



# **Rathfarnham Educate Together National School**

## **Code of Behaviour**

January 2009

## Table of Contents

Rathfarnham Educate Together Code of Behaviour.....	1
Rationale .....	1
Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school.....	3
Aims .....	3
Content of policy .....	4
1. Guidelines for behaviour in the school.....	5
2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour .....	6
Staff.....	6
Board of Management .....	7
Parents.....	7
Pupils .....	8
3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour.....	9
Classroom.....	9
Playground(s).....	10
Other areas in the school.....	10
4. Promoting good behaviour .....	11
Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour.....	11
Responding to inappropriate behaviour.....	12
Application of sanctions .....	14
Students with special educational needs.....	14
Bullying.....	14
Building relationships with parents.....	15
Involving parents in management of problem behaviour .....	15
Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour.....	16
5. Suspension / Expulsion procedures.....	17
Suspension .....	17
Procedure employed in R.E.T.N.S. in relation to suspension and expulsion: .....	17
Implementing the suspension .....	18
Expulsion (permanent exclusion).....	19
Grounds for expulsion .....	19
Appeals .....	20
6. Keeping records .....	21
Class level.....	21
Playground .....	21
School records .....	22
7. Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school .....	23
8. Reference to other policies/documents .....	24
Success Criteria .....	24
Roles and Responsibility.....	25
Implementation Date .....	25
Timetable for Review 2010 .....	25
Ratification & Communication .....	25
Appendix One: References.....	26
Appendix Two: Suspension Form.....	28
Appendix Three: Behaviour and Accident & Incident Report Forms .....	29

# Rathfarnham Educate Together Code of Behaviour

The RETNS Code of Behaviour is the set of practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping students to behave well and learn well.

The code of behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and minimise unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

Our code expresses the vision, mission and values of RETNS and its Patron. It translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

The code of behaviour enables school authorities to strike an appropriate balance between their duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and their responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process.

Maintaining a harmonious environment can present a challenge to schools, given competing needs, time pressures and varying capacities or readiness to learn. A code of behaviour that has the support of the school community can go a long way to helping schools meet this challenge successfully.

The revised version of RETNS Code of Behaviour was initiated in March 2006.

## Rationale

1. This policy is being reviewed at this time in response to an area of concern arising from the Whole School Development Plan. As part of this whole school development plan a facilitated school development planning meeting was held, (March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006), where the aim was to review the existing Code of Behaviour in light of the founding principles of Educate Together; child centred, democratic, multi denominational and co-educational, and to ensure that the code was in line with Department guidelines. On this day four workshops took place, each comprising of staff members and parents/guardians, under the headings:
  - Setting a positive climate
  - Preventative strategies
  - Dealing with misbehaviour
  - Communication/Record keeping.

In response to this school development planning session a document "Towards a Code of Discipline" was drawn up, which highlighted the already existing positive climate of the school and made suggestions for some initiatives that could further enhance this positive climate.

A further whole school planning day, with a Department of Education facilitator, was held in May 2008. Following this planning day a group of teachers collated all information to produce this final draft.

The National Educational Welfare Board document "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" was sent to schools in September 2008. This necessitated further review of our Code.

2. It is a requirement under section 23 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 that the Board of Management must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational welfare Board (NEWB). *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.*

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

*The aim of the Code of Behaviour is to ensure that the individuality of each child is respected and that individual differences are celebrated, acknowledging the right of each child to an environment in which they can safely learn and grow. The entire school community has a part to play in contributing to this environment. The strength of this community, together with a high level of co-operation between staff, parents/guardians and children, will ensure a high standard of behaviour.*

*In Rathfarnham Educate Together National School we recognise that each member of the school community, staff, parents/guardians and children have the right to be treated with respect and consideration, therefore every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Positive techniques of motivation and encouragement will be utilised by staff, placing greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. School rules are kept to a minimum and are there to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all members of Rathfarnham Educate Together National School.*

## Aims

By introducing this revised version of the school Code of Behaviour our aim is:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Educate Together ethos
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where all children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, open-mindedness and consideration for others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate and accept 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 ensure 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:

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour

- Staff
- Board of Management
- Parents
- Pupils

Positive strategies for managing behaviour

- Classroom
- Playground
- Other areas in the school

Rewards and sanctions

- Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
- Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
- Managing disruptive aggressive or violent behaviour

Suspension / Expulsion

- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Appeals

Keeping records

- Class
- Playground
- School records

Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school

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"*.

