



## Maynooth Educate Together National School Positive Behaviour Policy

The broad aim of the Positive Behaviour Policy is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in an environment conducive to learning. It is directed towards adopting a positive approach to the question of behaviour in our school. This means that there is greater emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions or punishments.

This policy is also adopted to promote a positive and safe working environment for all staff, including a positive and safe classroom environment for teachers.

This Positive Behaviour Policy applies while in the school as well as on school trips and any school-linked activities.

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## **Introduction**

In order to fulfil the main aims of primary education an atmosphere conducive to learning must be maintained. This is best achieved by maintaining a respectful environment appropriate to the development of satisfactory attitudes and habits by the children.

Children who have no limits set for them are generally not happy children. They feel insecure and do not develop much self control, and they realise intuitively that parents/guardians or teachers who do not enforce any rules are less caring than those who do. Therefore children must understand what they can and cannot do. There should be as few rules as possible, with clear agreed consequences when rules are breached. Rules work best when they are appropriate to the child's age and within their capacity to follow without much strain.

We need to establish a code of behaviour to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment. It is very important that children understand that they have rights. It is essential that they understand that with these rights come responsibilities. Every effort is made by every member of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of the classroom situation.

This policy follows recommendations set in the relevant Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, 2008). It was devised in consultation with the teaching staff in our school and was submitted to the Board of Management. It will be reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process.

## **Expectations for students, staff and parents/guardians and Board of Management.**

We believe that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school. A high level of cooperation among members of staff is necessary. Equally necessary is a high level of cooperation among staff, pupils and parents/guardians. It is hoped that all pupils, parents/guardians and staff will share a sense of responsibility about good conduct within the school, and that where someone witnesses inappropriate behaviour, that that person will try to rectify the situation and not walk away from it. It is one of the aims of the school to produce responsible students so we hope that they will learn from the environment that they see around them

Behaviour should reflect values such as:

- respect for self and others
- kindness and willingness to help others
- courtesy and good manners
- fairness
- readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict

Mutually respectful relationships balance warmth and empathy with objectivity, professional detachment, fairness and consistency.

### ***Expectations for students***

The school expects commitment from students to their own learning and to that of their peers. This commitment includes:

- attending school regularly and punctually
- doing their best in class
- taking responsibility for their work
- keeping the rules
- forgiveness
- helping to create a safe, positive environment
- respecting staff
- respecting other students and their learning
- participation in school activities

Class teachers and specialist personnel should check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that is appropriate to the abilities of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.

### ***Expectations for staff***

The concept of promoting positive behaviour should be based upon an empowering approach, which nurtures a culture of self-discipline among children, rather than behaviour which is tailored to please adults. An atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect should be created as part of the philosophy of the school. All adults throughout their interactions with children should use communication strategies which foster co-operation, respect, tolerance and encouragement.

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. However each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within their own class. They will:

- Endeavour to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and needs of the child.
- Ensure that there is a high level of supervision at all times
- Be familiar with the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner
- Keep a written record of all incidents of serious or gross misconduct, sanctions implemented and the outcome. These will be recorded on incident/Accident recording sheets which each teacher will maintain in the classroom. Incidents which occur on the yard will be recorded on Incident/Accident record sheets which will form part of the yard book.
- Prepare an Individual Education Plan, in consultation with the Resource teacher and the parents, for children who have special educational needs which include behavioural difficulties. This IEP will have specific targets included which will be reviewed twice annually.
- Support the child with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties through promoting an understanding of expectations and teaching and role modelling the expected behaviour.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

### ***Expectations for parents/guardians***

Co-operation between staff and parents/guardians is encouraged through regular communication. Notes in school diaries, phonecalls, informal conversations or arranged meetings ensure co-operation. Parents/guardians support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standard behaviour by:

- ensuring that children attend regularly and punctually
- being interested in, supporting and encouraging their children's school work
- being familiar with the code of behaviour and supporting its implementation
- co-operating with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- communicating with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/behaviour
- being aware of and co-operating with the school system of rewards and sanctions
- attending meetings at the school if requested
- helping their child with homework and ensuring that it is completed
- encouraging children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.

Parents/guardians are required to sign a Certificate of Co-operation with the Positive Behaviour Policy when enrolling their child in the school.

