

Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement

Portlaw N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

We endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for all people and their environment.

While Portlaw N.S. is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions.

We encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts and through their involvement in the Portlaw N.S. Parents Association

Portlaw N.S. strives to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of the entire school community through educational and development programmes.

Déanfaimid iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt.

Rationale for Code of Behaviour:

Compliance with Legal requirements and under the Education Welfare Act 2000 & NEWB guidelines in line with Section 23.

Aims:

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Portlaw N.S. are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations and to develop appropriate communication between home and school.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem, to promote positive behaviour and to cater for individual needs.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To build effective communication and co-operation between pupils and staff thus enabling teachers to teach without disruption.
- To ensure that all procedures of reward or sanctions are implemented in a fair / equal manner throughout the school.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules are kept to a minimum and are there to ensure the safety of all pupils and the effective running of the school. Rules will emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. The school emphasises the important role that parents play in encouraging and developing acceptable levels of social behaviour. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in their child's behaviour and progress at school.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Incentives

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.
- Implementation of Programmes such as *Circle Time* to promote positive behaviour.
- Some homework off if particular targets are met.
- Children's work is displayed in the class or on the notice boards outside classrooms. This encourages children to do their best.
- Matching work with pupil's abilities. A prize/reward carefully noted by the teacher to ensure that **all** children at regular stages during the school year are rewarded for effort/behaviour/skill etc. *Teachers creating moments of success and then acknowledging them.*
- Reinforcing Stop Think Do strategies with younger pupils.
- Recognition at monthly assemblies.
- Nurture Room; Portlaw NS operates a Nurture Room for pupils who are not yet ready to learn (see Nurture Policy).
- Trauma Informed approach to classroom management – all classes from 1st to 6th use the Zones of Regulation in class, to enable the children to name emotions and learn and practise coping strategies for their emotions.
- Completion of the Weaving Wellbeing program in class from 3rd to 6th class.
- Yard Star Chart to incentivise good behaviour in the yard can be used.

The above list is not comprehensive and consists of examples only.

Discouraging Misbehaviour

"No school however positive or imaginative can eliminate disciplinary difficulties entirely" DES.

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work.
- Loss of privileges.
- Removal from yard for their own or others safety.
- Communication with parents.
- Referral to Principal.
- Principal communicating with parents.
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.

Class Rules/ Class Contract

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules or a class contract with the children. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Class teachers also operate their individual in class positive incentives for pupils. These may range from stickers, positive affirmation, golden time etc.

Where the school rules and norms are breached, clear sanctions may be enforced by the teacher.

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges; pupils will only be removed from school teams or planned trips if the misbehaviour occurred in this environment.
6. Removal from yard for their own or others safety.
7. Communication with parents
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents

10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually, sanctions will relate as closely as possible to when the behaviour occurred and will be used at the discretion of the class teacher and Principal.

A record of more serious sanctions will be kept by the class teacher or Principal in cases where he/she is involved.

Types of Misdemeanours

It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of minor, serious and gross misdemeanours. The following are examples of the different categories.

Minor Misdemeanours

Minor misbehaviour is an action on the part of a pupil which does not cause serious harm to the pupil, other pupils, staff or property, but which contributes to a disruptive environment in the school.

Examples of minor misdemeanours

Interrupting class work
Lack of effort in class or homework
Running in the school building
Boisterous behaviour in class line
Unfinished food/drink not being brought home
Leaving litter around the school
Not wearing the correct school uniform
Being discourteous/unmannerly
Not completing homework without good reason
Incidental bad language
Playing outside designated area in yard
Unsafe play
Not adhering to Healthy Lunch Policy
Writing and passing notes

Serious Misdemeanours

Serious misbehaviour consists of actions which may cause harm to the pupil, other pupils, staff or property, or is of an ongoing or disrespectful nature so as to disrupt the school environment.

Examples of serious misdemeanours

All minor misdemeanours when on a continuous basis
Being constantly disruptive in class
Telling lies
Stealing
Damaging other pupil's/school property
Inappropriate or sexual language
Bullying
Back answering a teacher/SNA/coach etc.
Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
Carrying any item which could be construed as a weapon to inflict harm

Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil
Biting
Deliberate disobedience
Physical fighting
Aggressive verbal assault
Racist remarks
Spitting
Writing and passing notes of inappropriate content
Name calling
Bringing mobile phones to school.

