

## Code of Behaviour

<b>Title</b>
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St. Kevin's N.S., Greystones - Code of Behaviour

<b>Introductory Statement</b>
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This policy was reviewed in the 2009 - 2010 school year and involved consultation with staff, pupils, Parents' Association and St. Kevin's Board of Management

<b>Rationale</b>
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The policy was reviewed at this time to ensure that it was compliant with the National Educational Welfare Board publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School (May 2008), and to further ensure that it reflected the recommended framework of best practice.

<b>Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school</b>
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Creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour will, in turn, create a harmonious environment where every child is afforded the opportunity to develop their own gifts while caring for one another in the way Jesus taught us. As a school community, St. Kevin's values the contribution of all its members and seeks to foster positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.

<b>Aims</b>
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To create a school ethos which:

- Encourages an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- Fosters pride in our school and its community
- Develops an environment which is safe, supportive and conducive to learning
- Ensures an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- Allows the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- Assists parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and seeks their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- Ensures that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

## **Section One: Guidelines for behaviour in the school**

The approach to School behaviour focuses on promoting good behaviour, which is built on respect – for ourselves, for each other and for our school. There are a number of specific rules regarding punctuality etc. which are included in this policy, but in general our rules can be expressed very simply as:

- **Have respect for yourself**
- **Have respect for others**
- **Have respect for your school**

Behaviour that does not conform to one or more of these rules can be considered unacceptable. Within each rule we have certain expectations:

### **Have respect for yourself**

- Work to the best of your ability
- Take pride in your appearance e.g. wearing correct uniform
- Value your own safety
- Take pride in your work
- Demonstrate a positive attitude towards your school work

### **Have respect for others**

- Care for all members of our school community
- Value and respect our differences
- Value and respect the right of all children to an education
- Value all staff who teach you, who support you in the school environment, who maintain the school environment, who operate the office etc.
- Share with others
- Listen to others without interrupting
- Be polite and pleasant to everyone
- Accept decisions
- Work in a manner considerate of others
- Move around the school mindful of others
- Value the work and opinions of others
- Take care that you do not harm one another – either accidentally or intentionally

### **Have respect for Our School**

- Adhere to the Green Schools' Policy
- Always return property e.g. library books, school rental books etc
- Keep the school grounds clean and tidy

- Look after displays
- Use equipment properly
- Help tidy up
- Walk quietly and carefully around the school
- Take pride in our school by being polite and pleasant to each other and to visitors
- Remember to behave appropriately when wearing the school uniform especially when representing the school on various excursions

### Specific School Rules

- Pupils assemble in their classrooms between 8.50 and 9.10 am. Lateness and absences are to be explained by parents/guardians either verbally or written.
- Pupils may not leave the school premises until dismissal time. Pupils leaving the school during school hours must be signed out by a parent, guardian or a nominated adult.
- Pupils should complete all prescribed homework.
- Pupils should not run inside the school building. They should walk quietly and show consideration to others.
- Play in the schoolyard is confined to areas allowed. Under no circumstances should a pupil leave the schoolyard without the permission of the teacher on duty.
- Pupils are expected to play gently - rough play of any description is not allowed and any incidents should be reported to the teacher on duty.
- Pupils are expected to line up in an orderly fashion when the whistle is blown and return with their teacher to class in single file.
- Pupils are expected to maintain these standards of behaviour while on school outings.
- Chewing gum is not allowed on the school premises or on any school related activity.
- Glass bottles/containers are not allowed and pupils are encouraged to use recyclable containers.
- Skate boards and roller blades are not allowed on the school premises.
- No cycling is allowed in the school grounds.
- Mobile phones should be switched off during school hours. Mp3 players and any other hand held electronic devices are not allowed.
- Pupils should wear school uniforms while attending school and school tracksuit on PE or after school sports days.
- Long or hooped earrings are not allowed for safety reasons.

