



# Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy

**Date Ratified: 17/05/2017**

**Signed:**

---

***Fr. Richard Sheehy***  
**Chairperson Board of Management**

## 1. Introduction and rationale

Pupils are more likely to benefit from their education and be happy in a structured, caring environment where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to.

This Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy was formulated by the school In-School Management Team, informed by the views of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the Board of Management (BOM), in accordance with the provisions of the *Education Welfare Act 2000* and guided by the *National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB/TUSLA): Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools (2008)*. In devising the Code, consideration was given to the particular needs and circumstances of St. Brigid's School.

The rationale of the Policy is to establish a clear framework for the information and guidance of the whole school community on the behaviour pupils are expected to observe and the disciplinary measures taken when there is a failure to do so. The procedures that must be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled are also included.

Where a pupil is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement would have to be made that there is a clear connection with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work, before the code of behaviour applies.

## 2. Relation to school ethos

The Catholic ethos of St. Brigid's, enshrined in our school motto: *Le Chéile Faoi Bhrat Bhríde*, prioritises the creation of a school climate of love, trust, respect and tolerance. It recognises the need for the cooperation and involvement of the whole school community to create a positive environment for teaching and learning.

## 3. Aims

- To provide a clear framework of rules and procedures governing behaviour and discipline for all members of the school community
- To comply with relevant legal obligations and *NEWB/TUSLA* guidelines
- To ensure that all members of staff adopt a consistent, positive approach to behaviour in the school
- To place greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions
- To recognise the individuality of each pupil and the need to accommodate differences as far as possible
- To ensure that where a disciplinary sanction is proposed, including suspension or expulsion, that the principles of fair procedures are applied and afforded to all in a timely manner
- To use a Human Values Educational Framework to promote positive behaviour

## 4. Standards of behaviour

St. Brigid's standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. They describe the behaviour expected of all members of our school community.

They are categorised into five areas.

- A. Within the classroom
- B. Lunchtime/break practices
- C. Around the school
- D. Arriving at/leaving school
- E. School trips/outings
- F. Respectful on-line communication (refer to Anti-Bullying Policy)

### A. Within the classroom

Pupils are expected to:

- show respect to others and their property
- sit safely on their chairs
- listen to teacher and others when they are speaking
- follow classroom rules.

### B. Lunchtime/break practices

#### B1. Outdoor practices

Pupils are expected to:

- walk to and from yard in single file
- play on the tarmac only
- walk to line as soon as bell sounds
- stand in single file until class teacher arrives
- take only wrapperless snacks to the yard
- seek permission from teacher on duty before they leave yard
- play safely
- respect others and school property
- follow instructions of teachers and SNAs.

#### B2. Indoor practices

Pupils are expected to:

- remain seated at all times (except in the event of a fire alarm)
- seek permission from teacher on duty to leave seat
- distribute milk/fruit only while teacher is in room
- play/chat only with nearby children
- use indoor voice.

### C. Around the school

Pupils are expected to:

- walk quietly and respectfully
- show respect to others and to school property
- follow instructions of teachers/adults charged with responsibility.

### D. Arriving at/leaving school

Pupils are expected to:

- follow this code of behaviour outside the gate when arriving at/leaving school
- stay behind the yellow line on the ramp when accessing/leaving the school
- walk bicycles/scooters to the bicycle rack.

### E. School trips/outings

Pupils are expected to:

- be mindful that they are representing the school and behave in a respectful and safe manner
- follow a designated adult's directions at all times.

## 5. School uniform

Our uniform is an integral part of our identity in St Brigid's school and there is a recognition that once pupils are wearing the uniform they are representing the school.

