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## 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 the 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 a Continuum of Support/Behaviour Plan in consultation with the class and/or SEN teacher and the parents, for children who have special educational needs which include behavioural difficulties. This Continuum of Support/Behaviour Plan 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, email, phone calls, 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**

School Rules incorporate the principles of respect for others, sharing and caring, will encourage politeness, kindness, honesty, gentleness, listening etc. Teachers and classes can draw up their own class rules or class charters based on the principles above; examples of which are stated below.

The wording of Class and Yard Rules may change from class to class and from year to year, but they will always uphold the same underlying principles.

## ***Classroom Rules***

1. We are gentle
2. We are kind and helpful
3. We listen
4. We work hard
5. We look after property
6. We are honest

## ***Yard Rules***

Children will be encouraged to play together and to ensure that no child is excluded. Children are encouraged to remember the School Rules on the yard.

1. We are gentle
2. We are kind and helpful
3. We listen
4. We always play safely
5. We walk safely and quietly to and from the yard
6. We always ask permission to leave the yard
7. On the first whistle, we will freeze. On the second whistle, we will walk quietly to our line

## **Reward System**

Positive behaviour is the focus in our school and is rewarded in the following ways; verbal feedback, feedback to parents, Star of the Week/Month, Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine, displaying work, sharing work with the class, certificates, stickers, small prizes, additional class trips, homework passes and additional PE/Arts & Crafts/Yard time.

Teachers will use methods to encourage positive behaviour such as: Golden time, Superhero charts, Class Dojo etc.

## **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, SEN 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

- Being disruptive in class
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Minor breaches of General School, Class and Playground rules
- Persistent minor misbehaviour will be classified as Serious Misbehaviour

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

**Step 1:** Verbal Warning

**Step 2:** Lose some privileges and moved to another area within the classroom

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

**Step 4:** Reflection sheet for senior pupils and social story for junior pupils when needed

**Step 5:** Teacher meets with parents to discuss pupil's behaviour

**Step 6:** 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 middle grades/15 mins senior)

**Step 4:** Reflection sheet for senior pupils and social story or junior pupils when needed

**Step 5:** Teacher meets with parents to discuss pupil's behaviour

**Step 6:** Principal reprimands pupil. Principal meets with teachers, Parents/Guardians & pupil

### ***Serious misbehaviour***

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Bullying (including behaviour that is hurtful, alienation, intimidation, harassment, discrimination and victimisation including but not limited to online bullying (please refer to school's AUP))
- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member and adult volunteers
- Deliberate, continual disobedience despite intervention of steps.
- Racism
- Verbal /physical abuse of adults or children
- Use of serious offensive language
- Inappropriate behaviours or gestures
- 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. 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 child's 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 any staff member or visitor to the school
- Assault with intent to hurt or injure another pupil (including spitting, biting, punching, tripping and kicking)
- 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.

Suspension is defined as "requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specific, limited period of school days" (NEWB, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, 2008, p. 70)

## ***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 suspended for a first offence.



## ***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 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 authorises 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 authorise 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 authorise 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:
  1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
  2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
  3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
  4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
  5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
  6. Confirmation of the decision to expel
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after TULSA 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:

- Communication with parents in the form of note or email
- Informal parent/teacher meetings
- Formal parent/teacher meetings

## **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 class teacher. The class teacher will then in turn bring this to the attention of the school principal. 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.

## **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

## ***20 Key Strategies for Teaching Children with EBD***

1. Routine: Provide a structured routine with visual time clock. Ensure consistency across the school with morning/start of class routine. Auditory sound cues may be helpful in addition to visual cues to help students manage their time efficiently. Colour coding for subjects? Post schedule (e.g. on whiteboard) and refer to schedule on regular basis. Routines may take 6-8 weeks to establish or even more for this population of students. Have a class seating plan at all times.
2. Changes in Routine: Convey any changes of routine to students as soon as available. The sooner students are aware of changes the more time students have to adjust to the new routine.
3. Rules need to be explicitly taught. Telling pupils 'this is the rule' is not sufficient for pupils with EBD or any form of behavioural difficulty. Visuals e.g. photos of 'sitting properly', 'lining up correctly', 'listening attentively' should be used. Teaching rules and good behaviours can be integrated into drama lessons. Situations can be role-played where pupils can take on the role of teacher/pupil. This is an excellent method for reinforcing expected behaviours.
4. Build self-esteem. Offer encouragement, look for the positives, small though they may be at first. Be enthusiastic in what you say and do – it is contagious and raises the morale of those around you. Remember the crucial first step is consciously taking a positive, and willing, interest in the child. This involves taking time to listen to the child in order to build trust.
5. Classroom Jobs Chart/Classroom Order Chart: Classroom jobs offer an opportunity for student to show responsibility. In order to ensure success, make sure students have an opportunity to experience every job. One suggestion is having a chart with each student's name and according job. Every week rotate the jobs. The list can double as the order in which students line up or choose preferred activities. Students with EBD classification tend to be competitive and need specific procedures informing the order students line up and choose activities.
6. Logical Consequences: Students must fix what they break. If a student pushes over a desk, he or she must pick it up. If a student runs in the hall, she must practice walking the correct way. If the student talks during the lesson, student must make up the work on his time. Be consistent with consequences so students know what is expected of them. Consistency across the school in addressing behaviour is also crucial.
7. Collect data on Behaviour. It is crucial to keep detailed notes on incidents of misbehaviour, including what happened just before the behaviour and how the situation may have escalated. This can help to identify the trigger for a particular behaviour. Keeping a log of instances of good behaviour also works well to identify over time which occurrences/situations/environments lead to particularly positive

