

Donabate-Portrane



Educate Together

Donabate Portrane Educate Together National School Code of Positive Behaviour

The DPETNS Code of Positive Behaviour is the set of practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping and encouraging pupils to behave well and learn well. Children who attend DPETNS will be encouraged to reach their full potential mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially, in an atmosphere and environment in which they feel safe, valued and secure and in which respect for self and others is the norm. Our school operates under the direct patronage of Educate Together and there are four underlying principles which form our ethos. We are a co-educational school, democratically run, equality –based and child centered. The Code of Positive Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school's unique ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and minimise unacceptable behaviour. The Code of Positive Behaviour helps pupils, parents and staff members to work together to achieve a happy, effective and safe school environment. We strive to create an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and of commitment to relationships.

This revised version of DPETNS Code of Positive Behaviour was initiated in June 2010 in accordance with The NEWB(National Education Welfare Board) guidelines as outlined in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" by a working group involving all school partners including the Student Council, parents, staff, Principal and Management.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the Code of Positive Behaviour shall specify "*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.*"

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of large classes.
- Each pupil is expected to be well behaved and to show respect for self and others and to show kindness and willingness to help others.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other people's property, and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Each pupil is expected to have everything needed for class and to keep his/her personal space and belongings tidy.

- Each pupil is expected to show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and to show and practice forgiveness.
- A positive proactive approach will be taken towards discipline and every effort will be made to implement this policy in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.
- In keeping with the characteristic spirit of our school this Code of Behaviour document recognises the professional autonomy of the teacher alongside the pivotal role of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Our revised Code of Positive Behaviour will be brought to the attention of all parents via a written communication from the Principal. It will be communicated to pupils via the teacher as a Learn Together topic in September of each year. A “Manners Week” will also be incorporated into the school year to teach the importance of manners in everyday life both at school and in the home. This manners week will emphasize the importance of treating people with respect and the importance of understanding and respecting boundaries.

Aims

By introducing this revised version of the school Code of Positive Behaviour our aims are:

- To ensure an educational environment that is guided by our Educate Together ethos.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where all children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, open-mindedness and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognizing the differences between children and the need to accommodate and accept these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the school’s Code of Positive Behaviour and to ensure their co-operation with its implementation.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Golden Rules and Golden Time

The Golden Rules are taught in all classes throughout the school. They form the basis of our Positive Behaviour Policy. There are six Golden Rules:

- Do be gentle – do not hurt anybody.
- Do listen – do not interrupt.
- Do be kind and helpful – do not hurt people’s feelings.
- Do take care of property – do not break or damage things.
- Do be honest – do not cover up the truth.
- Do work hard – do not waste your or other people’s time.

Children who work hard at keeping the Golden Rules can earn up to 30mins Golden Time every Friday. Minutes can be deducted from a child’s Golden Time if they do not make their best effort to practice the Golden Rules. Each class

teacher uses a points/minutes system for earning Golden Time to suit the needs of their individual class and class level.

Classroom Rules

In September every year each class draws up a Class Charter which emphasizes the rules of that classroom. The charters are drawn up in consultation with the children and are displayed in the classroom.

While the Golden Rules form the basis of our Positive Behaviour Policy individual teachers may use different strategies to promote positive behaviour in the classroom.

Good Manners

In our school, our aim is to treat everyone with respect and dignity. We constantly emphasise the importance of good manners and encourage the children to always use good manners when dealing with others, both children and adults. Posters listing basic good manners are displayed in classrooms and all staff work to promote the use of good manners. The importance of modelling good manners is essential.

Good Manners Poster:

- **Always listen to others if they are speaking to you.**
- **Make Eye contact at all times when talking or listening to others.**
- **Don't interrupt others.**
- **Take turns.**
- **Say 'Hello' smile or wave when you meet someone you know.**
- **Respond to somebody when they address you.**
- **Use a respectful tone of voice when addressing others.**
- **Pay attention in class.**
- **Hold the door for people entering or leaving after you.**
- **Always clean up after yourself.**
- **Don't touch or use other people's possessions without permission.**
- **Knock and wait before entering a classroom, staffroom or office.**
- **Eat in a polite way.**
- **Never talk with your mouth full.**
- **Wash your hands after using the toilet and leave the bathroom clean for the next person to use.**
- **Use the language of Good Manners.**

The Language of Good Manners:

Please

Thank you

No thanks

Pardon

Excuse me

You're welcome

May I

Sorry

In older classes particular emphasis is placed on the children's understanding of boundaries and the importance of using a respectful tone of voice when addressing both adults and other children. The children are taught to understand and respect the roles of different staff members and are expected to treat Staff Members with courtesy and respect.

