



Code of Behaviour of St. Lassara's N.S.

This document was reviewed in March, 2024 by the Principal, teaching staff, Board of Management and parents of St. Lassara's N.S. It is formulated in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000 and in accordance with Circular 20/90 of the Department of Education and Skills and Rule 130 of the Rules for national Schools of the Republic of Ireland especially Section 3. The policy also reflects the National Education Welfare Board's "Guidelines for Schools – Developing a Code of Behaviour"

Introduction

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school. In St. Lassara's N.S. we hope to foster this in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Rationale

Our aim is to encourage and create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, taking into consideration the particular needs and circumstances of our school.

Vision

St. Lassara's N.S. is a Catholic school. We strive to provide a secure and happy teaching and learning environment where the pupils' intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs are identified and nurtured. We aim to develop the self esteem of pupils and staff by creating an environment where we celebrate difference in an atmosphere of mutual respect and inclusivity.

Principles underlining an effective code:

This document outlines the school's expectations of behaviour in the school. We hope to create a climate that encourages, fosters and reinforces good behaviour.

- We endeavour to create a positive and safe learning and teaching environment, where teachers can teach without disruption.
- We endeavour to develop a sense of responsibility and self-discipline based on consideration, respect and tolerance for the rights of others.
- Through our code of behavior, we hope to build self-esteem and positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents.

- The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, encouraging a consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour. There are times when it will be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and discourage offenders.
- It is important that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through an ethos of open communication.
- We recognise the importance of the school community and that a high level of co-operation is needed to maintain a positive working environment. We encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

Restorative Practice: In St. Lassara's N.S. our initial response and intervention for dealing with challenging behavior is Restorative Practices.

This Code of Behaviour Policy has been formulated by St Lassara's N.S. to promote a positive atmosphere throughout the school by focusing on the positive aspects of behavior and developing skills, rather than on punishments or sanctions. We promote the notion of a school community where everything we do is based on mutual respect. With this in mind we use Restorative Practices throughout the school to actively develop good relationships, prevent the escalation of conflict and to deal creatively with any incidents of challenging behaviour that occur.

Rationale for using Restorative Practice

The Restorative Practice approach is about early intervention and prevention work that strengthens relationships and provides people with skills for the constructive resolution of conflict and a better understanding of how to avoid conflict in the future. It is a whole school approach, which will support any situation where negative behaviour occurs, and in the long term should help reduce the incidents of challenging behaviour. It involves the use of a set of prompts/questions in a safe environment and goes hand in hand with the regular use of restorative language.

When harm has been caused by inappropriate, sometimes thoughtless, negative behaviour then all sides need and restorative practice gives:

- A chance to tell their side of the story and feel heard
- To understand better how the situation happened
- To understand how it can be avoided another time
- To feel understood by the others involved
- To find a way to move on and feel better about themselves

Therefore it:

- Creates an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility
- Creates a commitment to relationships, fairness and impartiality,
- Encourages collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy

By implementing this policy we are empowering pupils and staff to talk through any conflict, with regard to their thoughts, how they might have acted differently and to suggest a solution to put things right. This process gives a voice to all parties in the conflict. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. An important element of all this is that the intervention is voluntary. The success of the process depends largely on the willingness of people to take part and engage honestly in the process.

What is involved?

- Use of Restorative language when dealing with issues on a day to day basis
- Regular use of circles to encourage pupils to talk about feelings, actions and the

consequences of their actions on others, and how they can move forward when they are involved in causing harm.

- Check ins/ check outs to see how pupils are feeling and to give every student a voice.
- Restorative Conversations: A set of questions/prompts will be given to each member of staff to use when dealing with any incident where harm has been caused by inappropriate, thoughtless, negative behaviour.
- Restorative Meetings/Conferences: Conferencing/Meeting using restorative structure to deal with serious issues

An important element in Restorative Practice is Fair Process

- Expectations - everyone knows what is expected of them
- Engagement - involves individuals in decisions/listens to views
- Explanation – clarify how decisions are reached

If a student who has been involved in inappropriate behaviour is unwilling or unable to engage in Restorative Practice then they will be dealt with in accordance with other procedures and sanctions outlined below.

Note that all teachers, as a whole school staff, have engaged in training in Restorative Practice.

In order to maintain an effective teaching and learning environment we have agreed on standards of behaviour.

Our expectations about standards of behaviour

Standards should reflect the following values:

- A respect for self and others
- Kindness and willingness to help others
- Courtesy and good manners
- Fairness in our dealings with others.
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- Forgiveness.

