

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour has been devised by the staff of Robertson National School in consultation with the members of the Board of Management and the parents.

Rationale

The Code of Behaviour is based on and is compliant with the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) 2008 Document Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools. In Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Board of Management is obliged to prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students.

Matters which must be included in a Code of Behaviour are:

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;
- The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school;
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and
- The procedures to be followed relating to notification of a child's absence from school.

Relationship to Characteristic Ethos of the School

Robertson N.S. is a Church of Ireland school under the patronage of the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe. The school seeks to enable each student to experience a full curriculum in a Christian environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life will affect the child's own behaviour. The code will work best when parents/guardians, teachers, and the Board of Management have an input into and an understanding of the code. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted when there are breaches of the code will ensure all parties have clarity.

Aims/Principles of the Code

Aims

There are some basic principles that underpin an effective Code of Behaviour. When the Code takes account of and is in keeping with these principles, it is likely to be successful. These aims are:

- Creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- Creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- Encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- Helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- Building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents
- Ensuring that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all members of the school community are widely known and understood.

Principles

- Provides clarity
- Affirms everyone's behaviour matters
- Focuses on promoting good behaviour
- Balances needs
- Recognises that relationships are crucial
- Focuses on personal responsibility
- Ensures fairness and equity
- Promotes equality

- Recognises educational vulnerability
- Attends to the welfare of students and staff
- Promotes safety and freedom from threat

Roles and Responsibilities

The Patron

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1998, each school has a Patron who carries out certain functions specified in the Act.

The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the Patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents.

The Board must:

- Uphold the characteristic spirit of the school and be accountable to the Patron in this respect.
- Consult with and keep the Patron informed of decisions and proposals.
- Publish its policies on admissions, participation, suspension and expulsion in a manner that has been agreed with the Patron (section 15(d), Education Act 1998).
- In order to comply with these provisions, the Board of Management should submit the Code of Behaviour to the Patron for approval.

The Board of Management implements the principles of the code by:

- Providing clarity
- Affirming everyone's behaviour matters
- Focusing on promoting good behaviour
- Balancing needs
- Recognising that relationships are crucial
- Focusing on personal responsibility
- Ensuring fairness and equity
- Promoting equality
- Recognising educational vulnerability
- Attending to the welfare of students and staff
- Promoting safety and freedom from threat

The Principal

Leading the audit and review of the Code of Behaviour, and ensuring that it is implemented in the school, are important leadership tasks. It is the responsibility of the Principal, under the direction of the Board, to lead the work on the Code of Behaviour.

Teachers and other staff members

Teachers and other staff members can play important roles in the work in the review 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.

Parents

The Code of Behaviour will be more likely to work well where parents have meaningful ways of contributing to the development or review of the code. Their involvement will draw on their expectations, insights and experience. It will help to underline their responsibilities for their children's behaviour.

Joint work between parents and staff in the development of the Code of Behaviour can:

- Give parents insight into what teachers need in order to be able to teach effectively.
- Equip parents to reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school.
- Help parents to have a strong sense of pride in the school and ownership of its work.
- Help to ensure that parents give consistent messages to students about how to treat others.

Pupils

Students are more likely to support a Code of Behaviour when they have helped to develop it. Relationships of trust between teachers and students can grow stronger through the process. Through their involvement, students can:

- Hear directly from teachers about what is needed for teaching and learning
- Experience being part of a collective effort to make sure the school is a good place to teach and learn
- Learn about taking personal responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's wellbeing and the wellbeing of the teachers
- Learn essential skills of listening, negotiating and managing differences
- Have their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used.

Rights and Responsibilities

Pupil rights

- To be educated in a disruption free classroom
- To be treated fairly, consistently and with respect
- To have their individual differences recognised and provision to be made for these differences
- To be listened to and to ask questions, at appropriate times
- To have their positive behaviour affirmed and their misbehaviour addressed appropriately

Pupil responsibilities

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To work quietly and safely, to the best of their ability
- To listen to their teachers and to act on instructions and advice
- To listen to other pupils and to wait their turn to speak
- To show respect for all members of the school community
- To respect the rights of other pupils to learn
- To care for their own property and to respect all school property and property of other pupils
- To avoid behaving in a way, which would endanger themselves or others
- To contribute to good order in the school, by moving quietly around the school and by keeping the school clean and tidy
- To bring the correct materials and books to school (age/class appropriate)
- To follow school and class rules and procedures

