

St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Portaferry



Positive Behaviour Policy

Agreed: October 2021

Review: September 2023

Mission Statement

“Let your light shine”

We aim to create a calm and caring school family within a climate of joy, freedom, respect, challenge, co-operation and celebration. We strive to provide opportunities for the development of the whole person, so that as well as succeeding intellectually, each child will also be supported in developing their imagination, creativity, spirituality, emotional, physical and social skills. This is reinforced by maintaining home-school-parish links with the child at its centre.

Crucial to the creation of this environment is a commitment to the Christian values of love, faith, justice and peace. This is within a culture of tolerance, where each member of the school family, be they child, staff member or parent, is recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished.

We aim to establish a community which promotes a spirit of charity, social justice, global awareness and concern for others leading to practical outreach and partnerships. In doing so, we will enable the children to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives which will contribute to the wider world. Our school aims to be person-centred, promoting the dignity, self-esteem and full development of everyone in the school community, as we are each made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

Introduction

The creation and maintenance of an orderly working environment is a pre-requisite to effective learning and teaching. To achieve this, we aim to establish a positive ethos, which is conducive to learning and in which the individual pupil is respected.

Reflecting this ethos, our school's positive behaviour policy seeks to set guidelines that support our pupils within a caring framework and lead them to a position of self-discipline and personal responsibility.

Discipline needs to be seen in the much wider framework of how a school seeks to moderate and improve the behaviour of its pupils. As such, it includes the positive approach of praise, encouragement, incentives and inducements as well as the more negative one of criticism and accepting negative consequences.

Our positive behaviour policy is based on a whole school approach, is widely disseminated and is clearly understood by staff, pupils and parents/carers. There are clear procedures for dealing with breaches of discipline, and these will be consistently and fairly applied.

Part of growing up is about learning what is acceptable and unacceptable and gradually taking responsibility for one's own behaviour. Our approach to discipline is to encourage and celebrate good behaviour and positive achievements in all children.

The class teachers will make every effort to reinforce good behaviour and to promote a sense of achievement within all pupils.

What is Good Behaviour?

Characteristics of Good Behaviour

- Being considerate towards other people and property: politeness, kindness, patience, helpfulness, caring, friendliness, respect, attentiveness, good manners, obedience.
- Making an extra effort to make life better: preferring others, letting others go first, helping others who need assistance.
- Responding obediently and politely to all requests and rules.

How We Encourage Good Behaviour

Example and Expectations

- All staff will set an example by their own behaviour.
- All staff will have high expectations for good behaviour.

Teaching and Learning

Good behaviour in the classroom will be greatly enhanced through the provision of high quality teaching that meets the needs of the individual learner.

Code of Conduct

In order to encourage good behaviour, the pupils, staff, parents/carers and the Board of Governors have agreed a Code of Conduct which is further simplified in our 'Golden Rules' below, it provides the guidance for positive behaviour and therefore creates an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Our 'Golden Rules'

- We pay attention to the teacher's signal.
- We listen carefully to the person who is meant to be talking.
- We will do our best and not disturb others.
- We use kind hands, feet and words.
- We show good manners.

Other Rules

Classroom – Each teacher works with his/her pupils to produce a set of classroom rules. These rules are prominently displayed in the classroom.

Dining Hall – Rules to encourage a calm and positive atmosphere are displayed in the dining hall.

School Uniform Policy

It is our policy that all children should wear a uniform when attending Saint Mary's Primary School, or when participating in a school organised event outside normal school hours.

Our school uniform is important to us. It is one way in which we identify ourselves as a school family and it promotes a strong, cohesive school identity which supports high standards and expectations in all areas of school life. It promotes harmony between different groups represented in the school, and it enhances security, assisting the school to identify individual pupils in order to maintain good order and spot intruders more easily.

It is the belief of the school that the wearing of a school uniform by pupils, helps promote effective discipline and therefore contributes to more effective learning and teaching.

The Positive Side of Discipline

The class teacher will make every effort to reinforce good behaviour and a sense of achievement within their classrooms. Ranges of strategies are used to encourage positive behaviour. Praise can be given in formal and informal ways, in public or in private for maintenance of good standards as well as for particular achievements.

