

Our Lady of Victories Infant School

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Our Lady of Victories Infant School Code of Positive Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This policy followed from a review of the existing Code of Behaviour Policy in 2022. In Our Lady of Victories Infant School, we hope to foster harmonious relations between parents/guardians, children and school personnel. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with the emphasis on encouragement and positive strategies so that positive behaviour will prevail in our school.

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. We aim to have a positive school ethos based on the quality of the relationships within the school community. This ethos permeates all the activities within the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

Rationale

Our Lady of Victories Infant School decided to review its Code of Behaviour in because

- It was felt that in previous policies, the voice of the infant child was not significantly articulated; having established a pupil **Wellbeing Committee in 2019**, the **Wellbeing Anthem, composed by our pupils, will be intrinsically core to the school's newly revised Code of Conduct. The BOM has agreed that a Wellbeing Committee will be established annually with a view to hearing the voice of the children in the context of wellbeing for all.**



- The existing policy was due for review and amendment
- Parent/s' signature to abide by the Code of Behaviour
- It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline
- Agreement that Code of Positive Behaviour be more inclusive (2023)

Teachers and parents share a common goal:

- The collective voice of the pupils as articulated in our Wellbeing Anthem will form the basis of the Positive Code of Conduct.
- Children attending this school will be encouraged and given the opportunity to reach their maximum potential, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil.
- The school will endeavour to create a safe and friendly environment in the belief that this allows children to thrive.
- Every effort will be made by all members of staff to encourage positive behaviour in the school, within a framework of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of cooperation amongst staff and between staff, pupils and parents. The school encourages communication between all parties: staff, parents and children.
- The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal teacher.
- Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and grounds.
- A pupil will be referred to the principal teacher for serious / gross breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- All serious or gross breaches of the behaviour code will be recorded and referred to the principal.

Each student is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show respect and consideration for other children and adults
- Show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings
- Take pride in his/her appearance and wear our school uniform
- Be on time for school and to strive to attend every day- mainly parental responsibility in infant context
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework
- Each pupil is expected to:
 - Listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
 - Work – to the best of his/her ability
 - Value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
 - Follow – the direction of his/her teacher
 - Obtain – his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
 - Respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom

In the interest of safety, each pupil is expected to:

- Walk – in the school corridors
- Hold the bannister on stairs and play safely in the yard & playground
- Use equipment appropriately e.g. building equipment for building etc

- Play safely ,avoiding games that are rough or dangerous
- Follow the directions of yard/playground/hall supervisors
- Walk to and from playground
- Remain on the school premises at all times
- Avoid swearing, fighting, name-calling and bullying

On trips/school activities

- Each pupil is expected to
- Follow his/her teacher's directions at all times
- Remain with teacher/supervisor and group of pupils at all times
- Behave politely towards those they meet on such trips
- Observe the rules of good behaviour in our Wellbeing Anthem - kind hands,feet, words and hearts.

Strategies to Promote Positive Behaviour May Include:

- A word or gesture to show approval
- A comment on SeeSaw, homework sheet/certificate/ sticker
- A commendation from the principal or another member of staff
- A merit system
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal
- Golden Time (Treat or reward earned by the class or group)
- A visit to the "Treasure Chest"

The balance between rewards and sanctions is necessary to maintain good standards of behaviour. The ideal is where rewards are intrinsic and virtue is its own reward.

Strategies in Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour-General Principles

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or principal. A common sense approach will be taken. The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reminder of agreed school and classroom rules/behaviour contract
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or other
- In-school suspension
- Loss of privileges
- Prescribing additional work
- Communication with parents by class teacher
- Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils
- Referral to the Principal teacher.
- Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to discuss their child's case.

Undesirable Behaviour in Pupils

- The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.
- For some pupils, it may be necessary to design a behaviour management plan in which specific, short-term, behavioural objectives are set as a result of discussion with the child, parents(s) and teacher and SNA if this applies. These plans which provide for the monitoring and modification of specific behavioural problems, are most effective over a short period of time.

Examples of Level 1 Minor Misdemeanours:-

Level 1 Behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and of common areas. Generally, students learn through their mistakes and to this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Interrupting class work/preventing other from learning
- Arriving late for school
- Running in school building
- Leaving seat without permission at lunch time
- Leaving litter around school
- Being mildly discourteous/unmannerly (in language, tone, manner)
- Not working to full potential
- Ignoring staff requests
- First offence at bullying

Disciplinary Actions

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline pupils at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminders
- Inviting child to reflect
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact by teacher
- Positive behaviour contract

Supportive Interventions-Level 1

- Classroom based interventions Circle Time, class meeting, informal consultation with parent/staff member
- Discussion of behaviour with the child
- Reflecting on Wellbeing Anthem
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention; this information is useful should a problem persist