Teacher rights

- To be treated with respect and dignity by all members of the school community
- To be able to teach in a safe, well-maintained environment, free from disruption
- To have the support and co-operation of all staff colleagues, parents and Board of Management, in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the school
- To work in an atmosphere which encourages professional development
- To consult with pupils and parents informally and formally, when their professional judgement deems it necessary

Teacher Responsibilities

- To support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour consistently and for the duration of the academic year
- To create a warm, safe, welcoming environment for each pupil
- To develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- To facilitate each pupil to reach their full academic potential, by recognising and providing the individual talents and differences among the pupils
- To be courteous, consistent and fair, while keeping opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum and addressing misbehaviour appropriately

- To use their professional judgement, to decide when it is necessary to communicate with parents and to provide reports on matters of mutual concern
- To keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour(Continuum of support, Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS)

Parent/guardian rights

- To be treated with respect
- To have a safe and welcoming environment provided for their child
- To expect that there will be a recognition of the individual differences among pupils
- To expect that there will be fairness and consistency in the way the pupils are treated
- To communicate with teachers by appointment on matters of mutual interest or concern
- To expect contact at an early stage to discuss difficulties and/or problems
- To receive regular progress reports and information on the school's policies and procedures
- To be consulted in relation to the school's Code of Behaviour and to appeal decisions in accordance with agreed procedures

Parent/guardian responsibilities

- Make an appointment to speak with a teacher
- No to air grievances on Social Media
- To encourage pupils to have a sense of respect for themselves and others, for their property and that of others
- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually
- To show interest in their child's education by ensuring their child has the correct books and materials and by signing homework notebooks, reading records, behaviour trackers and other communication that requires signatures and/or comment
- To support the school in the implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour. It is a condition of enrolment in the school that parents agree to comply with the school's Code of Behaviour (Education Welfare Act 2000 section 23,4)
- To co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- To communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect their child's progress/behaviour

Supporting Policies

This Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Suspension Policy
- Expulsion Policy

The Rules in Robertson N.S.

As Robertson N.S. has to cater for a multiplicity of pupils, activities and age groups, rules are necessary to ensure the school will be a place where everyone can feel safe and secure. Pupils and parents/guardians are expected to comply with the accompanying rules, which are designed to create an orderly environment, in which the pupils can thrive. The rules will apply while in the school building and on school activities outside of the school building.

School Rules

- We speak to everyone with respect
- We work together at all times
- We ask permission before borrowing property
- We do our best every day
- We do our homework to the best of our ability
- We come to school every day and on time

- We tell the truth
- We respect the school building and property
- We stay on the school premises during school time
- Bullying is not tolerated

Classroom rules

Each teacher will work with his/her class to formulate a set of class rules which takes into account the following principles:

- The right of all to be heard at a suitable time
- The feelings of others
- The health and safety of all
- The need to act promptly on the teacher's instruction or request
- Learning from one's mistakes
- The need to help one another to learn
- Respect for all visitors
- The protection and respect of property

Corridor/Hall

- Walk slowly/ carefully in the hall (no running)

Yard

- Respect the rights of others to feel safe by refraining from rough play
- React promptly and positively to any request from the teacher on duty
- Stay in the school yard, unless you have asked the teacher to go into the school building
- Play with equipment appropriately and safely
- Tidy up all equipment quickly at the end of break

Absences

Absences

If a child is absent from school, an explanatory note should be sent by the parent to the teacher on the child's return. If a child is being collected early from school by a person other than a parent, an explanatory note should be sent by the parent to the teacher. No note is necessary if the parent collects the child in person.

Under the Education Welfare Act (2000), schools are required to report children who miss 20 days or more to The Educational Welfare Service of Tusla.

Procedures for notifying the school about absences

Parents/Guardians are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child in Robertson National School by

- Notifying the school (e.g. Phone call to Secretary/Principal) of the cause of the absence not later than the end of the third day of absence
- Sending in a signed dated explanation of absence when the pupil returns to school. Such notes are an important part of the record keeping done to fulfill the requirements of reporting to the The Educational Welfare Service of Tusla
- The school recommends, that if an illness related absence extends beyond 5 school days that a medical certificate be provided from the G.P.

Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

Positive Strategies for Managing Behaviour

The school has adopted a whole school approach to developing positive behaviour amongst its pupils. This has involved the co-operation and collaboration of staff, Board of Management, parents and pupils. All staff are involved in promoting good discipline in the school and are encouraged to interact with all the students at all times. The teachers on duty are responsible for dealing with incidents during break and lunchtimes.

Our school policy is designed to promote good behaviour, rather than merely deter bad behaviour. In promoting positive behaviour we aim to establish a climate where praise and encouragement far outweigh the frequency of the reprimand and sanctions. The teachers work together to develop routines to ensure the smooth running of classroom learning and to ensure the safety of the children while moving around the school.

Each teacher has the responsibility to develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil, and in this regard, praising of desirable behaviour is essential. We praise and reward children for good behaviour in a variety of ways:

- Teachers congratulate children – either publicly or privately, being sensitive to the age and personality of the pupil
- Affirming comments and smiley faces on pupil's work
- Stickers, badges or stamps in books
- Personal sticker charts
- Time on computer or other special activities, work displayed, homework pass
- A visit to another teacher/Principal for praise
- Informing parents through oral or written/pictorial communication
- Golden time

Undesirable behaviour of the pupils

The undesirable behaviour of the pupils will be categorised into minor and serious misbehaviour and will be dealt with accordingly.

Minor misbehaviour

- Speaking out of turn
- Littering
- Behaving in a manner which distracts other pupils and prevents them from learning
- Breaking the class rules
- Misbehaviour in the line and when moving around the school
- Passing inappropriate remarks
- Telling lies
- Lack of attention while instructions are being given
- Rough play in the classroom and playground
- Chewing gum at school

Serious misbehaviour

- Repeated incidences of minor misbehaviour
- Refusal to listen to staff and to follow instructions given by staff members
- Inappropriate questioning and answering back to members of the school community
- Bullying
- Leaving the classroom and/or school premises without permission
- Stealing, defacing or destroying other pupils' belongings or school property
- Refusing to co-operate with instructions and advice
- Acting aggressively or with violence towards any member of the school community
- Directing insolent or abusive language at any members of the school community
- Rough play in the playground
- **Using** a personal mobile phone or personal electronic device without teaching staff permission

In the interest of fairness to all, the teacher will ensure, as much as reasonably possible, if an individual is misbehaving and identified they will be reprimanded appropriately.

Strategies to prevent escalation of misbehaviour

The following strategies may be utilised in any particular order, to prevent misbehaviour escalating
non-verbal signs such as a warning look, or stopping speaking and waiting for attention

Moving to stand in the vicinity of the pupil

Overlooking/ignoring behaviour while praising the pupil demonstrating the appropriate behaviour

Moving the pupil to a quiet spot to work

Regular reminders and class discussions about the class rules

Establishment of clear class and school routines to minimise opportunities for misbehaviour.

Consequences of Misbehaviour

- Reprimand and Reasoning (Making clear what behaviour was unacceptable)
- Withdrawal temporarily to "timeout" area of the classroom
- Loss of privileges and/or classroom jobs
- Detention during break – Prior notice to parents. The student will only be detained for five minutes max and will be allowed outside for the remainder of the break.
- Logical consequences – e.g. move to the back of the line for inappropriate behaviour in the line/ Star or Sticker not being awarded
- Referral to Principal/Deputy
- Student Reflection Form (3rd class upwards)

In the event the above strategies do not work, the following steps will be followed (as outlined in the rationale):

- Verbal warning
- Reasoning with the pupil using restorative questions (as below)
- Star not being awarded
- Time out within the classroom
- Time out in another room
- The teacher requests a meeting with parents
- Individual behaviour plan, in consultation with parents
- The principal requests a meeting with parents if there has been no improvement in behaviour following meetings with the class teacher
- Restorative Conference in the event of bullying
- Suspension if there is no improvement following the meeting with the Principal (rule 130(5) for Primary Schools)
- Expulsion (Rule 130(6) Primary Schools).

