



Marymount National School

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Code of Behaviour

Introductory statement

This policy was drafted at the beginning of the academic year 2009/2010 initially by a committee of staff members and then in consultation with the whole teaching staff, parents and the Board of Management. The policy was implemented in January 2010 and reviewed periodically from that date.

Rationale

- Behaviour management is an area of concern identified by the school community
- The existing policy was due for review/amendment. As we are implementing *The Incredible Years* programme in the school it is important that the code of behaviour reflects the spirit of the programme
- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- A code of behaviour is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1)

School Vision Statement

- As a school community we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils in our care. We strive to ensure that all children's experience of school will be positive, supportive and challenging and that it will enable them to reach their full potential so that in turn they may play a fulfilling role in their community and in society in general

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

- In Marymount School we respect the individual differences and abilities of all our pupils
- We feel that a whole school approach is key to the development of an effective code of behaviour. Therefore, we work to achieve co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. We feel that this approach delivers greater consistency in the children's social, emotional and behavioural education

Aims

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our vision statement
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community

- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
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Guidelines for behaviour in the school

- At all times we, as teachers, aspire to model the behaviours we expect from our students. We feel that if children see, and are surrounded by, a positive atmosphere, then they will be more likely to adopt positive behavioural habits
- The clear, simple rule of “Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words” is expected of everyone at all times
- Children are expected to do their best in both school and homework
- Children are expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual

Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

Role of Staff

- As a staff we model good behaviour and positive self talk to children at all times. We work together to devise reward/sanction programmes and we undergo any professional development necessary to ensure that there is a united front in dealing with behavioural matters. This behaviour policy is circulated to all teachers and all temporary or new staff are also made aware of the policy and its content. Through regular staff meetings and good communication, the policy is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis
- All teachers have been trained in *The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme* and *The KiVa Anti- Bullying Programme*.
- All other staff in the school are appropriately informed of *The Incredible Years Programme* and *The KiVa Programme* to ensure consistency across the school in behaviour management
- As part of *The Incredible Years Programme*, *Dina School* is delivered to a group of 6 children on a weekly basis for approximately 22 weeks each year. These children are carefully selected for their suitability and many members of staff collaborate in the selection process
- The *SPHE* curriculum also supports our code of behaviour. The *SPHE* plan is circulated each year to class teachers. This curriculum helps children to develop communication and problem-solving skills while fostering self-esteem
- Teachers use varied methodologies such as “Circle Time” to deliver the above curriculum
- Our Intercultural Activities encourage children to accommodate difference and develop citizenship
- For children with Special Educational Needs, who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their needs, learning support and class teachers liaise regularly to develop behavioural targets for such children, in keeping with the approaches outlined in *The Incredible Years Programme*

Role of Board of Management

- Members of the Board of Management were involved in drafting and redrafting this policy and the board will be involved in any future review of the policy
- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis
- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour by providing continuous professional development in behaviour management education and training
- The Board of Management gives authorisation for particular sanctions in the case of serious breaches of behaviour

Role of Parents

- Positive relationships are built from the start with parents and they are encouraged to take an active role in the development of their child. Teachers work in collaboration with parents to develop any specific behaviour plans needed for their child
- There are clear channels through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about their child
- On the enrolment day, parents are given a copy of the Code of Behaviour in the school and the expectations of pupils are discussed, along with the role of parents in helping pupils to meet these expectations. Parents are encouraged to share information about anything that might affect a pupil's behaviour in school, and are informed how to go about doing this
- The HSCL co-ordinator provides support to parents and acts as a link between parents, teachers and pupils
- Parents are notified early if there is a concern about a pupil's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupil can be discussed and agreed
- The school has a Parents Association. Parents are encouraged to get involved in this association as a structure through which they can work together for the best possible education for their children. Information is often offered through the Parents Association, such as talks, workshops or courses on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development
- Parents are involved in reviewing and planning school policies, as part of school development planning

Role of Pupils

- Children are involved in devising simple classroom rules
- Children in older classes are assigned to younger yards to help out with play and to encourage positive behaviour in younger children
- The children have opportunities to engage regularly with the principal with a focus on building trust and a good relationship
- The children have opportunities to contribute to school development via the Student's Council.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional or special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans may be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians and the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher and the Principal will work closely with them to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account as will professional advice from psychological assessments.

