



# **St Christopher's Primary School Code of Behaviour**

## **Foreword:**

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000) and remaining cognisant of the rights of every child, we have developed our Code of Behaviour. We want St.Christopher's Primary School to be a place where our pupils can feel safe to learn, to play, to be themselves and to be unique during their formative years of primary education. We want them to grow in the knowledge of themselves and of others, of God and of the world around them.

The following acronyms are used in this document:

Board of Management: BOM

St Christopher's Primary School: SCPS

Department of Education and Skills: DES

## **Code of Behaviour**

### **Introduction**

In SCPS we adopt a positive approach to teaching, learning and discipline. We aim to work together in a respectful and caring community, in which the care of the individual student is the concern of all staff members. We strive to foster an atmosphere that is characterised by respect for all. We aim to achieve this by encouraging such qualities as good behaviour, kindness, tolerance, courtesy, respect for self and others and a good relationship among all members of the school community.

One of the rights of every child is the right to an education in a safe environment. It is essential that each child appreciates and understands that with this right, come certain, personal responsibilities. Time is spent in class discussing the expectations of the school with regard to each child's behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom.

The school acknowledges that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children and it appreciates the important role parents play in supporting standards of good behaviour in school.

Therefore, in accordance with Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 parents wishing to enrol their child in SCPS shall be provided with a copy of this Code of Behaviour. It is also available on our school website. The code acts as a framework for good behaviour in our school.

We would greatly appreciate if parents/guardians would read this document carefully in order to familiarise themselves with the school's policy in relation to good behaviour.

We hope that, thus informed, parents will:

- A. Co-operate with the school with regard to the implementation of its policy on discipline and encourage pupils to abide by the school rules.
- B. Co-operate with the school by visiting when requested to do so by the principal or other members of staff and communicate regularly with the school about circumstances that might affect the behaviour of their children in school.

### **Mission Statement**

SCPS is a Catholic primary school committed to encouraging and supporting each student to reach his/her full potential.

- We believe in the values of respect, fairness and equality, and we regard good manners as the touchstone of these values.
- We promote an atmosphere where each student enjoys coming to school, is happy working here and feels that they belong to a caring school community.
- We foster a love of education in a disciplined and safe atmosphere where the children are enthusiastic and active in their approach to learning for life.
- We are a school community where parents, staff members and the parish seek to work in partnership for the welfare of all pupils.
- We respect and embrace cultural diversity throughout our school.

## **Aims**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote positive self-esteem.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- 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 guided by our mission statement.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To ensure good and open communication of the school's expectation in this code of behaviour.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

## **How do we achieve these aims in SCPS?**

In order to maintain a safe environment for the children in our school we rely on the support and co-operation of parents/guardians. It is the responsibility of all parents to provide good example to their children and to always encourage good, age-appropriate behaviour.

- We must also have the co-operation of the Principal, teachers and all other staff including SNAs, administrative staff and caretaker in the school community.
- We must ensure that our pupils behave in a way that shows respect for themselves and the rights of others.
- We must encourage our pupils to respect private, school and public property.

## **Golden Rules underpinning our Code of Behaviour**

SCPS seeks to promote good behaviour based on mutual respect between all members of the school community. Staff encourage the highest standards of collective and self- discipline.

Our system is based on '**Golden Rules**' being taught to all class levels, and a general principle where staff focus on the positive and endeavour to '**Catch pupils being good!**' This system is based on Jenny Mosley's Circle Time model (Ref: <https://www.circle-time.co.uk/>)

## Golden Rules

**We are gentle**

We don't hurt others

**We are kind and helpful**

We don't hurt anybody's feelings

**We listen**

We don't interrupt

**We are honest**

We don't cover up the truth

**We work hard**

We don't waste our own or others' time

**We look after property**

We don't waste or damage things

### **School Rules common to all classes:**

- All students should behave with kindness, courtesy and respect towards their fellow pupils, teachers and adults in general.
- Pupils should be honest and truthful at all times.
- Pupils must follow instructions from staff immediately.

