

## **Rathbarry National School**

### **Code of Behaviour**

*Reviewed: 05/12/2023*



#### **Introductory Statement:**

This Code of Behaviour reflects the wishes of all partners and stakeholders in Rathbarry NS to provide an orderly and effective school for all, underpinned by appropriate standards of behaviour and enabled by respectful interactions between all parties involved.

Based on that shared understanding, we endeavour to promote the well being of all the pupils in our care by, age-appropriately, while supporting the spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual pupil entrusted to our care.

#### **Aims:**

The aim of this school policy is to create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour, promotes high self-esteem, and fosters a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in all pupils entrusted to our care.

The code gives priority to the setting of high expectations here in Rathbarry National School and in affirming good behaviour.

The standards and values we wish to foster may be summarized using the acronym 'RESPECT' as follows:

- **Responsibility** – all members of our school community are accountable for our actions.
- **Empathy** – all members must learn to understand the point of view of others.
- **Safety** - we will strive together to make the school a safe and nurturing environment.
- **Pride** – we must strive to make the school a place in which we are proud.
- **Excellence** - we will strive to do improve based on effort and commitment.
- **Co-operation** - working together will be our recipe for success.
- **Truth** – we will value truth and honesty above all else.

With respect to the implementation of this code, we call on all partners to play their part in a measured and responsible way as per their specific roles and functions.

**Parents**, as the primary educators of their children, will be asked to support the school in the implementation of this policy and to ensure that their children are aware of the parameters in

which their behaviour may be addressed, in a social or learning context, at school. We, respectfully, remind them that all behaviours have meaning, are context specific and are, generally speaking, learned. Consequently, behaviours can be unlearned.

The **principal and staff** will be expected to model good behaviour as per the expectations of the code of behaviour and to implement its conditions in a fair, reasonable and equitable manner favouring restorative behaviour modification practices over punitive reactions. We acknowledge that effective teaching and learning is closely linked to good behaviour and that the quality of relationships is a fundamental first step in the promotion of good behaviour in a school setting.

The **Board of Management** will be expected to support the principal and staff in the implementation of the code and act as the final arbiters of justice in matters of repeated serious breaches of conduct, or, in matters of gross misconduct, were these to occur. However, they too must always maintain a focus on the influences that may underpin negative behaviour, the developmental stages of the pupils as well as their history and personal experiences or any other extraneous factors that may come into play.

The **pupils** will be encouraged to participate in the development of classroom rules that enable optimum conditions for teaching and learning and to be kind, respectful and to represent themselves, their families, and their school in the best possible light always. At all times, all the partners should, in the context of behaviour, remind themselves that schools are for children and are complex social institutions where many variables come into play and though mistakes can be made, they are, fixable. Behaviour can be learned and therefore, it can change.

### **Standards of Behaviour:**

The standards of behaviour Rathbarry National School wishes to promote are based on fairness, kindness, inclusivity, and respect. All pupils will be expected to respect themselves, their families, their teachers and other school personnel, their friends and classmates, school property and equipment and to represent the school and their community with pride. In addition, pupils will be expected to work to the best of their ability, enjoy playing and sharing with their fellow pupils and to be a positive influence on younger pupils.

In devising this code, the individuality of each child has been considered, and, in the spirit of co-operation so evident in Rathbarry, we are confident that the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment will be protected by our school Code of Behaviour.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the Principal shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the Principal '*as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child*'.

## **School Rules:**

While we endeavour to keep rules to a minimum, we find it necessary the following be adhered to:

### *Caring for myself and others:*

- A respectful attitude between pupils, teachers, staff members, parents and visitors to the school is expected. A general courteous and mannerly attitude is anticipated when addressing or being addressed by a peer, teacher, or staff member.
- Pupils are encouraged to always do their best in school by listening carefully, working as hard as they can and behaving well in class so that they and their fellow pupils can learn.
- Pupils should complete their homework. A note from a parent/guardian is required when homework is not completed (Monday – Thursday).
- All pupils must wear school uniform to school.
- Pupils should bring a sensible, nutritional lunch to school. Crisps, minerals, sweets, and chocolate are discouraged. Chewing gum is not permitted.
- Pupils should keep their classroom clean by bringing unfinished food and drinks, cartons, wrappers etc. home.
- All property, belonging to other pupils and school property, must be respected, and damages must be replaced.

