

## **Code of Behavior Policy St Teresa's Special School**

### **Introduction**

The Board of Management of St. Teresa's Special School promotes a positive approach to the encouragement of good behavior in school. In referring to our school we are including all the members of the school community, pupils, staff, parents, and management.

The overall responsibility for positive behavior within the school rests with the Principal. However, each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within their own class. They will endeavor to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and needs of their pupils, thus eliminating boredom and promoting positive Behaviour.

### **Vision**

The school staff and parents strive to provide an environment which will enable each child to live, learn and grow to his/her full potential. This is founded on high professional standards, mutual trust and respect for the pupils and staff. We believe that our positive Code of behaviour will facilitate this goal.

### **The school promotes good behaviour by:**

Having whole school approach to promoting high standards of good behaviour and having high expectations for student behaviour The behaviours of the adults in a child's life, including parents, teachers and special needs assistants, is a significant influence on how a child behaviour.

- Having explicit ways of communicating high expectations for students
- Developing strategies to strengthen student and parental involvement
- Input from the multi-disciplinary team agreed strategies for catering for pupils who present with challenging behaviour

### **Aims of the Policy**

#### **This policy is underpinned by the following values**

- respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Fairness and forgiveness
- Courtesy and good manners
- Readiness to use many different ways to resolve difficulties and conflict that
- respectful to everyone involved
- To ensure the individuality of each pupil is accommodated while acknowledging the rights of all to education in a relatively disruption free environment
- To promote quality and fairness for all
- To promote good behaviour and self-discipline amongst the pupils

- To promote the safety and happiness of all members of the school community.

### **Supporting Positive Behaviour in School**

This section outlines what is expected of parents, staff, and pupils to ensure the harmonious operation of the school on a day-to-day basis.

#### **Expectation of positive behaviour**

##### **The school asks parents to:**

- Attend meetings relating to your child's progress in school
- Ensure the punctual and regular attendance of your child at school
- Inform the class teacher if the child is leaving school early
- Check school bags/communication book for notes
- Send written notes to the class teacher to account for your Child's absence on his/her return to school (as per National Education Welfare Board Guidelines)
- Observe public health regulations in relation to infectious diseases.
- Ensure that, where applicable, your child has a positive attitude to and follows the class and school rules.
- Be familiar with school policies
- Support the school staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour
- Give a phone number where you can be contacted in case of emergencies.
- Support the school's healthy eating policy – no sweets, fizzy drinks, crisps, chocolate. (These are not allowed unless part of a reward or other programme or for birthday parties and specific celebrations).

##### **The school encourages the children, in accordance with their ability:**

- Abide by the class rules (within child's ability) (*e.g., quiet hands, quiet voice*)
- Accept the authority of staff
- Participate in class activities
- Observe health and safety regulations in relation to moving around the building and grounds and in using equipment
- Respect the school property and the property of others.
- Keep school tidy (help to clean up after lesson is complete)
- Learn about recycling following Green School Programmes
- Share classroom equipment with others

##### **School expects staff to:**

- Provide a positive safe learning environment for all pupils
- Implement agreed approaches to discipline in a fair, consistent, and professional manner.
- Have a clear understanding of rewards and sanctions
- Maintain structures to ensure pupils move in a safe and orderly fashion around the school at all times.
- Celebrate the achievements of pupils
- Celebrate important dates in the children's lives
- Have open communication with parents and caregivers.
- Provide mutual support for each other.

- Avail of opportunities for training and professional development in this area
- Demonstrate a willingness to learn and change practice in line with school policy.
- To make reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities, identify possible special educational needs, and support children who lack understanding of their own behavior
- Follow the School Data Protection guidelines when discussing or sharing information about a pupil

## **Positive Strategies for managing behaviour**

### **Strategies in the Classroom**

Positive strategies which staff use to manage behaviour in the classroom are as follows:

Clear boundaries are set up and clearly displayed

- Staff ensure that pupils understand and are often reminded of how they are expected to behave through visual and other aids, modelling, and praise.
- In keeping with the underlying ethos of the school, respect for the rights of others is practiced at all times
- Classrooms are organized to cater for different learning styles.
- Approaches to classroom management ensure a variety of activities and methodologies are provided to sustain pupil interest and motivation
- Timetables are clearly displayed using formats accessible to the pupils
- Pupils are offered sensory breaks and taught relaxation techniques
- There is a clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and supporting those who sometimes exhibit behaviours that challenge. (for some pupils this will tie in with behaviour management programmes).
- Staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with pupils. (often the approach has been/will be devised with the help of the Psychologist or Positive Behavioural therapist)

### **Playground and Outdoor activities**

Playground and outdoor activities are organized in a way that ensures each child is safe.

### **Lunchroom**

- Children are supervised at all times in the lunchroom
- Children who need assistance with eating receive help in a respectful manner.

### **Strategies used in other areas of the school**

Positive strategies are used to enable the successful participation and prevent behavioral problems in corridors, toilets etc.

- Visual reminders on how to behave are displayed in dining room and common areas
- All staff praise good behaviour when it is right to do so.
- Staff remind and help the children keep good behaviour when the need arises
- Arrival and departure of pupils from school is supervised.

## **School Rules**

- Rules are kept to a minimum and presented in a positive way
- Children are praised in a positive manner using language accessible to the pupils
- Rules are reinforced through:
  - Direct teaching during circle time
  - Visual representation throughout the school in pictures and text
  - Verbal reminders are used whenever necessary
  - Incidents of negative behaviour are dealt with by the staff on duty. (In many cases, for individual children there will be a protocol to follow which has been devised with the support of Psychology or Behavioural Therapist.

## **Rewards and Sanctions**

### **Rewards**

Positive behaviour is reinforced through the following strategies:

- Verbal acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour
- Written acknowledgement of good behaviour in the communication books and log notes
- A reward system is agreed on an individual basis
- Individual rewards which can include extra computer time, extra iPad time, favourite toy, music, favourite books, favourite chores, outdoor activity.
- The acknowledgement of success in a variety of areas, art, sport, handwriting, photography, etc. at circle time or school assembly.
- Provision for opportunities for pupils to show skills in music, sport, art, drama etc. to parents and friends
- The promotion of school achievements in the local press. (Please see Appendix 1)

### **Sanctions**

The school recognises that many pupils in St. Teresa's Special School have communication difficulties. These pupils may have difficulty interpreting the world around them or difficulty in conveying information which may give rise to feelings of frustration. The school shall work closely with all health and social care professionals to help the child develop an appropriate means of communication.

The school shall provide:

- a positive learning environment with consistent boundaries for behaviour and clarity on expectation.
- Predictability and consistency in the classroom through the use of class rules, routines, schedules and timetables are necessary for children to understand what is expected of them at school.

The environment can contribute to the behaviour of a pupil in the school. Staff in the classroom should be mindful of noise, light, heat or cold, space, seating (etc.) in the

classroom and the impact of these elements on how a pupil copes with the intended learning environment.

Due to the complexity of some disabilities presenting in St. Teresa's Special School, pupils may engage in behaviour that could be a danger to themselves, to others and may result in damage to property. In this instance staff must take steps to ensure that safety of all involved while trying to support the pupil through the crisis. It is essential that all staff understand the phases of an incident as outlined in Appendix 2

When a pupil displays difficult behaviour consistently on a number of occasions, the family and members of the multi-disciplinary team shall be informed. All relevant parties including those working in the school will be involved in the development of a support plan. (an example of The Support Plan details is outlined in Appendix 3).

The following are strategies which may be included as ways managing unacceptable behaviour:

- Individual discussion with a pupil who has shown unacceptable behaviour including reasoning, modelling, direction, and visual supports
- Communication with parents. Parents will be informed of behaviours that challenge an early stage
- Temporary separation from peers for safety reasons or to have a calming space (
- Following individual behaviour management programmes/Strategies which have been devised by the Positive Behavioural Therapist

### **When Serious Incidents Occur**

Following incidences of behaviours that challenge of a serious nature, a record is made on the Incident Reporting system/ sheets and when necessary, the Psychologist or Positive Behavioural Therapist will be alerted.