- Any interference with the rights of other pupils to learn is unacceptable eg: interruptions, answering out of turn, bad manners, interfering with another's property.
- Movement in the classroom should be orderly, and running within the school is strictly prohibited at all times. Banisters must be held while going up or down stairs.
- Each pupil is expected to be punctual. Pupils should arrive in school by **8.50am** and line up in the playground with their class.
- Pupils should have all books and materials required.
- See **Attendance Policy** for procedure to be followed in case of absence from school.
- Pupils are expected to do all their schoolwork and homework to the best of their ability and to present written work neatly.
- Homework diaries must be signed each night by a parent/guardian. If homework is not completed, parents/guardians must provide a note in the journal stating the reason.
- Students should wear the correct uniform. Except for designated PE days, the school uniform must be worn at all times
- School shoes (flat, dark) must be worn with the uniform. Boots are not allowed. Runners must be worn only with the school tracksuit.
- 'Heelies' are forbidden in the school or on the school grounds
- A note from a parent/guardian is required if a pupil is not in uniform.
- Jewellery must be kept to a minimum; only stud earrings or very small hoop earrings are permitted. Nose rings or other piercings are not permitted.
- Long hair is to be tied up. Hair dye is not permitted. Shavings of shapes or symbols on the head are not permitted. Make-up and nail varnish are not permitted.
- Pupils may not use another pupil's property without the owner's permission. Items borrowed must be treated with respect and returned in good condition, including school property.
- If a pupil needs to leave school early, a parent/guardian must sign the child out at the front office.
- Chewing gum is strictly forbidden in the school buildings, playground and grounds.
- Pupils' mobile phones must be switched off on school grounds and may only be switched on outside the school gates.

- Toys/electronic games should not be brought to school (except on some Fridays at the class teacher's discretion). The school does not accept responsibility for such items.
- No pupil may leave the classroom or school premises without adult permission.
- Smoking and/or drinking alcohol in the school grounds or building is strictly prohibited. Smoking by any student at any time cannot be condoned. The "No Smoking / No Drinking" rule applies to all out-of-school trips.

### **General management**

- All pupils have the right to work in a calm, supportive and purposeful atmosphere.
- All pupils have the right to come to school without the fear of being bullied.
- Age appropriate guidelines are discussed at the beginning of each school year outlining expected classroom behaviour. The Golden Rules are discussed and displayed.
- General discipline around the school is maintained by a positive atmosphere and rapport between staff and pupils.

### **In-Class Behaviour**

The following positive strategies are used by staff to effectively manage behaviour in classrooms:

- At the beginning of each academic year the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with input from pupils. These will reflect and support the **Golden Rules** and **School Rules** outlined above. Classroom rules will be consistent with the ethos expressed in this code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Rules are presented in a way that is accessible to all children and should, where possible, emphasise positive behaviour. Teachers model positive behaviour and ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave. Due regard will be given to the age of the pupils and to individual differences.
- A clear system will be adopted for acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour, and sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Teachers will actively watch out for children who may be behaving out of character or showing signs of distress or upset; through talking and listening to children, any issues of concern should be detected and resolved.

### **Playground behaviour:**

Discipline and behaviour during morning and afternoon break times is monitored by the staff on duty. Directions given by the designated teachers are to be strictly adhered to and pupils must accept that any teacher who corrects them acts with the full authority of the school management.

- **Morning Break:** Pupils must go to the playground at 10:30am (Junior Infants - 2nd classes) or 10:45am (3rd- 6th classes).
- **Lunchtime:** Pupils must go to the playground at 12:30pm.
- Pupils who have permission to stay in, (by request from parent), must stay in a resource room under the supervision of administrative staff.
- Pupils are encouraged to play co-operatively and with due respect to the rights of others to space and safety.

A concise set of playground rules are outlined to all pupils. They are as follows:

- Respect the boundaries of the yard. Children should remain in their designated area at all times.
- Toys are not allowed in the yard unless provided by the teachers in certain areas. These toys must be left in the designated areas at all times.
- Lunch must be eaten in class. Time is given before each break to eat and take a drink. No food or drink may be taken to the yard.
- Drinking water is provided at the water fountains.
- Children should ask a teacher for permission if they wish to go to the toilet.
- Supervision is provided for children accessing toilets during break and lunchtimes.
- All dangerous activities are strictly forbidden. These activities include: fighting, tackling aggressively, wrestling, buffalo charge, jockey backs, mock fights, "the bumps", any form of kicking and some variations of chasing games that evolve from time to time. Chains or trains are not allowed.
- Climbing is not allowed, especially on furniture, in the toilets, on the walls, on the windowsills or on the padding around the basketball poles.

- For unacceptable behaviour in the yard, pupils will be asked to take “time out” for a designated time, in an area of the yard. The teacher on duty will decide an appropriate length of time determined by the age of the pupil and the nature of the misbehaviour.
- Pupils misbehaving on a regular basis are withdrawn from the playground, in order to safeguard the welfare of the other children. This withdrawal will be for a fixed period (i.e: a specified number of breaks) dependent on the nature of the offence and whether it was a once-off offence or part of a pattern of poor behaviour.
- All pupils freeze when the bell rings at the end of break or lunch time.
- Teachers on duty call children to line up class by class in an orderly manner.
- Pupils are requested to line up calmly and quietly. Any child talking after line up is asked to stand out and enters the building last.
- Children enter the school silently when break/lunch time ends to foster a sense of calm in preparation for afternoon lessons.
- Teachers meet their classes in the stairwell to ensure children remain quiet as they walk back to class. At least one teacher needs to meet the year group while others are on the landings.
- Teachers on duty enter last and bring with them any children who were misbehaving.
- The Yard book will be filled in regularly if there are any incidents that were of concern to the teachers on duty.
- On wet days pupils remain in their classrooms for breaks where they will engage in appropriate activities. They must observe directions given by their class teacher and the supervising teachers and safety procedures must be followed at all times. Failure to follow these rules may result in a child being removed from the class until break is over.