- All pupils must wear dickie-bows
- Pupils are encouraged to wear hair tied up for hygiene purposes
- Sensible shoes/runners must be worn as part of the uniform
- Track suits are only permitted on designated days
- Nail varnish is discouraged
- Pupils are permitted to wear a watch, one ring and stud earrings

## 6. Teaching the skills involved in reaching standards of behaviour

- Regular reference to this Policy and explicit teaching of rules
- Social Personal and Health Education curriculum and Human Values curriculum
- Establishing a positive climate and atmosphere - refer to school SPHE Plan 2017, available on the school website <http://www.stbrigid.ie-policies.html>
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by all members of the school community

## 7. Children with Special Educational Needs (See Circular 0013/2017)

All pupils are required to comply with this policy. However the school recognises that pupils with special educational needs may require assistance in understanding certain

rules.

A modified behaviour plan may be put in place if necessary in consultation with parents/guardians, the class teacher, SET teacher and Principal.

Other pupils may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to understand a rule. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the diversity that exists in the pupil population.

## **8. Strategies to support/encourage positive behaviour**

- Class rules jointly created by class and teacher. These rules are stated in positive terms
- Word of praise in front of the class
- A mention to parent/note home
- Class prizes – individual/small group/whole class
- Positive reinforcement
- Homework pass
- Pupil of the week/Worker of the Week/Star of the Day
- Group Star Chart
- A visit to another staff member or to the Principal for commendation
- Delegating privilege e.g. best group/class might lead class to yard
- Reward stickers/certificates
- Marble jar for each group
- Cushions for the week
- Transition activities
- Weekly Teddy and trophy
- Class dojo – an electronic behaviour management tool that allows teacher to assign points to each pupil represented by their own avatar
- Pyjama day
- Small trips
- Golden Time
- Lucky Dip
- Smiley Box
- Value Rewards
- Individual behaviour Plans – outlining strategies to specifically support particular behaviours

## **9. Responding to inappropriate behaviour**

A variety of disciplinary approaches will be taken when a pupil behaves inappropriately. Reference may also be made to the school Anti-Bullying Policy, available on the school website <http://www.stbrigid.ie-policies.html>

All approaches employed will be proportionate to the misbehaviour. The aim of any sanction applied is not only to prevent the behaviour from reoccurring, but to support the pupil in managing her own behaviour.

The list below provides some examples of the different approaches adopted but is not exhaustive. Teachers may put alternative appropriate measures in place, bearing in mind

the circumstances involved.

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others within the class
- Prescription of additional work
- If homework is not completed then pupils are expected to complete homework the following night
- Referral to Principal - a pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline or for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour
- Loss of privileges - e.g. school trip
- Communication with parents
- Reflection sheet to consider consequences of actions
- Placed 'On Report'
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The class teacher will keep a record of all instances of serious misbehaviour i.e. behaviour that is persistently impacting on teaching and learning. She/he will keep a record of investigations, meetings with parents/guardians, strategies to support behaviour, improvements in the behaviour etc. This information is uploaded onto the pupil's file on the Aladdin system.

## **10. Suspensions and expulsions: legal and procedural requirements**

Our St. Brigid's code of behaviour places emphasis on positive discipline through a consistent, whole-school emphasis on giving attention, praise and rewards to positive behaviour. However, under section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, our code of behaviour must also include procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion.

St Brigid's will follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. Fair procedures in relation to disciplinary matters include that:

- the details of any allegation are first put to the pupil and, as appropriate, to her parents/guardians
- they are provided with the opportunity to best respond fully to any such allegations
- they have the right to a fair and impartial hearing of the issues concerned
- they are afforded a right of timely appeal against any sanction imposed.

For reference and application purposes more details are given in *Sections 10-12 of National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB/TUSLA): Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools (2008)* available at;  
[http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_en.g.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_en.g.pdf)

## **11. Suspension**

Suspension will always be a proportionate response and may be considered in cases of serious unacceptable behaviour.

The following factors are among those to be considered before proposing suspension.

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The personal circumstances of the pupil
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date and results thereof
- Whether suspension is appropriate and proportionate
- The possible impact of suspension

Suspension is considered part of a restorative plan addressing the pupil's behaviour. The suspension should:

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the pupil and their parents/ guardians
- give staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- impress on the pupil and her parents/ guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

### **11.1 Authority**

The BOM has the authority to suspend a pupil and this authority is delegated to the Principal. The Principal will report all suspensions, together with reasons and duration, to the BOM.

