

St. Fergal's National School

Code of Behaviour Policy



Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement

St. Fergal's School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school models and promotes a philosophy inspired by the belief in God and the core values of life-long learning, respect, inclusion, justice, truth and joy.

It aspires to be a positive place of openness and acceptance where children and the whole school community can feel safe and will be listened to. Where we wish them to grow physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually through actively relating to self, others, the earth and spirit.

These values find expression in our daily work, our processes for decision making, planning and in the implementation of all school policies, curricular, pastoral and organisational.

Introductory Statement

This policy aims to outline the procedures for dealing with discipline matters that may arise while your child is attending St. Fergal's National School. (in line with the Education Act 1998 and the Welfare Act 2000).

We in St. Fergal's we believe that it is the right of every child and every staff member to be able to work in a safe and caring environment. Our Code of Behaviour reflects the vision of the child at the centre of learning process and we hope to ensure each child is provided with experiences that are relevant and age appropriate to his/her needs in a disruptive free environment.

In order to attain this, high standards of discipline are set and are expected to be adhered to by all. The rules are put in place to benefit both students and teachers alike and are an invaluable tool in ensuring a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

Aims

- To enable each child to be educated in a positive, happy, safe and effective learning environment
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To enhance a learning environment and allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community
- To ensure each student/staff member alike can work in a relative disruption free, caring & safe environment
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school

Guidelines for behaviour in the school

- We in St. Fergal's agree that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- The over-riding principle governing this code is respect- respect for ourselves and others and their property.

Golden Rules

Each pupil is expected:

- To be well behaved
- To be kind and helpful
- To listen
- To be honest
- To work to his/her best potential
- To look after his/her property and school property
- To respect themselves and others (Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Feet)
- To be punctual

Each class is required to draft their own class rules/charter which reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class

We strongly believe that no pupil has the right to deny any other pupil to reap the full benefit from his/her education

Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

The B.O.M. and the principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the policy

The staff are expected to:

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil
- Treat all children, parents, the school community and the outside community with respect and dignity
- Support and implement the School's Code of Behaviour
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Have clear boundaries and rules for children
- Give positive feedback about behaviour
- Keep record of instances of misbehaviour
- Devise if warranted a student behaviour plan in an effort to improve overall behaviour. Parents and the child (if deemed necessary) will be involved in devising this plan.
- Liaise with outside agencies e.g. Lucena Clinic, Enable Ireland, HSE in relation to specific children.
- Use circle time or another whole class method as a way of addressing a behavioural issue that arise within a class.
- Teach the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programme
- To monitor the behaviour of all children in the school and should respond accordingly to any incident of misbehaviour

The B.O.M. are expected to:

1. Support the principal and staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour
2. Discuss serious breaches of behaviour (which may involve expulsion) brought to the attention of the Board by the principal
3. Be consulted in reviewing, drafting and ratifying the Code of Behaviour

Parents are expected to:

1. Cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
2. Ensure their children are at school on time and in correct uniform.
3. Be courteous towards pupils and staff
4. To attend a meeting at the school when their child's behaviour is causing disruption/harm to their child and/or to other children. Initially the meeting may be with the class teacher, but the nature of the behaviour may warrant a meeting with a combination of the class teacher and Principal. Strategies for modifying behaviour will be discussed and behaviour will be reviewed within an agreed timeframe.
5. Help their children with homework and ensure that it is fully completed
6. Behave in a respectful manner towards all staff members
7. Supervise younger, non-school going children at all times whilst on the school premises.
8. Refrain from approaching or reprimanding another child while on school grounds.
9. Note for absence.
10. Notify school if contact number/address changes.

Pupils are expected to:

1. Contribute to devising classroom rules

2. Learn about taking personal responsibility for their behaviour, realizing as well as having rights one also has responsibilities
3. Attend school regularly and punctually
4. Do their best in class
5. Help to create a positive and safe environment.
6. Respect themselves and others
7. Respect staff
8. Allow other students to learn in a disruption free environment
9. Participate in all school activities. (swimming, school tours etc.)
10. Have long hair tied up and maintain good personal hygiene.

