



St. Mary's C.B.S.

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Code of Behaviour and Discipline

Introductory Statement

A school policy on discipline was originally devised in 2007. Following an extensive review of the school code of behaviour and all issues in relation to discipline, this new policy was formulated, during Croke Park staff meetings, in the first term of 2016/2017. All staff, parent representatives and pupils were consulted in reviewing the policy. A separate appendix entitled *Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool's Behaviour Policy and Procedures* (Appendix 3) for specific use in the ASD Unit was devised in May of 2017 and attached following ratification in June 2017. The overall policy was again reviewed in October 2019.

Rationale

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

- Due to a change in school population
- Large change in personnel in staff including a new principal and deputy principal
- 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

St Mary's C.B.S. strives to provide a well ordered caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the moral needs of the pupil are identified and addressed. We encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Parents Association. St Mary's C.B.S. will endeavour to enhance the self esteem of everyone in the school community. We imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

Aims

St Mary's C.B.S. 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 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 individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment which is secure and caring.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The following are the standards of behaviour expected in St. Mary's C.B.S.:

- It is expected that all children will be on time for school at 9.00 a.m. The school yard will be open to receive children at 8.50 a.m. No responsibility is accepted for children arriving before that time.
- It is also expected that children be collected promptly at 2.40 p.m. each day. First class should be collected at 12.45 p.m. each Friday.
- Children must show courtesy and respect to teachers, school staff, traffic warden, visitors and parents at all times.
- Children must show respect and regard for other children at all times. Older children should be particularly kind and helpful to the younger children.
- Children are expected to be truthful, co-operative, helpful and diligent.
- Everybody is expected to show respect for school property, to help in keeping the school tidy and litter free and to use the bins provided.
- Children should enter the school in an orderly fashion and move quietly in the corridors at all times. On entering the classroom children should go directly to their places and remain seated.
- Children are expected to wear the complete school uniform at all times. Due to health and safety reasons children may not wear rings or earrings.

Unacceptable behaviours

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of serious misbehaviour:

- Repetitive minor misbehaviours i.e. making noises, disrupting others, refusal to co-operate,
- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Derogatory or insulting comments directed against anyone e.g. different creed, nationality, ethnic background or sexual orientation
- Explicit or inappropriate language
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Use of abusive language or continued defiance towards a member of staff.

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

It is hoped that all the stakeholders of St. Mary's C.B.S. would work together in devising, implementing and supporting the schools code of behaviour. All stakeholders were given the opportunity to be involved in the review process of the code of behaviour.

Staff

Teachers and other staff members can play important roles in the work of reviewing and updating of the code. They bring to this work their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning; their experience of what works to help students to behave well; and their knowledge of the school and of the school community (p. 16 Guidelines)

Providing opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of the factors that affect behaviour and that help students to change behaviour (p. 29 Guidelines)

Staff as a team should have opportunities to confirm that all school policies and practices support the objectives of the code of behaviour (p. 32 Guidelines)

Issues in relation to behaviour may be raised at staff meetings to facilitate staff discussion on areas of concern. All existing, new and temporary staff will be given a copy of the code of behaviour. Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and to implement it consistently and fairly.

In the event of children who may present with behavioural difficulties arising from their special education needs an IEP with behavioural targets or an Individual Behavioural plan may be used as appropriate.

Teachers will encourage children to take part in all curricular and non-curricular activities which support the ethos of the school.(e.g. local religious activities, school choir, school teams, musicals etc.)

Staff are expected to model the standards of behaviour that the children are asked to respect.

The school's SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) 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. SPHE is taught at all class levels and a co-ordinated approach across the school is to be developed for SPHE.

The following activities are used to develop these skills in children: circle time, role play, brainstorming and discussion.

Board of Management

The overall responsibility for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared rests with the 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 will play an active role in exploring the kinds of relationships and behaviours that will reflect the school's ethos and responsibilities. The Board of Management will support the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and provide training for the staff if required. The Board of Management was consulted in reviewing of the code of behaviour at a Board of Management meeting. The Board of Management are responsible for dealing with serious breaches of behaviour as deemed by the staff.

Parents

Section 23 (4) of the Education Welfare Act 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 '*may, 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*'.

