

# Rathbarry National School

## Revised Code of Behaviour Policy

### Introductory Statement

This revised Code of Behaviour Policy was formulated by the Board of Management, staff and parents of Rathbarry National School in January 2009.

### Rationale

It is necessary to review a Code of Behaviour at this particular time:

- To ensure an orderly climate for learning in the school
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*
  - A. *The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
  - B. *The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
  - C. *The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
  - D. *The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
  - E. *The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*
- To ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008.*

### Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In our School Mission Statement we commit ourselves to promoting the well being of all the pupils in our care by developing the spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual. We strive towards developing the full potential of every child in communication, literacy, numeracy and relevant life skills.

### Aims

Rathbarry National School hopes to achieve the following by introducing this policy:

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 parent(s) / guardian(s) 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

# Content of policy

The policy is addressed under the following headings.

1. **Guidelines for behaviour in the school**
2. **Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**
  - Staff
  - Board of Management
  - Parent(s) / Guardian(s)
  - Pupils
3. **Positive strategies for managing behaviour**
  - Classroom
  - Playgrounds
  - School related activities
4. **Rewards and sanctions**
  - Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
  - Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour
  - Involving parent(s) / guardian(s) in management of problem behaviour
  - Managing aggressive or violent behaviour
5. **Suspension / Expulsion**
  - Suspension
  - Expulsion
  - Appeals
6. **Keeping records**
  - School records
7. **Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school**
8. **Reference to other policies**

## 1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify “*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*”.

The standards of behaviour Rathbarry National School wishes to promote are:

- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

### **Classroom Behaviour:**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking.
- Work – to the best of his/her ability.

- Value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- Follow – the direction of his/her teacher.
- Obtain – his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom.
- Respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

### **Playground (Playing Pitches) Behaviour:**

Each pupil is expected to :

- Play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous.
- Follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s).
- Remain – on school grounds at all times except with permission from teacher.
- Obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods.
- Respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- Avoid – swearing, fighting and name calling.

### **Behaviour in other School Areas:**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk – in the school corridors.
- Use their manners at all times.

### **Behaviour during School Outings/Activities:**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow – his/her teacher’s directions at all times.
- Remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times.
- Behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- Observe – the rules of general good behaviour.

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim of this code is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school’s code of behaviour and that the principal ‘, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child’.

## **2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour**

*The elements of a whole school approach to behaviour include*

- *An ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony*
- *A teamwork approach to behaviour*
- *A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management*
- *An inclusive and involved school community*
- *A systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy*

In Rathbarry National School, a whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour is implemented by all the school community. All adults in the school have the responsibility to model good behaviour.

## Staff

- ❖ Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.
- ❖ The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.
- ❖ The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences
- ❖ The rules are devised with the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community in mind.
- ❖ The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal Teacher. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. A pupil may be referred to the Principal Teacher by a member of staff for serious breaches of discipline, disruptive behaviour or for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- ❖ At the start of each school year class and school rules are revised and developed by the teacher in consultation with the children through SPHE lessons. Through our visual arts curriculum the pupils get opportunities to present and display their classroom rules.
- ❖ The staff insists on honest effort and commitment from the pupils and a high standard of behaviour.
- ❖ The staff will meet the parent(s) / guardian(s) formally once a year.
- ❖ The teachers of Rathbarr National School base their work on the philosophy that each student is directed and helped to be the best person he/she is capable of becoming. In order to undertake this task, the teachers need the help and co-operation of the parent(s) / guardian(s) at all times. Parent(s) / guardian(s) are encouraged to help their children to learn, practise good behaviour, and have a positive attitude towards themselves, towards other people, and towards the school.
- ❖ When the teacher wishes to contact a parent / guardian, he/she may do so by arranging a meeting with the parent / guardian giving some idea of the matter to be discussed. Parent(s) / guardian(s) are welcome to call to the school to discuss children's progress. If possible try to call at a time when class will not be disrupted. If a parent / guardian wishes to meet a teacher it is appropriate to make an appointment so that the teacher may give the parent / guardian his/her undivided attention. In this way it will be possible to make arrangements for the class to be supervised in the interest of their safety and the confidentiality of the matter under discussion.
- ❖ The code of behaviour caters for children who may present behavioural difficulties arising from their individual special education needs through use of specific strategies outlined in their I.E.P. with behavioural targets.  
Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from the support services within the wider

community, e.g. Community Care Services provided by the Health Boards, N.E.P.S. or Co Action.

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

Parents of newly enrolled children are informed about the SPHE curriculum and are given a copy of the RSE programme agreed in Rathbarry National School

## **Board of Management**

*The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for school policies.*

- The Board of Management was consulted in reviewing and redrafting of the code of behaviour
- 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 through the provision of opportunities for staff development.
- Procedures are in place for the Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour. ( as outlined in the "Code of Behaviour Guidelines 2008").

## **Parent(s) / Guardian(s)**

It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parent(s) / guardian(s).

School-Parent co-operation is very important.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parent(s) / guardian(s), every effort will be made by the Principal Teacher and staff to ensure that parent(s) / guardian(s) are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parent(s) / guardian(s), that the parent(s) / guardian(s) are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved well also. We ask all parent(s) / guardian(s) to uphold school policies and teachers decisions. Problems arising over school matters should be discussed with the class teacher and the Principal Teacher in a spirit of confidence and trust.

Parent(s) / guardian(s) are involved in the formulation and implementation of this policy through reviewing the draft policy and making submissions if required.

*Please note final authority rests with the Board in accepting or rejecting such amendments.*

- The code of behaviour is provided to all parent(s) / guardian(s) on the enrolment of their child at Rathbarry National School and thereafter at the start of every school year.
- Parent(s) / guardian(s) support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:
  1. Reading and discussing the code of behaviour with their children and sign the consent form along with their child at the start of each New Year.
  2. Ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually
  3. Encouraging their children to do their best and to take responsibility for their work
  4. Being aware of and cooperating with the school's rules and system of rewards and sanctions
  5. Attending meetings at the school if requested
  6. Helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed

7. Ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials for school and wear their full school uniform.

## **Pupils**

- Pupils are involved in drafting the code of behaviour through the development of class rules and general school rules
- Pupils play an important part in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by
  - Revising rules for the classroom at the start of each term
  - Co – operating with the Code of behaviour in their school life
  - Reading, discussing and signing the Code of Behaviour along with their parent(s) / guardian(s)

## **3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

### **Classroom**

The positive strategies we use to effectively manage behaviour in the classroom include:

- Behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning are promoted on an ongoing basis
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- Good behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded and sanctions for misbehaviour are clearly understood
- Pupil interest and motivation is sustained through a variety of activities and methodologies.
- Timetabling.

### **Playground(s)**

- Playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour are clearly understood by all staff and pupils
- Supervision is maintained in the playground at all breaks and clear playing boundaries are established
- Playground games are taught to children in the junior classes.
- On wet days children remain in their class room under teacher supervision
- Teacher permission is required for children who leave the playground to use the toilets
- Procedures are in place to manage incidents of misbehaviour: time-out, withdrawal of privileges, written report by the pupil of the incident in question.

### **School related activities**

Standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour will apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. e.g. school tours, games and extra curricular activities, other school-linked events ...

## 4. Rewards and Sanctions

### Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

- Good behaviour is recognised and acknowledged by both the class teacher and the Principal and good reports are communicated verbally.
- Certificates or Merit Awards.
- Prepared commendation letters to parents.
- Comments and “smiley” faces on children’s work.
- Stickers, badges or ink stamps in books.
- Specially written letter home.
- Phone call or postcard home.
- Time on PC or special activity.
- Photographs of award winners taken and displayed.
- Work displayed.
- Homework pass

### Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour:

- The strategies used in Rathbarry National School in response to incidents of inappropriate behaviour may include the following:
  - *Reasoning with the pupil.*
  - *Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).*
  - *Removal from the group (in class)*
  - *Withdrawal of privileges*
  - *Withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group*
  - *Prescribing additional work for home or school*
  - *Staying in at break time*
  - *Communication with parent(s) / guardian(s)*
  - *Formal report to the Board of Management*

### Strategies to Prevent Escalation of Misbehaviour:

- a non-verbal signal such as a look or a frown;
  - change in tone of voice;
  - stop speaking and wait for attention;
  - Reinforce positive behaviour
  - move the child to another seat;
  - speak to the child, remind the child of the rule which is being broken and encourage him/her to keep the rule.
- Sanctions will be applied to help pupils change inappropriate behaviour
  - A staged approach is used so that initially misbehaviour is dealt with by class teacher by way of warning and/or advice but, if it is more serious or persistent, the parent(s) / guardian(s) may be involved. The Principal will be involved in cases of serious misbehaviour. The Chairperson of the Board of Management Rathbarry National School will be involved at the discretion of the Principal in cases of serious misbehaviour.
  - Rathbarry National School ensures consistency in the application of all sanctions in line with fair procedures as outlines in the “Code of Behaviour Guidelines 2008”  
Teachers shall keep a record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils.  
Before resorting to serious sanctions, e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parent(s) / guardian(s) will be utilised.  
Parent(s) / guardian(s) will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

## **Involving parent(s) / guardian(s) in management of problem behaviour**

Communication with parent(s) / guardian(s) will be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parent(s) / guardian(s) concerned will be invited to come to school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson the Principal Teacher and the class teacher. If the parent(s) / guardian(s) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period.

Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal Teacher to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parent(s) / guardian(s).

## **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

- Strategies used for dealing with serious emotional and behavioural problems are:
  - Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
  - Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
- 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, immediate contact would be made with the parent(s) / guardian(s) and an immediate suspension may be put in place.

## **5. Suspension / Expulsion**

Rathbarry National School implements the procedures in relation to Suspension and Expulsion as laid out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*

{See Appendix 1, 2, 3.}

- Ch. 10 Suspensions and expulsions: legal and procedural requirements
- Ch. 11 Suspension
- Ch. 12 Expulsion

### **Suspension**

Refer to Appendix 2 (pages 70-78, "*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*", *NEWB, 2008*)

### **Expulsion**

Refer to Appendix 3 (pages 80-87, "*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools*", *NEWB, 2008*)

### **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parent(s) / guardian(s) of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals

must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent / guardian or student. (See Appendix 4: Circular 22/02)

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion by the Chairperson of the Board of Management of Rathbarry National School. (See Appendix 2; 11.7)
- The Chairperson of the Board of management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the Dept. of Education and Science (Appendix 4, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal)

## **6. Keeping records**

- o Teachers maintain records in relation to misbehaviour and the Principal is kept informed of all serious misbehaviour.

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

- Parent(s) / guardian(s) are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child in Rathbarry National School by:
  - ❖ Notifying the Principal of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence (Notifying the Principal by phone)
  - ❖ Sending a signed, dated explanation of absence when the pupil returns to school.
- All absence notes are securely stored by the class teacher and an individual monitoring sheet is maintained for all pupils.

**(See Attendance Policy of Rathbarry National School)**

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

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

- o SPHE plan
- o Anti-bullying
- o Positive Staff Working Relations. Bullying / Harassment Policy
- o Enrolment
- o Data Protection and Record keeping
- o Home / School links
- o Health & Safety
- o Equal Opportunity / Gender Equity
- o Attendance
- o Positive School Atmosphere
- o Supervision
- o Substance Use

## **Success Criteria**

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy

- *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*

## **Roles and Responsibility**

People who have particular responsibilities for this policy include

- *Principal*
- *Class teacher*
- *Resource and Learning Support teachers,*
- *Parent(s) / guardian(s)*
- *Pupils*
- *Education Welfare Officer*
- *Board of Management*

## **Implementation Date**

This policy will apply from March 2017

## **Timetable for Review**

The operation of this new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended within two years.

## **Ratification & Communication**

This policy has been reviewed by the Board of Management of Rathbarry National School at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_

And will be implemented as and from April 2017.

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

Chairperson Board of Management  
Rathbarry National School.

The ratified policy will be available on request at the school.