- a quiet word of encouragement;
- a positive written comment in a book;
- a public word of praise in front of the child's class or in assembly;
- a visit to another member of staff or Principal for commendation, signature or certificate;
- use of a positive behaviour strategies E.g., 'Golden Time'
- parents informed by letter, newsletter, end of year school report etc., of specific special action or achievement deserving praise;
- use of the end of year school report to comment on behaviour and general attitudes

The staff of the school use the following guidance when promoting formal and informal rewards:

FORMAL REWARDS

Children are awarded stickers, stars, stamps etc., for work and/or behaviour. At the end of week Assembly, pupils are awarded special "Pupil of the Week" certificates on a particular theme.

For P3/4/5/6/7 classes we have our House teams of Red, Green, Blue and Yellow with pupils from each class separated into coloured House Teams. In conjunction with this our P3/4/5/6/7 pupils have individual reward books and are rewarded with a Bronze certificate for 40 ticks, Silver certificate for 80 ticks and a gold certificate presented by the school Principal for 100 ticks.

In classes the school certificates are awarded for special activities. Eg. For books read, for completing stages in reading, for working hard or behaving well over a period of time.

INFORMAL REWARDS

- PRAISE; Builds up self-esteem and is positive.

POSITIVE TEACHER ATTITUDE

- Concern, respect pupils, value opinions. Empathising is important and making positive statements to pupils.
- Try to resolve grievances honestly.
- Criticise the act not the person.
- If possible try to suggest ways to improve rather than to criticise.
- Non-threatening

GIVE OF YOURSELF

- Show a willingness to give up time for them.
- Listen, make genuine effort.
- Search for common ground between teacher and pupil.
- Get to know the pupils.

ENVIRONMENT

- Seek to create a supportive environment within the classroom.

GROUP DYNAMICS

- Encourage peers to give praise.
- Maturely agree rules.
- Work to improve peer group relationships within the classroom.
- Defuse situations in a low-key manner before they get out of proportion.

Playtime and Lunchtime Supervision

Children are aware of the agreed rules when they are in the playgrounds. The children are not allowed to play ball games in the playgrounds before school starts.

The children are allowed to enter the school grounds from 8.45a.m. onwards.

Supervisory assistants and classroom assistants are employed to supervise the children in the playgrounds at lunchtime.

The lunchtime supervisors are asked to report incidents of misbehaviour to child's class teacher.

All staff are encouraged to offer praise for good behaviour. Depending on the seriousness of incident at lunchtime, the staff on duty will give a verbal warning with an explanation of the consequences of future misbehaviour. If the incident is more serious or there is a recurrence by the same pupil, the matter will be referred to a member of the teaching staff. If appropriate, pupils may be removed from playing with other pupils for a period of time in order to reflect on their behaviour or calm down.

Sanctions

Misbehaviour is dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance. Cases of more serious misbehaviour are dealt with by Principal. If a pupil's behaviour is considered serious enough, parents/carers will be informed and if appropriate invited to attend an interview in school, to discuss the matter.

Should children persistently breach the school's 'Code of Conduct', Golden Rules' and or 'e-Safety' policy recommendations, then a range of sanctions will be consistently implemented by all teachers throughout the school.

The severity of the offence will determine which sanction is imposed. It is important that all children understand the 'Code of Conduct', Golden Rules', e-Safety Policy and endeavour to behave in an acceptable manner.

The quality of education of all children in the school will be the over-riding consideration. Should this be jeopardised over a period of time, the Board of Governors will not hesitate to suspend or expel an offending pupil, following DENI and Education Authority set procedures for suspension and expulsion of pupils.

A one-off lapse in conduct will not be dealt with in the same manner as a continuation of persistent, unacceptable behaviour. However, school reserves the right to impose any sanction listed below if an incident is serious enough to warrant it.

Minor Offences

- A quiet word or look by the child's teacher often will prevent more major problems from developing.
- Where it is considered that criticism is appropriate, it will be constructive in its approach and include advice on how to improve behaviour.
- Reprimand by the class teacher.

- Isolation in class – for a set period only and within the teacher’s vision and direct control.

Moderately Serious Misbehaviour

- Child may be sent to the Principal
- Completion of a Think Sheet (P5/6/7).
- Completion of a task or tasks at break or lunch time appropriate to the seriousness of the unacceptable behaviour. This sanction is also used to isolate children causing problems in the playgrounds at break or lunch time.
- Parents/carers informed if appropriate.