Yard

The positive strategies which DPETNS implements to promote good behaviour, to prevent behavioural difficulties and to deal with incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the playground are:

- A clear and concise set of rules are communicated to the children. These rules are discussed at staff meetings and communicated to the children at assemblies and in individual classrooms.
- The children are offered a variety of different activities at yard time. These activities are organised and timetabled. Children engaging in specific activities wear coloured tags/wristbands. The yard is divided into a number of different zones (Basketball, Dodgeball, Football, Stage, Sand etc.)
- Music is often played at yard time to create a positive and enjoyable atmosphere.
- Teachers on yard duty wear high visibility jackets to ensure that they are clearly visible and easily identified.
- Children are given the opportunity to take on extra responsibility at yard time. Playground Helpers and Friends work to promote happy, peaceful yard times. These children wear special jackets so that they can be easily identified.
- Pupils are escorted to the yard by their teachers and are collected from class lines at the end of yard time.
- Incidents of misbehaviour are recorded in the Yard Folder and dealt with by either the class teacher or the Principal after yard.
- Children are asked, by a teacher, to stand out in a safe and appropriate place for a short period of time if they are engaging in rough or dangerous play.

Conflict Resolution

In our school we take a restorative justice approach towards resolving conflict. Within a restorative justice framework the emphasis is on restoring relationships rather than on exacting punishments. The building, nurturing and repairing of relationships is a key issue in supporting learners in schools. Restorative justice focuses on finding an acceptable way forward for all the parties involved in a dispute.

We recognise that there are three distinct approaches to resolving conflict:

1. **Negotiation:** The children are taught the skills needed to negotiate with others in times of conflict. We teach the children to clearly and directly communicate if another child is behaving in a way that is upsetting them. The children are encouraged to say 'Stop' if someone is teasing them or annoying them in any way. We see this assertive communication as a very important step in each

child's personal development. Through our SPHE programme and particularly through the SALT programme children are asked to take four steps if they find themselves in a conflict situation. (i.e. Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk)

2. **Mediation:** Mediation is regularly used to help children to resolve conflict. The mediator helps the children in a dispute to resolve their differences amicably and aims to create 'win-win' solutions. Mediators encourage the children to communicate their feelings and to give an account of what has happened. In the mediation process children are encouraged to listen and to understand the situation from both sides. Mediators must be impartial and as non-judgemental as possible.

Since 2010 we have introduced a **Peer Mediation Programme** into the school. The children in 6th class are trained as mediators and two mediators are on duty at all breaks. Teachers are not involved in this mediation. The Peer Mediation service is a confidential service which aims to help children to successfully resolve conflicts.

3. **Arbitration:** Unfortunately not all conflicts are resolved through negotiation and mediation. Sometimes conflicts are resolved through arbitration where the teacher or principal intervenes and decides whether sanctions are necessary to end a conflict.

Rewards and Acknowledgement of Good Behaviour:

DPETNS places a greater emphasis on affirming positive behaviour than on sanctions. We believe that students are more likely to behave well when:

- They are given responsibility in the school and are involved in the development of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- They are encouraged to see that the code works in a fair way to the benefit of all.
- The standards are clear, consistent and widely understood.
- They have a strong sense of belonging to their school community.
- There are good relationships between staff, parents and students.

Other strategies that also help to encourage good behaviour are:

- Positive every day interaction between staff members and students.
- Good school and classroom routines.
- Clear boundaries for students.
- Recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour.

Awards

Children are awarded certificates (and a small prize) to recognise their efforts in a number of areas:

- Student of the Week (Busy Bee award for Infants) – given for hard work.
- Golden Rules Award – given for excellent behaviour.
- Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine- given for using Gaeilge.

These awards are given to the children in Infants every week and to the children in 1st-6th class every fortnight. These awards are given to the children who the teacher

recognises as making a very genuine effort in that area. It is important to emphasise that the awards are given for effort and not necessarily to the highest achievers. Children can also be acknowledged in 'The Golden Book' for exceptional behaviour and teachers may also send cards home praising exceptional effort in class.

Interventions

All members of staff have a shared responsibility in operating the school's Code of Behaviour. Visiting staff, student teachers, etc., are expected to abide by the DPETNS Code of Positive Behaviour. All staff and visiting staff are also asked to familiarise themselves with the school's *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Child Protection Policy*. Copies of all school policies can be found in every classroom throughout the school.