Rewards/Sanctions

Reward and acknowledgement of good behaviour. The following strategies can be used by all teachers (using their own discretion)

- Sit beside a friend.
- A quiet word/gesture to show approval
- A comment in a child's exercise book or homework diary
- A reward system – student of the week etc.
- Special mention at the assembly
- Delegating some special responsibility /privilege
- A mention to parents – either written/verbal communication
- A homework pass.
- A special day e.g. Pyjamas Day etc.

Levels of Misbehaviour

There are **Three levels of Misbehaviour** within our Code of Behaviour

1. **Mild misbehaviour**
2. **Serious misbehaviour**
3. **Extreme Misbehaviour**

Examples of Mild Misbehaviour

- Interrupting and distracting others
 - Deliberate fidgeting or inattention
 - Not completing classwork/homework
 - Running in the school building
 - Being discourteous or unmannerly
 - Name Calling(single incident)
 - Breaking any of the school rules
 - Not telling the truth
- This list is not exhaustive

Sanctions for Mild Misbehaviour

Teachers will take some/all of the following age appropriate steps at their discretion when dealing with Mild Misbehaviour.

- Discussion with the child/reprimanded
- Objects causing the distraction taken/returned to pupil or parent
- Detention
- Extra work given
- Instances of yard misbehaviour in yard book and class teacher informed
- Time out at the wall at break time /Shadow teacher on yard
- Phone-call/note home to parents
- If unable to get to the bottom of the issue, all parties involved will be sanctioned
- Loss of certain privileges
- Other sanction at discretion of class teacher

Regular occurrences of minor misbehaviour will be dealt with as follows, using one or more strategy.

Phase 1:

- Temporary separation from peers (within the classroom) or referral to another teacher/classroom with specific work when privileges are withdrawn (e.g. Golden Time)
- Reflection sheet (describing incident) signed by parents, teacher and student (Kept in file by teacher. Age appropriate)

Phase 2:

- Child will be sent to the Principal's office
- Formal letter 1 from School Principal informing parents of continuous misbehaviour
- Denial of participation in some class activity e.g. trip to park, school tour
- Class teacher and or Principal will meet one/both parents

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour:

- Constantly breaking mild misbehaviour (as stated above)
- Persistently not working to full potential
- Bad attitude/ back answering adults
- Teasing/bullying
- Any behaviour that interferes with other students learning
- Abusing/vandalising property
- Defiant behaviour
- Fighting or causing injury to others
- Spitting
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Using unacceptable language, sexual language, behaviour/gestures
- Using phones /devices during school (Personal) as per school acceptable use policy
- Persistently not complying with school uniform policy

Sanctions for Serious Misbehaviour:

Teachers will take steps as outlined for Phase 1 or 2 above but depending on misbehaviour may proceed to the following steps when dealing with serious misbehaviour

- Child will be sent to the principal
- Formal letter from School Principal informing parent of serious misbehaviour

- Children to be put on a "Performance Review"(possibly three months probation)
- Withdrawal of privileges e.g. parents must come on tour with their child.
- Detention (lunchtime)

Examples of Extreme Misbehaviour

- Bringing weapons/dangerous substances to school
- Smoking
- Leaving school without permission
- Deliberately injuring any member of the school community
- Purposely activating school fire alarm
- Aggressive /threatening violent behaviour towards a member of staff or pupil
- Vandalism
- Assault
- Truancy

Note:

- The above lists are not exhaustive and therefore any misdemeanours that occur but are not mentioned above will be categorized into the above categories.

Suspension

Process Leading to Suspension/Expulsion

- The B.O.M. has delegated the power of suspension to the principal.