### **11.2 Grounds**

The decision to suspend a pupil requires serious grounds such as that:

- the pupil's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- the pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

### **11.3 Procedural guidelines**

The steps below outline the procedures that will be followed in the event of a proposed suspension. The school will ensure fair procedures including the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

#### **Step One: Preliminary assessment**

A preliminary assessment should be undertaken of the alleged incident/s to confirm that serious misbehaviour has taken place. To provide for impartiality, the Principal may arrange for another member of staff to conduct and report on this preliminary assessment.

## **Step Two: Formal investigation meeting under the direction of the Principal**

The pupil and her parents/guardians will be informed by letter about the incident, how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. This letter will invite them to attend a formal investigation meeting with the Principal where they will be given an opportunity to respond and the matter can be further discussed before a final decision is made and before any sanction is imposed.

## **Step Three: Decision**

Where a decision to suspend a pupil has been made, the Principal will inform the parents/guardians of the decision in writing confirming:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which it will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any work to be done at home
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour and/or engage in a behaviour management plan)
- the provision for an immediate appeal to the BOM,
- the right to appeal to the *Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, section 29)*.

A pupil should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a longer period is necessary to achieve a particular objective.

If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, this matter should be referred to the BOM giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes for consideration and approval. The Principal is required to report suspensions to *Educational Welfare Services, Túsla*, (in accordance with the *NEWB guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21(4) (a))* .

## **Step Four: Removal of suspension**

A suspension is removed:

- when the period of suspension has elapsed
- where the BOM decides on appeal or, for any reason, to remove the suspension
- where the *Secretary General of the Dept. of Education & Skills* directs that it be removed on foot of a *Section 29 appeal*.

After the removal of the suspension, the pupil will be given the opportunity and supports for a fresh start. The “On-Report” system (See Appendix 1) may be initiated in order to support the pupil on her return to school and to keep the lines of communication between school and home open.



## **11.4 Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the BOM authorises the Principal and/or Chairperson to sanction an immediate suspension where, for example, the continued presence of a pupil in the school poses an immediate and serious threat to the safety of pupils, staff or other person. Where immediate suspension is to be applied parents/guardians will be immediately notified and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected.

Where immediate suspension is applied, the preliminary investigation, if not already carried out, should still be completed to fully establish the facts and case for imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation meeting should then promptly follow.

## **11.5 Records and reports**

Formal written records will be kept of the following:

- the investigation, including notes of interviews held
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached.

These records are maintained on file by the Principal and in accordance with the school's *Data Protection Policy*.

## **12. Expulsion**

Expulsion will always be a proportionate response of final resort and may be considered only in cases of extreme unacceptable behaviour. It is the most serious sanction, and will usually only be applied where all others have been tried and proven unsuccessful, including having sought the assistance of relevant national support agencies.

### **12.1 Authority**

The BOM has the sole authority to expel a pupil and, unlike suspension, reserves and does not delegate this authority.

### **12.2 Grounds**

Grounds for expulsion include:

- the pupil's behaviour causes significant disruption to the learning of other pupils and/or to the teaching process
- the pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

A single incident of extremely unacceptable behaviour may be grounds for expulsion. This could include, for example, physical assault.

### **12.3 Procedural guidelines**

The steps below outline the procedures that will be followed in the event of a proposed expulsion. The school will ensure fair procedures including the right to be heard and the right to impartiality. The BOM will decide which of the tasks involved in the procedural steps require separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board meeting.

#### **Step One: Preliminary assessment**

Before proceeding, a preliminary assessment is undertaken of the alleged incident/s of extreme misbehaviour to ascertain and confirm facts. Records of previous serious misbehaviour, together with notes of any meetings with parents/guardians, strategies to support behaviour, and improvements are kept by the class teacher and/or uploaded onto the pupil's file on Aladdin.

