***Behaviour and Discipline Policy***

***Saint Michael’s N.S.***

***Castletown Geoghegan***

**Behaviour and Discipline**

The aims of primary education may be stated as:

* To enable the child to live a full life as a child.
* To equip him/her to avail of him/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and meaningful life as an adult in society.

The teachers of this school are committed to the realization of these aims. The Board of Management of the school is committed similarly. The parents of the children in this school have been strongly supportive of these aims for many years.

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This means a strong sense of community within our school and a high level of co-operation among teaching staff and between staff, pupils, parents, the Board of Management and ancillary staff.

In formulating this code, comprehensive consultations and discussions were held with:

* Parents of children attending the school
* Board of Management
* Children in the senior classes
* Teaching staff

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

**Aims of our Code of Discipline**

The Code of Discipline aims to achieve:

* The efficient operation of the school.
* The structuring of in-class discipline which prompts an efficient and stimulating environment.
* The maintenance of good order and safety throughout the school day, including break times, sports activities and all movements between classes.
* The development of self-discipline in all pupils and care and courtesy towards others.
* The development of respect for school buildings, all school property and the general school environment.

**Principles of our Discipline Policy**

Our policy is based on the principals of caring, fairness, respect, tolerance, compassion and courtesy. The attitude of the teaching staff will have a critical bearing on how successful the policy is likely to be. Staff shall consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and shall respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour.

If our school is to achieve a happy, secure environment where the children can develop and learn to their full potential, a positive, friendly, caring and encouraging atmosphere will provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour that is dangerous to oneself, others or which may be disruptive or anti-social. Therefore, every effort will be made by all members to teaching staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.

**General**

While a child is in school he/she will be known by the names (Christian and Surname) that is on his/her Birth Certificate. The school will only change the name if evidence of a change of name by Deed Poll is made available to the Principal.

**Respect and Courtesy**

Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and all others. They are expected to treat all other pupils, all members of staff, and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of any form of vulgarity of offensive language is unacceptable.

**Punctuality**

Pupils must be on time for school each day and return to class punctually after breaks. The official opening time of the school is 9.00a.m. Class for Infants ends at 1.40p.m. All other classes end at 2.40p.m. No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside of these times. Those collecting children from school should always be punctual. Lateness causes great anxiety especially for younger children

**Safety when entering or leaving the School**

Pupils and parents must enter and exit from the school only via the gates at the front of the school. Children will enter the playground via the side gate and will exit via the front door when dismissed by class teacher. Children must walk when entering or leaving the school and must use the footpaths on leaving the school. After small break and lunch time children must line up in the school yard and wait for the teacher on duty’s permission to enter the school. Cyclists must dismount before arrival at the school entrance and put their bikes carefully against wall at the side of the school near the office. Parents must not park at the entrance gates to the school. For more information on these procedures please consult the Safety Statement).

**Attendances/Absences**

Every absence of a child from school must be accounted for either by parents/guardians calling to the school or forwarding a written note. If a child has to leave school early or be absent from school for part of a day, a written note must be forwarded to the class teacher in the school. This is to ensure as far as possible the safety of children throughout school hours.

**Illness**

Any infectious illness should be notified to the school immediately. Children should return to school only when fully recovered.

**Personal Property**

Children must have their names on their coats, jumpers and on all personal property such as school books, copies, etc.

**School Property**

Pupils must respect all school property and treat all school books and equipment with care. Parents will be held responsible for the cleaning, repair or replacement of any school property or equipment willfully damaged or vandalized by their children. Copies and books are to be covered and kept neatly for the duration of the year.

**School Environment**

Pupils must keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully in any organized clean-up activities. Litter wardens operate voluntarily within the school.

**Healthy Eating**

As the school operates a Healthy Lunch Policy, sweets, crisps, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are not permitted in the school.

**Behaviour in Class**

* Pupils must have all books and materials or equipment required. Booklists are given out in June with school reports, for the following September.
* All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
* Respect and courtesy are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, towards a teacher, ancillary members of staff or towards any visitor to the school is unacceptable.
* Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with this right e.g. regular disruption of the class or persistent disturbance of others is unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with their teacher’s instructions as given so that an effective education programme can be undertaken.
* Uniform: Pupils are expected to wear their full uniform each day.

**Behaviour Out of Class**

**Corridors, Cloakrooms, Toilets, Yard Areas**

The general rule should be to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves. Pupils should behave in an orderly manner at all times and must walk when going from one area to another within the school buildings or in the school yard. Pupils must not run around school corners so as to minimise the risk to themselves and all others.

Pupils must not behave in any way which endangers others i.e. roughness, fighting, kicking, striking, spitting, punching, tripping or verbal abuse. Teachers will seek to ensure that standards of safety are observed and shall prohibit games or activities considered dangerous. Any directions given by teachers on these matters are to be followed implicitly. Pupils are required to play only on their designated areas:

* Infants to First Class – Play area at the back of their classroom.
* Second to Sixth Class – Play area at back of school. Playing pitch when the weather permits.

