

## CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The staff of St. Michael's School, in consultation with members of our multi-disciplinary support staff, has developed the Code of Behaviour Policy with the following aims in mind:-

- Students will acquire the skills, to the best of their ability, to function securely, competently and safely within the parameters of the Code of Behaviour.
- Staff will interact and deal with students, student behaviour, in a fair and unified manner.
- Our Code of Behaviour will provide a good baseline for new staff joining our school.

The code of Behaviour will be implemented by the teaching staffs that have ultimate responsibility for the students in our care. It is hoped that the teaching staff will, therefore, lead by example and that all auxiliary staff/visiting staff can model their behaviour/interaction in a similar manner. The vital contribution that parents can make will be acknowledged. Parental support is the implementation of the Code of Behaviour is essential for its success in the school. Parents input will be sought. Feedback will be shared with Board of Management.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Where appropriate, in devising the Code of Behaviour, the views and opinions of the Post Primary students were included. We feel that the contribution from students will enhance the success of the Code of Behaviour by giving them a greater understanding of the rules of the school and that equality and fairness prevails for all. Their involvement will help them understand the importance of rules, not only in the school environment, but also in the wider community. It will encourage the students to take a more active role.

### ETHOS

St. Michael's School caters for pupils with moderate and severe learning disability and Autism. Our ethos of the school encompasses the school motto "Together We Grow". The school, with the Bishop of Elphin as its Patron, believes that we all have the right and the responsibility to learn and work in a safe and caring environment. Therefore our Code of Behaviour aims to provide a stable and secure learning environment which respects the dignity of individuals. It also aims to teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school community at large.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**In accordance with the ethos of St. Michael's School the key message of our code of behaviour is respect for self and others and respect for school and its property.**

**This will be implemented by following these principles:**

#### ***SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE:***

- create calm, positive and structural environment
- create consistent approach to individuals and a sense of fairness

- make rules positive ‘do’s rather than ‘don’ts’
- promote self-esteem at all times and respect attempts to communicate
- Develop and support relationships with students-students/students-staff.

### ***USE OF LANGUAGE:***

- interaction between staff/students to be meaningful and affirmative
- staff to act as role models reinforcing appropriate behaviour for students
- use of affirmative respectful language suitable to the pupil’s level

### ***PROVISION OF A CREATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT***

- curricular activities should be appropriate to needs of individual students
- timetables/programmes to be planned, adhered to and reviewed regularly
- varied approaches and resources to be used
- physical environment should be comfortable and visually pleasing

### **APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

Appropriate behaviour will be taught affirmed and reiterated daily from the beginning of the school year. We want our students to respect themselves, other people and property. We hope that they will participate to the best of their ability and maintain personal dignity in all school situations. This will be encouraged by simple school rules as follows:-

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Be kind</i>        | 5. <i>Be safe</i>                      |
| 2. <i>Do your best</i>   | 6. <i>Take care</i>                    |
| 3. <i>Help others</i>    | 7. <i>Listen (follow instructions)</i> |
| 4. <i>Tell the truth</i> |  |

### **Classroom Management:**

*It is the duty of each class teacher supported by special needs assistants to establish well organised, orderly and responsive environment which will facilitate good standards in relation to behaviour.*

### ***CLASS RULES***

Each class teacher will develop and maintain class rules appropriate to the needs of the students in their care. Where possible students will be involved in drawing up class rules and the rules will be displayed. These rules will encapsulate the contents of the schools Code of Behaviour.

### ***INCENTIVES***

- Positive/good behaviour may be communicated to principal/parents via homework journals/the online platform Seesaw or by other informal means.
- Reward quickly and often.
- Praise appropriate behaviour and ignore or defer bad behaviour whenever possible.

The following incentives will be used throughout the school:-

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| - Star Charts (or similar chart)          | - Outings                   |
| - Choice of favourite activity            | - Responsibility (messages) |
| - Food (drink/biscuit/sweet) occasionally | - Student of the week       |
| - Visit to local shop                     | - Visit the Principal       |
| - Visit to Restaurant                     |                             |

The list is not exhaustive and other incentive will be used by the various classes.

### **MULTI-ELEMENT BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT**

At different times, students may need support to manage their behaviour, or to self-regulate.

#### ***AIMS***

- To promote choice, independence, participation, dignity and respect for pupils.
- To involve all staff, pupils and relevant support personnel and families whenever possible and appropriate.
- To foster an approach which seeks recognition of reasons for challenging behaviour.
- To use non-aversive ways of supporting children based on environmental accommodation, skills, and teaching, incentive and low arousal reactive strategies.