### ***Expectations for the Board of Management***

The Board supports the Code of Behaviour by:

- Providing a comfortable, safe environment for staff and pupils
- Supporting the Principal and staff in implementing the Code. The Board provides opportunities for staff development through facilitating staff to attend relevant courses on 'Managing children with challenging behaviour', 'Promoting a positive school environment' and facilitating in-school staff training
- Issues involving serious breaches of discipline are discussed at Board of Management meetings
- Dealing with serious breaches of behaviour in collaboration with the staff
- Ratifying the Code once consultation is finished.

### **School Rules**

Golden Rules have been drawn up for each class which are based on the rules below. The aim is to decide on a code which enables all to learn well and get on well together. These rules will be displayed in each classroom.

Golden Rules incorporate the principles of respect for others, sharing and caring, will encourage politeness, kindness, honesty, gentleness sharing, listening, etc. The wording of Golden Rules may change at the start of a school year, but they will always uphold the same underlying principles.

### ***Classroom and Yard Golden Rules***

1. **Rule number one:** be kind to everyone
2. **Rule number two:** listen when teacher is talking to you
3. **Rule number three:** be the best you can be
4. **Rule number four:** keep a tidy desk and a tidy floor
5. **Rule number five:** give visitors a lovely welcome when they arrive
6. **Rule number six:** on the playground play nicely and mix

## **Yard**

Children will be encouraged to play together and to ensure that no child is excluded. Children are encouraged to remember the Golden Rules at line up time on re-entering the yard. Jostling and overtaking is not acceptable.

We always play safely – no rough play  
We always ask permission to leave the yard  
We obey the whistle

## **Reward system**

Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All children deserve encouragement to attain their best. Rewards should be given for effort and not only for achievement. An approach which utilizes encouragement rather than praise should be developed.

Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school

Parents/guardians will hear good news on a regular basis about their child via the incentive systems. These include the following strategies: responsibility badges, sharing work with an audience, displaying work, verbal comments to parents/guardians, inviting parents/guardians to see work, stickers awarded by adults for behaviour and work, certificates, etc.

Positive Behaviour will be rewarded in **Golden Time** each week. Good behaviour on the yard will be taken account of in class Golden Time allocation. Golden Time lost may be regained by improved behaviour. If a child does not show improvement with the Whole School Reward System, at the Teachers discretion Parents/Guardians may be asked to meet with the Teacher to discuss the matter.

## **Unacceptable misbehaviour and its consequences**

Where a student's behaviour disrupts the teaching and learning of other students, school authorities have to weigh the needs of that student with the needs of other students and staff. Even minor breaches of the rules can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent.

Maynooth ETNS will use problem-solving approach when dealing with inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.

Sanctions will be applied in order to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Applying sanctions will also reinforce the boundaries set out in the rules and signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning, and keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

Sanctions should be used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

## **Special Educational Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour Policy. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special needs assistants, learning and/or resource teacher. The class teacher and Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Individual Behaviour Plans will be reviewed twice annually. Relevant professional advice from psychological assessments and the Special Education Support Services will be considered.

Class teachers, Resource teachers, Learning Support teachers and Special Needs Assistants will support the child with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties through promoting an understanding of expectations and teaching and role modelling the expected behaviour.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to adhere to the rules, and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

## **Minor Misbehaviour**

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour

- 
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Being disruptive in class
- Disobedience
- Minor breaches of General, Class and Playground rules.

## **Addressing Repeated or Persistent Minor Misbehaviour in Classroom**

**Step 1:** Verbal Warning

**Step 2:** Lose some Golden Time & Moved to another area within the Classroom

**Step 3:** Moved to another classroom, Parents/Guardians informed in Homework Journal or by note

**Step 4:** Principal reprimands pupil. Principal meets with teachers, Parents/Guardians & pupil

## **Addressing Minor Misbehaviour on Yard**

**Step 1** Verbal Warning,

**Step 2** Yellow Card,

**Step 3** Red Card & Time Out (5 Mins Juniors/10 Mins Seniors).

## **Addressing Repeated or Persistent Minor Misbehaviour on Yard**

Child will be removed inside by SNA to Teacher on Indoor Supervision. If a child is brought inside they will have to do an indoor period of reflection the following day to review the rules. If a child has to be removed from the Yard on 2 occasions in the same week, Parents will be contacted to meet with the Principal to discuss the matter.

