

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR - ST. COLUMBA'S GIRLS NATIONAL SCHOOL WITH FACILITY FOR DEAF CHILDREN

VISION

St. Columba's Girls National School with facility for Deaf Children is dedicated to the missionary vision of St. Columba – to foster a love of learning and a spirit of mutual respect within the school community. St. Columba's also aims to foster a sense of personal responsibility and well-being within a moral, spiritual and social framework which reflects Christian values. Our school's approach to learning aims to foster positive behaviour patterns which nurture children's confidence and self-esteem as well as tolerance and respect for the rights and dignity of others.

SCHOOL HOURS

Official school hours are 8.50 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. School will open at 8.45 a.m. each morning for the reception of children. Pupils are asked to assemble in the School Hall and proceed quietly to their classrooms following morning assembly. Classes commence at 8.50 a.m. and finish at 2.30 p.m. each day (Junior Infants finish at 1.30 p.m.).

Morning lunch break: 10.50 a.m.- 11.00 a.m.

Afternoon lunch break: 12.30 p.m.- 1.00 p.m.

Parents and Guardians are advised that the safety and well-being of children arriving at school before 8.45 a.m. and remaining after school finishes at 2.30 p.m. is the sole responsibility of parents as no arrangements exist for the supervision of children arriving or remaining on campus outside those times.

PURPOSE OF SCHOOL RULES

Our vision can only be achieved when there is a high level of co-operation and respect between staff, parents and pupils. Pupils and adults in the school community are expected to accept the rules in the spirit of good will and co-operation, thereby ensuring a convivial learning environment. Pupils who are respectful and orderly will be given due recognition within the school system. Greater emphasis will be placed on rewards for good behaviour, rather than sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. Routine and structure play a vital part in ensuring effective implementation of our Code of Behaviour, so that pupils and teachers may work in an ordered setting. This applies to all school-related activities. Accordingly, it is necessary that pupils observe the following rules.

SCHOOL RULES

Rule 1: School Uniform

The uniform for girls in our school is a green cardigan, pinafore and tie (available in Laura's boutique, Douglas), a cream blouse, white, cream, green or black ankle socks, knee length socks or tights and dark, sensible shoes. Our boys wear the uniform of St. Columba's Boys' School situated on our complex. This comprises of a maroon jumper, grey shirt and tie (available in Laura's Boutique), grey pants and dark sensible shoes.

School tracksuits (available for boys and girls in Laura's Boutique), white polo shirt (available with the school crest in Laura's boutique or without the crest in any retail store) and runners are worn on P.E./Dance days or on other occasions when advised by the class teacher only.

The uniform for our Junior and Senior Infants is tracksuit, white polo shirt and runners throughout the year.

For the months of May, June and September, if and when the weather is warm, children **may** wear the school shorts (available in Laura's Boutique for girls and boys) with the school tracksuit top, polo shirt and runners.

Pupils are expected to be neatly presented and dressed in their school uniforms during the school day. Jewellery: Watches and stud earrings are allowed, no dangling or hooped earrings for health and safety purposes.

Rule 2: Attendance

Children are expected to attend school unless they are sick or due to other extenuating circumstances. Notification and details of absence should be made by a parent/guardian on the Absence Note 'slips' provided at the back of the school journal upon a child's return to school (even if notification has already been made by telephone to the front office). These details are required by the Education Welfare Board and needed in writing for school record keeping purposes.

Rule 3: Punctuality

It is important that children understand the necessity for punctuality from a young age and that they develop it themselves as a good habit for later years. Children need to understand that circumstances outside their control can prevent punctuality, that this is not their fault and that it is completely acceptable. However, courtesy and social etiquette is also important whereby people apologise and acknowledge that circumstances have prevented punctuality. A short, one line, note in a child's journal/communication copy will fulfil this request for courtesy and acknowledgement. It also provides confirmation for school management that parents/guardians are aware of the late arrival.

Rule 4: Mobile Phones

Mobile Phones, while permitted, must be switched off **while on school grounds**, unless a phonecall/text to home is necessary when pupils are leaving school regarding collection arrangements. Children are not allowed to take photographs or video footage or access any form of social media on their phones when on school grounds. If the Mobile Phone rule is broken, the phone will be confiscated and only returned when contact has been made with a parent/guardian re same. If this rule is repeatedly broken, the pupil will not be allowed have a mobile phone on their person while on school grounds.

Rule 5: Good Behaviour

- a) Children are expected to show courtesy and respect to each other, to all members of the school community and to visitors to our school.
- b) Children should carry out staff's instructions at all times.
- c) Children are expected to behave in such a way that does not pose a danger or safety risk to themselves or to anyone else on school grounds or during school activities.
- d) Children should respect school property, the school environment and the property of others in a way that does not cause deliberate damage to school property, the school environment or the property of others.
- e) If a pupil is not co-operating with staff or is disruptive in school, the pupil's parents/guardians will be advised by the Class Teacher or Principal. If there is not a satisfactory improvement in the pupil's behaviour, the matter may be referred to the Board of Management.

Rule 6: Early Release from School

Pupils are required to stay on the school grounds during the school day. If known in advance, a dated request for early release from school must be written into the pupil's journal and signed by a parent/guardian. Parents are obliged to sign a register in the secretary's office before collecting a child

from the classroom. If the child returns to school during the same school day, parents must sign the register again in the secretary's office before he/she returns to the classroom.

Rule 7:

The Board of Management accepts no responsibility for any personal items of property mislaid, damaged, lost or stolen etc.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Our school's philosophy commits us to providing a supportive learning environment which fosters and encourages a love of learning and promotes regular and punctual attendance throughout the school year.

1. The Education Welfare Act (2000) places a statutory duty on parents and guardians to notify the school of the reasons for a child's absence from school for part of a school day, a full school day or for longer periods
2. The Act also obliges the School Principal to notify the Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school :
 - a) where a pupil is not attending school regularly, and
 - b) where a pupil is absent from school for an aggregate of twenty (20) school days or more during the school year.

Unexplained absences will be followed up on with parents and a standard form, approved by the Board of Management, is used to inform parents in cases of unexplained absences and for school record purposes.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

In 2013 the Department of Education issued '*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*' (circular 0045/2013)

The purpose of this circular is to inform school management authorities that Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools have been developed following consultation with the relevant education partners and to replace the 1993 Guidelines on '*Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools*'. These procedures have resulted from a review of the 1993 guidelines and the implementation of the Action Plan on Bullying – Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills which was published in January 2013.

School authorities and school personnel are required to adhere to these procedures in dealing with allegations and incidents of bullying. The Board of Management and Staff have reviewed the school's Anti-Bullying Policy in order to ensure that it is in keeping with the above circular and guidelines. A copy of the updated policy will be available for viewing in the school office or on the school's website.

In General, the Board of Management and staff aim to provide our pupils with the highest possible standard of care and to foster a spirit of mutual respect for diversity within the school community. Bullying in any form is therefore not tolerated in our school.

Bullying in its truest form is a series of repeated, intentionally cruel actions involving the same people in the bully and victim roles. A pupil should never say or do something which makes another child feel uncomfortable. The intention of the bully is to put the victim in distress in some way. If your child is a

victim of ongoing, threatening or intimidating behaviour she/he should say “No, Get Away” and tell someone (i.e. Parent, Teacher, Principal or other member of staff).

- Our school’s Code of Behaviour includes an effective Anti-Bullying policy which encourages a sense of collective responsibility amongst staff to respond promptly and sensitively to any such incidents of unacceptable behaviour in our school.
- All reported incidents of bullying or abuse, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and appropriate measures taken by the Class-teacher or Principal or Deputy Principal in accordance with the procedures approved by the Board of Management.
- The cooperation of parents is essential if the school is to achieve success in helping these children resolve any adjustment or personal difficulties which they may have.

It is important that clarity exists between behaviours which are generally defined as bullying and behaviours which constitute abuse. In situations where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive the school is obliged to consult with the Health Board with a view to drawing up an appropriate response.

ADDRESSING MISBEHAVIOUR

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring our school’s Code of Behaviour is applied with fairness and consistency and to be supportive of the Principal and staff in carrying out their duties and responsibilities with a measure of dignity and authority.

Where pupils with special educational needs are concerned, teachers will take special care in helping those pupils to understand why their behaviour is unacceptable. Sanctions may be required to help pupils with special educational needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any student. Sanctions will be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child and will take account of his/her individual circumstances. Sanctions will be sensitive to the particular circumstances of vulnerable individuals.

To maintain a high standard of behaviour and discipline in our school, so that learning and development can take place, the Board of Management has approved the following strategies for dealing with repeated instances of minor misbehaviour:

- Teacher advises the pupil re appropriate behaviour.
- Advice and support for conflict resolution.
- Temporary separation from peers.
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Consultation with the Principal or Deputy Principal
- If improvement is shown, the pupil’s efforts will be acknowledged and appropriately rewarded.
- If a significant improvement is not evident, the Class Teacher will inform the parents/guardians and the school Principal.
- The Class teacher, in collaboration with the parents/guardians, will agree on a strategy for an improvement in behaviour within an agreed time-frame. The Principal or Deputy Principal may be consulted. A review date will also be agreed.
- If an improvement in behaviour has not occurred following the review, the continued misbehaviour will now be regarded as serious and a formal report will be made to the Board of Management.

THE SUSPENSION OF PUPILS

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a pupil in cases where the normal disciplinary measures of the school have been exhausted. The Board of Management may sanction the suspension of a pupil for a specified period of time. Such sanctions will be age appropriate and contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances. The authority to suspend a pupil is delegated to the principal.

Repeated instances of serious misbehaviour:

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the parents and pupil (if appropriate) will be requested to give an undertaking to the School Principal and Class Teacher that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in future. The Board of Management may sanction suspension of the pupil concerned for a specific period if such an undertaking is not forthcoming.

Serious misconduct:

In the case of serious misconduct the Board of Management authorises the School Principal to sanction an immediate suspension from school pending discussion of the matter with parents and the Board of Management. A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for immediate suspension. Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted, parents/guardians must be notified and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected from school. The Principal is required to report all suspensions to the Board of Management, the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

Period of suspension:

- The initial period of suspension in all cases will be a maximum of three (3) school days. The exact period will be confirmed to the pupil's parents in the notice of suspension.
- A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of suspension, up to a maximum of six (6) school days to enable the matter to be reviewed.
- A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason.

In all cases a parent or guardian must accompany the pupil on her/his return to school following a period of suspension and give an undertaking, in writing, that the school's Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child.

Expulsion:

In extreme cases expulsion of a pupil may be considered by the Board of Management to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school and that the safety of students is secured. If the pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety of fellow pupils or staff, expulsion will be considered, and the school will endeavour to ensure the best educational provision is made available. (see Admission Policy Clause 2)

Addressing the concerns of parents:

Parents/Guardians who have a concern about behaviour or any aspect of the school's Code of Behaviour should address their concerns in the first instance to the child's class teacher or the School Principal, as appropriate.

The Board of Management has approved procedures for addressing a complaint by a parent/guardian against the school. A copy of these procedures is available to parents from the School Principal or Secretary.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

In all cases involving the suspension or expulsion of a pupil the parents or guardians of the child have a right of appeal to the Board of Management. Such appeals should be notified, in writing, to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

The Education Act (1998) gives parents/guardians the right to appeal to the Department of Education and Science a decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude a pupil from school or to suspend a pupil for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to twenty (20) school days in any one school year. In general, such appeals must be made within forty-two (42) days of receipt of the Board of Management's decision. (Policy Reviewed March 2017))

******Upon reading this Policy Document, please sign page 7, the Code of Behaviour Agreement Form overleaf, with your child and return to your child's Class Teacher or to the Office at your earliest convenience***

(This policy was reviewed in May 2017)

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AGREEMENT FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

In reference to the school Admission/Enrolment Policy, Pg. 2, No. 8:

'Participation in the activities of the school includes abiding by the Code of Behaviour adopted by the Board of Management.

** Parents/Guardians are requested to confirm in writing that they will accept and support the school's Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policies as a condition of enrolment in the school (in accordance with the Education Admission to Schools Bill 2013).'*

I have read the contents of the school Code of Behaviour and agree to abide by the provisions and procedures set out in the Policy Document.

I agree to discuss the Code of Behaviour with my child and to help and support them to upkeep the school rules and abide by the contents of the school's Code of Behaviour.

Date.....

Name of Pupil (in print)

Pupil's date of birth.....

Signed (Parents/Guardians).....

.....

*****Parents may sign on behalf of Junior and Senior Infant Pupils below*****

Signed (Pupil).....

Signed (Sibling).....

Signed (Sibling).....

Signed (Sibling).....

Signed (Sibling).....

*****Please return this page only to the Class Teacher or to the office at your earliest convenience*****