Teachers will play an important part in preparing children for good playground behaviour by teaching social skills, respect for others and the importance of friendships.

It is made clear that the **Golden Rules** apply to playground behaviour.

In addition, teachers will teach co-operative games and suitable playground games that encourage the children to play well with each other. Teachers will regularly teach ‘line-up’ rules particularly to younger classes. An appropriate award may be organised at the discretion of the class teachers.

Parents are informed of any serious or repeated unacceptable behaviour in the playground so that we can work together towards a solution.

### **School rules for Outings:**

The students of SCPS are expected to behave to a very high standard on visits, matches and trips outside of the school. Pupils are taught to be aware that they are representatives of the school on such occasions, and should take a sense of pride in that role.

- Pupils must follow instructions from their teachers.
- Pupils should walk in an orderly line to and from venues.
- At all times, pupils must behave with respect towards members of the public.

Pupils are regularly reminded that while wearing the school uniform they are representing SCPS and that as such, their behaviour should always be of the highest standard.

### **Before/After School rules**

Parents are reminded that the school does not accept responsibility or pupils before the doors are opened at 8.40am or after the official closing time of 2.30pm, except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the BOM. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school rules.

Kids Inc accepts responsibility for children in their care until 8.50am.

Pupils are expected to behave appropriately while waiting outside of school, to be mindful of their own safety, not to climb on walls or railings, to dismount from bicycles/scooters before coming through the gates and to show respect to everyone sharing the school environment.

Pupils in the care of Kids Inc for before-school care must adhere to the school's code of behaviour.

## **Rewards/Incentives**

Part of the vision of SCPS is to help and encourage pupils achieve their personal best academically, intellectually and socially. Rewards can be a powerful tool for teachers to use in promoting good behaviour in our school.

In addition to the consistent reinforcement of the Golden Rules, the general practice of classroom management involves affirmations and rewards being given to children on a daily basis.

These include:

A quiet word or gesture to indicate approval; comment or written remarks about good work either in the homework diary or in a copybook; stickers/stamps/stars; 'Bucket filling' (see explanation below); Class Dojo; Homework vouchers; sending children to the nearest teacher or the Principal for praise; written or verbal communication with a parent; Gaeilgóir na Seachtaine; Structured Golden Time; points / Star charts; Individual or group rewards using points systems; certificates for reading, spellings, teamwork, behaviour, attendance; extra Ipad, P.E. or library time; delegating some special responsibility or privilege. E.g: membership of the Gaelbhreach committee; marks and presentations for project work; Displaying pupils' work; intercom announcements; cookery or extra Art time; small prizes; lucky dip.

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

**Misbehaviour falls into one of three categories: Minor, Serious or Gross**

The Principal and/or Teachers will make judgements based on a common-sense approach having regard to the age or vulnerability of the child and the gravity and frequency of any misbehaviour. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage.

### **Examples of Minor Misbehaviour (not exhaustive)**

- Arriving late for school
- Interrupting class work; talking out of turn
- Running in the school building

- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason, (to include a note from parent or guardian).
- Disobedience.
- Minor breaches of General, Class or Playground Rules.

**Examples of Serious Misbehaviour (not exhaustive)**

- All forms of bullying. (Please refer to Anti-bullying Policy)
- Deliberate, continued defiance to any staff member.
- Any physical abuse, threats or persistent fighting.
- Deliberate, verbal or non-verbal abuse, sexist or racist remarks.
- Deliberate damage to property, whether personal or school.
- Swearing; spitting; biting
- Persistent name calling
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures.
- Serious breaches of General Class or Playground Rules.
- Using or carrying prohibited drugs; smoking; consuming alcohol.

**Examples of Gross Misbehaviour (not exhaustive)**

- Verbal abuse or physical assault on a teacher, pupil or other staff member.
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the classroom, corridors, on the stairs or in the playground, on school trips or outings.
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil.
- Serious theft.
- Serious damage to property.
- Very serious breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules.
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as Gross Misbehaviour.