Expectations of students

- Pupils must treat staff and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Visitors to the school should be treated with courtesy and respect.
- The use of foul language and deliberate physical force is unacceptable.
- Pupils should keep school and class rules.
- Pupils should attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils must respect all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils should have all books and materials needed for class.
- Pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability and to present their work neatly.
- All forms of behaviour that interfere with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe are unacceptable.
- ***All forms of bullying is forbidden.***
- ***Truthful responses are expected from pupils at all times. All pupils should report incidents of concern to them, to their class teacher or the teacher on yard duty as soon as the incident occurs.***

In. St. Lassara's N.S. we expect the following commitments from parents and children towards their own learning and the learning of others

- Attending school regularly and punctually. Our school opens at 9.15 a.m. and finishes at 2 p.m. for infant classes and at 3 p.m. for all other pupils. There is no supervision of pupils in the school grounds outside of these times.
- Education Welfare Act 2002: Under the terms of this Act, all absences of children from school must be explained in writing by Parents/Guardians. This note should contain the name of the pupil, the reason for absence and must be signed and dated by a parent/guardian. The school must retain all these written explanations for inspection by the Education Welfare Officer. Please note that under the Education Welfare Act, if a pupil is absent for 20 days or more in any school year (September to June), the Board of Management and the Principal are compelled by law to notify TÚSLA. A phone call, while welcome in the case of infectious diseases eg chicken pox, measles, etc *is not sufficient*.
- Children should come to school prepared for work, with the books, copies and materials for learning. During class time children should undertake to do the work allocated to them and endeavor to work to the best of their ability.
- A parent/guardian should sign the Visitor's Book for children who arrive late (after 9.30 a.m.) and/or are collected early. The class teacher should be informed of such collections in advance to avoid unnecessary class disturbance.
- St. Lassara's N.S. has a school uniform. Children should wear the full school uniform every days, except P.E. days, when a plain navy sweatshirt and plain navy tracksuit bottoms should be worn. In the interest of health and safety, long hair should be tied up (with the exception of "dress-up" days).
- Jewellery is not encouraged and should be kept to a minimum (watch, stud earrings only).
- Children should take responsibility for their own work.
- Doing one's best in class will add to a learning environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.
- Homework should be completed every night, and Homework Diaries should be signed by a parent on completion.
- Children and parents should support the school by keeping class and school rules.
- Children should help to create a safe and positive environment through their behavior and attitude towards others.
- Our school operates a Healthy Eating Policy. Children's lunches should be nutritious and healthy. Fizzy drinks, chewing gum, bars of any description and junk food should not be brought to school.
- Mobile phones **or other devices such as smart watches or fitness trackers with any communication/messaging/media/recording capabilities** are not permitted in school. **If a student brings in such a device a teacher may take the device from them and it will be stored in the school for a parent/guardian to collect.**
- Children should walk inside the school building at all times. They should remain seated in class unless directed by staff. They should enter and exit the school and classrooms in a respectful manner.
- Children must remain on the school premises during school hours. For their own safety, they are not allowed outside the school boundary unless under the direction of a member of staff.
- Children should be respectful towards staff.
- Children should show respect towards other children and be respectful of their learning.
- Children should use respectful language in the school environment.
- Party/birthday invitations should not be given out on the school premises.
- In St. Lassara's N.S. we follow the curriculum guidelines as devised by the Department of Education and Science. Children are expected to engage and participate in the curricular activities.
- It is school policy not to allow children serve mass in the church during school times, with the exception of School Masses, if required.

Rules for in class

- Children should have all the necessary books, copies and materials.
- Keep their books neat and tidy and in their proper place.
- Store their schoolbag safely under your table.
- Remain seated in class and while eating their lunch.
- Adhere to class and school rules.
- Do their homework carefully and completely.
- When going to another classroom remember ***knock, enter and wait.***

Rules for the playground.

Children should

- Follow all instructions given by teacher on supervision duty.
- Play in the area assigned to your class, unless they have permission to be in another area.
- Be kind and respectful to staff and fellow pupils by being mannerly and polite, taking turns and remaining in an orderly line.
- Remember safety in games and be a good sport.
- Respect the school equipment – goal posts, footballs etc and return to where they belong at the end of breaks.
- Play safely and fairly, include everyone who wants to play in your games – don't fight, tease or annoy others.
- Keep the school grounds clean, neat and tidy.
- Do not climb on walls or railings around the school.
 - **Sanctions during yard time:**
 - **While on the playground at yard time the teacher on duty may give timeouts for up to 5 minutes for misbehaviour. If misbehaviour is serious enough or it is repeated during a particular break time, then a teacher can send a student to the other yard area (junior or senior) for the rest of that break time. The timeout will consist of either the student staying in one set space on yard or walking on yard with a teacher/SNA. The type of timeout will be decided by the teacher on yard and will depend on what suits the given child/situation presented.**

All children have the right to enjoy a safe playtime and to go home safely from school. Dangerous or threatening behavior is not acceptable. This type of behavior should be reported to the class teacher or the teacher on yard duty. Similarly, children who are worried about something talk to the teacher on yard duty or your class teacher.