Any other behaviour not listed which the staff, Principal and Board of Management deem to be a serious misdemeanour

Gross Misdemeanours

Gross misbehaviour consists of actions which imply or cause harm to the pupils, other pupils, staff or property, or behaviour of an ongoing or blatantly disrespectful nature which untowardly disrupts the school environment.

Examples of gross misdemeanours

All minor/serious misdemeanours when on a continuous basis
Malicious damage to school property or to the property of a staff member or pupil
Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards staff/pupil
Blatant disobedience
Vaping or smoking
Bullying
Pornography
Stealing from others/staff
Having any type of illegal substance, including cigarettes, in their possession

Any other behaviour not listed which the staff, Principal and Board of Management deem to be a gross misdemeanour

Bullying

In conjunction with the schools Anti-Bullying Policy bullying is not tolerated in Portlaw N.S.
"Bullying is repeated aggression verbal, psychological or Physical conducted by an individual or a group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying".

Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support, HSCL teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Suspension/Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

Planned Suspension

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Immediate Suspension

In the 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 authorises the Chairperson and the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents in person or by phone.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a school support plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

School Rules

School rules are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

Before/After School

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 9.10 a.m. or after the official closing time of 2.50 p.m. except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils

involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner across the school community.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.
- Maintain a record of all behavioural incidents he deals with.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour – incorporating class rules.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

Pupils' Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.
- Use any social media responsibly and not in a way that breaches our Anti-Bullying policy.

Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

The support and co-operation of parents is essential to the effective operation of the code. Remember that you the parents and we the teachers form a partnership for the good of the pupils, your children.

If the teachers and parents are not working together, children inevitably suffer.

Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Sign homework and regularly clean out school bag.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and other school policies and support their implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Respect that teachers require prior notice to discuss classroom matters – this is to be organised by appointment through school secretary.
- Supervise their young children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school.
- Refrain from bringing pets / dogs into the school yard (even if on lead) with the exception of special assistant dog / guide dog.
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health and Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the School premises.
- Sign up to our Gen Free Charter and not buy their child a smartphone or allow them on social media while in primary school.

Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- Informal/formal parent/teacher
- Through children's homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Aladdin texts
- Phone

APPENDIX 1

General School Regulations

School Hours	9.10 a.m ----12.45 p.m.
	1.15 p.m.----- 1.50 p.m. (Infants)
	1.15 p.m.----- 2.50 p.m. (1 st to 6 th class)

(1) Assembly

- (a) Pupils are expected to be in the school yard by 9.10 a.m.
- (b) Children who are constantly late miss out on a considerable amount of work and cause disruption to their class.

(2) Uniform

Pupils are expected to wear full uniform/school tracksuit each day.

(3) Homework

Homework reinforces work done in class. Homework should be in keeping with the school's Homework Policy and never be 'busy work'.

(4) Absence

When a pupil is absent from school a written explanation or a note on Aladdin should be completed. Should a child wish to leave the school during school hours a note should be given to the teacher or written on Aladdin and the child must be signed out from the office.

(5) Behaviour

Pupils are expected to treat staff, fellow pupils and all of the people they encounter in school with respect, good manners and courtesy. In the interest of safety pupils must behave in an orderly manner at all times. They must not run in corridors, in the yard, on steps or create disturbance or excessive noise. Fighting, bullying or rough behaviour anywhere in the school is unacceptable.

(6) Litter

Each pupil is responsible for the cleanliness of his or her desk and floor space. All litter must be placed in bins.

(7) General

Any pupil remaining indoors during break-time (due to illness) should have a written note from parents. All books, garments and lunchboxes should be clearly labelled with the child's name. Mobile phones are not allowed in the school. In case of emergency pupils can always be contacted via office.

(9) Insurance

We have been asked by our insurers to remind parents that children who come onto the premises before the official opening and who stay on the premises without permission after the close of school, are not supervised and therefore the Board of Management cannot accept responsibility. This applies to all children including those who avail of school transport.

(10) Uniform

Wine jumper, wine tie, grey shirt, grey pants, grey pinafore, grey socks or the school tracksuit with a grey polo shirt.

(11) Entry to School

For security reasons all school doors will be locked during school hours. In order to gain admission to the school building visitors must use the main entrance which operates a buzzer system and security camera. Visitors are requested to identify themselves and nature of their visit, and must then report to the Office.

(12) Appointments with Teachers.

If you wish to speak to your child's teacher the following procedure should be followed. Please contact the office or class teacher and make an appointment which is suitable. It is very difficult to accommodate impromptu meetings, prior notice should always be given.