Examples of Level 2 Serious Misdemeanours

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. Listed below are samples of Level 2 behaviours. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated instances of level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Bullying (See Anti-bullying Policy)
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others in the school classroom or grounds e.g. hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, biting and other similar physical behaviours)
- Endangering self, staff or fellow pupils in the school
- Leaving the school premises without permission
- Consistent and persistent disruption of class
- Stealing
- Possession or dangerous use of equipment, toy etc e.g bow and arrow, any kind of knife, using equipment/object as a weapon
- Throwing objects that may cause harm to pupils or staff
- Telling lies or making wrongful accusations
- Damaging pupil's or school property
- Being verbally disrespectful to a member of staff
- Behaving in a way the disrupts teaching and learning
- Using unacceptable, aggressive or offensive language
- Posting libellous or defamatory comments publically e.g. on social media sites and public places
- Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another child or staff member

Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 Behaviour is dependent on the severity and/or frequency of specific behaviour and is developmentally appropriate. The disciplinary actions at level 3 are administered by the Principal/Deputy Principal and include notification of the parents. Some responses to level 2 responses include:-

- Temporary removal from class/yard
- Report submitted to the BOM
- Meeting parent/guardian
- Suspension depending on the severity of the behaviour
- Behaviour Management Plan

Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 Supportive Interventions:-

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or Principal
- Request for assistance from external agencies NEPS, HSE, NCSE etc
- Referral of child to HSE Services for psychological or other assessment with parental/guardian consent.

Level 3 Gross Misdemeanours

- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards Pupils, Teachers, SNAs
- Behaviour where child puts his/her own safety at significant risk
- Repeated instances of level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Bullying that has been ongoing
- Vandalism
- Verbal/offensive language against pupils/teachers/SNAs
- Stealing persistently
- Persistently disruptive behaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Bringing weapons to school
- This list is not exhaustive and other incidents may be considered as gross misdemeanours at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Management.
- Having illegal substance in possession

Disciplinary Actions

Behaviour at level 3 may involve suspension from school. Repeated incidents of level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

Suspension

- Before resorting to serious sanctions, e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.
- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour a pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 of the *Rules for National Schools*.
- The Board of Management authorises the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents
- In the unlikely situation of a repeated need to exclude a student it will be done on a phased basis:-

Stage 1 - Excluded for a single day x 3 times;

Stage 2 - Excluded for 3 days x 3 times – this will be done in consultation with the chairperson of the BOM and the Principal

Stage 3 - Excluded for 5 days x 3 times- approval will be sought from the BOM

- The Principal or Chairperson will notify the parent in writing of the decision to suspend.
- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents will be discussed and agreed on.
- The provision for appeal to the Board of Management.
- The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
- Where the cumulative total of days reaches 6, the NEWB/EWO will be notified.

- Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay.
- There is an expectation that the HSE/Children’s Disability Network Team-CDNT /NEPS/EIT/AON/SADT or other appropriate state agency will engage appropriately and with expedience when support and advice is sought from school management/ BOM.

Expulsion

- Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130 (6) and in line with Department of Education and Skills Guidelines.

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

- A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the principal.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the principal
- Consideration by the BOM of the principal’s recommendations and the holding of a hearing
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- If BOM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. Expulsion of a pupil will follow DE and Tusla procedures.
- Consultations arranged by the EWO.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29)

Monitoring & Evaluation of Code:

(Success by which the policy will be judged)

- Children will be consulted- the “Child’s Voice” is valued in our school culture
- Our Wellbeing Anthem is taught and children have an understanding of the expectations to maintain a happy school “*Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words, Kind Hearts; feeling safe, connected, belonging, feeling protected* ”, as in the Wellbeing Anthem. Some children may use differentiated resources to understand the concepts.
- Parents are enlightened with regard to our Wellbeing Anthem in the Induction Phase in School.
- Reports from the Senior Schools confirm that the Wellbeing Anthem introduced in Junior Infants creates a bedrock of understanding of behaviour that supports every child’s wellbeing and sense of safety
- Atmosphere of discipline and harmony within the school
- Children learn and thrive in a safe environment
- Children are aware of school rules
- Children are involved in the school rules
- Children reflect on “*kind hands, kind feet, kind words and kind hearts*”
- Children feel connected, safe and protected , as signalled in the annual Safeguarding audit with pupils in September

- Implementation of Wellbeing Programmes e.g. Welcome to Wellbeing and specific targeted interventions/programmes where needed
- Staff apply school rules
- Growth in self- discipline, intrinsically positive behaviour
- Cooperation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code
- Comments or compliments on behaviour
- Regular feedback from teachers and awards presented by Principal at Assembly
- Children working to the best of their ability
- Class working to the best of their ability
- Improvements in behaviour
- Liaising with Parents' Group (Principal, HSCL) in discussion and feedback regarding behaviour
- Annual review at staff meeting and BOM

Monitoring and Review:

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein in order that children learn and thrive in a safe environment. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed yearly or more often if the need arises.

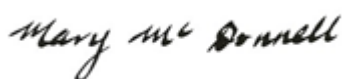
In registering children in Our Lady of Victories Infant School, parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school.

The Code of Positive Conduct Policy is reviewed annually and following consultation with stakeholders (children, parents, staff) , was amended and ratified by the Board of Management of Our Lady of Victories Infant School on 10th October 2023.

Signature of Chairperson Board of Management & Principal



Chairperson Tom Loughnane 10/10/2023



Mary McDonnell Principal 10/10/2023

