

## **Code of Behaviour**

The following Code of Behaviour has been devised for Piercestown N.S. following a review of the existing code which took place during the school year 2017 - 2018.

### **Introduction:**

Piercestown N.S. aims to provide a safe, positive learning environment where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership with each other. Each individual is valued and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential.

The school community of parents, staff and Board of Management have a central role to play in the children's social and moral development, just as it does in their academic development. It is our goal to guide and encourage each child towards standards of behaviour which are acceptable and in keeping with a school setting. As a school community we aim to work together towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of respect, honesty, consideration and responsibility for ourselves and for one another.

### **Rationale:**

This policy was formulated by the staff of Piercestown N.S. in consultation with parents, Board of Management and pupils, as appropriate. It constitutes a review and update of the existing Code of Behaviour and fulfils the legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, which refers to the obligation on schools to prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school.
2. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards.
3. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school.
4. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.
5. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The review of the Code of Behaviour was conducted to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in '*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.*' (National Education Welfare Board - 2008)

### **Aims of the Code of Behaviour:**

- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships with pupils, staff and parents.
- To encourage pupils to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and learning.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative 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 enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- To help children to mature into responsible, participating adults.

**Expected standards of behaviour:**

A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, parents and pupils. Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents / guardians, child and school. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on guidance and encouragement so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises. Special Needs Assistants can play an important role in promoting good behaviour, particularly among pupils they are assisting.

Parents / guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Our School Rules outline expected standards of behaviour. Summary of school rules for pupils:

*I will...*

- always do my best.
- have nice manners to my friends, other children and adults.
- keep myself and others safe.
- line up safely when the bells rings.
- show good behaviour in the classroom.
- respect my own belongings and other people's belongings.
- respect my classroom and my school building and grounds by keeping them clean and tidy.
- complete my homework each night.

Pupils should at all times show respect to each other and to all members of staff, parents and all visitors in the school and are expected to behave in an appropriate manner at all times including in class, in the playground, on school trips and on the school bus.

**Children with Additional Needs:**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special

education teacher and / or Principal as appropriate. Cognitive, emotional and social development will be taken into account at all times.

Where appropriate, consultation may be take place with outside agencies such as National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and HSE through the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO). Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable. The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way with respect for individual differences.

### **Promoting good behaviour:**

The promotion of positive behaviour plays a central part in our Code of Behaviour. Pupils are more likely to benefit from their education and to be happy in a structured, caring environment, where high standards of behaviour are expected and adhered to. In Piercestown N.S. we recognise that the quality of relationship between pupils and teachers is one of the most powerful influences on pupil behaviour. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise will be given generously and directed towards the appropriate behaviour as opposed to the child, e.g. 'well done, you lined up safely after break' instead of 'you're a great girl'. When behaviour is praised there is a greater chance of that behaviour being repeated in the future. Also, children will be clear about the reason for the praise and will strive to copy that behaviour.

### **The following are some examples of how positive behaviour may be acknowledged:**

- A verbal acknowledgement of the effort and of good behaviour.
- A positive comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- A visit to another member of staff or to the principal to acknowledge good behaviour.
- Reporting positive behaviour to parents (verbal / written, e.g. a 'sunny' note).
- Giving a reward, e.g. a star or other merit sticker or a homework pass.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege to the pupil.
- Additional 'Golden Time' given to preferred activity chosen by the pupil / class.

### **Other strategies used at class and school level to promote good behaviour include:**

- Behavioural plans and contracts.
- Reward charts.
- Class marble jars.
- Kindness charts / tokens.
- Class of the month.
- Involving pupils in establishing class rules.
- Modelling good behaviour.
- Tactically ignoring negative behaviour.
- Encouraging pupils to say sorry and to try again.
- Use of Reflective Sheets (Appendix 1)
- Fostering good communication between home and school.
- Health Promoting School - promoting health and well-being of the whole school community.

- Curricular instruction in SPHE - programmes such as Stay Safe, RSE, Walk Tall, Webwise, etc. and in Religion - Grow in Love.
- Initiatives such as Friends for Life, Zippy's Friends and Friendship Week.

**Responding to unacceptable behaviour:**

Sanctions should only be used at all times in a respectful way that helps students to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for it. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

**The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by helping pupils:**

- To learn that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- To recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others.
- To understand (in ways appropriate to their age and development) that all of the choices they make have consequences.
- To learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

**A sanction may also:**

- Re-enforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour.
- Signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

**In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:**

- Prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- Keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

**Sanctions:**

**Procedures:**

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and / or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity / frequency of such misdemeanours, as follows:

**1. Examples of minor misdemeanours:**

- Interrupting class work.
- Misbehaving in the class line.
- Leaving assigned seat without permission at lunch time.
- Running in the school building.
- Leaving litter around the school.
- Being discourteous / unmannerly.
- Not completing homework without good reason, and / or note from parents.
- Purposely not attempting to work to full potential.
- Unintentional endangering of self / fellow pupils in the classroom or school yard at break time.

**Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:**

- Verbal reprimand / reasoning with the pupil.
- Noting in teacher's records.

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours**

**Within the classroom:**

- Correspondence with parents in person or note in homework journal to be signed by parents.
- Temporary separation from peers within the classroom.
- Denial of participation in the class activity.
- Correspondence with parents concerning further misbehaviour in yard (misbehaviour in yard consists of any action that puts the safety of self/other pupil at risk)
- For repeated cases of homework not completed pupils may be asked to complete homework during break times.

**Outside the classroom:**

- Class teacher meets one / both parents.
- Send to the Principal / Deputy Principal.

**2. Examples of serious misdemeanours:**

- Constantly disruptive in class.
- Telling lies.
- Stealing / damaging other pupil's property or school property.
- Bullying.
- Showing disrespect.
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission.
- Refusing to co-operate on a consistent basis.
- Using unacceptable language.
- Bringing weapons to school.
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil.

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:**

- Send to the Principal / Deputy Principal.
- Principal sends note in homework journal to be signed by parent.
- Teacher and / or Principal meets with one / both parents.
- Chairperson of the Board of Management is informed and parents requested to meet with the Chairperson and Principal.
- Chairperson / Principal may sanction suspension pending the outcome of discussion with parents.

**3. Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:**

- Deliberate vandalism, e.g. damaging school or other people's property, blocking toilets, leaving taps / fire hose turned on, etc.
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards staff / pupils.
- Setting fire to school property.
- Substance abuse.

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours:**

- Chairperson / Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents.
- Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case.

**It should be noted that the above list of misdemeanours and sanctions consist of examples only. It is not intended as a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.**

**School Procedures for the use of Suspension and Expulsion:**

Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school will be in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

**Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools:**

- *"Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils, or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school-days. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school-days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed."*

The Board of Management will give careful consideration to all relevant factors before suspending a pupil. (see Appendix 1)

**Removal of suspension and re-instatement:**

Following or during a period of suspension, parents / guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. They must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the 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. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

**Expulsion will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools:**

- *No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality.*

**Implementing the code of behaviour:**

The Code of Behaviour, ratified by the Board of Management, is circulated to all staff and posted on the school website. A paper copy is also available from the school office. All new staff will be given a copy of the Code of Behaviour. The effectiveness of the policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Management and feedback from pupils, parents and staff will be taken into consideration.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Board.

**Appendix 1. Suspension - Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools - Page 72**

**The Board of Management will consider the following factors before suspending a student:**

- **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour:**
  - What is the precise description of the behaviour?
  - How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
  - Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?
- **The context of the behaviour:**
  - What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
  - What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
  - What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
  - Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?
- **The impact of the behaviour:**
  - How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
  - What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
  - Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
  - Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?
- **The interventions tried to date:**
  - What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
  - How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
  - What has been the result of those interventions?
  - Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
  - Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
  - Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
  - Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
  - Has any other agency been asked for assistance? (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Services)
- **Whether suspension is a proportionate response:**
  - Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
  - Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?
- **The possible impact of suspension:**



- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

## **Appendix 2. Expulsion - Developing a Code of Behaviour, Guidelines for Schools - Page 72**

**The Board of Management will consider the following factors before suspending a student:**

- **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour:**
  - What is the precise description of the behaviour?
  - How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
  - Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?
- **The context of the behaviour:**
  - What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
  - What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
  - Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?
- **The impact of the behaviour:**
  - How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
  - What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- **The interventions tried to date:**
  - What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
  - How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
  - What has been the result of these interventions?
  - Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
  - Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
  - Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
  - Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
  - Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?
- **Whether expulsion is a proportionate response:**
  - Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?

- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?
- **The possible impact of expulsion:**
  - To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
  - Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
  - In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

### **Appendix 3. Reflective Sheets**

### *Pupil Reflective Sheet*

*What happened?*

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*What were you thinking about at the time?*

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*What have your thoughts been since?*

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*Who has been affected by what you did?*

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*In what way have they been affected?*

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*What do you think needs to happen to make things right?*

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## *Pupil Reflective Sheet*

*What did I do?*

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*Why did I do it?*

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*What rule did I break?*

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*How can I fix it?*

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## *Pupil Reflective Sheet*

*What did I do?*

*Why did I do it?*

*What rule did I break?*

*How can I fix it?*