Appendix 2

SCHOOL RULES FOR PUPILS

1. Pupils are expected to treat everybody with respect and good manners at all times.
2. Bullying in any shape or form will not be tolerated. All pupils are entitled to work and play in a caring and happy environment.
3. For the safety of everyone activities or actions which could cause harm or upset are not allowed. Pupils must not run anywhere in the school building.
4. Pupils should show respect for and take good care all school property and the property of others.
5. Pupils should respect our Green School rules and Healthy Eating policy.
6. All pupils must wear the full school uniform or tracksuit.
7. The wearing of jewellery is totally discouraged. Boys and girls are permitted to wear plain, metallic, stud earrings. No hoops, discs etc. are permitted.
Hair dyeing is prohibited.
Make-up is prohibited, pupils will be given a wipe to remove make-up.
Fake or acrylic nails are not permitted in school.
8. Pupils must enter and leave the school through the approved doors, and in an orderly fashion.
9. Pupils must remain in their own designated areas in the playground, and may only leave the yard with a teacher's permission.
10. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises at any time or for any reason without the permission of a teacher.
11. Pupils should observe the bell at the end of each break and walk quietly to their line when requested.
12. When pupils remain in the classroom at break time or lunchtime they must stay in their own places and be well behaved.
13. If the teacher is called out of the classroom, pupils must stay in their own places and continue with their work.
14. A genuine effort with all homework is expected from all pupils.
15. Mobile phones are not allowed in school.
16. All pupils must keep the class rules.

Appendix 3

Managing Behaviours of Concern Appendix to Code of Behaviour Policy

Policy Statement

This document sets out the Behaviours of Concern Policy for Portlaw National School.

Scope

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and Staff of Portlaw NS and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all staff/parents/pupils within the school.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement

"If this child doesn't learn the way we teach, can we teach him/her the way he/she learns, and can we extend his/her learning options?" Dr. Harry Chasty

School Philosophy

Each child's uniqueness is valued within the school, which fosters a secure, caring and positive environment, to enable each child to develop to their full potential.

Background

The Behaviours of Concern Policy is an integral part of supporting pupils within our school. The policy aims to recognise and plan for times when behaviours of concern occur, to support pupils in providing preemptive interventions to minimise behaviour escalation, and to outline strategies to support pupils and develop independent skills in emotional regulation and management of self.

The policy also recognises that in the interests of Health and Safety minimising of risk to self/peers and staff is an essential element to any plan/procedure and practice and that referral and involvement of the relevant support services, EWO/TUSLA/NCSE/Disability Network teams/OT/SLT/Therapeutic Services form an integral part of managing Behaviours of Concern.

As a school community, we will always endeavour to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building positive relationships with the pupils.

Definition of Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are often defined as "Culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities" (Emerson, 1995).

In our school, behaviours of concern are those behaviours that interfere with the child's learning and/or that of others. These behaviours can be triggered by a wide variety of factors and influences, such as being a new pupil in the school, transitioning to a new teacher, or by other external events in their lives.

Children are encouraged and guided to develop respect for themselves, other children and all adults with whom they come in contact with.

Internal factors include:

- age and stage of development
- personality and temperament
- personal history and experience
- physical, sensory, emotional regulation or medical factors
- skills, ability to learn
- beliefs about self and others
- resilience and self-efficacy

External and interpersonal factors include:

- parental and family patterns and relationships
- social networks - friends and peer groups
- neighbourhood and community factors
- the status and standing of different groups in society
- school factors
- time, opportunity and support for personal and social development

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

The following behaviours where excessive and infringing on the rights of others are not acceptable:

Aggressive behaviour: pinching, biting, scratching, punching, throwing objects, slapping, pushing, pulling, kicking, head butting, pulling hair, using objects against people and themselves.

Non-compliance: lying down, non- cooperation, resistance to teaching, refusing to do things.

Disruptive or threatening behaviour: shouting, screaming, swearing, repetitive vocalisation, verbal abuse, remarks/discrimination, curses, gestures or threats to harm, teasing, arguing, interrupting, obstructing, taking food or drink from others, setting off the fire alarm, invading personal space.

Absconding / Flight risk: wandering outside the classroom without permission, running away or trying to run away.

Attention seeking: constantly misbehaving in order to seek attention.

Sexually inappropriate behaviour: inappropriate sexual language or sexual gestures including inappropriate comments about the sexuality of others.