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

In accordance with Incredible Years ideology, the school believes that the key to achieving good behaviour standards is to prevent opportunities for unsatisfactory behaviours occurring. Such proactive strategies are essential to the running of our school.

Positive Strategies in the Classroom

- In the classroom, teachers use and implement a variety of proactive strategies with the view to minimising negative behaviours and increasing positive behaviours at all times
- Praise is used regularly and descriptive commenting draws the attention of the children to the behaviours expected
- Simple incentive systems such as Golden Time or other tangible rewards are employed to encourage positive behaviour
- Where minor misbehaviours occur, they are ignored for the most part, unless they are posing a direct threat to the safety or well-being of a child or the children around them. Instead, proximal praise and descriptive commenting is used to try to redirect the child away from the negative behaviour. Where misbehaviour continues each teacher has a clear hierarchy of consequences so that children are aware of the sanctions for misbehaviour. These consequences are clear, simple, direct and consistent
- Each teacher comes up with a set of simple, direct and clear rules with their class. Rules are few in number and always use positive terminology. There is less emphasis on “don’ts”. Instead, the rules are phrased using positive “do” language
- Simple non verbal signals are employed by teachers to gain students’ attention
- *Give me 5 – hands on lap, feet on floor, eyes on teacher, voice off and ears open-* is used by all teachers as a means of developing good concentration habits among the children
- Teachers use interesting and stimulating ways to deal with “transition” periods in the classroom and employ simple organisational approaches to ensure order in the class
- Teachers timetable their subjects in such a way as to minimise disruptive behaviours eg: Art is timetabled to be delivered so that a lunch time does not disrupt the lesson
- Routines are established so that children know what to expect and can deal with minor changes if they occur

Positive Strategies in the Playground

In the playground there are 4 simple rules.

1. Kind hands, feet, words
2. Stay in your own yard
3. No Lock-Outs (don’t exclude someone from your game)

4. Line up calmly and quietly

These rules are clearly displayed in each playground. There are also clear, friendly signs illustrating pro-social behaviours in the yard.

Proactive strategies and supervision practices are in place to decrease yard problems.

- At every lunchtime teachers supervise each yard area with the support of SNA/s where required. All playgrounds are marked with red lines designating the various play spaces
- Teachers regularly teach playground games in PE lessons to encourage the children to engage in meaningful and constructive play
- On wet days, children are encouraged to play with board games/cards etc
- Any children who are not well enough to play outside are supervised inside
- Children are toileted before play time but any emergency cases must ask the teacher on yard duty to go to the nearest toilet to the yard they are in. They must report back to the supervising teacher on returning to the yard
- When problems arise in the yard, the teacher on yard duty encourages the children to use problem solving techniques to solve the problem. Serious issues/incidents are communicated discreetly to the class teacher at the end of playtime.
- When the bell rings, the children line up calmly and are rewarded as appropriate.

Other Positive Strategies

- When children are going about their daily school routine they are encouraged at all times to be polite and courteous to teachers and to fellow pupils
- Teachers use positive reinforcing statements to highlight behaviours expected. A culture of complimenting is fostered in the school where children receive attention and praise for specific expected behaviours such as showing kindness, walking on the corridor, being patient, waiting their turn, speaking politely, using a quiet voice, raising a quiet hand to speak, working well in class, listening, etc. Thus proximal praise is used as a proactive strategy to decrease any problem behaviours

Rewards and sanctions

Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- Good behaviour is acknowledged on a daily basis by all staff members through praise and complimenting
- Each teacher recognises and acknowledges good behaviour in their own class by developing systems of rewarding individuals/groups of children on a regular basis
- Children receive reward when line up time routine is adhered to in the yard.
- The Principal regularly acknowledges children for improvements in behaviour or exceptionally good behaviour
- Classes receive awards for good attendance on a monthly basis.

Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- As stated above, each teacher has their own definite and consistent hierarchy of discipline in their own class. This hierarchy follows a defined pattern where the child can predict what will happen if they behave in a certain way. "If.....then" sentences are

used regularly to encourage children to become responsible for the consequences of their actions

- A sample hierarchy would be the following:
Verbal warning
Yellow card
Red card
Time-out
Referral to principal
Call/note to parent
Meeting with parent

(See Appendix A for a list of possible positive behaviour incentives and strategies and a list of possible consequences.)

Involving parents in management of problem behaviour

- It is important at the start of the year to develop a positive relationship with as many parents as possible so that the first point of contact is not in relation to a problem and so that a level of trust is built between teacher and parent. If however, a child is presenting with persistent problem behaviour, every effort will be made by the class teacher to devise a simple behaviour plan for that child in collaboration with the child's parent. Particular behaviours will be pinpointed by the teacher and worked on consistently with the child. Reports of progress will be given frequently to the child's parent and they can be encouraged to develop similar behaviour plans at home

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

- Where a child displays aggressive or violent behaviour there is a definite consequence for this. In such cases the child will be encouraged to go to *Time Out* or to have a *Cool off* period before the incident is dealt with in line with the Incredible Years Programme
- If a child persistently displays such aggressive or violent behaviour, their parents will be contacted and a behaviour plan will be drawn up collaboratively to seek to eliminate problem behaviours. If there is seen to be a need, the child may be referred to other support services.

Suspension / Expulsion

Policies and procedures for the use of suspension, expulsion and appeals are as laid down in *Guidelines for developing a Code of Behaviour*, prepared by The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), Chapters 10, 11 and 12. These guidelines can be accessed at www.newb.ie. Alternatively, a copy of these guidelines is available from the school on request.

Suspension:

For the purposes of this document suspension is defined as requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified limited period of school days. In exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff or any other person.

During the period of a suspension the child retains their place in the school. In the case of grossly unacceptable behavior, where it is necessary to ensure that order is maintained and /or

to secure the safety of the students and staff, the board has authorized the principal to sanction a suspension for a period not exceeding 3 school days.

In circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, the Board of Management has authorized the principal with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board to impose a suspension of up to five school days, subject to NEWB guidance concerning such suspensions

Grounds for Suspension:

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behavior that is causing a concern.

Normally a range of other interventions will have been implemented before suspension and school staff will have reviewed the strategies /plans implemented and reasons that they were not successful.

- The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as : The student's behavior has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student's continued presence in the school at the present time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following a period of suspension, the parent/s / Guardian must give satisfactory undertaking that the suspended student will behave in accordance with the schools code of behavior. The principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the student's own safety or the safety of other pupils or staff.

Prior to a child returning to school, a meeting must take place with relevant staff members and parent(s) / guardian(s). A written record of the meeting will be kept. The school requires the full support of the parent/guardian in re-introducing the student to the school. The parents / guardians must work in partnership with the school to develop a plan for the student going forward. Once in agreement, the student will then be invited to join the meeting and discuss the plan. The student must be in agreement also. All parties must sign the plan before the student will be re-admitted to the school. The plan will be reviewed at regular intervals as frequently as may be required.

If parents/guardians fail to support the school in this process, the school will seek the intervention of TUSLA or other outside agencies. Being mindful of the school's duty of care to staff members and other students and the rights of other students to an education, the child will be unable to re-join the school until such an intervention has been put in place.

Expulsion:

Expulsion may be considered by the Board of Management in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, NEWB guidelines and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before expelling a student, the Board will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Keeping records

Each class teacher will keep a record of any notable behavioural incidents, whether positive or negative. This is invaluable in getting an accurate picture of the child's strengths and difficulties and in determining the best course of action going forward.

Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

For Parents/Guardians of children between the ages of 6 and 16 there is a legal requirement to inform the school of the child's absence. Parents/guardians must tell the school why the child has not attended.

For all children, this can be done by writing a note in the child's school journal or sending a note in any paper form. The parent can also record the absence and the reason via the Aladdin system. If this poses any problems, contact must be made directly with the school by phone.

If a child misses more than 20 days the school is legally required to notify the NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board). The school will also inform the child's Parents/Guardians in writing, that this notification has been sent.

Reference to other policies

This policy is consistent with all other relevant school policies, statements and procedures.

Appendix

- For further information on *The Incredible Years Programme* go to www.archways.ie. Further information is also available on request from the school.
- Visit www.newb.ie for further information on policy re: suspension/expulsion or absence procedures

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis and when the need arises. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

This policy will be available on the school website www.marymountgns.ie

Reviewed 26/08/2022.

Signed: Rev. John Allen PP.
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 07/03/2023.

Appendix A

List of possible Incentives, Strategies and Consequences

Positive Behaviour Incentives	Positive Behaviour Strategies	Consequences
<p>Class Dojo, Marbles in jar, Compliments, Praise, Yard Starts, golden time, Star of the week, Parties, Experiences i.e.: walk, playground, no uniform day, PJ day, yoga, picnic. Homework/buddy/computer passes, Lucky dip prizes, Additional PE/Art/Play time, Movie, Popcorn, Music choice in yard, Choose your seat for a day. Lunch outside on benches. "Go noodle", "Kahoot", Chrome Book Time, Show and Tell, google Slide, Cushions, Choose your brain break, Board games.</p>	<p>Praise, Breathing (finger breathing, milkshake breathing, smell the roses). Modelling, Notes Home, Phone Calls Home, Naming desired behaviour, Effective/timely transitions. Regular breaks – indoors/outdoors, Go Noodle, Chat time, Meditation, / OT exercises i.e. Chair lifting, crossing the midline praying hands, desk push-ups, bear hugs. Visual signal when break needed. Teacher self-reflective practice, ignoring small things, speaking to children at their own level. Children draw/write an account of an incident before discussion with teacher. Older children modelling for younger, older children as play assistants in yard, Classroom rules with frequent re-visitation, Visual cues and timetables, Proximal praise, Specific praise, Positive attention, Promoting positive relationships, Coaching statements, Dina School, Consistent routines, First / then statements, Short instructions, Staged instructions, Use of relevant stories, Explicit teaching of desired behaviours, Line up visuals in yard, Visual timer, yard rules, Play equipment in yard, Stars on doors. Reporting good behaviour publicly and poor behaviour</p>	<p>Verbal warnings before consequences, Loss of Golden time in intervals, Withholding of prizes or other rewards, Timeout in yard with timers, Time out away from yard, Removal of play equipment, Thinking table/chair in class, Restorative justice activity, Parent consultation (letter/email, phone call or meeting), Time in another classroom. Time in another yard. Loss of privileges, Exclusion from school trips and outings, Reduced school day.</p>

	discreetly, Routine and consistency, Offering choice, Positive work stations, Sensory corners, Individualized reward systems.	
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Appendix B

Behaviours of Concern

What are Behaviours of Concern?

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

What is a crisis situation?

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

Our Rationale

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

Code of Behaviour

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

Child Safeguarding Statement

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

Health & Safety Statement

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

How we react to a Behaviour of Concern Incident?

Make sure everyone is safe
Prevent the situation deteriorating further
Put an immediate plan in place that will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan

Support Services

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

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

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

POSSIBLE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recording of Behaviours of Concern

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

Examples of Behaviours of Concern (not exhaustive):

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

When will our school use restraint?

We will only use restraint when there is a crisis.

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

Examples of physical intervention:

1. Presence. - Standing in front of a student
2. Touching – Lead, guide, usher, block-door handle
3. Holding – student's hand held by one adult but restrains a level of mobility
4. Restraint – Completely restrict mobility – 2 adults holding legs & arms (Am I using minimum force for the shortest time?)

Restraint:

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