- The delegation of such authority reflects the provision of the Guidelines for Schools (NEWB) and any legal requirements, as directed by the Dept. Of Education and Science
- The school will record incidences of consistent misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour

Step 1:

- In the event of consistent/serious misbehaviour being recorded two letters will be sent to the parents of the pupil in question asking them to discuss the matter with their child.
- Letter 1 will be signed and returned to the school and the other one can be kept by the parent/guardian
- At this time a daily record of the student's behaviour will be kept by the class teacher for a period of time

Step 2:

- If the misbehaviour continues, 2 copies of letter 2 will be sent to the student's parents/guardians. This letter will invite the parents/guardians to a meeting in the school to discuss the behaviour.
- One of these copies has to be signed and returned to the school and the other one can be kept by the parents/guardians

Step 3:

- If the misbehaviour continues the pupil in question may be suspended for one or more days at the discretion of the principal.
- The pupil's parents will receive two copies of letter three advising them of the suspension and the date of the pupil's return to school. One of these letters will be sent by Registered Post.
- A phone call will also be made to ensure the parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the situation.
- The pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to attend a meeting in the school on that date and give assurances that the misbehaviour will not reoccur.
- Once these assurances are given, the pupil will be readmitted to the school.
- One copy of letter will be returned to the school signed by parent(s)/guardian(s)

Immediate Suspension:

- In the event of a once off incident of gross misbehaviour, which in the opinion of the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Management is deemed serious enough, the student may be immediately suspended

- If the school principal deems it necessary, the school may require the parent to collect their child as soon as possible from the school. If the parent is unable to do this, the school may arrange for the child to be brought home.
- Two copies of letter four will be sent home advising the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the suspension as well as the date of the student's return to school. A phone call will also be made to ensure the parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the situation. (Registered Mail)

Post Suspension:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student (if deemed necessary) will be required to attend a meeting in the school to discuss the inappropriate behaviour and give assurances that this behaviour will not continue. The student will be re-admitted only when these assurances are given.
- Where allegations of criminal behaviour are made about a student, these will be referred to the Gardai who have responsibility for investigating criminal matters. Parents /Guardians will be informed.

Note:

- Discipline letters will not be carried forward from the previous year and therefore each child will start with a clean slate for the new school year
- Parents/Guardians of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to Appeal such suspension.

Expulsion

The B.O.M has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case – in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and will only be considered when:

- a. The student's continued presence in the school contributes a real and significant threat to the safety of either students/staff.

- b. The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the educational opportunities of fellow students
- c. The student is responsible for serious damage to property

Automatic Expulsion

The Board of Management may sanction automatic expulsion for the following prescribed behaviours:

- 1.** Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.
- 2.** Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- 3.** Possession of illegal drugs in the school
- 4.** Sexual Assault
- 5.** Any other serious misbehaviour that the Board of Management deem to warrant expulsion

In imposing expulsion as a sanction, due regard will be given to the following factors

1. The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
2. The context of the behaviour
3. The impact of the behaviour
4. The interventions already implemented
5. Whether expulsion is an appropriate response
6. The possible impact of expulsion

Procedures to be followed in relation to expulsion

Investigation

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include the following

Step 1:

A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal in line with fair procedures. Inform student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and the possibility that this investigation might lead to expulsion. Parents and student will have an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanctions is imposed. Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation. Parents will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour.

Step 2:

A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

Step 3:

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.

Step 4:

Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

Step 5:

Consultation arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 6:

Confirmation of the decision to expel. In the event that the Board of Management of St. Fergal's Primary School invokes its right to expel a student, the steps listed above will be followed, as detailed in the National Education Welfare Board publication 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'

Appeals Process

A decision to expel may be overturned if directed by the Department of Education and Science (following a Section 29 Appeal)

Procedure for notification of Pupil's Absence

- Parents must notify the school in writing of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.

- Parents will be informed in writing when their child has been absent for 10+ days of school.
- Under current legislation, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

Keeping Records

In line with the school's policy on record keeping and data protection legislation, records in relation to pupil's behaviour are kept in a secure filing cabinet.

Incident occurring outside the school's grounds or school hours

Incidents occurring either outside the school grounds or school hours, that either directly or adversely affect any member of the staff or the reputation of the school, may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. This may include but is not limited to Cyber bullying (see Anti-Bullying Policy). If deemed necessary, suspension, or in extreme cases expulsion may occur.