Destruction of property: damage to property belonging to self, other children or adults or damage to school property.

Socially- inappropriate behaviour: spitting, interrupting others, provoking others, making inappropriate comments.

Temper tantrums: outbursts of bad temper, emotional reaction

Self-injurious/self-harming behaviour: head banging, scratching, biting and poking.

Passive challenging behaviour: glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, withdrawal.

IT/Phones: The recording of any photos or videos is strictly prohibited on school property, as is the use of social media accounts.

It is very difficult to list all possible misbehaviours and eventualities. However, we expect the children to behave in a manner which does not compromise the safety, wellbeing and education of themselves or others.

Positive parental input is paramount in ensuring that the children are supported and encouraged to respect and abide by our values and school rules. We look forward to full co-operation in these matters.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication.

Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate which is supportive of positive behaviour. In Portlaw NS, we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour.

The following are some of the strategies that have been developed throughout our school for pupils to promote positive behaviour:

- Developing language and communication skills – eg: PECS, Lámh,
- Meeting basic needs – providing food and rest
- The use of visual cues to reinforce verbal instructions
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- A focus on creating warm relationships
- Visual schedule- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Creation of Support Plans with input from external experts; OT, NEPS etc.
- Meeting sensory and movement needs
- Regular communication with parents –email, daily journal
- Teaching of social skills through the Stop Think Do programme from junior infants to 2nd class.
- Nurture Room; Portlaw NS operates a Nurture Room for pupils who are not yet ready to learn (see Nurture

Policy).

- Trauma Informed approach to classroom management – all classes from 1st to 6th use the Zones of Regulation in class, to enable the children to name emotions and learn and practise coping strategies for their emotions.
- Use of social scripts(stories)

SCHOOL STAFF

STAFF TRAINING

In Portlaw NS we promote Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. The school staff have trained in Trauma Informed approaches to managing pupils and many have undertaken the Nurture Room training.

Teachers are trained to deliver the Stop Think Do program and it is taught by a class teacher with SNA support. The Zones of Regulation is used in classes from 1st to 6th and teachers and SNAs have got in-school training on this intervention.

The select number of teachers and all SNAs have received Positive Handling for School Staff at Portlaw National School on 30/03/2023 with Dynamis Training. This training will be refreshed as needed.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Teachers will be responsible for:

Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage co-operation.

- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour.
- The creation of School Support Plans where needed.
- Participating in professional development that contributes to skill development in the pupils and a clearer understanding of students with challenging behaviour.
- Documenting challenging behaviour incidents as they occur. Incident reports will be written when needed.
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/guardians.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal in relation to concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Providing suggestions which could assist in the development of School Support Plans.
- Cooperating with interventions and behavioural strategies that are proposed by the child's teacher and the principal.
- Working co-operatively with the school with the best interest of the child at heart.

The **Principal** will be responsible for

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the 'Behaviours of Concern Policy' within the school.
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students.
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal.
- Providing the opportunities for specialised teachers within the school to develop higher level skills so they can provide additional support and advice within the school.
- Seeking outside support and advice, such as: support from our NEPS psychologist and the NCSE in relation to behavioural supports for pupils with SEN.
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted e.g. reduced day, suspension, expulsion (as a last resort).
- Health and Safety: In the event that a pupil poses a risk to themselves or others, they will be removed from their class or setting to ensure their safety and the safety of others. If this is not possible, the other children will be removed. If the threat to safety persists, the child's parents/guardians will be asked to take the child home.

Support Strategies for Behaviours of Concern

- Zones of Regulation
- Social Stories
- Class based strategies/interventions/reward systems
- Home/School strategies/interventions/reward systems
- Modelled co-regulation
- Behaviour tracking books/logs
- Nurture Focus Tasks
- A place of safety- Zen Zone etc
- Sensory Regulation Plans/Movement Breaks
- Pupil Support Plan
- School Code of Conduct
- Referral to network teams
- External Agencies
- Referral to EWO
- Stop Think Do completed from infants to 2nd class
- Weaving Wellbeing completed from 3rd to 6th class
- SPHE program completed in full including Stay Safe and RSE
- NEPS Consultation if available
- Referral to SENO/Consultation with NCSE
- Referral to TUSLA if deemed necessary
- Modified timetable/school day in compliance with Circular 0047/2021

Sanctions

Minor challenging behaviour:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be dealt with at class level and privileges will be withdrawn as appropriate.
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students.

