



# Code of Behaviour

## Introduction

At St Vincent de Paul Junior School we believe a school's approach to behaviour is most effective when it is underpinned by positive relationships among students, staff, and the wider school community.

Research highlights that schools fostering mutually respectful relationships create a climate where students feel valued, leading to better engagement, improved academic outcomes, and lower instances of disruptive behaviour.

This policy seeks to prioritise relational approaches, encouraging self-discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect.

## Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of St. Vincent de Paul Junior School are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- 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 toward one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach, and to enable children to learn without disruption.

## Implementation

The overall responsibility for discipline in the school rests with the Principal Teacher. Each teacher has a responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Positive behaviour will be emphasised and rules will be kept to a minimum, and 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. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

## General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to follow a teacher's instructions and to work to the best of their ability.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for the absence.

## Bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. A single incident while unacceptable is not bullying. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting. 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.

## Strategies/Incentives

To help promote positive behaviour we use the

### I Care Rules

- (1) We listen to each other.
- (2) Hands are for helping not for hurting.
- (3) We use kind words.
- (4) We care about each other's feelings.
- (5) We are responsible for what we say and do.

## 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.

- All members of staff praise good behaviour when noticed in the school and in the school grounds.
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's written work.
- Praise in front of the class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Written or verbal communication with the parents.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.

## Discouraging Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and to 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 the pupil
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers within a class and/or temporary removal to another class of the same level
- Loss of privileges
- Detention during a break
- Informal 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 and safety.

## Suspension/Expulsion

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels

of communication between school and parents will be exhausted. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

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 the 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. A suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

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 may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

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 behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### School Expectations

Here are our School Expectations:

- Be kind and have respect for all other children and adults.

- Have respect for all property, your own and that of the school and others.
- Work hard in class and do not distract other children. Do all work given carefully and well.
- Keep our school clean and tidy.
- Do not run within the school or its grounds.
- When entering and leaving the school use the church side gates only and keep off the grass and railings.

School rules are kept to a minimum and 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 the official opening time of 8.50a.m. or after the official closing time of 1.30pm/2.30pm.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.

- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

## Teachers' Responsibilities

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- 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.

## Non-Teaching Staff Responsibilities

- Familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour
- Support teaching staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour

## Pupils' Responsibilities

- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property, their own property and that 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.

## Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its 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 and situations which may affect a child's progress/behaviour.

Signed:

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Chairperson

Signed:

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Principal