Serious or Persistent Misbehaviour

If all previous sanctions fail, or in the case of very serious misconduct, parents/carers will be informed and if considered appropriate a formal interview with the parents/carers will be arranged (Parents/carers may be involved informally at an earlier stage at the discretion of the class teacher) and a formal record made of the outcomes which will be selected from the following:

- Child spends time with a member of staff during break and/or lunch free time. Withdrawal from participation in play at break and/or lunch time for short periods only.
- Daily Report; A report card where the child’s teacher or the Principal comments on the child’s behaviour. This report card is signed by the parent each day. Pupils are normally placed on a report card for a period of five school days. After five days, the pupils’ behaviour will be reviewed with the aim that the report card is removed.
- Isolation; For a short period only. The pupil concerned is removed from the class and completes work under the supervision of the Principal or another member of staff.
- Withdrawal of privileges; E.g., exclusion from after-school activities, school trips, school sports’ teams etc.
- Suspension - for serious misbehaviour the school may follow the Procedures for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils in schools as outlined by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Serious and Persistent Misbehaviour

If appropriate, one or more of the sanctions listed below will only be invoked if all other measures fail and a pupil is consistently involved in serious and persistent misbehaviour. Some of the sanctions listed above may also continue to be implemented.

Referral

Child may be referred to the Education Board's Psychology Department. This may lead to support from the Primary Behavioural Support Service, or the child being issued with a Statement for Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

Debarment

Debarment during the lunch break. In the case of a pupil whose conduct is becoming unacceptable, the parents/carers will be informed, that if their child's behaviour does not improve, he/she may not be allowed on the school's premises during the times specified. Should there be no subsequent improvement in their child's behaviour, the parents/carers will be informed in writing of the times during which their child is not allowed on the school's premises.

Suspension or Expulsion

Suspension - for serious and persistent misbehaviour the school may follow the Procedures for the Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils in schools as outlined by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

IMPOSING SANCTIONS AS A RESULT OF INCIDENTS AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, the Board of Governors of Saint Mary's Primary School reserves the right to impose sanctions on pupils for incidents directly related to school, which occur off the school premises or outside of school hours.

Incidents of this nature may include:

- Bullying of other pupils or fighting on the way to school, or on the way home from school;
- Verbal abuse to pupils, parents/carers, governors or other adults on the way to school, or the way home from school;
- Cyber bullying of pupil, staff or governors during or outside of school hours (Refer to the school's e-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Other Related Technologies Policy);
- An attack on the property of a member of staff or school governor after school hours;

- Verbal abuse or physical abuse of a member of staff or school governor after school hours.

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice

Pupils with specific difficulties such as ADHD, ASD, SEBD etc. may be placed on the school's Special Educational Needs' Code of Practice. The aim of placing a child with behavioural difficulties on the SEN Code of Practice is to lead to a change/ modify behaviour.

Parental/Carer Support for the Positive Behaviour Policy

We, in Saint Mary's Primary School acknowledge the formative influence of parents/carers on their children's behaviour and we seek to engage their support in promoting good behaviour.

Parent/carer consultation has the triple advantage of being a sanction – since many pupils dislike having their parents/carer involved; throwing more light on the problems behind misbehaviour, and hopefully providing joint, consistent action between school and home.

Parents can assist the discipline process by:

- telling the Principal/child's teacher if there are problems at home which might affect a child's behaviour in school;
- discussing concerns about major behaviour changes involving their child with the class teacher;
- contacting the school if there are concerns about something that has happened;
- attending parent/carer consultations.

External Support

The main sources to support schools in promoting good behaviour are the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Social Services, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and the Education Authority South-Eastern Region's Behaviour Support Team.

Links with these agencies aid:

- staff development in aspects of discipline and classroom management;
- our ability to diagnose and interpret pupil behaviour.

This policy is linked to the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding;
- Pastoral Care
- e-Safety
- SEN Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- PDMU policy
- School Uniform Policy.

Conclusion

We acknowledge that sustaining good behaviour creates a need for continuous assessment of the effectiveness of approaches to behaviour management in our school. We will review and make changes to our positive behaviour policy, encouraging innovation and flexibility in interacting with our pupils.

It would be hoped that through the adoption of this Positive Behaviour Policy, with the teachers, pupils and parents working together, we will provide a safe, secure, happy and structured atmosphere for effective learning.

The Board of Governors will review written records kept by the school of behavioural concerns. This will allow the governors and school staff to identify behaviour patterns or locations in the school that give concern regarding pupil behaviour.