Prior to registering a pupil, parents/guardians of the child are asked to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

## **Section Two: Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

### **Staff**

In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents. The promotion and recognition of positive behaviour is considered a priority.

- Each class has its own reward system, e.g. star charts, homework passes, group of the week. Children are encouraged to share good work with other classes.
- Teachers work with pupils to develop a set of class rules each year
- School rules are revisited each year and explained clearly to the children
- Staff model and reinforce good behaviour
- Every opportunity is used to praise and encourage pupils
- At infant level, the children learn the phrase "I didn't like it when..." in order to help them deal with various social situations that cause them distress.
- On enrolment parents are informed of our school ethos and our code of behaviour.
- Specific school rules are printed in the homework diary
- An introductory pack is made available to new teachers which includes the code of behaviour
- All staff are made aware of children that have specific behavioural difficulties. Class teachers and SEN team co-operate in the preparation of IEP's. Specific targets are set in relation to behaviour. Social stories are prepared and used as needed.
- Staff liaise with outside agencies e.g. Lucena Clinic, Enable Ireland, HSE in relation to specific children.
- The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour.
- Circle time is an integral part of the SPHE curriculum. It is particularly effective to use when a behavioural issue arises within a class.
- Positive behaviour is explored through the teaching of certain lessons from the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.

## **Board of Management**

- The Board of Management is consulted in reviewing, drafting and ratifying the code of behaviour.
- The Board of Management supports the staff in the implementation of the code of behaviour.
- In the case of serious breaches of behaviour which may involve suspension or expulsion, the matters are referred to the Board.

## **Parents**

- Parents contribute to the development of the code. Their involvement will draw on their expectations, insights and experience.
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents ensure their children are at school in time
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Parents are expected to support the use of the Homework diary
- As primary educators, Parents are expected to model and reinforce good behaviour
- When on the school premises, parents are expected to support our expectation of appropriate behaviour. Parents should also supervise younger, non school going children at all times whilst on the school premises.

## **Pupils**

- Pupils' opinions were sought and the results were taken into consideration when drawing up the code.
- Pupils contribute to devising classroom rules.
- Pupils learn about taking personal responsibility for their behaviour thus contributing to each others well being and the well being of all members of the school community.
- Pupils are taught to appreciate the value of good behaviour to promote a positive learning atmosphere.
- Older children learn the importance of modelling good behaviour e.g. whole school assemblies, assisting in the infant yards.

### Section Three: Positive strategies for managing behaviour

#### Classroom

- A high standard of behaviour is expected from all students to facilitate learning.
- Pupils are involved in developing class rules/behavioural expectations that are consistent with the objectives of the code of behaviour and which create a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave.
- All teachers will implement a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Classroom management techniques are used to ensure that a variety of activities and methodologies exist to sustain pupil interest and motivation.
- Fairness is an integral part of the code of behaviour.
- Teachers should consider pupil's behavioural needs when implementing the code of behaviour.
- Parents should support the school by encouraging good behaviour that is conducive to learning.
- Promotion of good relationships between teachers, parents and students should be encouraged to promote a happy school atmosphere.
- Adults should model the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Teachers should explore with students how people should treat each other in order to promote positive relationships.

#### Yard/s

- Yard boundaries and rules, as listed in the Specific School rules, will be reviewed and reinforced on a regular basis
- Good yard behaviour should be taught and communicated to each class.
- Promotion of positive inclusive interactions between children should be encouraged in the yard.
- Teachers should positively reinforce good yard behaviour.
- St. Kevin's Supervision Policy promotes positive behaviour and appropriate supervision arrangements are in place to support this code.
- A rota of senior pupils is in operation in the Infant Yards to facilitate and encourage interaction.
- See St. Kevin's Supervision Policy re supervision arrangements for wet days.
- Children are expected to walk safely and quietly in single file to and from the yard.
- Children will be made aware of the designated toilets for the different playgrounds. Children up to 3<sup>rd</sup> class should be accompanied by another student.