Natural consequences in the classroom situation are better than sanctions and appropriate response may reduce the likelihood of repeat behaviour.

No response to a child's behaviour should be in conflict with the principles of the children First Guideline. Severity; ridicule and sarcasm are to be avoided. Corporal punishment is conduct unbecoming a teacher.

Pupils should not be left vulnerable to harsh disciplinary measures or neglect of care.

A whole school approach of positive management will be maintained including the following elements:

- Consistency of policy and practice
- Teamwork approach and training where appropriate
- Clear systematic planning
- Information sharing – snapshot, IEP and Need to Know Book
- Inclusive and involved school community.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Safety is the priority :- the safety of the pupil, other pupils and staff must determine all action e.g. the safety of the pupils may necessitate that sharp object be removed from reach; pupils may need to leave the room; staff may need to be replaced for a time.
2. Rules which give positive information and are based on need should be in place throughout the school and in specific situations. Woodwork Room Rules, Cookery Room Rules, Classroom Rules.
3. Out of school activities need to be planned with care. Mobile phones can be very useful for safety out of school.

## **DEFINITION OF BEHAVIOUR**

Decisions about behaviour must be based on an understanding of the needs of individuals, the nature of their disability and their level of responsibility. Where it is felt to be appropriate, unacceptable behaviour may be highlighted. In cases of subsequent repeated behaviour, disapproval may be shown by a response such as labelling the inappropriate behaviour; correction, withdrawal of preferred activity, timeout, distraction etc. Any misuse of sanctions will be addressed with immediate effect.

However, it must be noted that pupils who have special needs may not perceive their behaviour as 'naughty' or 'difficult'. The behaviour may indicate that the child has a pain or physical need that needs to be addressed.

Also pupils may have difficulties with communication that may cause frustration. These difficulties will be magnified if a child is anxious, upset etc. and may lead to challenging behaviour. "Space" may alleviate difficulties. A distraction might be more suitable than correction. Observation might identify the cause of the behaviour.

## **PROCEDURE**

Continuing incidents of behaviours that challenge will be recorded and reported to the principal. The class teacher and principal will make an informed decision on the basis of each individual case. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. A parent-teacher meeting may be required.

The Behaviour Support Team may be requested to advise or assist if behaviour continues. The team may need to meet with parents so that consistency can be maintained. Observation and record keeping is vital to identify triggers, patterns of behaviour and possible responses. An Incident Behaviour report form will be used when behaviour is more serious e.g. resulting in injury or the potential to do so. Information will be stored in the strictest confidence in a locked file and will be made available to teachers and the Multi-disciplinary team as deemed necessary.

Where a behaviour support plan is in place for a pupil it is important that staff become familiar with it and are consistent in its implementation.

Incidents of behaviour which give cause for concern for the physical well-being of the pupil, his peers or others should always be documented using forms or copies as appropriate (date, time, location, witnesses, description of the incident, consequences comments regarding reasons and further relevant information). Information should be factual and as specific as possible.

If serious incidents continue the Chairperson and the B.O.M. will be informed. The school will follow Department of Education guidelines but all possible avenues will be explored before sanctions such as suspension or expulsion will be considered.

## **Persistent Behaviour**

The Board are fully committed to responding to the individual needs of specific pupils. Pupils attending St. Michael's may experience great difficulties in managing their behaviour. Priority should be given to maximising every source of support possible for the student. This may involve classroom support, whole school support, external support or exceptional responses. The

school will endeavour to respond to the needs of the pupil in line with the advice of multi-disciplinary professionals. The support of the NCSE Tusla and Local support services will inform decision making. Central to this process is this the involvement of parents and guardians.

Good practice in St. Michael's school would include

Caring, consistent, positive and appropriate responses

Documenting instances of behaviour and strategies employed to address them

Wider consultation to ensure that every effort is made to support the student especially in addressing pupil needs relating to communication, physical or sensory needs, anxiety, EBD and ASD.

Developing and documenting good practice in relation to the use of suspension or similar strategies

### **Responding to inappropriate behaviour in school**

Incidents of misbehaviour are classed as minor, serious and gross. Minor incidents are generally dealt with by the class team. Serious breaches of school rules will be notified to the school principal. Gross breaches of behaviour may lead to the suspension or expulsion of the student. This response will only be applied in consultation with the Chairperson and/or the Board of Management.