In this latest review, representatives of the Parents Association were invited to a meeting to discuss the contents of the Policy. In the original formulation of the Policy the principal attended a parent's association meeting and invited two parents to volunteer to become involved in reviewing the school's code of behaviour. Parents were informed of what topics would be raised and invited to attend a meeting in the school in relation to the policy. On each occasion parents were encouraged to voice their opinions on various strategies to be used within the school in relation to behaviour. These were recorded in the draft policy. *Final authority rests with the Board in accepting or rejecting such suggestions.*

Following enrolment it will be communicated in the following methods:

Parents will be informed of the code of behaviour as appropriate through the parent's association meetings.

If parents require a further copy of the code of behaviour following enrolment, it is available on our school website. A Hard copy may also be requested from the school.

Parents will be informed if any changes are made to the code of behaviour.

Parents can support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

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Notes from parents are required:

- (a) Following any absence of a pupil from school.

- (b) In the event of a parent wishing their child to leave the school before normal times of dismissal e.g. (Medical / Dental appointments, funeral Masses etc.)
- (c) In the event of a pupil not having completed his/her homework.

Homework is an integral part of a child's education. It is a useful means of: -

- (a) Reinforcing the learning done at school.
- (b) Developing a sense of responsibility and the habit of studying outside the classroom.

We ask that the parents act in the best interests of their child by ensuring that the homework is completed fully and neatly, as required by the teacher. If requested by the teacher, please sign your child's homework. *(Please refer to the school's Homework policy)*

Children and parents **must** have regard for the Healthy Lunch Policy in the school as agreed by B.O.M., Parents and Teachers. *(Please refer to the school's Healthy Lunches policy)*

So as to avoid disruption of classes and teaching time, parents wishing to discuss an important issue, which may take a lengthy period of time, should make an appointment with their child's teacher through the school secretary or the school principal beforehand.

Parents are asked to encourage their child to show respect to other children and adults outside of school hours.

Parents are expected to model the standards of behaviour that the children are asked to respect and to speak respectfully both to and about the school and staff.

Parents are asked to contact the school if there is any issue in relation to their child – health, emotional, separation, Bereavements, homework – which may affect their performance.

Parents are expected to ensure their children wear the correct school uniform *(Please refer to the school's Uniform policy)*

Classes finish at 2.40 p.m. and children should be collected promptly at this time. Pupils are not allowed to remain in the school grounds after dismissal at 2.40 p.m. unless under the supervision of a teacher taking some after school activity or if attending homework club.

Parents are asked to work co-operatively with the school and in trying to resolve any issues which may arise e.g. discussing the problem with the child at home.

Parents are asked to distribute personal cards / invitations outside of the school.

Pupils

Pupils are more likely to support a code of behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Pupils were involved in reviewing the code of behaviour through discussion at class level and this feedback was taken into consideration by the staff on the school development planning day. Pupils are involved in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

- Involving themselves in regular discussion on the code of behaviour
- Drafting rules for the classroom
- Informing the teacher of any issues in relation to behaviour

3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'. (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

Classroom

In September of each year classroom rules are devised or revised in consultation with the children. These will be stated in positive terms and displayed in the classroom, as appropriate. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave and we strive to achieve a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour. Classroom management techniques are used that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies that sustain pupil interest and motivation.

Playground(s)

Two teachers are on supervision per day and a rota is in place. Children are visible at all times and play in the main yard.

Children are allowed to play games – ball games can only be played using a tennis ball – specific arrangements are now in place for hurling.

All classes have a designated play area. On wet days children are allowed to remain in their classrooms while the teachers and SNAs patrol the classrooms and corridor.

If children wish to leave the playground to use the toilets they must get permission from the teacher on duty. Children will not be allowed inside the school during break times without the permission of a teacher or SNA. The sanctions, as listed above, apply for the playground also. 'Sin Bin' may be used as a timeout for misbehaviour on the playground.

Other areas in the school

Children are only allowed to the toilet one at a time during class time.

School related activities

All standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school trips, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games.

While we encourage pupils to behave at all times, the school cannot take responsibility for a pupil's actions outside the school grounds.

4. REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The school fully recognises the importance of cultivating a high level of self-esteem among its pupils. The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give best results. This is recognised as one of the best ways to improve behaviour in the school context. Good behaviour is encouraged by praise and reward. Misbehaviour is discouraged and disapproved of.

The class teacher is responsible for the effective implementation of the schools policy in relation to discipline within his/her own classroom and in communal areas during breaks and while on supervision. Each teacher is entitled to expect the support of the Principal teacher and the Board of Management with regard to the fair implementation of this policy. Rewards are given for good or improved behaviour. Rewards may take the form of: - praise, encouragement, being given responsibility or "jobs", stickers, stars, homework passes, golden time or small material rewards, 'Pupil of the Month'. Individual teachers may also devise other strategies, which they

find effective for encouraging good behaviour. Sanctions may vary according to the seriousness of the offence. Fairness and consistency are of primary importance.

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

1. Verbal Warning / Reasoning with the pupil.
2. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
4. Loss of privileges.
5. Detention during a break or after school hours.
6. Prescribing additional work.
7. Referral to Principal.
8. Report
9. Communication with parents.
10. Suspension (temporary). Three days initially, 10 days for subsequent or more serious offences
11. In extreme cases of serious misbehaviour Expulsion is an option.

When sanctions have been applied the teacher will identify the misdemeanour to help the child to understand the expected behaviour.

To ensure consistency in the application of sanctions regular discussions will take place formally and informally between staff.

Once the Principal becomes involved, we will apply a **three strike system** for dealing with serious issues. If the Principal feels it warranted, a first formal warning will be given to the child. Should the pupil continue to behave inappropriately, then a second formal warning will be issued and the parents of the child will be made aware that a continuation of misbehaviour will result in the child receiving a suspension (Third Strike)

5. Suspension / Expulsion

Suspension

Suspension is defined as requiring the child to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The Board of Management of St. Mary's C.B.S. has the authority to suspend a child.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. The decision to suspend a child requires serious grounds such as that:

1. the child's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education, development or wellbeing of other children
2. the child's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
3. the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Serious misconduct includes any physical fight in the playground. The school's three strike system also applies to suspension as detailed in Section 4 of this policy.

Suspensions can give the child time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the child to change unacceptable behaviour.

However, suspension can be counter-productive if used without a clear rationale or without measuring its impact and value. School management will consider the risk of any unwanted outcomes from suspension.

The Factors to be considered before suspending a child as per NEWB guidelines (pg.72) will be used. See attached in appendix 1.

Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the child's behaviour. The suspension will:

4. Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the child and their parents
5. Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
6. Impress on a child and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.

Forms of suspension

Immediate suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the child in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of child or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- inform the child and their parents about the complaint/Issue

Let the child and their parents know about the complaint, how it will be investigated, and that it could result in suspension. Parents may be informed by phone and/or in writing.

- give parents and child an opportunity to respond

Parents and child will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension also.

The school's three strike system applies to suspension as detailed in Section 4 of this policy.

Period of suspension

A child will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the school considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective – up to a maximum of 10 days. The Principal has the authority to issue a three day suspension should students fail to comply with the three strike rule. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal, in consultation with the chairperson of the BOM, may impose a longer suspension - up to a maximum of 10 days.

Appeals

Parents can appeal a suspension through an appeals process provided by the patron.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the child has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. (Please see school's complaints procedure)

Written notification

The Principal will notify the parents and the child in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the child and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (*Education Act 1998*, section 29).

Engaging with child and parents

Where a decision to suspend has been made, it can maximise the impact and value of suspension if the Principal and/or another staff member delegated by the Principal meets with the parents to emphasise their responsibility in helping the child to behave well when the child returns to school and to offer help and guidance in this.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the patron decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

After the suspension ends:

The school will make every effort to re-integrate the child successfully into the school. The child will be asked to recommit to the school's Code of Behaviour. The child will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Records and reports

Records of investigation and decision-making Formal written records will be kept of:

- the investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

Report to NEWB The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (*Education (Welfare) Act, 2000*, section 21(4)(a)).

The school will review the use of suspension as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

EXPULSION

A child is expelled from a school when a Board of Management of St. Mary's CBS makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school. The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a child.

