

St. Michael's House Grosvenor School

Leopardstown Road, Dublin 18

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

St. Michael's House Grosvenor School is designated by the Department of Education and Skills as a school for students with moderate, severe and profound general learning disabilities. The school also has 3 classes dedicated to the needs of students with the dual diagnosis of ASD and general learning disability.

This Code of Behaviour was drawn up in consultation with the school community to ensure that school policy is compliant with legal requirements and good practice as set out in the "Developing Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools" (NEWB 2008), Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011), DES Circular 0061/2006 and St. Michael's House Positive Behaviour Support Policy.

The intellectual ability, stage of development and understanding of the student will be borne in mind at all times in relation to his/her behaviour in school.

Aims of the Code

The aims of the code of behaviour are:

- To provide a safe and secure learning environment for all our students
- To ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption-free environment
- To respect and safeguard the dignity and the particular needs of individual students
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where students can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive behaviour while noting the difference between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- To ensure that students behave in a respectful manner towards each other, school staff and the wider community
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, consequences and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- To teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school and the community at large

- To assist parents and students 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

Content of the Policy

This code of behaviour will address:

1. The standards of behaviour expected in the school from adults and students
2. The plan for promoting good behaviour
3. The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
4. The plan for implementing the code
5. School procedures for the use of suspension, expulsion and appeals
6. Record Keeping
7. Procedures for the notification of pupil absences from school
8. Reference to other policies
9. Review of the code

Standards of Behaviour

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage behaviour that might challenge is to try to prevent it happening in the first place. All members of the school community are expected to behave in ways that show respect for others. Behaviour will reflect values such as respect, kindness, courtesy, fairness, forgiveness, respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict. Standards are also a way of signalling the kinds of behaviours that are not acceptable in the school e.g. behaviour that is hurtful, demeaning, behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning or is threatening and/or causes physical hurt to other pupils and/or staff.

Promoting high standards of behaviour is the central aim of this code of behaviour. Teachers, staff and the wider school community employ a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and at school level. Students are more likely to behave well when they understand why the code is important and their part in making it work. They need to see that the code works in a fair manner. A code of behaviour works well when there are good relationships between teachers, SNAs, students, parents and the wider school community.

Communication with parents/guardians/respite carers is an important element in maintaining a positive approach in dealing with students. Co-operation and communication with parents/guardians/respite carers is seen as an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour. The following models of communication are used at all levels within the school:

- IEP process
- Informal and formal parent/teacher meetings

- Through student's home/school notebook
- Letters, notes and text messages to and from school to home/respite
- Meetings held in school
- End of year report
- Phone calls to and from home/respite
- Parents Association

The Plan to promote Positive Behaviour

A whole school approach will help to create, maintain and foster a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. We aim to achieve this by:

- Creating a positive and encouraging attitude to students at all times
- Creating a calm environment
- Creating a uniform and consistent approach to students by all staff
- Promoting self-esteem amongst the students at all times
- Creating a sense of fairness and consistency, taking into account the competence, understanding and functional abilities of the students. These are crucial in deciding on the appropriate responses to behaviours.
- Making rules positive, "do's" rather than "don'ts" in a language that is appropriate to the student's ability to understand
- Developing and supporting positive, respectful relationships between students and staff
- Using class and school settings to promote and encourage positive behaviour e.g. Assembly
- Using positive language appropriate to the student's level of understanding that is affirmative, respectful and fair.

Encouraging and Promoting Good Behaviour

Good behaviour is encouraged and promoted in the school by the factors listed below. All of these strategies will be implemented in the classroom, on the school bus, in the playground and on school related activities within the community.

- Modelling positive everyday interactions between teachers, SNAs and students
- Good school and classroom routines with clear boundaries for students
- Involving students in the preparation of school and classroom rules

- Developing students communication skills as the ability to communicate effectively has a significant impact on behaviour
- Developing students social skills through the SPHE programme and throughout the school day
- Good communication with parents and in particular, parents informing the school where situations arise at home that might influence behaviour in school
- Recognising and affirming good behaviour
- Fostering respect for themselves and others
- Encouraging students to participate to the best of their ability
- Encouraging good attendance at school

School Rules

The school rules are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what the students should do:

- Be kind and use your good manners with everyone in our school
- Be co-operative at all times
- Behave in a safe way, using kind hands and kind feet, so that you and others are not hurt.
- Always try to do your best
- Listen and follow instructions from staff
- Tell the truth
- Share with others and take your turn
- Show respect for yourself, other students and staff and for the school environment
- Use kind, helpful words when talking to people in school

Class Rules

Each teacher will develop class rules with the students, reflecting the school rules, in a language and manner appropriate to the age and stage of development of the students. We recognise that students in our school may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways e.g. Through the use of pictures, charts, video or role play. We also recognise that students use a variety of approaches to internalise and learn new skills. Students will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by the adults in the school. Praise is earned by maintenance of good standards of behaviour as well as by particular noteworthy personal achievement. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for academic work.

Activities to encourage Positive Behaviours

- Circle time in the classroom
- Explaining positive behaviour regularly and revising class/school/playground rules
- Role play and social stories
- Encouraging participation in games and fun activities together
- Assembly
- Providing individualised supports to enable students to participate in the school community

Incentives / Praise

The following are some examples of how incentives / praise may be given to students

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in the student's home/school journal
- Choice of favourite activity
- A trip / outing within the local community
- A visit to another staff member / school principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of the class group by a staff member / principal
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege to the student
- A mention to parent / guardian
- Receipt of certificate to encourage continued good behaviour

School Attendance

Regular attendance in school helps a student to make and maintain friendships and be fully included in the life of the school. Parents are required to notify the school if a student is absent for any reason.

The procedures to be followed by parents in relation to a student's absence are:

- Parent must let the school know of their child's absence for any reason
- Parents must inform the school on the first day of absence by phoning the school or informing the bus escort to relay the message to the school

- Parents may inform the school in the home/school diary or phone the school in advance of a planned absence
- Parents need to give detailed information to the school about the reasons for absence following a period of absence.
- Failure to notify the school about a student's absence will be followed up by a phone call.

The school co-operates fully with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act in reporting students attendance and absences from school.

Implementing the Code of Behaviour

Responding to inappropriate behaviour in school.

Incidents of misbehaviour are classed as minor, serious and gross. Minor incidents are generally dealt with by the class team. Serious breaches of school rules will be notified to the school principal. Gross breaches of behaviour may lead to the suspension or expulsion of the student. Suspension or expulsion of a student are sanctions which will only be applied in consultation with the Chairperson and/or the Board of Management. In circumstances in which the Principal deems that an immediate suspension is warranted, the Chairperson may be informed after the parents have been contacted and requested to collect the student from school.

Sanctions

The purpose of sanctions is to bring about a change of behaviour by

- Helping students to learn that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- Helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and understanding) that they have choices about their own behaviour and that choices have consequences
- Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

Sanctions will be proportionate to the behaviour and will be in accordance with the level of understanding of the student:

Sanctions for minor misbehaviour may include:

- Reminder of school rules
- Redirection to another activity
- Reasoning with the student
- Verbal reprimand
- Temporary separation from peers within the class for a specified period of time

- Temporary loss of privileges
- Temporary removal to another classroom
- Detention during break time (under supervision) to allow time to calm down
- Time in a quiet space to allow the student to regulate their behaviour
- Communication with parents/guardians to advise of behaviour and seek support

Serious Misbehaviour

From time to time, parents and staff can find some behaviour difficult and stressful to address. There are times when a student presents with behaviours that cause concern for their well-being and sometimes their safety and/or the safety of others. Examples of serious misbehaviour include behaviour that is hurtful and/or offensive (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) to others and spitting. When the usual strategies are not effective, behaviours are analysed using the antecedent-behaviour-consequences (ABC) checklist which examines

- Possible causes / reasons for behaviours
- The nature and frequency of the behaviour
- What happens as a result of the behaviour

This type of assessment enables staff to make adjustments to the environment, to the programme or teaching strategies or to seek advice from members of the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) so that the student's needs may be addressed. An individualised behaviour programme / plan may be put in place to support the student. The plan will be shared with school staff and parents/guardians to try to ensure consistent implementation. The plan will be monitored by the principal and school team to ensure its effectiveness.

Gross Misbehaviour

Where serious behaviours of concern continue to disrupt the smooth running of the school and/or threaten the safety of others, a student may be suspended or have their school day reduced to protect the welfare of others.

Serious assault that causes injury to others will be considered gross misbehaviour and may lead to immediate suspension. A single incident may constitute gross misbehaviour. Such incident(s) will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management and the appropriateness of the placement for the student may need to be reviewed. The incident will be investigated to determine the appropriate response from the school.

In the most serious incidents, expulsion may be considered. This measure will only be used as a last resort. The Board of Management will ensure that:

- Fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of these procedures

- Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that fair procedures are accessible to those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- There are no undue delays in the investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion
- All matters to do with an investigation are dealt with in confidence
- In circumstances of particular complexity, the school authorities may seek legal advice to support their decision making.

Dealing with Challenging Behaviour in school

A small number of students engage in physically challenging behaviour at times. While staff make every effort to anticipate such incidents and to de-escalate the situation quickly, there are times when a behaviour intervention is required. Staff have been trained in using CALMS techniques which may be used to maintain the safety of a student or others. Parents will be informed if it has been necessary to use CALMs techniques to help a student regain control and regulate their behaviour. Please refer to Appendix A of this policy: SMH Grosvenor School Positive Behaviour Support and Use of Restrictive Practices Policy.

Suspension

For the purposes of this document, suspension is defined as:

Requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days

During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend and this authority has been delegated to the principal. The authority delegated to the principal in respect of suspension has limits and the principal is accountable to the BOM for his/her use of that authority.

The grounds for suspension include:

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

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 others. Parents / guardians may be requested to collect a student from school during the day if their continued presence constitutes a threat. Parents/guardians may be asked to keep a student home from school for a number of days and this form of suspension will be notified to parents/guardians by the principal.

All suspensions, for whole days or part of a day will be recorded by the principal and reported to the BOM.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. The school will arrange, where possible, for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case. A student is expelled from school when the BoM makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The BOM has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion of a student will only be undertaken in extreme cases of gross misconduct that seriously disrupts the smooth and safe running of the school. This measure will generally only be undertaken after every effort has been made to support, help and address behaviours of concern so as to avoid the expulsion. However, a single serious assault on another person may be considered grounds for expulsion.

Before the expulsion of a student, the BoM will notify the local Education Welfare Office in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

The procedural steps will include:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal
- Parents will be called to a meeting to try to find ways of helping the student to address their behaviour
- Consideration will be given to the level of understanding of the student
- The principal will make a recommendation to the BOM to consider permanent exclusion of the student
- The BOM will consider the principal's recommendation and will invite both the principal and the student's parents / guardians to a hearing on the issue
- In the absence of the principal and the parents/guardians, the BoM will deliberate on the recommendation of the principal, the responses of the parents/guardians and any other relevant information.
- The BOM will write to the parents/guardians to inform them of their decision. Where the BOM recommends expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision and that a period of 20 school days will elapse before the decision of the BOM is confirmed.
- The school will participate in any consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer in respect of the decision to expel.

Appeals

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, gives parents (and students over the age of 18) the right to appeal decisions made by the BOM to the Secretary General of the Department of Education.

Appeals must be lodged within 42 calendar days from the date the decision has been notified to parents.

Record Keeping / Monitoring/Recording Behaviour

A system of Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording behaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will enable the school to balance subjective opinion with factual information about what is actually happening and to review triggers or patterns of behaviour over time. It will use consistent terminology. Regular monitoring will:

- Alert school staff to emerging problems for a particular student /group of students
- Show trends and patterns, for example, the time of day, location or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or instances of particularly good behaviour
- Provide information about successes and what is working well
- Avoid the risk of labelling a student unfairly from class to class or year to year, by providing factual data for any judgement about behaviour

A record system will allow the school to track an individual student's behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to clinicians. Positive responses by a student and evidence of changed behaviour will also be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed. Parents and students will be made aware that a record is being kept and will have access to the information at all times. All reports will be managed within the school in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

The principal will monitor all records and will make an annual report to the Board of Management.

Policy Review

The school will be happy to discuss any concerns a parent/guardian may have about behaviour or about any aspect of the Code of Behaviour. The school will provide parents with a copy of the code and will require parents to sign up to supporting the code prior to the enrolment of a student.

This policy was reviewed in April 2020 and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th May 2020.

Signed: *John Lawless*

Chairperson, BOM

Date for review: 14th May 2022