The following factors are among those to be considered:

- the extreme nature, persistence and seriousness of the behaviour
- the personal circumstances of the pupil
- the context of the behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour
- the interventions tried to date and results thereof
- whether expulsion is an appropriate and proportionate response
- the possible impact of expulsion.

#### **Step Two: Detailed investigation meeting under the direction of the Principal**

Parents will be informed by letter of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. This letter will invite the pupil and her parents/guardians to attend and fully respond at a detailed investigation meeting under the direction of the Principal, where the matter can be fully discussed before a final recommendation is made to the BOM.

#### **Step Three: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

The Principal makes a decision on what action to take based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour. Where the decision is a recommendation to the BOM to consider expulsion, the Principal will:

- inform the pupil and her parents and guardians by letter that the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure the parents/guardians have records of: the allegations against the pupil; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the BOM is being asked to consider expulsion
- provide the BOM with the same records as were given to the parents/guardians

- notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the BOM and invite them to that hearing
- advise parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the BOM
- ensure that the parents have enough notice to prepare for the hearing.

#### **Step Four: Consideration by the BOM of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing**

At this formal hearing the parents/guardians and others involved, including the Principal, are provided with an opportunity to present their respective cases to the Board and where necessary, directly question each other. The Board will be impartial between the Principal and pupil. Parents/guardians may be accompanied at the hearing if they so wish.

#### **Step Five: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing**

To provide for impartiality when deliberating their decision, the Board ensures that neither the Principal nor parents/guardians are present for their deliberations.

Where the decision of the Board is to expel a pupil, it will notify the *Education Welfare Officer (EWO)/Tusla* in writing of its intention to expel and the reasons for this decision. A pupil cannot be expelled until 20 days have passed from the date on which the *EWO* receives this notification.

The BOM informs the parents, in writing, of their decision and the fact that they are notifying the *EWO*.

#### **Step Six: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer**

During this 20 day period, the *EWO* will make efforts to meet and consult with all parties to ensure arrangements are in place for the continued education of the pupil.

Pending these, the BOM may take such steps to ensure good order and safety in the school including suspension of the pupil.

#### **Step Seven: Confirmation of decision to expel**

After this 20 day period has expired and where the BOM remains of the view that expulsion is still warranted, they confirm their decision to the parents/guardians in writing. The BOM will notify the parents/guardians of their right to appeal. They will provide them with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal to the Secretary General of the Department and Science (*Section 29 of the Education Act 1998*). An appeal may also be brought by the NEWB on behalf of a pupil.

### **12.4 Records and reports**

Formal written records will be kept of the following:

- the investigation, including notes of interviews held
- the decision-making process
- the decision and the rationale for the decision
- the duration of the expulsion and any conditions attached.

These records are maintained on file by the Principal and in accordance with the school's *Data Protection Policy*.

### **13. Communicating with parents**

The school places great emphasis on the part that parents/guardians play in fostering and developing standards of pupil behaviour.

An early warning system is in place to alert parents to concerns about a pupil's consistent misbehaviour, so that ways of helping the pupil can be discussed and agreed. This may take the form of a text, email or informal chat at the gate.

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

This Policy is available on the school website <http://stbrigid.ie/policies.html>

The following methods of communication are used within the school.

- Monthly newsletters, notes, texts, e-mails and via homework journals
- September Welcome Meetings
- Parent Teacher meetings - both formal and informal
- Telephone conversations
- School notice board
- Aladdin text-a-parent
- SSPP Meeting for pupils presenting with SEN
- School website
- Parents Association

### **14. Procedures for notification of a pupil's absence**

- All absences from school must be explained in writing to the class teacher when the child returns to school
- When a child has reached 15 days absence the parent will be informed by way of a letter from the school Principal. A letter will also be issued once 20 days absence in any school year are reached. It is mandatory for the school to report all absences in excess of 20 days to the NEWB in their quarterly attendance returns
- Where the school is concerned about absences, the NEWB will be informed of its concern outside of the quarterly attendance return dates