While setting these standards of good behavior, we recognise the following behaviour that are not acceptable

- Behaviour that is hurtful towards others.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Refusing to do work or activities.
- Using inappropriate and hurtful language
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Standards are learning goals. Class rules help staff to discuss and implement standards.

Adults in the school help children to understand standards by modelling and discussing them.

Support staff may work with children with additional needs to help them understand the behaviours that are expected of them.

Note: The school's Code of Behaviour pertains to all school activities and trips.

Strategies to affirm and promote good behaviour

The emphasis in St. Lassara's N.S. is on promoting good behaviour. Teachers and staff will use a wide range of strategies to promote good behaviour at class and school level.

- Classroom rules and routines to give clear guidelines of acceptable behaviour.
- Positive interactions between teachers and children.
- Friendship Week
- Friendship Squad – pupils from 5th and 6th classes are part of our Friendship Squad. They help out in the Infant Yard on a Rota basis.
- Affirmation of good behaviour through the use of praise, stickers, certificates and treats.
- Written comments in copies/homework diary
- Whole school assembly to reflect on positive elements of school and class life
- Give responsibilities – jobs within the class and in the school
- Membership of committees and teams
- SPHE curriculum

Promoting positive behaviour:

The emphasis in our school is on promoting good behaviour. A variety of strategies will be used in each class. Some examples are:

- Verbal praise
- Written comments in copies and diaries
- Positive comment to parents, both written and oral.
- Displaying of pupils work in school.
- Stickers, stars etc.
- Certificates
- Treats for good behaviour
- Extra privileges – no homework, DVD's etc.
- Monthly star chart
- Class award
- **Class Dojo System**
- **Green cards - exemplary behaviour**
- **Student of the week certs**
- **Group rewards**

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

The Board of Management takes responsibility for maintaining the classroom and the school environment which is supportive of children's learning and ensures continuity of the curriculum in the school

The Board of Management will intervene when children's behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal.

Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Whole School Strategies towards dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

Communication with home –

A template letter has been devised to communicate with parents when a child

- Has to be removed from the playground for inappropriate behaviour
- Has to be removed from the class group due to inappropriate behaviour

Parents are asked to sign these letters and return them to the school the following day. Parents should support the school's standards of good behaviour by encouraging improvement in behaviour with their child.

Staff may alternatively phone a parent to discuss a relevant issue and/or meet and talk with a parent about inappropriate behaviour.

Note: The 7 step approach as outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy may also be used in dealing with inappropriate, non-bullying behaviour.

Recording of Information

Teachers are encouraged to record repetitive types of inappropriate behaviour.

The Principal may record records of interventions with children.

When behaviour continues to interrupt teaching and learning, a behaviour plan/record may be kept.

Sanctions:

Sometimes despite promoting positive behaviour, children may continue to use inappropriate behaviour. In dealing with this behaviour, the focus is on the behaviour, not the pupil. Sanctions and strategies are used to deter a child from using inappropriate behaviour.

Types of sanctions which may be used in the school are:

- Verbal reprimand
- Step System:
 - Teachers will be encouraged to have a step system in their class. If a student misbehaves they will be given a warning (step 1). If they misbehave again they will be given a second warning (step 2). If they misbehave a third time they will be put on step 3 and will go on a timeout to another classroom. The timeout should last for 5 minutes. Each day the step system is 'reset' and no 'steps' will be carried forward from a previous day.
- Yellow Card:
 - If there is repeated inappropriate behaviour, or if a teacher deems one instance of inappropriate behaviour serious enough, then a yellow card will be sent home. This card will outline briefly the inappropriate behaviour and will be signed by the teacher and principal. It will also contain a punishment exercise of lines. This exercise is to be completed by the student, signed a parent and returned the following day. 'Inappropriate behaviour' that may warrant a yellow card includes:
 - Behaviour that is hurtful towards others.

- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Refusing to do work or activities.
- Using inappropriate and/or hurtful language
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Red Card:
 - A red card will be issued to a student for more serious instances of misbehaviour as deemed by the teachers involved. Like a yellow card, it will be signed by teacher, principal and parent but a meeting will also be arranged with the class teacher to discuss the student's behaviour. If a student receives 5 yellow cards in an academic year then they will automatically receive a red card.
- Sending a student to another class for an extended period:
 - If a teacher has exhausted other forms of sanction outlined here, a student may be sent to another class. The student may be sent with work to complete and will only be sent to a suitable class where there is space for them.
- Sending home student:
 - If a student refuses to comply with a teacher who is trying to deal with inappropriate behaviour (e.g. the student refuses to go from one classroom to another or to do a timeout), then, in the interest of health and safety, the students' parents will be called and asked to collect the student as soon as possible. This may or may not include a yellow/red card being sent home as well.
- Extra piece of homework
- Removal from group within the class (seating arrangements)
- Withdrawal of privileges (this can include trips, events, tours).
- Communication with parents.
- Withdrawal from the particular class or peer group.
- Referral to the Principal.
- Formal report to the Board of Management.
- Suspension
- Expulsion.