The BOM will only expel a child in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a child.

A proposal to expel a child requires serious grounds such as that:

1. the child's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
2. the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
3. the child is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the child's behaviour.

Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a child will be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- a serious threat of violence against another child or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other children in the school
- sexual assault.

The Factors to be considered before expelling a child as per NEWB guidelines pg. 82 will be used. See attached in appendix 2.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a child. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

The school will refer to the NEWB guidelines pg. 83-86 for specific procedures in relation to expulsion.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a child.

The school will review the use of expulsion as the need arises or as guidelines dictate.

6. Keeping records

Teachers shall keep a written record in the school incident book of all instances of serious or gross misbehaviour in the classroom as well as the playground. A record will also be kept, by the class teacher, of continuous minor misdemeanours and/or disruptive behaviour. Improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils shall also be recorded. Communication with parents will be utilised at an early stage rather than as a last resort. In this regard we welcome and encourage regular visits from parents to enquire about their child's progress. Attendance at parent teacher meetings is **essential**. On the end of year school report a comment may be made regarding the child's behaviour.

7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 the school must notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has missed a total of 20 days in the school year. Very often there will be good reasons for the absences e.g. illness, family difficulty etc. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. An Educational Welfare Officer may then visit the child's home to discuss the matter.

The following strategies are used to encourage school attendance:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- System for reward system for full attendance
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

Notes will be provided to parents at the start of each school year (Homework journals) and are asked to return them to the school directly after the absence. The date, reason and signature of the parent are required. The reasons for absence are recorded on 'Aladdin' for the current school year and the year following that.

The school uses 'Aladdin' to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board (TUSLA) through the on-line system.

Success Criteria

The following are 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 are being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and children

Roles and Responsibility

The teachers have responsibility for implementation of the code in their classrooms and playground. The Board of Management and the parents have responsibility for supporting the school staff in the implementation of the code. The parents have responsibility in reinforcing the code of behaviour with their children at home. The children have a role in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented in November 2016.

Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed in three years, as a result of any school improvement plan or in line with new legislation.

Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy on 24th November, 2016 with the appendix for the ASD preschool ratified on the 1st June, 2017. Most recent ratification 9.10.19

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)
Ita O'Brien

Appendix 1

Factors to consider before suspending a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?

- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

Whether suspension is a proportionate response

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of suspension

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

Appendix 2

Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

The context of the behaviour

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

The impact of the behaviour

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

The interventions tried to date

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?

- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

Whether expulsion is a proportionate response

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

The possible impact of expulsion

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

Appendix 3

Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool's Behaviour Policy and Procedures

School Ethos

Our school provides a caring and supportive learning environment that encourages positive behaviour and where all members of the school community feel valued, safe and respected. We consider promoting and teaching positive behaviour as central to ensuring academic achievement, independence and community participation.

Introduction

This policy stems from Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool's commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment in our ASD preschool class. The policy is designed to ensure the rights of children in the ASD class and the staff who support them, to learn and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive. Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community we will endeavor at all times to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building up positive relationships with pupils.

Autism and Behaviour

People on the autism spectrum are likely to have impaired communication and social skills, a lack of empathy, over or under sensitivity to sensory stimuli and damaged self-esteem. For a variety of reasons people with autism are likely to experience high levels of anxiety. Behaviour that challenges may be a reaction to these difficulties and an attempt for the individual to control a situation, regulate their emotions and/or communicate fear, distress or frustration. People with autism can behave in ways that hinder their access to opportunities, restrict their social inclusion and adversely affect their quality of life. Working with families to enable the children and young people we support to learn to behave appropriately in different situations is central to achieving our aim of their acceptance and inclusion.

Definition of Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour is “behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; significantly reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger” (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996) CherryBlossom A.S.D. Preschool’s approach to Behaviour Support acknowledges that the student’s behavioural difficulties may be linked to the triad of impairments, sensory sensitivities, and cognitive abilities of the individual. The school acknowledges that the students may have a dual diagnosis and the impact this may have on behaviour. All of the above factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce problematic behaviours; however the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted.