## 15. Roles and Responsibilities

### Teacher's Responsibilities

- Support and implement the Policy
- Draw up their own Classroom Code, in consultation with pupils
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Recognise and affirm good work
- Keep relationships positive
- Prepare work well, in order to address the ability of all pupils and have a quick subject transition in order to reduce opportunities for boredom and therefore disruptive behaviour
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences amongst pupils
- Be courteous, fair and consistent
- Use a firm, yet respectful, tone of voice, trying to achieve eye contact with the pupil when a reprimand is required, remaining calm
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents and with the Principal when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern
- Ensure the use of electronic devices/internet is monitored in line with the Acceptable Usage Policy
- Review progress

### Principal's Responsibilities

- Oversee the implementation of the Policy by staff members
- Support staff, pupils and parents in the effective roll-out of this policy including making provision for staff training and development as needed
- Ensure that all staff including substitute teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and volunteers are familiar with the policy, particularly the strategies for promoting positive behaviour
- Initiate in consultation with the Chairperson the suspension and expulsion procedures, when deemed necessary
- Ensure that a safe and caring teaching and learning environment exists for pupils and staff
- Arrange a review of the policy as required

### Board of Management's Responsibilities

- Provide input into the review of the Policy and oversee ratification
- Support staff in the implementation of the Policy
- Consideration of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing in the case of an expulsion
- Ensure that the school has a policy on, and procedures for, the use of suspension and expulsion that are in line with NEWB: *Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools (2008)* and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron
- Ensure that all pupils and parents are advised about, and aware of, the school's

- policy for suspension and expulsion
- Ensure that fair procedures are used for suspension and expulsion and that all staff are aware of those procedures
- Take special care to ensure that the fair procedures are accessible to people with disabilities or those from different language or cultural backgrounds
- Ensure that the Board of Management and the Principal are equipped for their roles in relation to the use of suspension and expulsion

## **16. Supporting school policies**

The following school policies, drawn up in consultation with staff/parents/guardians and the BOM are all available on the school website and support this Code of Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment & Admissions Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Child Protection Policy
- Relationships & Sexuality Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## **17. Ratification and review**

This Policy was reviewed by the In-School Management Team, informed by the views of staff, pupils and parents (via pupil/parent surveys) and was ratified by the Board of Management on XXXXXXXX.

The BOM will monitor its implementation and will review it again, on or before XXXXXXXX, or as the need arises.

## **Appendix 1 Report Card System**

The child is placed on a daily report which focuses on all aspects of her day and reports on her achievements or, where appropriate, on any difficulties that may have arisen. The pupil herself, parents, teacher and Principal all have an input into the report and initially all must agree to take part.

- 1 The child is issued with a book/sheet which has a page for each day. Each day is divided into 3 sections.
2. Each day at the first break, the teacher and child briefly discuss progress from 9.00 – 10.35. The process is repeated at both 12.30 and 2.30p.m.
3. At the end of the day the child visits the Principal and the report is discussed. The Principal may write a comment.
4. The report is then taken home to be read by parents so they can see how the day has been. They may also write a comment.
5. Finally there is a section for the child's own comment (if relevant).

The process is repeated each day up to a maximum of one week and is reviewed at the end of that time. The aim of the reporting process is that the focus can be directed more on the positive achievement which will hopefully result in an overall improvement. If there is no marked improvement in behaviour following this, then the teacher, Principal and parents will meet to discuss the next course of action.

**JUNIOR REPORT CARD**  
**Junior Infants to Second Class**

Report Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

10.35 am



\_\_\_\_\_

12.30 pm



\_\_\_\_\_

2.30 pm



\_\_\_\_\_

**Pupil's Comment**

**Parent's Comment**

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_



**SENIOR REPORT CARD**  
**Third Class to Sixth Class**

Report Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

10.35 am	1	2	3	4	5
----------	---	---	---	---	---

12.30 am	1	2	3	4	5
----------	---	---	---	---	---

2.30 pm	1	2	3	4	5
---------	---	---	---	---	---

Pupil's Comment
Parent's Comment

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_