### *Safety:*

- Pupils are expected to be punctual and take care coming and going from school.
- In the yard, regardless of what game is being played, pupils will always show respect for their fellow pupils and teachers.
- A pupil cannot leave the school without permission, a note from a parent/guardian is required if a child needs to leave school during the school day.
- Following absences, a note explaining the child's absence is required from a parent/guardian (Tusla).
- The use of mobile phones, smart watches or any other electronic device is prohibited (this excludes any digital device provided by the school to support teaching and learning).

### ***Bullying:***

Pupils should never bully others. If bullying occurs it should be reported to both parents and teachers. Bullying is always unacceptable. **Rathbarry National School is a bully-free zone. The school has an anti-bullying policy in operation.**

*The above rules are not deemed to be a comprehensive list in relation to discipline. Matters may arise which require special consideration.*

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

In Rathbarry three levels of misbehaviour are recognized as follows:

**Minor** – spontaneous minor breaches which are neither planned nor premeditated.

**Serious** – serious issues are, usually, hurtful to others and may be physical, verbal, emotional or virtual. They may also interfere with the learning experience of others or cause damage to school property or equipment. These can be continuous and are usually premeditated and will be considered unacceptable within the Rathbarry school context. An example would be bullying, which in Rathbarry will be a term used only to describe acts of repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others. Bullying is not a difference of opinion or an argument on the yard. Parents will be informed of all such instances and will be invited to participate in the development of strategies to assist repeat offenders unlearn negative behaviours that restrict and limit their learning potential and interfere with the welfare of others.

**Gross** misbehaviour would be serious assault, serious theft or damage to school property, repeated acts of aggression against others, and, in all such instances, parents will be involved in finding a suitable resolution which will result in repeated aggressors or rule breakers assuming responsibility for their actions.

### **Strategies:**

Parental support and co-operation in matters of discipline are vital in ensuring that a harmonious and healthy atmosphere exists within the school.

When dealing with incidents of misbehaviour, the following approaches will be part of the school response to misbehaviour, and these will be implemented in a sensitive, consistent, and age-appropriate manner when required:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Separation from peers
- Prescribing additional work
- Loss of privileges
- Detention at break times
- Communication with parents
- Use of individual reward systems, implemented if and when different situations arise
- Referral to the Principal
- Meetings with parents
- Suspension
- Expulsion

### **Suspension and Expulsion:**

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, all other possible solutions will be explored.

However, for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. In that case, parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case and to give an undertaking that their child's behaviour will be addressed. If such an undertaking is not received, and, following a review by the Principal, a temporary expulsion may result. All necessary sanctions of this nature will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. In that instance the parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal, if satisfied with the commitments received, will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### **Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be used where appropriate.

## Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Accordingly, schools should advise parent(s) / guardian(s) of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent / guardian or student.

## Monitoring / Evaluation / Review:

All stakeholders in the school including pupils, parents, staff, and Board of Management have been involved in the formulation of this policy document.

A copy of the policy will be provided to all school personnel, published on the school website and will be readily accessible to all parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will also be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

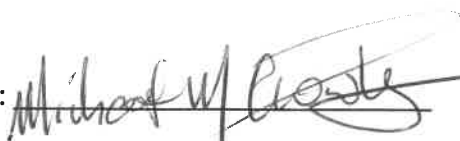
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every two school years.

## Ratification

This policy has been reviewed by the Board of Management of Rathbarry National School at a meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023

And will be implemented as and from December/2023.

Signed:



Date:

5/12/23

Chairperson Board of Management

Rathbarry National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Rath A'Bharraigh

Rathbarry National School

Roll No: 17715M

Signed:

Catherine Foley

Date:

5/12/23

Principal

Rathbarry National School.

Signed:

S. Keohane

Date:

5/12/23

Chairperson Parents' Association

Rathbarry National School.

**References: Developing Codes of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools (NEWB)**