- In Rathfarnham Educate Together National School our aim is to promote positive behaviour, which will allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. We aim to enhance the learning environment where every child can have the opportunity to make progress in all aspects of his/her development.
  - Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show respect for self and others, and to show kindness and willingness to help others.
  - 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 regularly and punctually.
  - Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
  - Each pupil is expected to have everything needed for class and to keep his/her personal space and belongings tidy.
  - Each pupil is expected to show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and to show and practice forgiveness.

**Due regard will be given to the age and range of abilities in implementing the Code of Behaviour.**

Each parent/guardian will be provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour to discuss and sign with their child/children. A Positive Behaviour Week will be held in the school in September each year. As part of this week, one night's homework will involve both parent/guardian and child reading, discussing, and jointly signing the Code of Behaviour.

There will be regular follow up on the behaviour code throughout the school year.

## 2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

*'In RETNS we recognise that positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between staff and the ways in which pupils, staff and parents/guardians treat each other.*

*This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school'.*

### Staff

*In our school, our aim is to treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils, and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour*

The ethos of RETNS, the core of which is child centred, lends itself to a spirit of close co-operation among all the partners in a child's education.

- Our code of behaviour will be reviewed on an on-going basis.
- Parents/Guardians are made aware of the Behaviour Policy, which includes strategies, rewards, and sanctions, , through behaviour week in September, through curriculum meetings, and through school rules in the Homework Diaries.
- Through a staff-mentoring programme, which operates in RETNS, new staff members are made aware of the Behaviour Policy.
- All staff have been consulted on and have agreed on the Code of Behaviour
- Cognisance will be taken of behavioural difficulties that arise from special educational needs of individuals. Behaviour targets and specific strategies may be included as part of an Individualised Education Plan.

*The school's Learn Together, Ethical Education Programme and Social Personal and Health Education curriculum are used to support the code of behaviour. These curricular areas aim to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, encourage forgiveness, develop resilience, and promote conflict resolution skills. They also aim to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.*

- Relevant policies and resources are available to all staff and are reviewed on an on-going basis.
- Parents/Guardians of newly enrolled children are informed about the curriculum and their part in supporting it at new parents meetings, curriculum meetings, and progress meetings and through information packs.
- A range of activities is used to develop these skills in children e.g. Circle Time, Toy Time, Golden Time, Assemblies, Achievement Book, Workshops on relevant topics, EEP stories, and Discussions.

## Board of Management

*The Board of Management of RETNS has a role to play in the maintenance of acceptable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and sanctions used, which are part of a plan to change behaviour and to help students understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.*

- The Board of Management of RETNS is consulted in the drafting/reviewing of the code of behaviour.
- The Board of Management is responsible for providing a safe and orderly environment for staff and pupils to work in.
- The Board of Management, through on-going consultation, supports the staff in devising and upholding the behaviour code.
- Departmental procedures are in place for the Board of Management to deal with serious breaches of behaviour.

## Parents

*'Schools need the support of parents/guardians in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline'*\*

*RETNS recognises that, in line with our school ethos, parents work in partnership with staff to meet legitimate expectations with regard to positive behaviour and discipline.*

- Co-operation and communication between staff and parents/guardians is actively encouraged through formal and informal meetings, workshops, written communication, information packs etc.
- Planning days were held in the initial stages of formulating this policy, where parents/guardians and staff worked together to explore areas of the behaviour code in relation to the Ethical Education Programme. Also, a representative group from the stakeholders in the school came together to devise and outline a draft policy.
- Parents/Guardians of newly enrolled children are informed about the Behaviour Code and their part in supporting it, at new parents meetings, at curriculum meetings and through information packs.
- Parents are expected to support the school in the promotion of positive behaviour and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour by:

---

\* Circular 20/90- Guidelines Towards a Positive Policy for School Behaviour and Discipline  
[www.sess.ie/ress/Files/Circular%2020-90%20Code%20of%20Discipline.doc](http://www.sess.ie/ress/Files/Circular%2020-90%20Code%20of%20Discipline.doc)

- Encouraging their children to uphold the school's ethos and code of behaviour
- Encouraging their children to respect all members of the school community
- Making themselves aware of and cooperating with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- Ensuring their children are in school on time
- Attending meetings at the school if requested
- Helping their children with homework and ensuring that it is completed
- Ensuring their children have the necessary books and materials to complete their schoolwork and take part in school activities.