### **Responses**

The purposes of a response is to bring a change of behaviour by

- Helping students to learn that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- Helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and understanding) that they have choices about their own behaviour and that choices have consequences
- Helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

Responses will be proportionate to the behaviour and will be in accordance with the level of understanding of the student. The responses will be in line with the whole school approach and will be introduced after incentives and supports have not been fully effective.

### **Repeated Responses**

- Redirection to another activity/distraction/deferral
- Reminder of school rules e.g. modelling, role play, prompting , repetition
- Verbal reprimand or command
- Temporary separation from peers within the class for a specified period of time
- Temporary loss of privileges
- Temporary removal to another classroom
- Time in a quiet space to allow the student to regulate their behaviour
- Communication with parent/guardians to advise of behaviour and seek support
- Communication with the class team and MDT to ensure continuity and consistency

Pupils will not be deprived of any of the curriculum except on the grounds of health and safety.

## **Dealing with behaviour that is prolonged or has more serious impacts**

A small number of students engage in physically challenging behaviour at times. While staff make every effort to anticipate such incidents and to de-escalate the situation quickly there are times when a behaviour intervention is required. Staff may need to be trained as appropriate.

From time to time, parents and staff can find some behaviour difficult and stressful to address. There are times when a student **presents** with behaviours that cause concern for their well-being and sometimes their safety and/or the safety of others. Examples of serious misbehaviour include behaviour that is hurtful and/or offensive (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) to others.

When the usual strategies are not effective, behaviours are observed, reviewed and analysed to identify

- Possible causes/reasons for behaviours
- The nature and frequency of the behaviour
- What happens as a result of the behaviour

This type of assessment enables staff to make adjustments to the environment, to the programme or teaching strategies or to seek advice from a member of the Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) so that student's needs may be addressed. An individualised behaviour programme/plan may be put in place to support the student. Despite all supports offered, if behaviour persists, more formal procedures may need to be introduced including a shortened day, suspension or expulsion. These procedures are not necessarily applied consistently. All decisions will be based on each individual case.

### **Shortened Day**

In exceptional circumstances a parent could be asked to collect a student: This might be used as a possible consequence for a pupil. It will require the agreement of the teacher and the principal. Often the possibility of ringing home will have sufficient influence to avert a behaviour. However sometimes this may need to be implemented. Typically this would not be recorded as a suspension but could form part of an assessment for suspension if behaviour continues.

Subsequently a reduced timetable may be introduced (subject to future DES guideline). The school does not in any way expect this to be a standard aspect of a child's experience of school and it should be an exceptional measure. It has to be accepted that in some cases it may be necessary to use a reduced timetable, for example, as a means of assisting the reintegration of a pupil to a school routine. Such arrangements should only be adopted in limited and time-bound circumstances.

To maintain fair procedures (for investigation and decision-making) formal consultation should be conducted with some or all of the following as appropriate: school staff, parents, other professionals, outside agencies. This should be led by the school principal. The Board of management should be informed as soon as practicable.

The plan will be shared with school and staff and parents/guardians to try to ensure consistent implementation.

The plan will be monitored by the principal and school team to ensure its effectiveness.

In the event that additional supports are required, parents and/or the school may be requested to complete forms for the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) and/or Department of Education & Skills.

## **Suspension**

Where serious behaviours of concern continue to disrupt the smooth running of the school and/or threaten the safety of the student others, a student may be suspended.

Serious assault that causes injury to others will be considered gross misbehaviour and may lead to immediate suspension. A single incident may constitute gross misbehaviour. Such incident(s) will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management. The incident will be investigated to determine the appropriate response from the school.

In the most serious incidents, expulsion may be considered. This measure will only be used as a last resort. The Board of Management will ensure that:

- Fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of these procedures
- Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that fair procedures are accessible to those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- There are no undue delays in the investigation and in making decisions about the imposition of suspension or expulsion
- All matters to do with an investigation are dealt with in confidence
- In circumstances of particular complexity, the school authorities may seek legal advice to support their decision making.

For the purposes of this document, suspension is defined as:

*Requiring the student to absent him/herself from the school for a specified,  
Limited period of school days*

During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend and this authority has been delegated to the principal. The authority however, has limits-for example, the Board of Management of this school has given approval to the Principal delegated to the principal in respect of suspension has limits and the principal is accountable to the BOM for his/her use of that authority.

