

Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in October 2010 following consultations with teaching staff, parent representatives, and Board of Management

Rationale:

To update our existing policy so that it 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 the School Mission Statement

Cornamaddy N.S. strives to provide a safe, secure and caring learning environment for all our pupils. Our Code of Behaviour aims to ensure that the school will function in an orderly way so that all children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

Aims

The aims of this policy are as follows:

1. To help the children develop as caring and responsible people who are truthful and just.
2. To promote positive behaviour and enhance children's self-esteem.
3. To allow the school to develop a happy environment, where children learn undisturbed and discipline problems minimised.
4. To ensure consistency in dealing with offences.

Content of Policy

Introduction

In Cornamaddy School we adopt a positive approach to behaviour and learning. We aim to work in a respectful, caring and Christian way in which the care of the individual student is the concern of all staff members. In general, the relationship and co-operation between teachers and pupils in school is very satisfactory.

The overall aim of the Code of Behaviour is to ensure that all pupils enjoy a happy, supportive and secure environment during their time in Cornamaddy N.S. The Board of Management, in conjunction with the Principal, oversees the implementation and communication of the Code of Behaviour. Teachers and staff recognise and praise good work and behaviour, and implement the Code of Behaviour in a consistent and fair manner.

We appreciate the important role that parents play in supporting standards of good behaviour in the school. It is our policy to inform parents at an early stage if problems occur. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about the school rules and to visit the school when requested to do so. Children are encouraged to show respect for all members of the school community and work to their best ability.

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

Our school rules and routines are kept to a minimum and are designed to encourage good behaviour and good habits.

5 Golden Rules

1. Morning: Arrive on time, in uniform and prepared for learning with homework complete.
2. Outside: Stay in your own yard - Play safely - Respond to the bell - Line up properly.
3. Inside: Work quietly - Always raise your hand to speak - Keep your desk tidy.
4. Inside and Outside: Kind comments - Kind hands - Kind feet.
5. Remember - If you have a problem - Tell an adult.

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

Teachers are conscious of raising the level of self-esteem of each child and of giving all pupils a genuine pride in their work, in their school and in their community. There are a number of rewards which teachers use in their classes, both for work well done and for good behaviour. These include:

- Praise in copybook/Homework Journal
- Praise in classroom in front of classmates
- Acknowledgement by Principal
- Verbal approval or written note of achievement to Parents
- Golden Time (Reward Time for Good Behaviour)
- Stars and Merit Stickers/Group Prizes
- Display of work in classroom/corridors
- Extra time at Art, P.E., Computers or Library
- Items of Homework off
- Child of the week/month
- Pupil stamp-book (class reward system)

Categories of Misbehaviour

While our aim is to be as positive as possible, occasionally children do misbehave. Teachers keep a written record of misbehaviour in their classroom. Teachers on duty in the playground keep similar records.

Misbehaviour is categorised under 3 headings:

Minor Incidents

1. Disruption of class, e.g. distracting others, passing notes etc.
2. Being discourteous and unmannerly to fellow pupils.
3. Not completing homework without good reason.
4. Name-calling (i.e. slagging, jeering, booing).
5. Rough play, e.g. pushing people to the ground, hurting others in the line.
6. Spoiling games, deliberate interference with other children's games.
7. Ignoring the teacher's instructions.
8. Playing in the wrong yard.

Serious Incidents

1. Repeated minor offences.
2. Being dishonest.
3. Being cheeky or back-answering a teacher.
4. Leaving the classroom/school without permission.
5. Using bad language in classroom.
6. Dangerous behaviour which could endanger pupil safety, e.g. punching, kicking, fighting, pulling a chair from under another pupil.
7. Damaging school property or other pupils' property.
8. Repeated bad behaviour after warnings from the supervising teacher.
9. Inappropriate physical contact.
10. Bullying (verbal or physical) including name-calling, racist remarks etc. (See Anti-Bullying Policy).

Gross Unacceptable Behaviour

1. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards teacher or fellow pupils.
2. Open defiance of the teacher's instructions.
3. Bringing illegal substances, i.e. cigarettes, into school. Smoking or taking any illegal substances in the school.
4. Bringing dangerous items into school, e.g. penknives, bangers, lighters, matches, stink-bombs.
5. Persistent bullying.

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

Overall responsibility for discipline within our school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school.

A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

Strategies used by teachers/principal to deal with unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil.
- Reprimand (including advice how to improve).
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others (Classroom/Yard).
- Recording of misbehaviour on yard log.
- Loss of privileges/golden time.
- Detention (during breaks or after school).
- Prescribed additional work.
- Referral to Principal.
- Communication with parents.
- Short School Day (noon).
- Suspension (in school or home).
- Expulsion.

Please note the following in relation to the above strategies:

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of Health and Safety.

A short school day allows the school to restrict the attendance time of a child, who is presenting with serious behaviour problems, but who has not been approved for SNA or resource support.

In-school suspension separates the child from classmates and friends, while allowing him/her to carry out work in a different classroom.

Involving parents in the management of problem behaviour

Close co-operation with parents is essential to all our school policies. We try to involve parents at an early stage and encourage parents to meet the teacher regularly. Communication with parents will be by note in the journal, letter, phone or pre-arranged meetings. Every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to keep parents well informed, listen to their concerns, provide them

with a welcoming atmosphere and to inform them of positive events as well as when their children are in trouble.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally pupils may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour.

Children whose behaviour suggests they might be emotionally disturbed are referred for psychological/psychiatric assessment. Appropriate support may also be sought from the Health Service Executive and NEPS. The school will apply to the Special Educational Needs Organiser, for extra school support for children assessed with Special Needs.

Suspension - Procedures

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. If the parents (and the pupil) 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 teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other 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 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the health and safety of pupils and teachers, the Board has deferred responsibility to the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Longer suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Reinstatement

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s (and pupil) 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 pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff and will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

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))

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills 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.

The Principal will advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. A copy of the circular (22/02) outlining the appeals procedure as well as an application form will be sent to the parents by post.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

The school Principal will prepare a response if and when the Dept. of Education and Skills are investigating an appeal.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 9.20am or after the official closing time of 2.00pm (infants) or 3.00pm (other classes) except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Record Keeping

In line with the school's policy on record keeping, and data protection legislation, formal records in relation to pupils' behaviour are kept in a secure place in the office. Copies of all communications with parents/guardians will be retained in the school. All such records are retained until students reach 21 years.

Reference to other Policies

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

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- SPHE Policy

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

Implementation Date: 13th October 2010

Review

The code will be discussed at staff meetings and reviewed periodically.

Ratification and Communication

A copy of the finalised code is made available to all staff members, temporary and substitute teachers, parents and members of the Board of management.