



ST. COLUMBA'S GIRLS NATIONAL SCHOOL WITH FACILITY FOR DEAF CHILDREN

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Our Code of Behaviour references other important policies and documents so it is important to read them in conjunction with our Code of Behaviour. These policies and documents are listed below:

Developing a Code of Behaviour - Guidelines for Schools (available online)

Parental Complaints Procedure (available online)

The Education Act (1998) (available online)

St. Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children - Anti-Bullying Policy (available on our school website)

St. Columba's GNS with Facility for Deaf Children - Attendance Policy (available on our school website)

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 wellbeing 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 from 8.50 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Children are supervised by school staff on the yards from 8.40a.m. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time. Pupils assemble in the School Halls at 8.50a.m. and proceed quietly to their classrooms following morning assembly. Our Early Intervention Deaf Class, Junior and Senior Infants finish at 1.30 p.m. each day and 2nd to 6th Classes finish at 2.30 p.m. The school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time.

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

Afternoon lunch break: 12.30 p.m. -

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 goodwill 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 structured play are 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 Schoolwear in Dosco Industrial Estate T23DH79), 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 a maroon jumper, grey shirt and tie (available in Laura's), grey pants and dark sensible shoes.

If hijabs are to be worn for religious reasons in the senior classes, they need to be bottle green in colour, in line with our school uniform.

School tracksuits (available for boys and girls in Laura's Schoolwear in Dosco Industrial Estate T23DH79), white polo shirt (available with the school crest in Laura's Schoolwear or without the crest in any retail store) and runners are worn on P.E. 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 Schoolwear 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. Long hair needs to be tied back.

Jewellery: Watches and stud earrings (in the ear lobes only) are allowed. For health and safety purposes, no dangling or hooped earrings, or other body piercings are permitted.

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 either on the Aladdin Connect App or on the 'Absence Note' slips provided at the back of the school journal upon a child's return to school to avoid absences being marked as unexplained. These details are required by the National Education Welfare Board and needed in writing for school record keeping purposes.

The purpose of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 (amended by the Child and family Agency Act 2013) is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education. Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school whichever comes later.

As a parent/guardian, you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that reasons must be given in writing. The school will notify Tusla – Child and Family Agency if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.

If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by Tusla - Child and Family Agency. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.

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. This can be corresponded via Aladdin Connect. It also provides confirmation for school management that parents/guardians are aware of the late arrival. Parents and guardians who are dropping or collecting children outside of the usual drop off or collection times must report to reception where you will be asked to sign your child in or out.

Rule 4: Mobile Phones / Smart Watches

Mobile phones (or any device with internet access) must be switched off **while on school grounds**. Children are not allowed to take photographs or video footage or access any form of social media on their phones or any device (eg. smart watch) when on school grounds. If this rule is broken, the device will be confiscated and only returned to a parent/guardian. If this rule is repeatedly broken, the pupil will not be allowed to 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 instructions from staff 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 ideally corresponded via Aladdin Connect, or alternatively, this can 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. The school strongly discourages the early collection of children for convenience and the collection of siblings if a child is being collected early.

Rule 7:

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

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.
- 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.

Addressing the concerns of parents:

Parents/Guardians who have a concern about behaviour or any aspect of the school's Code of Behaviour should make an appointment to address their concerns with the class teacher in the first instance.

The Parental Complaints Procedure (2023) for addressing a complaint by a parent/guardian is available to parents online. It states: A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

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 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 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.

In the event of a proposed suspension, the school will follow the guidelines, as laid out in the 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'.

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.

In the event of a proposed expulsion, the school will follow the guidelines, as laid out in the 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'.

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. Appeals are dealt with as per 11.7 and 12.5 of 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'

The Education Act (1998) gives parents/guardians the right to appeal to the Department of Education and Skills a decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude a pupil from school or to suspend a pupil.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AGREEMENT FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Parents / Guardians consent to this Code of Behaviour policy upon enrolling their child in the school.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in January 2025