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Record Keeping

A key part of the school's Code of Behaviour is accurate record keeping. The following are used in the school:

- Incident Book
- Teacher Diary
- First Aid Book/Accident Book
- Student Behaviour Communication Book
- Reflection Forms

Suspension

There will have to be serious misbehavior before a decision to suspend a pupil will be taken such as:

- The pupil has engaged in repeated instances of minor misbehaviour and there has been no improvement
- The pupil's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. Serious misbehaviour is defined as any behaviour or acts that would endanger the health and safety of others in the school and or in violation of the law.

Suspension allows staff and the pupil time to reflect and gives the staff an opportunity to plan ways to help the pupil change unacceptable behaviour. Students will not be suspended for longer than three days, unless more time is needed to fulfill a particular objective to assist the student.

In such instances, the Board of Management reserve the right to suspend an offending child for a period of 3 – 10 school days in accordance with Section 23 of the Educational Welfare Act, 2000.

Parents have the right to appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, a decision to expel or a decision to suspend where cumulative suspensions reach or exceed 20 days in any school year. The full details of the procedures to be followed can be found in the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour, section 10 p66 – 78. They are listed in Appendix 1. http://www.newb.ie/codes_of_behaviour_guidelines/download_guidelines.asp

Expulsion

In extreme cases and when all possible avenues of discussion, negotiation and mediation open to us have been exhausted, as a last resort it may be deemed necessary for the Board of Management to expel a pupil from the school in accordance with Section 23 of the Educational Welfare Act, 2000

Prior to this, the school will have significant steps to address the misbehaviour, such as:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways to help the student change his/her behaviour
- Ensure the student understands the consequences of their behaviour, if it persists
- Ensuring all other possible options have been tried
- Seek the assistance of support agencies, such as the N.E.P.S., H.S.E. Community Services, Student and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Behavioural Support Services and National Council for Special Education, if appropriate
- Consultation with the Educational Welfare Officer, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla.

The decision to expel a student require serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour has had a serious 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

While these are similar to the grounds for suspension, factors such as persistence and seriousness of the behaviour as well as a belief the school has exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour will influence the decision of the Board to expel a student.

The full details of the procedures to be followed can be found in Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour, section 12, p80 – 87 and a full list is included in Appendix 2. http://www.newb.ie/codes_of_behaviour_guidelines/download_guidelines.asp

Communication with Parents / Guardians

Communication with Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. Communication will be verbal or written, depending on the circumstances. The staff are willing to meet parents at any mutually agreeable time to discuss any concerns. The aim of the Code of Behaviour is to provide a clear, consistent method of communication between home and school to inform the parents about their children's behaviour in school

In situations where there is evidence of serious ongoing emotional and behavioural difficulties, teachers will work with parents/guardians to have their student referred for assessment by the relevant services.

Success Criteria

The success criteria will be based on the achievement of the objectives. Staff observation and parental feedback will be used as the benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy. The effectiveness of the policy will be judged by standards of pupil behaviour.

Roles and Responsibility

The school Principal and staff will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Any feedback received will be recorded and any problems that arise will be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation and review.

Time Frame for Implementation

The policy will be implemented from 4th February 2019

Time frame for Review

The policy will be reviewed in January 2020

Responsibility for Review

The school principal and staff in consultation with the Board of Management will be responsible for reviewing the policy

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the 4th February 2019

Appendix to Code of Behaviour:

Rewards

Infant Classes & First:

- Star of the Day
- Star of the Week
- Note to parents praising work or behaviour

Sanctions:

- Behaviour Tracker with traffic light colours to indicate behaviour

This may have to be adjusted from time to time

Middle Classes

Rewards

- Dojo points awarded
- Table of the week award
- Star of the week award
- Kindness jar

Sanctions

- Pupils don't get points
- Pupils miss out on being awarded table/star of week
- Pupils don't get marbles added to their jar
- Communication with parent/s

This may have to be adjusted from time to time

4th, 5th & 6th Class

Rewards

- Golden Time at end of week where pupils choose what to do for an hour (Chart on wall lets pupils see how much time they have)

Sanctions:

- Lose time for Golden Time at end of week (pupil is given extra work to do during Golden Time for the length of time they have lost)
- Communication with parent/s

This may have to be adjusted from time to time