## **Serious misbehaviour**

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Bullying (including alienation and intimidation)
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including harrasment, discrimination and victimisation) which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour.
- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member and adult volunteers
- Deliberate, continual disobedience
- Racism
- Verbal /physical abuse of adults or children
- Use of unacceptable language
- Inappropriate behaviours or gestures
- Serious breaches of General, Class and Playground rules
- Persistent minor misbehaviour will be classified as Serious Misbehaviour
- Theft
- Deliberate damage to property
- Any behaviour which poses risk of injury to the pupil or others
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous.
- Use of mobile phones or electronic equipment with recording capabilities without staff permission
- Any other misbehaviour which continuously interferes with teaching and learning process.

Staff will keep a written record of all incidents of serious or gross misconduct, sanctions implemented and the outcome. These will be recorded on incident/Accident recording sheets which each teacher will maintain in the classroom. Incidents which occur on the yard will be recorded on an Incident/Accident record sheets which will form part of the yard book.

In cases of serious misbehaviour, parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet with the class teacher and the Principal to discuss their childs behaviour. Teachers and Parents will work closely to manage serious behaviours. Only in cases of repeated serious misbehaviour and failure to improve after meeting(s) between parents/guardians, teacher and principal will temporary suspension be considered. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

The Board of Management will adopt policies to deal with bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

### ***Gross misbehaviour***

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil or any staff member or visitor to the school
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Very serious breaches of general, class and playground rules

- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour

## **Suspension**

Examples of grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to suspend a student can be made.

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

## **Expulsion**

Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

## ***Repeated serious and gross misbehaviour***

Where it is recognised that serious/gross misbehaviour is the result of a child being emotionally disturbed every effort will be made to have the child referred for psychological assessment. Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible. Co-operation between staff and parents/guardians is vital to success in dealing with serious and gross misbehaviour.

## ***Persistent serious or gross misbehaviour***

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Science guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for national Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal
- If parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period

- In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board authorizes the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils parents/guardians
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed
- Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services.
- When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:
  - A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
  - A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
  - Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing.
  - Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
  - Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
  - Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.

## **Methods of communicating with parents/guardians**

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents/guardians and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians are being established and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings
- Formal parent/teacher meetings
- Through children's homework journal (1st-6th class)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School notice board

## **Raising a concern/bringing a complaint about a behaviour matter**

Any parent/guardian who has concerns about a behaviour matter should bring this

concern to the attention of the school principal. The school principal will then in turn bring this to the attention of the class teacher. Together they will investigate the matter and report back to the parent/guardian. All behaviour matters will be dealt with in compliance with this Positive Behaviour Policy.

### **Notifying the school about absence from school**

Regular attendance at school is important for a child's progress. Children must not be absent from school unless they are ill or for some unavoidable reason.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to inform the school on the first day of the child's absence, by text message, phone call or email. A note of explanation should always follow a child's absence on the first day of their return to school. The note should be given to the class teacher and will be kept on record in the Roll Book.

A standard letter (see Appendix 1) will be sent to parents/guardians if a child is absent from school for more than 15 days. This letter will remind them, that the school are obliged to report any child that is absent for 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board.

If there are repeated instances of absenteeism following the letter, the Principal will meet with the Parents/Guardians in relation to the matter.

### **Plan for reviewing the policy**

This Positive Behaviour Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and any training needs arising from implementing such a policy will be addressed.

Approved by the Board of Management:

Date:

Signature:

## Appendix 1 - Letter to parents/guardians if a child is absent from school for more than 15 days

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Regular attendance at school is important for your child's progress. Children must not be absent from school unless they are ill or for some unavoidable reason.

I am writing to inform you that your child has missed \_\_\_\_\_ school days in the school year \_\_\_\_\_.

The school is legally required to report any child who is absent for 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board.

If your child had recorded a large number of days due to medical reasons, a Medical Certificate should be furnished to the school. A copy will be kept on file.

Yours Sincerely,

Marie Hand. School Principal.

## **Certificate of Co-Operation with the Positive Behaviour Policy**

The safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Positive Behaviour Policy has been put in place and ratified by the Board of Management.

We request that parents/guardians read the policy carefully with their child/children and discuss the contents. Please sign the following undertaking and return this form to the school by:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that I have read this policy with my child:

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

We have discussed the contents together and we agree to uphold this policy during the coming year.

Signed by Parent/Guardian:

Name (please type): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.**





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**MAYNOOTH EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL**  
**INCIDENT / ACCIDENT REPORT SHEET**

*Please circle appropriate heading*

Name of Pupil:	
Class:	
Date/Time	
Names of Students Involved:	
Incident Description:/ Location.	
Supervising Staff:	
Further Action Taken:	
Names of People Informed:	Principal: Teachers: Parents: Special Needs Assistant: Others:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_