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour – the parents may be asked to take the child home.
- Will be dealt with appropriately by demonstration and explanation of appropriate behaviours and withdrawal of privileges as appropriate.

Damage to property:

- Child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- Will be reported to class teacher.
- Will be reported to parents/guardians and the parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The parents may be asked to take the child home.

Aggressive behaviour – threats:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss the child's behaviour and appropriate sanctions may be put in place. The parents may be asked to take the child home.

Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious challenging behaviour:

Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible. Referrals will be made by the Principal with the support of the parent/guardian

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Skills guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the

Principal

- Parents/guardians must endeavour to support their child and school to comply with rules and aim to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. On failing this, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil or pupils parents/guardians
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed

The School's Capacity to meet the needs of the child

The school will discuss with the parents the needs of the child and the ability of the child to adapt to the school setting.

Some children will exhibit behaviours of concern arising from distress or anxiety due to their inability to cope with what they perceive to be the overwhelming experience of being in a mainstream classroom. In such cases, it is important that both parents and school recognise children in such situations can respond by displaying behaviours of concern as a coping mechanism. Parents should be aware that such behaviours, where they are aggressive or violent, will often frighten other children and cause further social isolation.

The school will discuss with the parents what learning, behavioural, sensory or social needs the child may have in relation to attending school.

The school will seek and receive full co-operation from the parents in relation to how the school will work with them and their child to meet his/her needs.

The school will analyse all relevant data pertaining to the child's behavioural issues so that the school can begin to understand the reasons why the child is behaving as s/he does.

The school will make the parents aware of the role of NCSE and the SENO and ask for all relevant data which might assist the school in seeking the required resources from NCSE or DES in relation to their child. The school will also work with parents to design and teach the child alternative and more socially acceptable responses/behaviours for the child. These new responses or behaviours will promote better acceptance by peers and a stronger, positive relationship with teachers.

Reduced School Day

Circular 0047/2021 was issued to schools, as Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools, which came into effect from January 1st 2022. They can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63545-the-use-of-reduced-school-days>

In the context of challenging behaviour, reduced school days should only ever be considered in very limited and time-bound circumstances. It is acknowledged that a reduced school day may be helpful in exceptional circumstances as part of a transition or reintegration intervention, based on the needs of individual students. Any such arrangement should be short term and transitional, and designed to assist the student to attend for the full school day along with his/her peers.

Manual Handling of pupils

Portlaw National School is vertical co-educational primary school and by September 2024 will have two AS classes. Each of these special classes has six pupils. There are also a number of pupils in our mainstream classes with special needs. From time to time children can pose as a flight risk or a danger to themselves or others. A number of teachers and all SNAs have received Positive Handling for School Staff at Portlaw National School on 30/03/2023 with Dynamis Training. This training will be refreshed as needed.

Rationale:

The school management recognises the occasional need for teachers or SNAs to lift, move or handle children in the interest of Health and Safety. This can be particularly the case in relation to children in the special classes or with additional emotional or learning needs.

The following are examples of incidents when the principal, teachers or SNAs may need to intervene physically (intervention will be at a minimum and only used as a necessity for the health, welfare and safety of pupils and staff. Our goal is to use the least amount of physical intervention for the least amount of time).

- A child runs towards an exit with the intention of leaving the school
- A child is a physical threat to another child or themselves
- A child is a physical threat to a member of staff
- A child climbs / jumps on an item of furniture and is at risk of injuring himself or another child or a staff member
- A child goes to ground and is a disruptive force in the classroom or the playground
- A child gets stranded on a piece of equipment in the playground, in the classroom, school hall or at a school event and needs assistance to descend
- A child is having difficulty transitioning from one area to another
- This list is not exhaustive.

In all cases the principal, teacher or SNA must show the utmost care and attempt to protect both him/herself and the pupils. Pupils should be moved to a safe environment and observed by a member of staff at all times. Best practice would suggest that the adult wait until another member of staff is present to help them move the pupil, in reality the Board acknowledges this will not be always possible.

Limitations

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour but to serve as a general guide to the students, the staff and the Principal. This policy should be used to assist in dealing with difficult situations.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of Portlaw NS must adhere to the 'Behaviours of Concern Policy'. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff adhere to this policy.

Policy Review/Ratification

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Behaviours of Concern Policy will be reviewed

at regular intervals to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified.

Policy ratified in ~~March~~⁶⁺² 2024, to be reviewed in ~~March~~ 2026

Signed: Mary Turner

Dated: 6/3/2024.