- Children with slings, casts, or crutches or children whose parents request that they stay in due to illness will stay at the secretary's office.
- Accident/Incident report to be used to note incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- Incidents of misbehaviour to be managed in accordance with school rules, sanctions and general school practice.

### **Other areas in the school**

- Children are expected to move quietly around the school and avoid causing disturbance.
- Children should be encouraged to be courteous and mannerly to other children, members of staff and visitors.
- Children should be encouraged to respect school property and take pride in their school.
- Staff should compliment children for good behaviour.

<b>Section Four: Rewards and Sanctions</b>
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### **Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour**

- In St. Kevin's the class teachers reward good behaviour in a class setting. Examples of recognition for positive behaviour and good work: verbal praise, merit award on the class merit chart, being sent to the Principal's office and being sent to other classes for recognition, positive note in the Homework Diary, display of work that deserves particular recognition.
- In St. Kevin's there is a whole school approach to promoting good behaviour in a public setting. The area of good attendance is rewarded at school assemblies, with certificates being given to children with full attendance at the end of each term. Pupils' achievements are further appreciated and celebrated in school Newsletters. Class of the week is awarded to the class which models and exemplifies good behaviour when lining up in the middle and senior yard. Winners are awarded a night off written homework
- At a class level, rewards are given at the discretion of the class teacher.
- Good news is communicated to parents at. parent teacher meetings, both formal and incidental, end of year reports, written comments at the end of work and/or Homework Journal.

## Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

A sample list of minor, serious and gross misdemeanours has been compiled by school staff. Some examples are ;

- minor misdemeanours- breaking a class rule, pushing in the line.
- serious misdemeanours- abuse - verbal, physical or emotional, continuous breach of minor misdemeanours.
- gross misdemeanours- defiance/cheek constantly disturbing the peace of others, committing acts of violence to others, being overly abusive to others in a verbal sense.

The following is a menu of sanctions which could be implemented in response to minor, serious or gross misdemeanours. It should be noted that sanctions should be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour. They should also be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the pupil and take account of the background of the pupil.

In relation to a **minor misdemeanour** the following sanctions could be used

- Reasoning with the pupil, verbal reprimand and/or temporary separation from peers, friends or others.

In relation to a **serious misdemeanour** the following sanctions could be used

- Reasoning with the pupil, verbal reprimand and/or temporary separation from peers, friends or others, loss of privileges, prescribing additional work, referral to Principal Teacher and/or extra work during the hours of break time.

In relation to a **gross misdemeanour** the following sanctions could be used

- Reasoning with the pupil, verbal reprimand and/or temporary separation from peers, friends or others, loss of privileges, prescribing additional work, referral to Principal Teacher, 'extra work' during the hours of break time, detention after school hours and/or suspension.

In St. Kevin's the following ladder of intervention will be used to effectively implement sanctions;

- Minor misdemeanours should be attended to routinely and effectively by a member of teaching staff.



- Serious misdemeanours should be attended to by a member of teaching staff and a referral should be made to the principal. Parents could also be informed at this stage.
- Gross misdemeanours involve all the above, along with the involvement of the Board of Management.

For pupils who manifest persistently serious misbehaviour, it might be necessary to involve outside agencies.

Prior to reviewing this policy, staff members (teaching and non-teaching) and pupils from the senior cycle, were asked to complete Questionnaires to elicit their views on behaviour, attitudes, sanctions etc. The responses to the questionnaire were reflected in the list of sanctions compiled. Consistency of application and fairness were considered key elements in the successful implementation of our Code of Behaviour.

### **Involving parents in management of problem behaviour**

Parents are contacted when a child's behaviour is causing disruption/harm to the child and/or to other children. For isolated incidents, pupils will be given the opportunity to improve, before parents are contacted. However, if the problem behaviour persists, parents will be notified and will be invited to the school to discuss the issue. Initially, the meeting will be with the class teacher, but the nature of the behaviour may warrant a meeting with the class teacher and Principal. Strategies for modifying behaviour will be discussed and behaviour will be reviewed within an agreed timeframe.