Pupils may not leave their designated yard areas during breaks without the permission of the supervising teacher. This includes re-entering the school building. Aggressive behaviour or foul language will not be tolerated in the school.

**Inclement Weather**

On such days pupils are required to stay in the shelters of their respective yards. They must observe implicitly any directions given by teachers and safety procedures must be followed at all times. If it is very wet or cold the children are to remain in rooms and will be supervised by teacher on duty.

**Playing Pitch**

Again respect and consideration for others are the basics. Any form of verbal abuse or physical abuse of others is unacceptable and is considered serious misbehaviour. Pupils are required to use the pitches assigned to them. When the field is wet all pupils must play in the yard area only.

**Accidents**

A child involved in any accident or hurt in any way must report to the teacher on yard supervision or to any other available teacher. The teacher may decide to attend to the injuries or to bring the child to a doctor or hospital. Where suitable, parents will be informed or asked to bring the child to a doctor or hospital. Where suitable, parents will be informed or asked to bring the child home or the teacher may arrange for the child to be brought home. For further information see Safety Statement.

**Bullying or Intimidation of Others**

This is always regarded as a serious offence. All forms of threatening behaviour are unacceptable. Children must be able to attend school and to go home safely without fears. If children are being bullied or threatened either verbally or physically, teachers must be told so that the matter can be dealt with effectively. The school will insist that children who are bullying shall be brought to school in the morning and collected each afternoon by their parents until the matter is resolved. These children may also have to be brought home at lunchtime. Dangerous articles i.e. knives, sharp objects, aerosols, matches, lighters or any other objects considered dangerous should not be brought to school. For further information see Countering Bullying Behaviour Policy.

**Recycling**

Pupils and parents are requested to co-operate with the school’s policy on recycling.

**Homework**

It is the policy of this school to assign homework on a nightly basis. Teachers shall make every effort to make the curriculum correspond to the aptitude of the pupils. Thus homework assignments may vary in the interests of the pupil. Homework is an important part of a child’s learning. It links the home and the school and can be a means of self discipline and good study habits for the pupil.

Parents are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child’s homework. If homework causes undue stress or worry to the child, parents are asked to talk to the teacher.

Homework should not take an undue amount of time. As a general guide the following is recommended:

* Junior Infants 10 minutes
* Senior Infants 20 minutes
* Rang 1 and 2 20-40 minutes
* Rang 3 and 4 40-50 minutes
* Rang 5 and 6 1 hour

All homework is to be taken down in a homework notebook/copy (1st-6th class). Notebooks/copies are to be checked regularly by teachers and parents. Parents are required to sign the child’s completed homework (notebook) each night thus completing a very important communication link between pupil-teacher-parent.

If for any acceptable reason homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to either explain the reason directly to the teacher or forward a written note to the teacher.

If a child persists in neglecting his/her homework he should be sent to the Principal. This action will be recorded in the Discipline Book. If it re-occurs the Discipline Procedure will be followed.

**Cleanliness**

Cleanliness of pupils is to be encouraged at all times; clothes, hands, face, nails and hair. Children should keep their desks and the area surrounding their desks tidy at all times. The cloakroom area, hall and toilets are to be litter free at all times. The toilets are to be used properly at all times. Any football gear etc. is to be put in bags and hung up in the cloakroom area. Classrooms are to be tidied every evening before dismissal. Children are encouraged to clean their feet before entering the school.

**Mobile Phone**

Mobile phones are not needed or allowed in the school. For further information see Mobile Phone Use Policy.

**Chewing Gum**

Chewing gum is not permitted in any area of the school.

**Rewards for Acceptable Behaviour**

The following are some of the ways of showing appreciation for acceptable good behaviour which are in operation in the school:

* Oral praise
* Written praise
* Pupils to be given specific tasks
* Responsibilities they like
* Teacher communication with parents
* Pupils to be given snack prizes/other small prizes
* Merit lists
* Merit star
* Reduction of homework
* Homework pass

A detailed account of each pupil’s attitudes and behaviour is given on each school report presented annually to parents. Parents are required to examine these carefully and to discuss them with their children.

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour in our school has been classified in three categories:

* Minor
* Serious
* Very Serious

**Minor Unacceptable Behaviour:**

Examples considered as unacceptable are:

* Talking out of turn in class, leaving the seat without permission
* Being forgetful on a continuous basis
* Disrupting lessons by causing a distraction, shouting and not working to the best of one’s ability.
* Lazy in starting work or deliberately wasting time.
* Being generally rowdy, aggressive, spitting, unhygienic in toilets, disturbing other children at work, being disobedient or defiant, etc.

If there is a repeated pattern of these offences this is considered serious.

**Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

Examples considered as serious are:

* Making rude signs or annoying gestures
* Using vulgar or bad language
* Being often late
* Copying work from others
* Not completing school tasks
* Being inattentive during class-work
* Not completing homework without a valid reason
* Entering building or classrooms without permission
* Littering in buildings or school grounds
* Leaving designated play area without permission etc.

**Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

Examples considered as very serious are:

* Stealing
* Bullying or threatening others
* Making abusive, insulting, offensive or insolent remarks
* Laughing or jeering at others mistakes or disabilities
* Willful damage to buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others
* Fighting
* Showing repeated disrespect for teachers or other school employees.

**Sanctions and Strategies to Show Disapproval for Unacceptable Behaviour**

Positive encouragements and reinforcements are regarded as primary in helping pupils to develop responsibility, a positive attitude and self-discipline. However, where a pupil willfully disregards school rules and infringes on the rights of others to participate in an ordered and structured learning environment, sanctions may be needed. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school. A pupil may be referred to the principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

**Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

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

* Reasoning with the pupil
* Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
* Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
* Loss of privileges
* Detention during a break or after school hours
* Prescribing additional work
* Referral to Principal
* Communication with parents
* Suspension (temporary)

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilized. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned are to be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case. For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules of National Schools.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6).

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also from support services within the wider community e.g. Community Care services provided by Health Boards.

**Communication**

**Home**

Parents are always welcome at school and are invited to attend various activities during the school year. In June, the parents of children about to be enrolled in the school are met and invited to visit the school. They are invited to participate in a Triple P parenting session with parenting tips to help their child’s transition into Primary school.

**Board of Management**

Parents elect two members to represent them on the Board of Management.

**Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Informal meetings occur on an ongoing basis. Formal meetings are normally during second term:

* As arranged on specific days each year when parents are assigned a specific time to discuss their child’s progress with the teacher.
* By appointment at any other time.

**School Reports**

The importance of these has already been stated. For further information see the Pupil Records Policy.

**Homework Notebook**

As already mentioned this is an important home/school link and must be regularly checked by parents. For further information see the Homework Policy.

**Children**

Children will be anxious to show and discuss their work at home. Parents should check regularly through the child’s copies and comment on the grades awarded or any teacher’s remarks written therein.

**Lunches**

Education is hard work. Pupils need nourishing food to account for, or be part of daily nourishment. Parents are asked to supply an adequate balanced healthy lunch for their child. It has been conclusively proved that colourants, additives, preservatives and sugar have adverse effects on children’s behaviour. Sweets, chocolate, crisps and fizzy drinks are therefore not allowed for lunch or indeed in the school at any time. Chewing gum is also banned. Breads, sandwiches with meat, cheese, salad etc. plus fruit are strongly recommended. Do not give your children breakable bottles or containers. Food is to be consumed in the classroom and must not be brought out to the toilet. Children may bring unwrapped food out into the yard.

**Community Use of School Premises and Grounds**

There is a well-established tradition of use of the school grounds and facilities by groups and organisations in the community: Comhaltas group, extra mural classes. Apart from fostering child development, this has promoted good relations and attitudes between school and community.

Clubs are required to take out their own insurance and to maintain good order and safety standards among the children in their care. Children using the school grounds must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. Written permission from the Board of Management is also desirable on an annual basis.

**Conclusion**

This Behaviour and Discipline Policy has been prepared based on the conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated to comply with any changes in conditions, statutory requirements or any suggestions from the Partners of Education. It has been compiled following the guidelines issued by the Department of Education Circular 20/90.

Ratified by Board of Management on:

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

Chairperson, Board of Management Date

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

Principal Date

**Rule 130 of the Rules of National Schools**

**(As amended by Circular 7/88)**

**School Discipline**

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. This code should be formulated by the Principal and the teaching staff, in consultation with parents and be approved by the Board.

Teachers should have a lively regard for the improvement and general welfare of their pupils, treat them with kindness combined with firmness and should aim at governing them through their affections and reason, and not by harshness and severity. Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a pupil’s self-confidence should not be used in any circumstances.

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden.

Any teacher who contravenes Sections 2 or 3 of this Rule will be regarded as guilty of conduct unbefitting a teacher and will be subject to severe disciplinary action.

Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils, or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil or pupils parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

No pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

**Ten Rules to Keep Safe**

1. Never speak to strangers or accept treats like sweets or money.
2. Don’t accept lifts in cars. If you are offered one, stay well away from the car and the people in it.
3. Always let your parents know where you are.
4. Don’t play in lonely spots. Stick always to places you know well and where there are other people.
5. Go straight home from school.
6. Never go off with anybody, even grown-ups or older children you know, unless your parents allow it.
7. Don’t let a stranger into your home if you are alone.
8. Never wear clothing or jewellery with your Christian name on it.
9. Make sure you know your name, address and telephone number by heart.
10. If you are approached by a stranger, tell your parents or your teacher immediately.