The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other. The ways in which parents/Guardians and teachers interact will provide students with a model of good working relationships.

### **Pupils**

- Pupils are involved each September in creating a Class Charter for their own class, reflecting the school code of behaviour. The active Student Council in the school promotes ownership of our code of behaviour and provides pupils with an opportunity to monitor its enactment.

### 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'.\**

The following positive strategies will be used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour.

#### **Classroom**

- In September of each year teachers will discuss with the children the Happy School Rules, as outlined in RETNS homework diary, in an age appropriate way.\* Reference can be made in senior classes to RETNS Code of Rights and Responsibilities from the homework diary. (Ref.p.4 of this document)
- Each parent/guardian will be provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour to discuss and sign with their child/children. (Whole School Homework night will occur in September specifically for discussion of Code of Behaviour and signatures in Homework diary).
- Pupils, when creating their Class Charter, are encouraged to draft rules using positive language.
- Pupils will be encouraged to see the similarities between "their" rules and those set out in RETNS journal.
- Teachers will ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour is in place in each classroom.
- Teachers will implement a range of classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- Teachers will timetable activities in the classroom to maximise promotion of positive behaviour

---

\* Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for Teachers INTO 2004: 5

\* Junior classes can use SPHE curriculum guidelines

## **Playground(s)**

The positive strategies, which RETNS implements to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidences of unacceptable behaviour in the playground, are:

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make it clear what activities are permitted. These are discussed at staff meetings, and then communicated to pupils in the individual classrooms and at whole school assemblies.
- A list of the rules will be included on the playground clipboards.
- One teacher is on duty in the senior yard and one in the junior yard. SNAs are shared between both yards.
- When there is a need to supervise more closely the behaviour of certain age groups, certain areas of the playground, certain individual pupils, this is discussed at staff meetings and necessary arrangements are put in place. An agenda item on behaviour/ individual pupil needs is included at each staff meeting.
- A range of play activities is allowed on senior yard, with each class being responsible for its own box of activities.
- On occasion senior children will teach games to junior children. This will be organised from the classroom.
- The creation of zones within the playground provide sections for specific age groups, and quiet activities are made available in the playground..
- Children are required to remain seated during indoor break. They may read, draw, or do puzzles. Laminated indoor rules are on display in each classroom.
- Pupils are escorted to the playground by the class teacher and are collected from class lines at the end of yard time.
- To use the toilet children take a 'leithreas' sign from the teacher on duty. Only two children from senior yard and one from junior yard may go at any one time. An SNA stays inside supervising children who are not on yard.
- To manage incidents of misbehaviour, a Behaviour Form and Accident and Incident Report Forms are included on the yard duty clipboard.

## **Other areas in the school**

All staff members are proactive in communicating rules/expectations to children in all areas of the school.

Positive behaviour by the children is acknowledged and praised.

## 4. Promoting good behaviour

### Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour

*RETNS places a greater emphasis on affirming positive behaviour than on sanctions*

The day-to-day school management, classroom teaching and our Educate Together ethos will enable most students to behave in ways that support their own learning and development.

Teachers and other school staff use a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and school level.

Students are more likely to behave well when:

- they are given responsibility in the school and are involved in the development of the code of behaviour
- they are encouraged to see that the code works in a fair way to the benefit of all
- the standards are clear, consistent and widely understood
- parents support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour and there are good relationships between teachers, parents and students.

Other strategies to encourage and promote good behaviour include:

- positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- good school and class routines
- clear boundaries for students
- helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- exploring with students how people should treat each other
- involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules.

Systems for acknowledging positive behaviour are in use in classrooms and at times form part of a planned intervention to help an individual student to manage their own behaviour. When using reward systems teachers are mindful that:

- any reward systems used will be meaningful
- students will understand that rewards acknowledge behaviour that is valued and wanted
- rewards can be given for effort and not only for achievement.