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

- Children who present with indicators of an Emotional Behavioural Disorder are referred for psychological assessment/multi-disciplinary assessment. Parental support is required before any assessment can be pursued.
- Following assessment, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, Lucena Clinic and resource teaching hours are applied for through the Special Educational Needs Organiser. Where care needs are involved, S.N.A. support is also applied for through the N.C.S.E.
- S.E.N. personnel may be in a position to facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour. This could include the development of an Individual Behavioural Plan.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the

Board of Management will consider temporary exclusion while consultation with SENO and/or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing and/or alternative placement.

### **Section Five: Suspension / Expulsion procedures**

The procedures for Suspension and Expulsion derive from the National Educational Welfare Board publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" and are by guided by the principles of natural justice, i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

#### **SUSPENSION**

These procedures will be applied to both the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour and the process of decision making as to (a) whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and (b) what sanction to impose.

Suspension of a student will only be considered when:

- a) The student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- b) The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety
- c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property

In imposing suspension as a sanction, due regard will be given to the following factors:

- 1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- 2. The context of the behaviour
- 3. The impact of the behaviour
- 4. The interventions already implemented
- 5. Whether suspension is an appropriate response
- 6. The possible impact of suspension

#### **Procedures**

##### **Investigation:**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant a suspension, initial consultation will be made by the Principal with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. In the event that the Chairperson is unavailable, another member of the Board of Management will be consulted. The student and their parents will then be informed by phone (if the matter is extremely urgent) or in writing about the complaint, how it will be investigated and the possibility that this investigation might lead to a suspension. Parents and

student will have an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

In the event of an immediate suspension (where the safety of the student, other students, staff or others is compromised) parents will be notified and arrangements will be made for the student to be collected.

A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal, in consultation with a Board of Management member, considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed to achieve a particular objective. In the event of an extended suspension, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. The maximum number of days in any suspension period is ten.

#### Implementation:

Parents will be notified in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

1. the period of the suspension, including the relevant dates, 2. the reasons for the suspension, 3. any study programme to be followed, 4. the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents, 5. the right to appeal to the Board of Management if the decision is made by the Principal, 6. the right to appeal to the Department of Education & Science in the event that the number of suspension days in one school year reaches twenty (Section 29 Appeal).

A suspension may be removed following either a review by the Board of Management, or as directed by the Department of Education and Science (following a Section 29 Appeal).

#### Return to school:

Following a period of suspension, a plan for integration will be put into place to ensure that every opportunity will be afforded to the student to start afresh.

### EXPULSION

Expulsion of a student will only be considered when:

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

In imposing expulsion as a sanction, due regard will be given to the following factors:

- 1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- 2. The context of the behaviour
- 3. The impact of the behaviour

4. The interventions already implemented
5. Whether expulsion is an appropriate response
6. The possible impact of expulsion

## Procedures

### Investigation:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- a) A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- b) A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
- c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
- d) Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
- e) Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- f) Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Step 1: Detailed Investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal, in line with fair procedures -

Inform student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and the possibility that this investigation might lead to an expulsion. Parents and student will have an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation. Parents will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour.

Step 2 A recommendations to the Board of Management by the Principal

Step 3 Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

Step 4 Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Step 5 Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Step 6 Confirmation of the decision to expel

In the event that the Board of Management of St. Kevin's N.S. invokes its right to expel a student, the steps listed above will be followed, as detailed in the National Educational Welfare Board publication "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools"

## Appeals Process

A decision to expel may be overturned if directed by the Department of Education and Science (following a Section 29 Appeal).

Review of Suspension and Expulsion procedures:

The Board of Management will review the above procedures to ensure that the use of these sanctions is consistent with school policies and that the sanctions are used appropriately.