A record must also be made in the incident books for the Department of Education In instances where a peer or staff member has been hurt, an Incident report must be filled in and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed.

Some types of behaviours are such that they call for referral to additional agencies for advice and support. In such situations we will refer to the guidelines in the School's Child Protection Policy and/or Data Protection Policy.

### **Suspension**

In some instances, if behaviours that challenge escalate to such a degree that the safety of the child, other pupils or staff are at risk or, if serious damage is done to the classroom, the Board will consider taking steps to suspend a pupil.

Similarly in a case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

In all situations, the school and Board of management will endeavour to take every measure to avoid escalation to this level through following behaviour management guidelines and consulting with psychology or behaviour therapist for support and advice.

If a suspension is considered necessary by the Board of Management, the principal shall inform the Túsula/Education Welfare board, by notice in writing when a student is suspended from a recognized school for a period of not less than 6 days (sections 2.1(4)a) of Welfare Act.)

When the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated, *“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 class teacher. (Circular 20/90)*

This should always be done if such an action is being contemplated.

### **Immediate suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would be a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person. Fair procedures must still be applied. **Immediate suspension should not last for longer than three days. (Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, Education Welfare Board)**

### **Procedures in relation to immediate suspension**

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, should be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents must be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school must have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances should a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

### **Expulsion**

Due to the nature and conditions of our children, this is not an option which we will be using unless the pupil's behavior presents a serious safety risk to himself or others.

Procedures outlined in the Education Welfare Act (2000) will be followed in the event of a suspension period exceeding six days.

### **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 the 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 23(5))*

### **Appeals Procedure for raising a concern or bringing a complaint**

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 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 a cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated time frame if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student (Circular 22/02)

In this situation, the principal will inform parents and supply a copy of Circular 22/02

### **Record Keeping**

In line with the school’s policy on record keeping and the data protection legislation, records of behaviour are compiled by the teacher, psychologist and Positive Behavior Therapist where appropriate.

Incidents/accidents are recorded in the class incident book incident/accident forms, and other relevant forms as the need arises. These are usually filled in by the Class team. The Principal is informed where appropriate.

- The teacher report includes a section on behaviour where positive and negative behaviour is noted
- Serious incidents of behaviours that challenge is reported immediately to the Principal
- Parents are kept informed regarding behaviour issues during the year
- In general behaviours that challenge in and around the school are dealt with by the staff on duty.
- All Department of Education and Skills documentation relating to behaviour is filed in the Principal’s office.

### **Procedure of Notification of Pupil Absences from School**

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000), written notification of absence or proposed absence should be supplied to the class teacher outlining the reason for the absence. A letter to this effect is issued to new parents. The written notifications are kept in the Principal’s office or by the class teacher for one year.

The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the Túsla/National Educational Welfare Board (see forms on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie))

### **Reference to other policies**

- Behaviours that Challenge
- Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment Policy
- SPHE/RSE
- Enrolment
- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality

### **Success Criteria**

Indications of the success of the policy will include

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy are consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from staff, parents, and pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All stakeholders have a responsibility to be familiar with the policy and implement their specified roles and expectations

### **Timetable for review**

The policy will be reviewed as necessary or in the event of a new legislation it will be amended accordingly

**This policy has been reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Board of Management.



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Haslam, Chairperson of the Board of Management

**DATE: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Review Date: September 2023**



## Appendix 1

### Strategies

- Strategies used in St. Teresa's Special School to promote positive behaviours include:
- Catch Them Being Good: A strategy which promotes the acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour or on task focus as an incentive for the pupil to repeat the positive behaviour. This can be used in conjunction with planned ignoring where attention for inappropriate behaviour does not serve as a reinforcer for the pupil.
- Social Stories: A strategy for assisting pupils who have poor social skills to understand and develop a range of social skills by presenting appropriate social behaviours in the form of a story.
- Behaviour Modification: A strategy which specifies basic class rules and routines. The consequences that will accrue from abiding by these rules and routines, and the consequences for pupils on the occasions when these rules and routines are not followed. These strategies can be formulated on a class or individual basis as appropriate. Token Economy, Star Charts, and First and Then cards can be used as part of this approach.
- Active listening: A strategy designed to allow the pupil to have their point of view expressed and listened to in a non-confrontational manner.
- Self-management: A strategy which aims to equip the pupil with coping skills in dealing with feelings of anger, frustration, and anxiety.
- Replacement Skills: Teach pupil to find a different way to responding/expressing need

