

## Code of Behaviour of Martinstown NS

### Introduction

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of **Martinstown N.S.** has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

### **The Code of Behaviour details:**

- The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
- The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
- The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
- The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
- The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
- The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of Martinstown NS has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

### **POLICY FORMULATION**

In formulating this policy, the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- Teachers reviewed the existing Code of Behaviour on 4.3.2020
- Board of Management were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available, and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe by 29.5.2020
- Parents were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available, and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.

- Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils suggestions to the Principal.
- The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_ and where deemed appropriate was amended in-line with the feedback received.
- The Board of Management of Martinstown NS reviewed the Code of Behaviour and approved it on 3/6/2020
- The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE.**

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences, recognising the rights of children to be educated in classes not disrupted by the behaviour of a tiny minority, and the rights of teachers to work in conditions free from stress.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

## WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

For avoidance of doubt any reference in the foregoing to Principal is to be construed as meaning Acting Principal or Deputy Principal in the absence of the Principal.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

### Pupils

#### General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- Be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and all staff and visitors
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- Attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Abide by the **Code of Kindness**
  - *Treat people the way that you would like to be treated.*
  - Share because it shows you care.
  - Be polite and display good manners at all times.
  - Work together cooperatively in a caring and considerate way.
  - Be respectful of everybody in our school community
  - Keep in mind that to be kind is the best quality that you can find.
  - Do his/her best both in school and for homework.

### **Classroom Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking.
- Work – to the best of his/her ability.
- Value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils, staff and visitors.
- Follow – the direction of his/her teacher
- Obtain – his/her teachers' permission to leave the classroom.
- Respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

### **Playground Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous.
- Follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)/SNA.
- Remain- on the school grounds at all times.
- Obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods.
- Respect – the yard duty teacher/SNA and fellow pupils.
- Avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling.

### **Behaviour in other School Areas**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Walk – in the school corridors.
- Be courteous to all members of the school community.
- Respect school property.
- Display good manners.

### **Behaviour during School Outings/Activities**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow – his/her teacher’s directions at all times.
- Remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times.
- Behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips.
- Observe – the rules of general good behaviour.

### **Staff**

It is the Principal’s responsibility to ensure the school’s Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class.

They will:

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the class rules are understood in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, be punctual, attend regularly and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment with the class teacher to discuss their concerns.

Appointments must be made through the school secretary during administration hours. (see website for times)

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process. It is understood by enrolling your child in Martinstown National School, you are consenting to the Code of Behaviour and the policies of the school. It is important that parents take the time to read the Code of Behaviour and fully explain the contents to their children to ensure they fully understand what is expected of them.

### **Homework**

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis cf. Homework Policy in Pleán Scoile.

Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework. If homework causes worry for the pupil parents/guardians are asked to contact the teacher.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor Behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

A reward scheme for promoting positive behaviour will be used. Such rewards will include;

- Each class has their own individual rewards system in place to promote positive behaviour within the classroom e.g. star charts, Dojos, passport stamps, draw cards, student of the week etc.
- Personalised letters to parent(s)/guardian(s)

- Special privileges e.g. extra computer time, no written homework etc.
- Public praise at school assembly/ Feel Good Friday.
- Certificates for full attendance
- Stickers, badges, ink stamps used to positively reinforce good behaviour.

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response, the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

### **Restorative Practice**

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behavior. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it. It is used to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. All parties involved in the incident are given a Restorative Practice Question sheet in response to an incident where harm has been done. The Restorative Practice Approach will be used at all levels of behaviour as an initial supportive intervention. It may be used on its own or in conjunction with the sanctions outlined below.

### **Restorative Questions to respond to challenging behaviour:**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- How have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

## Level One – both in classrooms and the yard

### *Level 1: Behaviours*

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of Behaviour that are included in Level 1.

***Please note the list is not exhaustive.***

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers.
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner to other pupils.
- Ignoring staff requests.

### *Level 1: Disciplinary Actions*

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s) by class teacher.
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour.
- Child's name recorded – nature of the incident noted. If it occurred in the yard, the class teacher will be informed of the incident and the incident recorded.
- Note sent home informing parents / guardians.
- Prescribing additional work (2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes). Time out/ Golden Time (Juniors to first class)
- Loss of privileges.

### *Level 1 Supportive Interventions*

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Circle time or class discussion.
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.



## Level Two – both in classrooms and in the yard

### *Level 2: Behaviours*

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. **Please note the list is not exhaustive.**

- Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult
- Disrespectful language or behaviour towards any other pupil in the school.
- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. Kicking, hitting)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property
- Stealing
- Use of profanities.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin.
- Using P.E. or any other objects in a dangerous manner that could inflict harm or injury to oneself, another adult or pupil.
- Bullying behaviour.c.f.Bullying Policy

### *Level 2: Disciplinary Actions*

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2, will include: informing the Principal of the incident and the formal notification of parents, written incident form\*\* depending on the severity of the misbehaviour. (\*\* All incident forms will be held in a 'Limbo' file(separate file) initially and will not be submitted to their student file unless there are further instances of Level 2 misdemeanors this offers the pupil an opportunity to work towards behaving in a more positive way without having a permanent record of misbehaviour. The incident report shall not remain in the 'Limbo' file longer than a period of 2 years.

Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- Restorative Practice sheet given.
- Discussion of behaviour with the child and teacher.
- Temporary removal from school committees/councils etc.
- The Principal is consulted and meets with the pupil and class teacher.

- An incident report is filed.\*\*
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Report may be submitted to the Board of Management
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour

### *Level 2: Supportive Intervention*

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- In school Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Assistant Principal, Deputy Principal and Principal.
- Consultation with parents.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

## **Level Three**

### *Level 3: Behaviours*

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with An Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. **Please note that the list is not exhaustive.**

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires.
- Substance Abuse.
- Intentional possession or use of weapons.
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing serious physical harm to others.

- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, SEN, or ethnic origin.

### ***Level 3: Disciplinary Actions***

Behaviour at Level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend

upon the severity and frequency of the specific Behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- **Suspension from school for one to five days:**

This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- **Suspension from school for five to ten days:**

This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

**Expulsion:** Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

## Procedures for Suspensions & Expulsions

### Suspension

#### *Definition of Suspension:*

*'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

#### *Authority to Suspend:*

The Board of Management of Martinstown National School has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an '**Immediate Suspension**' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an '**Automatic Suspension**' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

### *Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension*

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Martinstown National School having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff

or

- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension

- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed **no later than 2 school days** after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of Martinstown National School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

1. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

***Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:***

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Martinstown National School will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

1. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
2. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled **no later than 5 school days** from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of Martinstown National School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

2. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
3. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## Expulsion

### ***Definition of Expulsion:***

*'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

### ***Authority to Expel: :***

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

### ***Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:***

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

1. details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
2. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond



- b) The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

1. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
2. ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
3. provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

- c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

1. as to the date, location and time of the hearing
2. of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
3. that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

1. the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures

2. the principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
  3. each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
  4. the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose
- d) Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

1. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
2. Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
3. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
4. Will be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer
5. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

- e) Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed,

and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education

and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Martinstown National School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

1. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
2. The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Helen O'Flaherty 29/09/20

Ratified on 09/10/20