Teachers should take particular care that they help pupils with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class, including those with identified special educational needs.

Dealing with concerns or complaints

- If a child has a worry or concern they are encouraged to talk to their class teacher or the teacher on yard duty.
- If parents want to meet with a member of staff re a concern or complaint, parents are asked to contact the school and make an appointment to meet the class teacher in the first instance – being mindful of the teacher's responsibility to their class and/or timetable.
- If a parent is unable to resolve the issue with the class teacher, the parent should request a meeting with the principal.
- If the complaint is still unresolved the parent should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the issue.
- If the issue is still unresolved and the parent wishes to pursue the matter further, the issue must be lodged in writing with the Board of Management.

Note: *Full details are available in CPSMA Guidelines.*

Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion are in keeping with the Code of Behaviour Guidelines devised by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).

We have adopted the National Education Welfare Board Guidelines for Suspension and Expulsion. Full information is available in Chapters 10-12 of Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools. The following is a summary of procedures.

Suspension.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a child when the child's behaviour is causing concern.

Suspension is defined as "*requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.*"

The decision to suspend a child when;

- Student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to health and safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

It should be noted that a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension

Procedures:

We use **fair procedures** when proposing to suspend a student

The Principal and/or chairperson will communicate with the parent(s) to discuss the reason for suspension.

Communication will generally be done in person or on the phone.

A letter stating the reason for the suspension will be given to the parent(s). The letter will also state:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.

Suspension will generally not be longer than 3 days but the Board of Management may authorise suspension of up to 5 days.

- Suspensions of over 20 days in the school year may be subject to appeal to the Board of Management or Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science, under Section 20 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the National Education Welfare Board will be notified.

Expulsion

A child is expelled from a school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude the child from the school, having complied with the provisions of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

(Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools, NEWB)

Authority to Expel

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of practice that authority should be reserved to the Board of Management and not delegated.

Expulsion will be an appropriate response to child's behaviour. This is a serious step and will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The decision to expel is a serious decision and will be considered when

- Student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning and teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

There may be certain circumstances when the BOM forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. These types of behaviour could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or staff member
- Actual physical violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal substances to other students
- Sexual assault

Procedures: (Fair procedures /right to be heard)

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
- Informing the student and the parent(s) of the details of the alleged misbehavior that will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal. Inform the parents that the BOM will be asked to consider expulsion. Records and reports of behaviour to the BOM and parent(s).
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and review of the documentation.
- The BOM calls a hearing.
- Board of Management deliberation and actions following the hearing.
- Consultation with the National Education Welfare Board. If the BOM decides that expulsion is the appropriate sanction, the BOM will inform the Education Welfare Officer, in writing, of the decision to expel. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 school days from the date the Education Welfare Officer receives the written notification. The BOM will also inform the parent(s) of its decision and communication with the EWO.
- Pending consultation with the Education Welfare Officer, the Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this time. The suspension will be considered when to presence of the student at this time will seriously disrupt the teaching and learning process or represent a threat to the health and safety of the other students and/or staff.
- Following the 20 day period and if the BOM remains of the view that the student should be expelled, formal confirmation of the decision to expel should be communicated to the parent(s). A formal record should be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

Parent(s) may appeal an expulsion or a cumulative suspension of 20 days to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. The Section 29 form is available in the school or on the Department of Education and Skills website.

Expectations of parents

- Parents are given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour when they request an Enrolment Form.
- Parents are asked to read the Code of Behaviour and to reinforce the message about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school, with their child.
- In accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, parents are required to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student.
- Parents are expected to model the standards that students are asked to respect, in their dealings with school staff and pupils in the school.
- If a parent wants to meet with a teacher or the Principal, they are expected to make an appointment to do so, being mindful of a teacher's responsibility to their class and/or timetable.
- Parents should sign homework and any notes sent home from school.

Related policies

A number of School Policies and Procedures support our Code of Behaviour.

- Admissions Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- SPHE programme
- RE Programme
- PE curriculum – co-operative games etc
- Equality Policy
- Homework Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy (Internet Safety)
- Administration of Medicine
- Parent/Teacher meetings

Monitoring/Evaluation/Review

The staff will evaluate the Code of Behaviour annually to ensure the Code reflects the school's current needs.

The staff will present any revisions to the Code to the Board of Management for ratification.

The Code will be communicated to parents at enrolment and through the website.

Ratification

This document was ratified at a Board of Management meeting of St. Lassara's N.S., Ballinacarrow.

Signature of Chairperson: Signature on filed copy

Date: 20/3/2024