

St. Luke's NS Code of Behaviour

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of St. Luke's NS is required by legislation to prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that the school Code of Behaviour must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

Mission Statement & the Code of Behaviour

In line with our Mission Statement every individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive and supportive atmosphere. We, as a staff, believe our Code of Behaviour has an important role to play in fulfilling these aims and objectives.

St. Luke's aims to treat every child, irrespective of ability, creed, race or gender, with dignity, fairness and respect.

Implementation of this Code of Behaviour is central to the provision of effective teaching and learning in St. Luke's NS. It is a reflection of our school ethos and central to our Mission Statement.

Mission Statement

St. Luke's National School is a learning community in which all our students are valued and educated so that they may have every possibility of becoming full and active citizens of Ireland and Europe and of preparing for a meaningful Christian life.

In St. Luke's N.S. we aim:

- To cherish all pupils equally so that they will be given every opportunity to succeed and to overcome any difficulties experienced during their school years.
- To provide each child with opportunities to realise his/her full potential.
- To help each child in the development of his/her intellectual, physical, emotional and social skills.
- To nurture a love of learning, to cultivate the motivation to apply himself/herself with enthusiasm to his/her work and to develop a sense of good self-esteem in each child.
- To enable each pupil to develop his/her creative and imaginative capacities and to communicate effectively through a wide range of media.
- To help each child to understand the society and environment in which he/she lives, to conserve what is worthwhile and precious and to co-operate for the welfare of that society and environment.
- To help each child to appreciate his/her own religion and culture and to respect the beliefs and cultures of others.
- To help each pupil, according to his/her abilities and interests, to prepare for the social, domestic, recreational and working aspects of his/her adult life.
- To treat each pupil as an individual.

Where and When the Code of Behaviour will apply

This Code of Behaviour will apply to all school activities, regardless of timing and location. This will encompass the normal school day, activities that may extend beyond normal opening and closing times and all extra-curricular activities such as school tours, outings, performances and sporting pursuits.

Aims of the Code of Behaviour

Fundamental to a happy and effective school is the school climate as experienced by teachers, pupils, parents and visitors. It is reflected in the level of our staff morale and the quality of relationships between pupils, teachers, staff and parents. It is essential that respect for self and for others, and that kindness and consideration for others is a fundamental expectation that sets the standard for the behaviour of everyone in the school.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and Staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, not only when their child is in trouble but also when they have behaved particularly well. The school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents, and encourages parents to communicate with their child's teacher about any concerns they may have.

In order that pupils have a sense of responsibility for, and understanding of, their behaviour, and have a positive attitude towards classroom rules, it is the school's policy to allow the pupils, with the guidance of their teacher, to develop classroom rules at the start of each school year. Pupils are also involved in deciding the consequences for misbehaviour, and in this way, they will support the rules and feel that the consequences are fair.

St. Luke's Code of Behaviour aims:

- to create a safe, secure and positive environment where teaching and learning can occur
- to promote a friendly, happy atmosphere which will help every child to reach their full potential
- to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and consideration for all
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline where the children take ownership of their own behaviour
- to help our children to realise that they have choices about the behaviours they exhibit
- to help our children to mature into responsible and full participants in a learning community
- to assist Parents / Guardians in understanding the expectations and procedures that underpin the Code of Behaviour
- to ensure that all procedures of reward or sanction are implemented in a fair manner throughout the school

Responsibilities in Relation to Behaviour

The teachers and adults encountered by the children in St. Luke's have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other. Our example has an important influence on the children.

Teachers' Responsibilities:

- To ensure that pupils are fully aware of the expectations of them in regard to behaviour, classwork and homework and that the consequences for not fulfilling these expectations are clear, fair and consistent throughout the whole school. Consideration will also be taken of each child's age and any special needs.
- To reward and affirm good behaviour and reinforce effort.
- To engage in effective, structured and consistent classroom management which will involve the children as active participants in their own education, which will promote good self-discipline and will encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.
- To communicate regularly with parents/guardians and welcome those who wish to discuss their children's progress and behaviour.
- To speak with parents/guardians to make them fully aware of difficulties their child may have, either behavioural or academic, and seek their co-operation if these difficulties persist.
- To establish communication with pupils and try to understand the reasons for any unacceptable behaviour.
- To encourage children to articulate any difficulties they may have, to help them understand their own behaviour, the reasons for it and how to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships.
- Teachers will record all incidents of misbehaviour (with the exception of isolated minor incidents) and these records are securely kept and are subject to Data Protection law pertaining to primary schools. These records will be kept until the pupil reaches the age of 21. (See page 62 of NEWB guidelines for more information)

Pupils' Responsibilities

- To respect the authority of school staff.
- To respect school property and that of others.
- To behave politely towards visitors to the school.
- Not to behave in a way that will endanger their own safety or that of others.
- Not to bring any dangerous or illegal item or substance into school.
- Not to interfere with the learning of others.
- To respect the opinion of others.
- To be kind to other pupils and considerate of their feelings. (Please also see the School's Anti-Bullying Policy)
- To comply with the school's healthy eating policy.
- To dress appropriately for school.
- Pupils are not allowed mobile phones in school except in special circumstances where permission has been received in writing from the Board of Management.

In the event of a problem, to

- Co-operate with teachers to understand the problem from the other pupils' and the teachers' points of view.
- Work with teachers to seek solutions.
- Give an assurance that every possibility will be made to effect a solution.

The children in St. Luke's NS can help enormously to make our school a positive, happy and effective learning environment by adhering to the school rules.

Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities

- To inform your child's teacher or the principal of any personal situation (eg a bereavement) that might lead to difficulties arising in school. This will enable the teacher to be more understanding.
- To make every effort to meet the teacher if requested or if you feel that your child is having difficulties at school.
- To take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about things that they do in school and check the homework journal and to make sure homework is completed to the best of their ability. If there is a reason why homework cannot be completed on a particular evening, please write a note in your child's journal explaining why not.
- To ensure that pupils are suitably dressed for school.
- To insist on high standards of punctuality, attendance, and effort.
- **Re. Absences** Where a child is absent from the school for the whole day or for part of a day, the child's parent must notify the class teacher, through the Aladdin app, or IN WRITING, of the reasons for the absence. In accordance with the Education (Welfare) act 2000, the Deputy Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Officer of all children who miss 20 or more days in any school year. Depending on the circumstances, the Educational Welfare Officer will contact the parents/guardians to discuss and help address the problems that are causing the irregular school attendance. If the problem of irregular attendance does not improve, the legislation provides for a legal notice to be served on parents.
- To collect your child on time. If you are delayed for any reason, please telephone the school.
- Support the code of behaviour by your own good example.

In the event of a problem:

- To co-operate with the school to resolve disciplinary issues

The Parents and Guardians of the children in St. Luke's NS have the responsibility to ensure that their children abide by the expectations outlined in this Code of Behaviour.

Board of Management Responsibilities

The Board of Management will be supportive of all the partners in the application of a fair code of behaviour within the school.

Guidelines for Positive School Behaviour

The following standards of behaviour are expected of all members of the St. Luke's NS community.

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for school property and buildings
- Respect for other children's property
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Walk respectfully of other classes in the school building
- Do their best in all activities
- Listen to those who are speaking, including visitors to their classroom

- Be kind and show a willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners at all times

Classroom Behaviour

Each teacher will have a set of expected classroom behaviours for his/her class level. Some teachers, for example in the senior classes, may draft a list of class rules with the help of the children in their class. Class rules should be kept to a minimum of 4 or 5. Class rules should emphasise positive behaviour e.g. 'walk' and not 'don't run'. The following general behaviours apply to all classes.

- Co-operate fully with your Teacher's / SNA's / Substitute Teacher's instructions
- Complete your work to the best of your ability
- Present your work neatly in books and copies
- Get on with your work and let others get on with theirs
- Aim to be on time for school every morning at 8.30am (Be in the yard at 8.20am)
- Go home promptly at 2.10pm after your class is released by the teacher
- Enter and leave your classroom quietly and respectfully
- Ask for teacher's permission before leaving your classroom
- Complete all Homework to the best of your ability
- Help to tidy up your classroom at 2.00pm every day
- Wear your full school uniform / tracksuit
- Eat a healthy lunch every day

Behaviour on the Yard at Break-Times

Children have the opportunity to play and socialise with each other at morning and lunch break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on the yard.

- Children are encouraged to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- All age groups have a designated play area and should remain in that yard
- Children should never leave the school grounds
- Children eat their lunch in their classroom before / after yard times
- Children must ask permission from a supervising teacher / SNA to leave the yard e.g. going to the toilet.
- Children with injuries will be treated by the teacher or SNA's on duty
- Serious injuries (e.g. bangs to head, cuts, bruising) will be recorded in the Incident Book (this is kept in the staff room) and the class teacher will be informed of such injuries at the end of break. Teachers will write a note in the child's Homework Journal or send home a copy of the incident form to inform Parents/Guardians. Sometimes parents will be notified by phone (serious incidents and all head injuries)
- It is the responsibility of the teacher or SNA on duty, to communicate all incidents they have dealt with, to the relevant class teachers at the end of break times every day

- At the end of breaks the children will stop playing, tidy and return to class.
- The children should walk in an orderly fashion to their classroom
- Children are encouraged to be fair and inclusive when setting up their games
- Rough play and bad language are not allowed at any time

Behaviour for Indoor Play

On wet days the children may be required to remain in their classrooms during break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on these occasions.

- Children will stay in their classrooms at all times
- Children can play with games / activities provided by their teacher
- Teachers on duty will float between the classrooms
- SNAs will help supervising the classes of the children they work with on wet days

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Part of the vision of St. Luke's NS is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further Education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solving problems. All children deserve encouragement to attain their personal best. Our reward systems seek to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by all adults in St. Luke's. Praise for good behaviour should be as high as for good work.

The following are examples of how praise will be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in child's copy / Homework Journal
- A visit to another teacher / Principal for commendation
- Words of praise in front of class / bualadh bos
- Words of praise at assembly
- Words of praise after yard in front of peers and other classes
- Delegating some special responsibility of privilege
- A mention to Parents/Guardians, written/verbal communication

Rewards and Incentives for Positive Behaviour

Greater emphasis is placed on rewards than on sanctions. **This is not an exhaustive list.** Rewards may include the following.

- Stamps / stickers / points / dojo points
- Homework passes
- Golden time
- Class / group of the week / points systems
- Assembly
- Star of the Week/ Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine

- Certificates / prizes / rewards

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children are required to comply with the spirit of the Code of Behaviour. St. Luke's recognises that some children with SEN may need extra time and help in understanding some rules. Specialised **Behaviour Plans** may be necessary at times. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with the class teacher, Parent/Guardian, SEN team and Principal. All will work together to make sure the child receives all the support they need. Any professional advice from our NEPS Psychologist will be taken into consideration.

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

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of Misbehaviour are recognised: **minor, serious and gross**. All everyday instances of **minor misbehaviours** will be dealt with by the class teacher or the supervising teacher at break-times.

Examples of Minor Misbehaviours include:

- Interrupting work in the classroom
- Being discourteous / unmannerly
- Running in the corridors/stairs
- Rough play on the yard
- Leaving the classroom without checking with the class teacher
- Leaving the yard to go indoors at break times without checking with the supervising teacher / SNA
- Not adhering to Healthy Lunch Policy
- Late in the mornings
- Unfinished Homework
- Keeping a mobile phone in their bag during class time

Class teachers may keep a **running record of minor misbehaviours**. If a pattern of minor misbehaviours appears, the class teacher may inform Parents/Guardians.

Serious Misbehaviours

Single instances of serious misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher in conjunction with the Deputy Principal / Principal. Any single incident may be brought to the Parent/Guardian's attention at the discretion of the Deputy Principal / Principal.

In cases of **repeated serious misbehaviours** Parents/Guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the class teacher and Deputy Principal / Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of Serious Misbehaviours include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful including threats, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation
- Using violent and/or aggressive behaviour towards others
- Verbal abuse of a teacher / adult
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning on a daily basis
- Damage to school property
- Theft
- Using a mobile phone at school / taking photographs

Gross Misbehaviours

Parents / Guardians will be informed immediately by the Principal if there is **one incident of gross misbehaviour.**

Examples of Gross Misbehaviours include:

- Physical abuse of a teacher / adult / other child
- Serious aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / adult / other child
- Bringing dangerous implements to school
- Leaving St. Luke's without permission
- Serious damage to property e.g. structural damage to school building, broken window etc.
- Bullying over a prolonged period of time after earlier interventions
- Carrying drugs / alcohol / cigarettes / dangerous substances
- Skipping school without the consent of a parent/guardian.

Bullying

Please refer to St. Luke's NS Anti-Bullying Policy

Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour

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

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- see that their behaviour affects others
- understand that they have choices about their behaviour
- understand that their choices have consequences
- learn to take responsibility for their choices / behaviours
- discuss and devise strategies to prevent the behaviour occurring again

Sanctions should:

- reinforce the Code of Behaviour
- signal to other children that their wellbeing is being protected

- prevent serious disruption of Teaching and Learning
- be clear so that the child understands why the sanction is being applied
- make it clear that changes in behaviour are needed to avoid further sanctions
- make a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- relate to an individual and not a group
- focus on the child's behaviour not on the child himself/herself

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. Individual teachers may put alternative measures in place depending on the circumstances involved and the age of the child. **This list is not exhaustive.**

The Class Teacher will:

- ask the child to stop the behaviour
- discuss behaviour and reason with child
- advise child on how to improve the behaviour
- ask the child to move away from his/her class group to consider the behaviour
- ask the child go to a nearby class to consider his/her behaviour
- loss of privileges e.g. golden time / free play / activities / representing the school / attendance on a school trip / tour
- ask the child to write down their account of behaviour
- inform the Principal / Deputy Principal about on-going behaviour
- communicate with Parents/Guardians in Journal
- make an appointment with Parents/Guardians
- make an appointment with the Principal and Parents/Guardians

When all of the above has been exhausted then the matter will be referred to the Board of Management where;

- BOM will consider Suspension
- BOM will consider Expulsion

Strategies for dealing with misbehaviours

The following strategies may be used. The order of the strategies will be at the discretion of the class teacher, and, where necessary, the Principal, according to the level/nature of the incident.

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Ongoing communication with parents
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing extra work
- Loss of privileges
- Referral to Principal

Recording of Misbehaviour

Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour, of sanctions applied as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. Records are subject to Data Protection law pertaining to primary schools. These records will be kept until the pupil reaches the age of 21. (See page 62 of NEWB guidelines for more information).

Communication with Parents

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

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 have to be suspended for a temporary period. See pages 65 to 78 of NEWB guidelines 2008 for more information.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Chairperson or Principal can sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case. See pages 65 to 68 and 79 to 86 of NEWB guidelines 2008 for more information.

The following methods of Communication are used:

- Informal or formal Parent / Teacher Meetings
- Notes in Homework Journals
- Letters / notes to and from St. Luke's NS
- School notice board on the yard by the door
- St. Luke's NS website
- Email / text messaging
- SeeSaw

- Aladdin Notices

- Social Media

The Parents and Guardians of any new children starting in St. Luke's will be provided with a copy of our Code of Behaviour.

Psychological Assessment

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will also be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care services provided by Health Boards.

Suspension and Expulsion

The Board of Management of St. Luke's N.S. does not anticipate needing to suspend or expel a child, but is required under the Welfare Act to have a policy and procedures in place to deal with such an unlikely occurrence.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is defined as:

"requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days"

During the period of suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

Suspension will be considered on the following grounds:

- the 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 safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

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

Suspension will

- enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents
- give school staff time to plan other interventions
- impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour

Procedures in respect of suspension

Fair procedures will be applied when proposing to suspend a student

- the student and their parents will be fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter
- the student and the parents will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed
- where immediate suspension is considered warranted by the Principal for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension, the parents will be notified, arrangements made for the student to be collected and a formal investigation conducted immediately following the imposition of the suspension

Authority to suspend

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority has been delegated to the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The period of suspension

The period of suspension will be for the shortest time necessary for the student and their parents to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the positive influence of school.

Implementing the suspension

The Principal, as well as meeting with the parents/guardians, will notify the parents in writing of the decision to suspend and will confirm:

- the period of suspension
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- arrangements for returning to school
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

After the suspension ends

To maximise the impact and value of suspension, the Principal or a delegated staff member will:

- meet with the parents/guardians to emphasise their responsibility in helping the student to behave well and to offer help and guidance with this
- the student will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start
- the school will expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students

Appeals

The Board of Management will give an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student.

Section 29 Appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, as amended by the *Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007*.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student will be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*, and will be given information about how to appeal.

EXPULSION

Authority to expel

A student is expelled from a school when the Board of Management takes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of Section 24 of the *Education Act 2000*

Grounds for expulsion

Expulsion is a very serious step and will only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

The school will always take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as:

- the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the 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
- school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing involving parents and Principal
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

For further details regarding these six procedural steps, please see *Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools 12.4*

The school may also seek help from external support agencies such as:

- NEPS (National Education Psychological Service)
- HSE (Health Service Executive)
- NCSE (National Council for Special Education)
- NBSS (National Behavioural Support Service)

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998* section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.


Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19/9/23 [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Signed:



(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date:

19/9/23