## **Section Six – Keeping Records**

Factual records of misbehaviour are recorded in an impartial manner in a pupil's *Cárta Leanunachais*. This profile card allows teachers to record evidence of positive behaviour as well as any record of misbehaviour. This card facilitates the recording of academic progress and/or academic difficulty. The report is passed on to the next teacher at the start of the new school year.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour are recorded and stored in the school office.

### **7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

#### *Promoting Good Attendance*

Teachers in St. Kevin's recognise the importance of good school attendance for children's social and academic development. While recognising that children will be absent from school from time to time due to illness, urgent family reasons etc., we encourage parents to avoid unnecessary absences from school for their children (c.f. letter to parents re Attendance, Appendix 2).

Teachers record the number of children's absences on the end of year school report.

In order to promote good attendance, certificates are awarded to children who have had no absences during each of the three school terms. Certificates are also awarded to children who have had no absences in the full school year.

### **8. Reference to other Policies**

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour:

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Supervision Policy
- Health & Safety
- School Tours
- Special Educational Needs

<b>Success Criteria</b>
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- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

<b>Roles and Responsibility</b>
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The Board of Management will initiate a review of this Code of Behaviour two years after its implementation date. However, it may be revisited before that date if any aspect of the policy needs to be addressed before that time. Any changes ratified by the Board of Management will be made in the best interests of all members of the school community. Any changes are implicit in a Parent/Guardian initial acceptance of the Code of Behaviour.

All stakeholders in our school community have the responsibility to support this Code of Behaviour - Pupils, Parents, Staff, Parents' Association and Board of Management.

<b>Implementation Date</b>
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October 2010.

<b>Timetable for Review</b>
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September 2012

<b>Ratification &amp; Communication</b>
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Ratified: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010

Posted on St. Kevin's Website November 2010

## Appendix 1 – Glossary

**N.E.W.B.**

**National Educational Welfare Board**

*National agency with the responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular school attendance*

**E.W.O.**

**Education Welfare Officer – regional representative of the National Educational Welfare Board**

**N.C.S.E.**

**National Council for Special Education – the statutory body established under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004. To evaluate need and provide appropriate resources to support children with special educational needs.**

**S.E.N.O.**

**Special Educational Needs Organiser – regional representative of the National Council for Special Education**

**S.N.A. Special Needs Assistant.**

*S.N.A.'s are assigned to classrooms to provide support to children who have special educational care needs.*

**S.P.H.E. Social, Personal & Health Education**

**N.E.P.S. National Educational Psychological Service – a service provided by the Department of Education and Skills.**

**H.S.E. Health Service Executive**

**I.E.P. Individual Educational Plan**

**S.E.N. Special Educational Needs**

## Appendix 1 - Attendance - Letter to Parents

### School Attendance

Dear Parents,

As you are probably aware, the Education Welfare Act was passed into law in July 2002. Essentially, this act is about promoting school attendance. The National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) was established to support regular school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

The attendance rate in St. Kevin's is extremely high and this is a record that we are very proud of.

In our continuing commitment to maintain this high standard, I would like to bring the following points to your attention:

Assembly time is from 8:50 to 9:10 a.m., allowing pupils a twenty minute period to assemble in their classrooms. Children who arrive later than roll call at 9:30 a.m. will be marked absent.

A written explanation for all absences should be given to the class teacher.

If a child misses twenty schooldays, the Board of Management is required to notify the National Education Welfare Board. For this reason, if your child is absent for an extended period due to illness, it is advisable to retain any relevant medical certificates.

I would also ask you to bear the absence of twenty school days in mind when booking family holidays. The Board must report **all** absences, regardless of the reason for non-attendance.

Ensuring that your child attends school punctually and regularly will enhance his/her potential to make social and educational progress. I look forward to your cooperation in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

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Scott Vance, Principal