behaviour from the child. When collecting behaviour data, note

- Frequency of particular behaviours
- Duration of behaviours (more than just a 'bad day')
- How general are the behaviours?
- How intense are the behaviours?

Develop an Individual Behaviour Plan if a pattern of behaviours is noted (see attached sheet). This is completed in consultation with the class teacher, Principal, parents and SEN Teacher or Psychologist if applicable.

8. Target Behaviours: After taking data on students' observable behaviour, determine which behaviour or behaviours to direct attention. Work with student to develop a plan to replace undesirable behaviour with a more suitable behaviour. If student throws desks and pencils when angry, have student work on communicating anger to an adult or trusted peer and how to be assertive without being aggressive.

9. Small Flexible Grouping: Students with EBD may have difficulty establishing relationships with peers. Abusive language and other behaviours may interfere with learning. Smaller groups decrease distractions and student-to-teacher ratio. Differentiation of instruction is more manageable with smaller groups.

10. Audience: During a serious behaviour episode, the most effective strategy may be to remove the audience. The audience typically is other peers but may be other adults. The audience can be removed by moving the student if he or she is willing. However, moving the audience may be necessary in some cases. Develop a procedure with your class which will function as an "everybody out" drill. Behaviours amplified with an audience may be reduced or completely stopped when an audience is removed. Alternatively, the spot may be used after a behaviour occurs to give the student a chance to refocus.

11. Choices: Students may frustrate easily when doing work. Giving students an option of when to complete the work is a powerful tool. For example, a teacher may say, "You need to get this done today. Would you rather do it now or during your free time?"

12. Do not excuse a child's behaviour because he has EBD.

13. Time Out/ Cooling Off Time. 5 minutes is enough. 10 minutes is the absolute maximum amount of time which should be allowed for 'cooling off'. This generally has a shelf life of 2-3 occasions before losing effectiveness as a disciplinary technique. This time can be used for reflection. (See attached sheet)

14. Effective Questioning. If you use a question, never use 'why' e.g. Why are you talking? Why are you shouting out? Or 'Are you talking down there?' The child either cannot reasonably answer this or else it's a pointless question. Use direct questions only...what/where/when. Use approaches and terminology such as 'John, you're talking. Do you remember our rule about chatting during quiet time?' or 'I'm not using a nasty tone with you and I don't expect you to use a nasty tone with me'.

15. Communicate calmness at all times. Remember: the first person to calm in an emotionally fraught situation is yourself.

16. Avoid an over-stimulated classroom environment. Children with EBD should not be seated next to windows or doors or near lights or areas with a lot of footfall. Minimise charts on walls, too many bright colours and clutter in the room. In a classroom where an SNA is present, be conscious of two people moving around at the same time, speaking to each other etc.

17. Tactical ignoring. Tactically ignore the secondary behaviour but not the primary behaviour e.g. The pupil has hit another child on yard. This behaviour must be dealt with. However, as this behaviour is being dealt with, we tactically ignore secondary behaviours such as sulkiness, attitude or tone of voice. Addressing all these behaviours leads to an escalation of the situation and confusion in the child's mind over which behaviour is being addressed.

18. 'Separate the behaviour from the person'. This is difficult when a child's behaviour is rude, arrogant, lazy, hostile or aggressive. As teachers, we need to advocate appropriate discipline and consequences for disruptive or wrong behaviour. However, we should not hold grudges, but rather repair, rebuild and move on with the child, work with the child within.

19. Allow feedback from the pupils themselves. As well as reflection by the pupil on his behaviour, this also includes giving opportunities for the greater student body, perhaps through the school council, to discuss and make recommendations about behaviour, including bullying, and the effectiveness of rewards and sanctions.

20. Do not think you can always handle the situation on your own. The support of colleagues is a crucial factor in all that we do to enable, and work with, challenging children and their families.

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_

## My Reflection Sheet

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

1. What happened?

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2. What were you thinking at the time?

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3. What are you thinking about it since?

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4. Who has been affected and in what way?

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5. How could things have been done differently?

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6. What do you think needs to happen next?

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Signed (Child): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Parent): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Teacher): \_\_\_\_\_