Reward Systems: Rewards can be individual, group and/or whole class. A combination of individual and whole class can work very effectively. This encourages both a positive group atmosphere and individual achievement. Rewards can include:

- Tokens:
- Stickers
- Certificates
- Colouring Pictures
- Puzzles (collecting a piece to create a complete puzzle)
- Stamps
  - Positive note home
  - Positive note to the principal
  - Vouchers to spend on favourite activity
- Privileges:
  - First in line
  - Extra time on preferred activity
  - Helping the teacher

## Appendix 2

### Approaches for dealing with a serious incident

The approaches outlined are intended as a guideline for staff in dealing effectively with a serious incident. It may be necessary to vary the approaches for individual pupils based on prior knowledge of the pupil's pattern of behaviour:

1. **Trigger & Agitation:** At this point the pupil displays anxiety. The staff approach should be supportive, empathetic and attempt to alleviate the anxiety. The trigger/source of agitation should be identified if possible and removed if this is feasible
  
2. **Acceleration/Escalation:** Here the anxiety levels are heightened affecting the pupil's self-control. The staff approach should now be directive – setting limits for the pupil and offering choices. Diversionary tactics can also be employed at this stage
  
3. **Peak:** At this stage the pupil has lost control and is exhibiting violent aggressive behaviour which is hazardous to themselves and others in the vicinity. The following steps should be taken, the child's safety is paramount at all times:
  - Stay calm – breathe slowly
  - Keep a safe distance from the pupil
  - Be aware of tone of voice and speak softly
  - Listen to the pupil
  - Empathise: Acknowledge feelings
  - Depending on the situation remove the pupil or if more appropriate the other pupils in the immediate area
  - It may be appropriate in some instances to leave the pupil alone and once safety is ensured monitor the situation from a distance.
  - Use distraction if appropriate
  - Doing something unexpected or funny may change the mood
  - In extreme circumstance it may be necessary to restrain or restrict the liberty of a pupil to prevent injury to him/herself or others. This should only be done as a last resort. Such measures should be discussed with relevant professionals and parents prior to implementation and outlined in individual support plans. Staff should be trained to correctly carry out these procedures.
  - If a behaviour incident persists over a long period, it may be necessary to contact family and/or other appropriate support personnel.
  
4. **De-escalation:** In this phase the pupil displays a drop in physical and emotional

energy and begins to regain rationality and focus. Staff should aim to re-build communication and provide therapeutic care.

Recovery: At this point the pupil has regained control of his/her behaviour, has been reassured and is return to return to his/her class activities. Staff should record any physical injuries sustained by anyone during the incident in the Incident Book located in the office and arrange for medical attention if required. Individual staff involved in the incident should record the details of the event. All body marks or injuries should be identified on a body chart. A debriefing meeting for staff involved should be organised as soon as possible. At this meeting staff should reflect on the incident, provide emotional support for each other, and decide if procedures need to be adjusted

### Appendix 3:

#### The Support Plan

The plan should include the following:

##### Gathering Information

- Assess the pupil's behavioural skills, deficits, and excesses
- Consider both internal and external contributing factors
- List antecedents and consequences
- ABC charts and Behaviour charts can be used to record a child's behaviour over a period of time
- Interpretation
- Be aware of multiple causes

##### Intervention

- Identify likely causes of the problem
- Specify the help the pupil needs
- Specify the help the staff need
- Exclude, if possible, contributory external causes
- Develop strategies for changing the environment, if appropriate
- Build on the pupil's strengths
- Use negotiation, if appropriate
- Agree on an individual support plan.