Health and Safety Issues

1. In the interest of Health and Safety, students are not permitted to wear items of jewellery that are 'dangerous' posing a 'risk; to themselves and others while undertaking activities during the school day. If a member of staff deems a piece of jewellery to be a 'risk' to the students and others, he / she may be asked to remove it. St. Fergal's School will not be responsible for any items of jewellery that go missing arising from such request.

2. If a parent/guardian has an issue with a student other than his/her own child, he/she is requested to contact the school office. Parents/Guardians do not have the right to reprimand a student not in their care in the school environment.

3. Parent/Guardians are asked to take note of the various signs around the school grounds e.g. no dogs permitted on the grounds, no smoking etc.

4. No cars should enter the school grounds without prior permission of the school office. Care should be taken when parking or moving cars at the entrance to the school grounds especially at opening and closing times.

5. Students are not permitted to wear any makeup, nail varnish and/or false nails while attending school or at events organised by the school.

6. Students' hair must be clean and tidy.
Long hair must be tied back at all times.
Students are not permitted to colour/dye their hair.



St Fergal's National School
Ballywaltrim
Bray
Co. Wicklow
A98A521
Reg. charity no. 20139292

Roll Number: 20466L
Principal: Tom Sargent
Deputy Principal: Margaret Scanlon

Tel/Fax: 01-2868033
Email:secretary@stfergalsnsbray.ie
Email:principal@stfergalsnsbray.ie

Discipline Letter - 1

Date: _____

Re. Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to inform you that _____ has been repeatedly misbehaving.

Despite being spoken to about his misbehaviour there has been no improvement.

Please speak to _____ tonight about this.

We need your support to ensure your child takes responsibility for his/her behaviour and learning.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please make an appointment to see your child's teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Teacher

Mr. T. Sargent
Principal

Please sign to confirm you have read this letter and discussed it with you child, and return to the Principal/Class Teacher

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Discipline Letter - 2

Date: _____

Re. Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

_____ was sent to my office today.

I wish to inform you again that despite being warned and having a letter sent home on _____ he/she has continued to misbehave.

If _____'s behaviour does not improve the next step may be suspension from the school.

Please call to see me at _____ on _____ to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. Sargent
Principal

Please sign to confirm you have read this letter and discussed it with you child, and return to the Principal/Class Teacher

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Discipline Letter - 3

Date: _____

Re. Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

_____’s behaviour is still of serious concern.

You have already received two letters from the school.

Despite our recent meeting there has been no change in _____’s behaviour.

I am now in the unhappy position of having to suspend _____ from school from _____ until _____.

It will be necessary for you to return with _____ on that day at _____ to attend a meeting in the school to discuss and hopefully resolve the situation.

It is of the utmost importance that you consider this suspension as being serious.

We look forward to your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. Sargent
Principal

Please sign to confirm you have read this letter and discussed it with you child, and return to the Principal/Class Teacher

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Letter of Exclusion

Date: _____

Re. Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Dear _____,

Due to serious misconduct we regret that we find it necessary to exclude
_____ from school until _____.

It will be necessary for you to return with _____ on that day at
_____ to attend a meeting in the school to discuss and hopefully resolve the
situation.

It is of the utmost importance that you consider this exclusion as being serious.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. T. Sargent
Principal

**Please sign to confirm you have read this letter and discussed it with you child, and return
to the Principal/Class Teacher**

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Ratification and Review by Board of Management

This Code of Behaviour Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 04/04/2022

This policy has been made available to school personnel/members of the school community and published on the School Website with hard copies available to parents in the school foyer. Copies of this policy will be made available to DES and the School's Patron if requested.

The policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of management every three years or when is deemed necessary.

Signed: *Joe Behan* Date: *04/04/2022*

Joe Behan
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Tom Sargent* Date: *04/04/2022*

Tom Sargent
Principal

Date of next review: 2024 (or as necessary to the school needs)