Systems for acknowledging positive behaviour will be inclusive and used consistently throughout the school. It is acknowledged that rewards should not become the goal of learning or result in unhelpful competition.

## Responding to inappropriate behaviour

Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers. Our policy is to intervene early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

**The objective of a sanction is to help the student to learn.**

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

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Some strategies used in response to incidents of inappropriate behaviour are:

- reminding the pupil (reflection)
- reasoning with the pupil
- reprimand (including advice on how to improve and may also include a warning)
- "putting it right", e.g. clean table after marking it
- withdrawal from part lesson or peer group
- loss of privileges, e.g. loss of golden time
- payback time
- carrying out a useful task in the school
- prescribing additional work/prescribing weekend and/or extra homework
- referral to Principal
- referral to Deputy Principal

- communication with parents/guardians, either oral or written
- suspension\*
- **expulsion**

Temporarily removing a student from the classroom to a supervised location may be appropriate in the interests of classroom management in order to ensure the learning of other students and to help the individual student to recognise and learn about the impact and consequences of their behaviour. However, consistently denying a student access to a particular part of the curriculum **as a general sanction** would not be appropriate.

Sanctions are used in the school as part of a plan to change behaviour. A sanction is a form of positive intervention. They are used as part of a wider plan to help the student learn. Sanctions are used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular teachers are aware that sanctions should:

- defuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely

Staff use agreed sanctions and teachers know the level of sanction they are authorised to apply.

---

\* See Section 5 (page 15) on Suspension

## **Application of sanctions**

Initially class or support teacher by way of warning and/or advice will deal with misbehaviour but, if behaviour is more serious or persistent, the Principal will be informed and the parents may be involved. In the case of gross misdemeanours the Principal will be informed immediately. On the Principal's judgement a case may be referred to Board of Management for consultation.

All of the staff (Principal, Deputy Principal Class teachers, Special Educational Needs teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Classroom Assistants) has a shared responsibility in operating the school's Code of Behaviour. Visiting staff, student teachers, coaches, etc. are expected to abide by the RETNS Code of Behaviour.

The staff member who has dealt with or observed the misbehaviour will communicate incidents of notable misbehaviour to the class teacher.

In addition, the school has a mentoring system to support new staff, and teachers who have management responsibilities (In School Management team) in the school may provide support to class teachers in addressing behaviour issues with an individual or a class group.

There is an agreed method of recording matters to do with students' behaviour. (See appendix)

## **Students with special educational needs**

Sanctions may be needed to help a student with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. Teachers will take particular care that they help the student with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.

## **Bullying**

In RETNS bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable. Teachers have a professional duty of care to address bullying and the school has an anti-bullying policy. Action to be taken in relation to alleged breaches of the school's bullying policy are set out in this policy.

## **Building relationships with parents**

In RETNS we recognise the importance of building relationships with parents, and so keeping problem behaviour to a minimum. Parental understanding and support for the implementation of the code of behaviour is strengthened through activities such as:

- a new parents meeting giving an introduction to the school and its standards, expectations for students and the role of parents in helping students to meet the standards
- encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school, and making sure they know how to do so
- early communication to alert parents to concerns about a student's behaviour, so that ways of helping the student can be discussed and agreed.
- agreed procedures through which parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a student, and explore ways of helping the student
- information offered through the Parents' Association, such as talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child development
- parental involvement in reviewing and planning school policies, as part of school development planning.

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

In the case of persistent misbehaviour or a serious incident of misbehaviour, generally the class teacher will contact parents, either verbally or in writing. The Principal may also contact the parent. In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Principal, Deputy Principal, class teacher or Special Educational Needs teacher will contact parent/guardian either verbally or in writing.

Teachers will be mindful of the sensitivities of parents when meeting to discuss their child's behaviour. Principal may also be present and the child may be included at some stage of the meeting.

Parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if they have concerns. This may be done by making an appointment through the school office or directly with the class teacher, as set out in the Parental Involvement Charter.

## Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour

- Parents and teacher will need to work together to help the student to modify behaviour and to work towards changing it. This will involve the Principal and other in-school supports.
- Children who display repeated emotional disturbance in school will be referred for psychological assessment with the consent of parent
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support is sought from services available e.g. Health Service Executive, National Educational Psychological Service.
- Principal and RETNS Special Education Teachers team may facilitate teachers in sharing practice and support in the management of challenging behaviour, if required.
- A mentoring system is in place for newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school, to support them in managing challenging behaviour.
- Teachers may avail of INTO seminars on managing challenging behaviour or in-service courses run by Institute of Child Education and Psychology, Education Centres, etc. and refer to publications.
- 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, steps will be taken to distance the pupil from the immediate environment of other pupils and the Principal will be notified immediately.

## 5. Suspension / Expulsion procedures

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify... *'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned'* and *"the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student."*\*

### Suspension

The Principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.*\*\*

Circular 20/90 states that *'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated'*.

### Procedure employed in R.E.T.N.S. in relation to suspension and expulsion:

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

Grounds for suspension:

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

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

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.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and or the Chairperson to exclude a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

Procedures that ensure fairness when excluding a pupil will include:

- Ensuring other means of intervention and dealing with the behaviour has been tried.
- Parents will have been invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.
- A fair investigation will have taken place, taking both parents' and pupil's perspective into account.
- Parents and student will be informed about the complaint.
- Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond.
- Parents may be informed by phone or in writing.

---

\* The Education Welfare Act, 2000 Sections 23(2) c, d

\*\* The Education Welfare Act, 2000 Sections 21(4) a

- In the case of immediate suspension, parents will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- The BOM, before reaching a decision to exclude a pupil, will ensure its decision will be reached in an unbiased manner. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.
- Following suspension, a plan to re-integrate the student will include, where possible, an arrangement for a member of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. Student contracts will if necessary be put in place for the student and his/her parents. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and parent/s. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parent/s will support and maintain support at all times for their child. Regular positive contact will be necessary until the student has re-settled.
- When an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation will immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. In the case of immediate suspension the parents guardians will be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected.
- RETNS suspension form\* will be filled in noting which parent/guardian collected student, what time student was collected, place and time of supervision and personnel supervising whilst waiting arrival of parents/guardians
- Parent/Guardian will sign RETNS suspension form.
- The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- The National Education Welfare Board will be notified by phone, fax, or email and using the standard form\* if a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days,

### **Implementing the suspension**

The Principal shall notify P/G in writing of the decision to suspend

- Letter stating period of suspension - dates it begins and ends
- Reasons for suspension
- Any programme to be followed by student and or parent

---

\* See Appendix Two

\* Forms are available on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

- Arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by student and parents
- Provision for an appeal to Board of management
- Right to appeal to the secretary General of the DES (Education Act 1998 section 29)

### **Expulsion (permanent exclusion)**

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, '*A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer*' (Section 24(4)) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '*...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.*' (Section 24(5))

*The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice this should be reserved for the BOM and not delegated.*

### **Grounds for expulsion**

*Before a student is expelled:*

A meeting is held with parents and student to try to find ways of helping the student to change her/his behaviour.

- Ensuring the student understands the consequences of their behaviour should it continue.
- Ensuring all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies.

Serious grounds are:

- Student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's presence constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in expulsion for first offence

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

## Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) 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.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing by the Principal of the decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude or suspend the student .

Parents/Guardians will be informed of their right of appeal, the associated timeframe of 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents and student.

Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02.

The Board of Management will prepare an appeal if the school is being investigated by the Dept of Education and Science.\*

---

\* Section 12, Circular 22/02 – Processing of an Appeal

## 6. Keeping records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, the school maintains records in relation to pupils' behaviour.

### Class level

- Copies of incident forms/ child's reflection on an incident will be copied and kept in the child's file. Copies may also be given to the Principal.
- A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.\*
- Staff have a clear and consistent understanding of what constitutes excellent behaviour and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and discuss these matters regularly at staff meetings.
- The end of year report includes a reference to behaviour.
- Problematic behaviour will have been discussed with parents before noting/recording on the end of year report.