The staff member who has dealt with or observed the misbehaviour will communicate incidents of notable misbehaviour to the class teacher. Interventions are used in the school as part of a plan to change behaviour and are used as part of a wider plan to help the student learn. Interventions are used in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. In particular teachers are aware that interventions should:

- diffuse and not escalate a situation
- preserve the dignity of all the parties
- be applied in a fair and consistent way
- be timely.

Staff use agreed interventions and teachers know the level of intervention they are authorised to apply.

The teacher deals with most incidents of misbehaviour, a variety of different interventions are used:

- talking to the child,
- note in diary,
- time out,
- thinking chair.
- Sent to another class
- Loss of privileges (yard time, School trips etc.)

Yellow Cards and Red Cards

The staff at DPETNS have operated under a yellow and red card system since the school was established in 2002.

Yellow cards

Yellow cards are given to children by a teacher as a “warning” against misbehaviour or rule breaking. Yellow cards are sent home to be signed by parents. Parents should talk with their child and discuss the misbehaviour or rule breaking but are asked to bear in mind that the yellow card acts as a “warning.” If the misbehaviour continues

and the child receives two yellow cards within a half-term period (approx. 2 months) then the third card becomes a red card.

Examples of when yellow cards may be used include:

- Breaking class rules as set up by the class teacher.
- Not completing homework.
- Constantly talking in class etc.

Red Cards

Red Cards are given by the school Principal, in consultation with the teacher, and may be automatically given in the following instances:

1. Physical or verbal aggression/physically harming another child or staff member.
2. Serious/harmful name calling or “put downs,” swearing, racist comments.
3. Blatant mistreatment of school property or another individual’s property

If a child is to be given a red card they must be sent to the Principal and will lose yard time privileges. Only the Principal has the authority to issue a red card to a child. The red card must then be sent home to be signed by parents and returned to the school to be put on file. We ask that parents take the issuing of a red card seriously and take the time to discuss the misbehavior or rule breaking with the child with a view to improvement. We ask parents to take note that the child has received a reprimand through loss of yard time privileges.

The purpose of sanctions and reprimands are to teach the student to own their own behaviour in a way that respects the rights of others (both adults and children). We seek to do this in a way that strives to enable a working relationship with the student. After a child has been reprimanded for unacceptable behaviour every effort will be made to repair and rebuild relationships. It is important that children are given a dignified re entry; allowed to move on without grudges being held and given the opportunity to start each day afresh.

Suspension and Expulsion

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify...’*the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned*’ and ‘*the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.*’

Suspension:

The Principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), by notice in writing, when a ‘*student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.*’ Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

Grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of 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.

Note: A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. A record of any suspension will be kept on file.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a member of staff will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and/or the Chairperson to suspend a pupil from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

Procedures that ensure fairness when excluding a pupil will include:

- Ensuring other means of intervention and dealing with the behaviour has been tried.
- Parents will have been invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.

Implementing the Suspension:

The Principal shall notify Parents/Guardians, in writing, of the decision to suspend. This will include:

- Letter stating period of suspension – beginning and end dates.
- Reasons for suspension.
- Any programme to be followed by student and or parent.
- Arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by students and parents.
- Provision for an appeal to Board of Management.
- Right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

Following suspension, a plan to re-integrate the student will include, where possible, an arrangement for a member of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. Student contracts will, if necessary, be put in place for the student and his/her parents. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and parents. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parents will support and maintain support at all times for their child.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal, with the approval of the chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The National Education Welfare Board will be notified if a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion):

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an Educational Welfare Office' (Section 24(4)). It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5)).

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice this should be reserved for the BOM and not be delegated.

Before a student is expelled:

A meeting is held with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change his/her behaviour:

- Ensuring the student understands the consequences of his/her behaviour, should it continue.
- Ensuring all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

Serious grounds are:

- Student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's presence constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A fair investigation will have taken place, taking both parents and pupil's perspective into account.

Parents and student will be informed about the complaint.

Parents and student will be given an opportunity to respond.

Parents may be informed by phone or in writing.

The BOM, before reaching a decision to exclude a pupil, will ensure its decision will be reached in an unbiased manner. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

The kinds of behaviour that might result in expulsion for first offence:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school

- sexual assault

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) 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.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in writing by the Principal of the decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude or suspend the student.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of their right of appeal, the associated timeframe of 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents and student.

The Board of Management are responsible for replying to the Dept. of Education and Science if the school is being investigated and may also prepare an appeal for the Dept. of Education and Science.