is there anything you'd like to say that might begin to make things right?

What do you think needs to hear from you right now? (If an apology is not forthcoming).

Was it your intention to upset? Do you think that was fair?

Making the Three Rs Agreement – everyone beginning with persons who felt bullied

How do you all think we could repair any harm done? What needs to happen now to fix things?

How can we make sure that this doesn't happen again? Can we begin to write this into our agreement?

What do you think it needs to say?

What should we do if we feel the problem might be starting again?

What help do you think I might be able to give you?

Finishing the meeting

Before we finish this meeting is there anything that anyone would like to say?

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this today. By working together today we have reached an agreement that should go a long way to making things right. I'm going to write this agreement out properly and then I will be giving you all your own copy of it which I would like you to share with your parents.

Can we agree on a date to follow up and check how things are going?

Great! This matter is now finished as long as we keep to the agreement reached.

Three Rs Meeting Ground Rules

for Step Three - Repair

One Person speaks at a time.

Listen well.

Speak respectfully, no shouting, no blaming, no shaming.

Agree not to talk about this meeting to anyone who is not in this meeting unless someone needs to understand something.

Respect others respect each other's feelings; creating a safe place to express thoughts and emotions.

Speak for yourself, your thoughts and feelings only

All are equal. Each member of this group is valued. We are all here to learn and heal. Each member will have a chance to help create the Three Rs Agreement. Once we had made our agreement, this matter is finished.

Honesty – be completely truthful.

Your parents will be phoned to tell them about the agreement we have made.

Is this all clear to everyone?

Do we need any more ground rules?

The Three Rs Bullying Roles For Step Three – Repair

The three main roles that a group can play in a bullying cycle are Person feeling bullied, Person using the bullying behaviour and Persons seeing the bullying behaviour.

It is important to remember that sometimes people in a group who see the bullying behaviour being done will join in with the behaviour.

Three Rs Group Agreement

For Step Three – Moving Forward Healthily

Restarting without retribution – no blame, no shame. How will we as a group do this?

Class/Support Teacher: Date:

Follow Up Date:

Date this policy will be reviewed School year 24/25

Date ratified by the Board of Management: 13/12/2023

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher
A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal
Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson
Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved
The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2 Written

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson
If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher
The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)
The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other parties as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved
The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board
If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded
Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or;
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

Formal Stage 4 Decision

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson
The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded
The decision of the Board shall be final.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing
Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.