## Sanctions

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Teachers may administer mild sanctions or equivalent, without referral to the Principal. In particular, a teacher may exercise discretion as to whether misbehaviour needs to be brought to the attention of the Principal.

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour, e.g: If a child does not do his/her work in class or has not completed homework, he/she may be asked to complete it during breaktime, under supervision of Principal or staff in the resource room.

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- Group punishment should be avoided as much as possible.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

The following strategies are used in responding to incidents of unacceptable behaviour in our school:

- Reasoning with the pupil in question.
- Reprimanding, including advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from classmates
- Loss of privileges (Including Golden Time, Ipad time, membership of committee or team)
- Detention during break/lunchtime outside the Principal's office or in the resource room.
- Reflection page (as a way to reflect on poor behaviour)
- Referral to the Deputy Principal or Principal teacher
- Communication with parents. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage

- In-school suspension (ie: withdrawal from class for a period of days)
- Immediate Suspension; in-school suspension. (See section below)
- Referral to the BOM by the Principal.

## **Bullying**

*Definition of bullying:* Bullying is repeated, deliberate aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

All reports of bullying in school will be investigated and dealt with immediately and the unacceptable behaviour dealt with promptly and discreetly.

The parents/guardians of any child involved in a serious incident will be informed.

Bullying or any form of intimidation in school is forbidden.

Please refer to the school Anti-Bullying Policy for more information.

It may happen that more serious sanctions may need to be imposed and the following procedure will apply.

## **Suspension of pupils**

On very rare occasions it may be necessary to suspend a pupil.

There are two types of suspension: Immediate Suspension by the Principal, and Suspension by the BOM.

The authority to suspend a pupil has been delegated by the BOM to the Principal. The delegation of such authority reflects the provisions of the Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf), and any legal requirements, as directed by the DES.

### **Immediate Suspension:**

The BOM will authorise the Principal to suspend a pupil or pupils from school for a maximum of 3 days where:

- The continued presence of the pupil or pupils in the school at the time would, in the opinion of the Principal, represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person.
- The continued presence of the pupil or pupils in the school at the time would, in the opinion of the Principal, represent a serious threat to the right to education of another pupil or pupils.
- Should the Principal decide to suspend a pupil from the school for a maximum of 3 days, the parent will be contacted immediately to take the pupil home. The pupil will be removed from the classroom and supervised until the parent arrives to collect the pupil.
- The Principal will also inform the parent in writing of the reason(s) for the suspension and the term of the suspension. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Chairperson and Secretary of the BOM.
- The BOM may authorise a further period of suspension, up to a maximum of 10 school days, to allow for further consideration by the Principal and for consultation with the pupil's parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the BOM may authorise a further period of suspension in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.
- A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances. The BOM will be consulted should the Principal feel that a suspension of more than three days is required
- Parents are informed of their right to appeal and the procedure to follow. All due procedures as outlined in the Guidelines for Schools will be followed, (p.70-78) and a written record kept of the incident(s) and the investigation conducted.

### **Suspension by the BOM**

- The Principal may, following consultation with a teacher or teachers, refer the on-going misbehaviour of a pupil to the BOM.
- The Board has authorised the Chairperson and the Principal, to suspend a pupil.

- Prior to such a suspension being considered, the parent(s) will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and Principal.
- The misbehaviour and any previous cases of misbehaviour will be discussed and where appropriate, alternatives to suspension may be considered. This may require the parents to give a written undertaking to ensure that their child will comply with what has been agreed.
- Following this meeting, the pupil may be suspended by the Chairperson and the Principal.

### **Removal of Suspension**

- Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school.
- The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and the Chairperson and Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff or unduly disrupt the education of other pupils.
- The Principal, in consultation with parents/guardians class teacher and pupil (where appropriate), will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and the pupil may be re-admitted formally to class.

### **Expulsion of Pupils**

While the BOM has the authority to expel a pupil, it is not envisaged that we would have to use such a measure. The authority to make the decision, following all due procedures, remains with the BOM and is not delegated to the Principal.

In the unlikely event that we may have to consider expelling a student, the procedures to be followed are as outlined in the document *Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools*. Parents may also access a copy in the school, upon request to the Principal.

### **Appeals:**

Parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES against some decision of the BOM, including permanent exclusion from a school and suspension.

Accordingly, the school will advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

### **Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However we recognise that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules.

Continuum of support plans will be put in place, where necessary, in consultation with parents, the class teacher, the Special Education team and/or Principal in order to ensure that support is given to the child. The cognitive development of the child will be taken into consideration at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will also be considered. The child's peers may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This should be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Our Code of Good Behaviour has been drawn up by the Principal and staff of SCPS with valuable help from our parents/guardians and pupils.

It was ratified by the BOM on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 and will be reviewed at regular intervals.