The grounds for suspension include:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the safety or education of him/herself or others
- at this time constitute a threat to the safety and welfare of others
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

The principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of others. Parents/guardians may be requested to collect a student from school during the day if

their continued presence constitutes a threat. Parents/guardians may be asked to keep a student home from school for a number of days and this form of suspension will be notified to parents/guardians by the principal.

All suspensions, for whole days or part of a day will be recorded by the principal and reported to the BOM.

When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. The school will arrange, where possible, for a member of staff to provide support to the student during the re-integration process.

### **Procedures in respect to Suspension**

The procedural steps will include:

- ❖ Parents will be informed by phone and in writing. The letter will confirm:
  1. Period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
  2. Reasons for the suspension
  3. Arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student.
  4. Provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
  5. Right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1988, section 29)
- ❖ Written notification will be signed by the Secretary to the B.O.M. and has the benefit of ensuring that there is a form and permanent record of having informed parents. It also ensures that parents are clear about what their son/daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school view the alleged behaviour.
- ❖ Except in the case of immediate suspension, parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision to suspend is made and before any sanction is imposed. This meeting will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the misbehaviour, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.
- ❖ A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days by the Principal. If a proposal in excess of 3 days is being considered, the matter will be referred to the BOM.
- ❖ A period of up to 5 days may be sanctioned by the Chairpersons in circumstances where a meeting by the B.O.M. cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
- ❖ The BOM can place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.
- ❖ The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year to 20 days or more.



## **Expulsion**

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case. A student is expelled from school when the BOM makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school. The BOM has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion of a student will only be undertaken in extreme cases of gross misconduct that seriously disrupts the smooth and safe running of the school. This measure will generally only be undertaken after every effort has been made to support, help and address behaviours of concern so as to avoid the expulsion. However, a single serious assault on another person may be considered grounds for expulsion.

Before the expulsion of a student, the BOM will notify the local Education Welfare Office in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

## **Procedures in respect of Expulsion**

The procedural steps will include:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal
- Parents will be called to a meeting to try to find ways of helping the student to address their behaviour
- Consideration will be given to the level of understanding of the student
- The principal will make a recommendation to the BOM to consider permanent exclusion of the student
- The BOM will consider the principal's recommendation and will invite both the principal and the student's parents/guardians to a hearing on the issue
- In the absence of the principal and the parents/guardians, the BOM will deliberate on the recommendations of the principal, the responses of the parents/guardians and any other relevant information.
- The BOM will write to the parents/guardians to inform them of their decision. Where the BOM recommends expulsion, the parent/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal the decision and that a period of 20 school days will elapse before the decision of the BOM is confirmed.
- The school will participate in any consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer in respect of the decision to expel.

## **Appeals**

In all cases involving suspension by the Board of Management/Principal, the parents/guardians have the rights to appeal to the Board of Management. Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parent (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management including (1) permanent exclusion from school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 24 calendar days from the date that the decision of the school was notified to the parents/guardians or student (see circular 22/02).

## **Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording Behaviour**

A system of Record Keeping/Monitoring/Recording behaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will enable the school to balance subjective opinion with factual information about what is actually happening and to review triggers or patterns of behaviour over time. It will use consistent terminology. Regular monitoring will:

- Alert school staff, parents and MDT to emerging problems for a particular student/group of students
- Show trends and patterns, for example, the time of day, location or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or instances of particularly good behaviour
- Provide information about successes and what it working well
- Avoid the risk of labelling a student unfairly from class to class or year to year, by providing factual data for any judgement about behaviour
- Behaviour recording can take the form of :
  - “tick charts” for instances of a repeated single behaviour e.g. spitting
  - ABC Charts
- Challenging Behaviour Incident recording

A recording system will allow the school to track an individual student’s behaviour and to check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to deal with unacceptable behaviour will be recorded, including contact with parents or referral to clinicians. Positive responses by a student and evidence of changed behaviour will also be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed. Parents and students will be made aware that a record is being kept and will have access to the information at all times. All reports will be managed within the school in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

### **This Code of Behaviour has been informed by the following documents:**

- Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011).
- Department of Education & Skills – Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Circular 0061/2006 (Department of Education & Science).

Policies that relate to our school Code of Behaviour include:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Statement of Strategy for School Attendance
- Supervision Policy
- Safety Statement

- Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) Policy
- Communication & Language Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Wellbeing policy
- SEN policy
- Critical Incident management plan

The Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management