### Playground

- Supervising teachers maintain written records of behaviour/incidents on standard behaviour/incident forms. These forms are maintained and collated weekly by a member of the SNA staff, who brings instances of repeated misbehaviour to the attention of the Principal.
- To ensure consistency in the application and interpretation of the rules, a comprehensive list of playground rules\* is attached to the playground clipboard and is on display in the staff room. These are discussed regularly with the children and amended following discussion by the whole staff at staff meetings, if necessary.

---

\* Circular 20/90

\* See Appendix Three

## **School records**

- The class teacher maintains individual files for each child. In cases referred to the principal, documents pertaining to that case will usually be photocopied and a copy given to the Principal.
- Formal records are maintained by the Principal e.g. factual reports of particular incidents, communication between school and home, with outside agencies, Board of Management etc.
- The Principal also maintains documentation pertaining to appeals under Section 29.

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

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23(2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify *"the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school"*. Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- RETNS strives at all times to encourage maximum school attendance in all pupils by:
  - Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
  - Acknowledging good or improved attendance
  - Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
  - Adapting, on occasion, the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
  - Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- RETNS policy in relation to explanation of pupil absences is that parents/guardians send in a note or ring the office informing teachers of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence.
- Written notes are signed and dated. A written record of phone calls is kept and passed on to the class teacher. These records are kept in the class filing cabinet until the end of the school year.
- RETNS uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board.\*

---

\* See forms on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

## **8. Reference to other policies/documents**

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

- Learn Together Policy
- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Home / School links
- Health & Safety Statement
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Homework Policy
- Parent Charter

## **Success Criteria**

Practical indicators of the success of this policy are:

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Consistent implementation of the policy by all staff in the school
- Willingness among staff to discuss and modify the policy when needed
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Parents positively supporting criteria and implementation of sanctions

## **Roles and Responsibility**

- The BOM will read, discuss and officially ratify this policy
- Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with all staff, in partnership with parents, and with BOM.
- Principal, Deputy Principal, and In School Management team will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The Principal, teachers, Special Needs Assistants and all those working with children in the school have a pivotal role in ensuring that this Code of Behaviour is implemented fully and positively throughout the school at all times
- Student Council will have an active part to play in promoting good and positive behaviour. Senior pupils in the school have responsibility in showing example to juniors. All children will play their part in promoting a positive ethos in the school in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour.
- Senior students will act as student monitors to promote safe, responsible respectful and acceptable behaviour.
- Parents have an important role in upholding RETNS Code of Behaviour and in supporting staff and children in the implementation of this policy.

## **Implementation Date**

This policy will apply from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.

## **Timetable for Review 2010**

The operation of this policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended in February 2012

## **Ratification & Communication**

RETNS Board of Management officially ratified this policy January 2009.

## Appendix One: References

- Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 Section 23(1 -5), 24 (1-5)
- Education Act, 1998 Section 15 (2(d))
- Circular 20/90 on Discipline (DES web site [www.irlgov.ie/educ](http://www.irlgov.ie/educ)). Also in CPSMA Handbook
- Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website). Deals with appeals under the following headings:
  - (1) Permanent exclusion from a school
  - (2) Suspension
  - (3) Refusal to enrol
- Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour (National Education Welfare Board) *Draft edition published for consultation in 2007*
- Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools (1993) available on DES website
- Report to the Minister of Education Niamh Breathnach, T.D. on Discipline in Schools. Maeve Martin, 1997. Ch. 4 p.56-61 Recommendations for Schools
- Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes
- Management Board Members' Handbook. Revised 2007. CPSMA: A suggested Code of Behaviour & Discipline for National Schools
- INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers
- INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools
- INTO (1995) Enhancing Self Esteem
- The Education Act 1998. The Education Welfare Act 2000. Questions and Answers, INTO
- The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School Discipline
- Responding to Bullying. First Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Investigating and Resolving Bullying in Schools. The Cool School Programme. NE Health Board
- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying. Wexford Education Network. Wexford Area Partnership. Phone: 053 23994

- Working towards a Whole School Policy on Self-Esteem and Positive Behaviour. Jenny Mosley. Positive Press 2001
- Working Together - to promote positive behaviour in classrooms, CEDR, Mary Immaculate College of Education
- Achieving Positive Behaviour. A Practical Guide. Patricia Dwyer. Marino

**Appendix Two:  
Suspension Form**

**Appendix Three:  
Behaviour and Accident & Incident Report Forms**