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication. Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate, which is supportive of positive behaviour. In CherryBlossom A.S.D. Preschool we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour. The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

The following are some of the strategies that will be used to promote positive behaviour in our ASD class:

- Develop language and communication skills – including PECS, Lámh and requesting
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Now/Then boards
- Daily communication with parents
- The teaching of social skills
- The use of social stories (where applicable)
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child
- The teaching and reinforcing of appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function for the child (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour)

- The use of social praise and acknowledgement
- Choice boards
- Access to preferred items/ activities intermittently throughout the day following an appropriate request or the completion of a particular task

Staff Training

The health and safety of all students and staff is of utmost priority. Therefore Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool promotes Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers in our ASD class develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. Training in both promoting positive behaviour and managing challenging behaviour will be undertaken by all staff in the ASD class.

Responsibilities Related to Behaviour Management

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment, which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage feedback
- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour
- Behaviour Management Plans will be put in place where needed in consultation with the parents
- Participating in professional learning that contributes to their skill development and understanding of students with challenging behaviour
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur on ABC charts. Incident reports will be written when needed in the school incident book
- Facilitate a 'de-brief' at the end of each day with SNA's – talking through what has gone well and why, and reflecting upon more challenging situations and how they could be managed the next time they occur.
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/guardians

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Contributing to management plans that concern their child and providing feedback on the results of any interventions
- Co-operating with interventions and strategies that are proposed by the child's classroom teacher and the principal
- To inform the school if their child is receiving any regular medication. Where prescribed medications are known to have a behavioural effect these possible effects will be factored in to all behaviour support measures
- Talk in confidence to the class teacher or principal about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the Challenging Behaviour Policy within the school
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal
- Providing the opportunity for the teachers in the ASD class to develop higher-level skills so that they can provide additional support and advice within the school
- Seeking outside support and advice
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted

Steps in Managing Challenging Behaviour

The approach adopted by Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool in response to challenging behaviour is to affect a decrease in inappropriate behaviour by increasing appropriate behaviour. This should be achieved through the employment of reinforcement strategies and positive behaviour promotion. Only when data indicates that these positive measures have been tried and exhausted; or have been unsuccessful in eliminating or sufficiently reducing problem behaviour, should the following strategies be considered;

Minor challenging behaviour:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be dealt with at class level as appropriate
- Will be written up in each child's ABC chart (see appendix 1)
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians
- Will be dealt with appropriately which may include the creation of a Behavioural Support Plan

Aggressive behaviour – threats:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart
- Will be reported to parents/guardians
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented

Please Note: The Principal may be consulted at any stage above.

Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious Challenging behaviour:

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher

- A written report will be made on the incident and kept in the ABC chart and recorded in the Incident folder
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the principal
- Each incident will be reported to parents/guardians
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented in consultation with the parents
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behavioural Plan will be reviewed after each incident
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend a meeting at the school with the Chairperson, the Principal and the Class Teacher
- If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with the class teacher and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act - in line with the suspension policy listed in sections 4 and 5 above
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils and staff of Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with parents – in line with the suspension policy listed in sections 4 and 5 above
- Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupils reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The principal will re-admit the pupil formally to the class if that decision is made
- The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it's an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of themselves, to other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made to exclude the child from the school.
- Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act
- If a decision is made in relation to expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the application form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to the parents/guardians

Please Note: The above steps are in keeping with our school Code of Behaviour.

Please Note: Behavioural interventions implemented in the school will only be done so with full parental/guardian support. In situations where parental/guardian support for the best practice intervention as selected is not forthcoming, a meeting will be held with the child's family to present and examine all of the alternative interventions available. The potential effectiveness, outcomes, and consequences of each intervention will be discussed with reference to the school's duty of care towards all its students and staff. After all outcomes and risks have been examined a decision will be proposed. If agreement can't be arrived at then the matter is referred to the Board of Management.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of Cherry Blossom A.S.D. Preschool. must adhere to the Challenging Behaviour Policy. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are made aware of it. Parents must sign a statement saying that they will adhere to the policy.

Responsibilities of volunteers and pupils on placement:

- To be familiar with school policies
- To follow guidance given
- To request support and advice when necessary

Limitations

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the students, the teacher, and the Principal to be used to solve individual problems.

Policy Review/Ratification

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Behaviour Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals, to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified.