

# **Saint Augustine's School**

## **Code of Behaviour Policy 2022**



## **St Augustine's Special School Code of Behaviour Policy (2022)**

Our mission in St Augustine's is to promote excellence in special education. In our Code of Behaviour we wish to outline the expected standards of behaviour that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. We acknowledge that students are more likely to gain full benefit from their time in St Augustine's if we strive to provide a structured caring environment where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

The school actively seeks to promote an ethos which is safe, welcoming, understanding, tolerant, caring and which acknowledges the inherent value, respect and dignity of each person.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

### **Rationale - Why devise it?**

It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline.

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23 (1).

It is part of our developing School Plan.

**St Augustine's** Special School is also dedicated to providing the highest quality of learning, teaching, and care of pupils under our instruction. In partnership with the parents/guardians, families and staff working with our pupils, we seek to provide: individual, intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development.

The dignity of every child is maintained, and we believe that each child is entitled to an education provision, regardless of individual levels of attainment and functioning. While enabling each pupil to develop his/her potential to the full, we also want our pupils to be happy in school and to enjoy their time in St Augustine's.

The Code of Behaviour Policy will help to foster harmonious relationships and co-operation among staff, parents and pupils. Following consultation with students, parents and staff, our school Board of Management has revised our code of behaviour.

### **Aims of the Code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- To encourage consistency of response to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils to understand the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

**Additional aims of the code during Covid-19:**

It is the aim that all staff and parents will ensure that pupils are taught the procedures set out above and that pupils will be encouraged and supported at all times to follow such procedures in a calm, supportive and proactive way so that potential risks are minimised.

However, the following behaviours will be considered as misdemeanours under the code (whether minor, serious, or gross will be determined contextually), due to their potential impact on the physical and psychological health, safety and wellbeing of other members of the school community:

- Deliberately ignoring guidance on:
  - personal space and distancing
  - hand hygiene
  - respiratory etiquette (e.g. failing to cover mouth/nose when coughing/sneezing, not properly disposing of used tissues, etc.)
  - zones at playtime for pods/bubbles
- Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
- Any deliberate action, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour
- Any accidental action, persisted in after instruction or correction by staff, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour

The consequences for such behaviours which put the health and safety of others at risk will be as already set out in the Code of Behaviour but parents need to know that due to the increased health & safety risks associated with COVID-19 such behaviours listed above cannot and will not be tolerated.

It is possible that parents of children who engage in behaviours as set out above will be contacted to collect their child from school if the behaviour is persistent despite all staff attempts to reduce the behaviour(s).

Parents and children will be required to read, accept and agree to the above specific measures to assist with maintaining the school to be a happy, healthy and safe learning environment for all pupils and school staff.

**Implementation**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. There will be an emphasis on promoting and reinforcing positive behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of

the pupils and to their individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

### **Additional information during Covid-19:**

All members of the school community, staff, pupils, and visitors are expected to:

- Follow HSE guidance instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
- Use elbow or a tissue to cover mouth & nose when sneezing or coughing
- Dispose of tissues properly in bins provided
- Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- Inform the Principal if experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus

### **Before/After School:**

Parents are reminded that the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before the official opening time of 9.00am, or after the official closing time of 2.40pm.

Parents are asked to provide a written note for class teacher to explain if a student is going on a play date with another student, or if there is a different arrangement for going home. If we do not receive written confirmation of a change to the usual home time routine, we will send student home on minibus, or public transport if that is the norm.

### **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

### **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

### **Pupil's Responsibilities:**

- Be at school
- Be at school on time
- Be kind and show good manners
- Always do your best
- Be tidy
- Be safe
- Listen
- Be calm

### **Additional Pupils' Responsibilities with regard to Covid-19 Risks:**

- Follow altered procedures and instructions for safe arrival and departure from school
- Stay in seat as much as possible (raising hand to seek attention)
- Only share equipment by direction of staff

- Keep their work area neat and tidy
- Not share drinking bottles, food, etc.
- Use toilets one-at-a-time, ensuring hands are washed properly (20 seconds, with soap) and dried before returning to their classroom

#### **Classroom Staff Responsibilities:**

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Explain class rules to pupils.
- Prepare school work and correct work completed by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair to both fellow staff and students.
- Deal appropriately with minor problem behaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious challenging behaviour or repeated instances of problem behaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.
- All staff will undertake training where necessary in the implementation of student behaviour plans.
- All staff will adhere to the positive ethos of the school, in order to maintain a positive learning environment.

#### **Additional Responsibilities of Classroom Staff with regard to Covid-19 Risks:**

- Adhere to and follow all guidelines issued by HSE, DES and school COVID-19 Response Plan protocols and procedures
- Encourage and practise personal social distancing in all school areas
- Keep work areas, school materials and equipment clean, tidy and disinfected regularly.
- Ensure pupils practice hand hygiene at all appropriate times (before eating/when entering classroom/after toileting/after using shared equipment/etc.)
- Teach pupils to co-operate and learn the new routines and hygiene practices and support their re-connection with school life in a positive, empathic way.
- Liaise with Lead Worker Representative on any issues of concern that need to be brought to the attention of management

#### **Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with the class staff in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for themselves and others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Become familiar with the behaviour support strategies and learning goals necessary to support their child and ensure success and generalisation outside of the school environment.
- Be courteous towards pupils and staff.

- Keep to scheduled appointment times.
- Protect the confidentiality of students and staff.
- Make an appointment in advance to meet with a Teacher/ Principal/deputy Principal.
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same.
- Supervise their children on school premises when collecting other pupils or visiting the school.
- Label pupils' property.
- In the event of a grievance with policy or procedure, the following process applies:
  - in the first instance, raise the issue with the relevant teacher
  - if no resolution is found, consult with the principal or deputy principal
  - if there is still no satisfactory outcome, contact the Board of Management
  - if the situation remains unresolved a parent can contact the Department of Education regarding the issue

**Additional Parent/Guardian responsibilities with regard to Covid19 Risks:**

- Follow altered procedures for arrival and departure or collection of child from school
- Support the school by reinforcing guidance and teaching children hand hygiene, personal distancing, and respiratory etiquette
- Stay outside of the school building except where they have made an appointment by phone, or email, to meet staff
- Keep pupils who are unwell at home, informing the school by email/phone of the type of illness being experienced, until a full recovery is made. It is very important not to send a child who is unwell to school as this will place everyone else at potential risk. We do not know if a cough or sneeze is COVID-19, or a mere cold/allergies, but we cannot risk the health and safety of the school community by having ill children attend school. All children presenting with COVID- 19 symptoms will be sent home and asked to remain at home until they are 48 hours symptom free and have a negative antigen test.
- Keep their mobile phone ON at all times while children are in school in case the school needs to contact parents urgently to collect child if unwell or if a case arises in the school. Inform school if mobile contact number or email changes during year.
- Be available or arrange to have someone available to collect children if there is a need to send them home due to COVID-19 circumstances arising in the school or on the school bus transport.

**Responsibility of Adults:**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their relationships with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all those in the school community.

### **Additional Responsibility of Adults with regard to Covid-19 Risks:**

- Adhere to and follow all guidelines issued by HSE, DES and school COVID-19 Response Plan protocols and procedures
- Encourage and practise personal social distancing in all school areas
- Keep work areas, school materials and equipment clean, tidy and disinfected regularly.
- Ensure pupils practice hand hygiene at all appropriate times (before eating/when entering classroom/after toileting/after using shared equipment/etc.)
- Teach pupils to co-operate and learn the new routines and hygiene practices and support their re-connection with school life in a positive, empathic way.
- Liaise with Lead Worker Representative on any issues of concern that need to be brought to the attention of management

### **Strategies we will use to promote Positive Behaviour**

- Assembly every Friday morning will focus on good news. Student achievements will be announced and celebrated. Each class teacher will nominate a “Student of the Week” and photographs of these students will be displayed.
- Merit awards will be presented to students for achievements, good manners, appropriate behaviour and reaching targets.
- Friendship skills will be promoted and celebrated e.g. students will be encouraged to invite a friend into their classroom for break time.
- Golden Time where students choose from an activity menu will happen every Friday afternoon, for classes up to PV level, as a reward for positive behaviour.
- Students will be encouraged to practice a 4 step strategy for managing annoying behaviour: I ignore it, I walk away, I say stop, I ask an adult for help. This strategy will frequently be discussed and demonstrated at Assemblies.
- Positive comments will be sent home in communication books/weekly report cards and or homework journals.
- Good behaviour is recognised and positive feedback is given.
- Many classes use Dojo points as rewards.
- Favoured activities are offered as rewards.
- Homework-off passes.
- Having a hot chocolate in the canteen with a friend
- Star charts for younger students
- Extra computer time
- Extra personal attention
- Visiting and spending time in another class with friends.
- Classroom teachers have annual budgets to buy rewards for students.

### **Additional support for some students**

We recognise that some students will need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. The school acknowledges students may have a dual diagnosis and the impact this may have on behaviour. All of these factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce challenging behaviours; however the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted.

**Supports we will offer may include:**

- Individual behaviour support plan this will include setting targets with the student and monitoring them in a supportive way
- We will look for ways to avoid occurrence of challenging behaviours
- Restorative conversations will be held after an incident
- Referral to another staff member who can work with the student
- Student may request a break/time out
- Rewards of favoured activities
- Referral to the child's CDNT (Child Disability Network Team)
- Discussions with family on supporting student to manage behaviour
- School management team will be available to provide support to class teacher in addressing and managing behaviours.

The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

**Managing Challenging Behaviour**

St Augustine's through its promotion of positive behaviour endeavours to minimise the occurrence of negative/challenging behaviours. However, we accept that realistically we will be presented with incidents of challenging behaviour from time to time. As stated previously, individual plans will be prepared to meet specific needs of students. An appropriate response to challenging behaviour depends on the type of behaviour being exhibited by the child. Our responses will be consistent, fair and be the least disruptive to manage the behaviour. A considered proactive response is likely to be effective. Serious outbursts of misbehaviour where the student chooses to act inappropriately will be met with consequences which are clear and logical. Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that

- Is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Interferes with teaching and learning
- Threatens to physically hurt another person
- Damages property
- Results in theft
- Includes running off/absconding

**Consequences of Unacceptable Behaviour**

- Students who present with challenging behaviour on the yard may be given a short timeout where they may not join in play
- Exiting a student from a classroom may be needed where a class is being significantly disrupted
- In some instances the rest of the class will be removed from a difficult and upsetting situation
- Student will be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully
- Student will be given space and time to cool down and respond to requests
- A serious incident form may be filled in and parents contacted by telephone, or by email.



- When an incident of unacceptable behaviour has been witnessed by other students, classroom teachers will acknowledge the behaviour and give students time to discuss their feelings or anxieties.

### **Suspension**

As part of our code of behaviour a student may be suspended from attending school for very serious misbehaviour. The decision to suspend a student will be as a result of very serious issues such as

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education and well-being 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.
- A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

If considered warranted the Principal may suspend a pupil for up to three days. The power of suspension is delegated to the principal by the school Board of Management. Parents will be telephoned and this will be followed up with a letter. On return to school after suspension, parents will be requested to attend a meeting with school management to review the incident and make a plan going forward. The principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour support plan if required. The student will be offered the opportunity and support for a fresh start and welcomed back to school.

Records of all serious incidents and all records relating to suspensions and expulsions will be kept in the Principal's office.

### **Appeal**

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended are entitled to appeal such a suspension under the Education and Welfare Act 2000.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with the rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. The Board of Management shall notify the local welfare education officer in writing in accordance with the act.

The following school policies are relevant to this Code of Behaviour Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHE Plan
- Enrolment Policy
- Parent/Staff communication Policy

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

### **Methods of Communication with Parents**

The following communication methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Parents information meetings
- IEP's/Personal Pupil Plans(PPP)
- Through children's homework journal.
- Student record cards are sent home on a Friday, P5/PV3

- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School noticeboard
- School Newsletter/ Website
- Email
- Text
- Student diary/journal
- Phone call

#### **Success Criteria**

- Practices and procedures listed in the policy being consistently implemented.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.
- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment.

#### **Limitations**

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the students, parents/guardians and staff.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff in St Augustine's school must adhere to the Code of Behaviour Policy.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff is made aware of this policy.

---

#### **Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Signed: 

Theresa Ghalaieny, Chairperson, Board of Management



Signed:

David O'Brien, School Principal

---