



CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Gorey Educate Together National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Foghlaim le Chéile, Guaire





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Code of Behaviour

Updated May 2016

Introduction

Gorey Educate Together National School is committed to the Educate Together Charter.

Our Code of Behaviour reflects the equality-based, co-educational, child centred and democratic principles of the Charter. The Code forms part of the school's undertaking to create a teaching and learning atmosphere that is *safe, effective, positive and respectful*. The practices contained in the Code reflect the developmental and educational needs of individual children and of 'the children of the school.' The practices empower boys and girls to fully participate in the Code. The Code also meets the school's obligations under the Education Act, 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 and Department of Education and Science circulars on School Discipline.

The staff, the children and their parents were involved in the Code's development during the 2005-2006 school year. The Code was amended by the Board of Management during 2010-2011 and its systems & procedures were updated by school staff during 2015-2016. This revised Code of Behaviour was adopted as school policy by the Board of Management at their May 2016 meeting.

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- To create an educational environment that is guided by the Educate Together Charter;
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others;
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- To enhance the learning environment and allow the school to function whereby children can make progress in all aspects of their development;
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code and to enable their co-operation in the application of these procedures;
- To help ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a *fair and consistent manner* throughout the school.

The Board of Management and the Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation and on-going monitoring of this policy. However, all staff members have responsibility for their own groups of pupils, while sharing a common responsibility for good order around the school and on organised out-of-school activities. The school also values and relies upon the support and co-operation of parents and pupils in the implementation of this Code.



A. Whole-School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

The following are the main steps that will be taken to promote a school environment that is safe, effective, positive and respectful:

1. Class Charters

At the beginning of every school year, the class teachers will guide the children through the formation of Class Charters. This process will enable the children to learn that they — *and the children and adults around them* — have **rights** and **responsibilities**. The teachers will actively encourage each child in the class to contribute to their Class Charter. The language used in class charters will be age appropriate. **Each charter will state in positive terms the behaviour that is expected in the classrooms, the playground and the school environment.** The example below is from 1st/2nd/3rd class 2005-2006:

We agree that each child has the right to be safe, happy and learn in our school.

Helping everyone stay safe - examples: passing pencils, books and colours carefully; showing good example to the infants, telling an adult if we feel unsafe....

Helping everyone to be happy - examples: being friendly, respecting other children's work and belongings, including others in our games, being nice....

Helping everyone to learn - examples: using quiet voices in the classroom, talking and listening....

The charters will be displayed in each classroom. Older children may be asked to gather ideas for charters as part of their homework, and they will share the finished Class Charter with their parents. Parents of infant children should make themselves familiar with the Charter during visits to the child's classroom.

2. Whole School Charter

During 2016 the children on our School Council worked with the Principal in identifying priorities for the school community. Questionnaires were used in some classrooms, and the results of a parental survey on Social, Personal and Health Education at our school were also referred to. The need to convert knowledge and words into everyday actions was also discussed: *Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world* – Nelson Mandela.

The resulting Whole-School Charter is as follows:

Gorey Educate Together NS – Vision with Action:
'A safe place.'
'Friendship and happiness!'

'Respect for everyone.'
'Our best teaching and learning!'
'A bully-free school.'

This whole-school charter will be promoted through school activities and publications. It will offer guidance to the school community as we engage in the development of Class Charters and other undertakings.



3. Courtesies

As part of the whole school approach to behaviour, the following courtesies will be expected from all members of the school community.

- Greeting others with a smile and saying **Thank You** and **Please**, **Go raibh maith agat** and **Más é do thoil é, Dia duit/Good morning** and **Slán/Goodbye**.
- Allowing others to go ahead of you through the door or gate.
- Holding the door/gate open for others, in particular: visitors to the school, someone carrying something, younger children or older people.
- When getting someone's attention, saying **Excuse me** or **Gabh mo leithscéal** and then waiting until the person is ready. (That is unless it is urgent. For example you need to use the bathroom or someone is injured – in which case you say, **Excuse me – it's urgent!**)
- Being patient when at the secretary's office (e.g. if the secretary is on the telephone or speaking to someone else.)
- During the busy school day, cooperating with all reasonable requests without discussion or questions as to why. (If someone feels they have been treated unfairly or needs to discuss the request, they should cooperate first and then ask to talk about it later. Pupils can also seek the advice of staff or parents after such instances.)

4. Orange Cards and 'Class of the Week'

Orange cards will be issued to individual pupils and to groups of children/classes as a whole by teachers and SNAs upon instances of positive behaviour. The cards will be issued to the pupils themselves or passed to their class teachers. (See Appendix A. Class teachers paste the orange cards on the door of the classrooms. On Fridays, orange cards are tallied to determine 'classes of the week'. One junior class and one senior class are nominated.)

5. Assemblies

Junior and Senior Assemblies will take place on Fridays. The principal and teachers will at times plan assemblies that promote the aims of the Code of Behaviour. The children will be enabled to communicate the ideas in their Class Charters or new ideas on how to maintain positive school relationships during such assemblies.

6. Programmes/Lessons

Particular programmes and lessons taught in the school will enable the children to develop values, social skills, attitudes and empathy. They include:

- The Learn Together Programme (lessons: Feelings; Co-operation; Honesty; Discrimination; Collective Responsibility; Wants, Needs and Rights; etc.)
- The Walk Tall Programme (lessons: Making choices, Standing up for Myself, Valuing Myself and Others)
- Circle Time (lessons: Friendship, Cooperation, Solving problems, etc.)
- Golden Time: As a privilege, many classes may have 'Golden Time' (similar to a free-choice time) for 30 minutes each week. A child may lose five minutes or more of Golden time for misbehaviour in class/playground, but his/her time can be earned back through positive behaviour.



- The Stay Safe Programme (lessons: Feeling Safe and Unsafe, Bullying, Secrets and Telling, etc.)
- The SALT programme (used for conflict resolution) “Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk.”
- Elements of the PlayWorks programme (RoShamBo for conflict resolution, etc.)

7. Encouragement and Praise

The staff will use encouragement and praise routinely. Praise may take many forms, including: positive oral or written comments, stickers and ink stamps in homework journals, good news scrapbooks, orange cards, etc. Some teachers may also use incentive schemes such as **Class Dojo**, to affirm desirable behaviour, resulting in rewards such as: extra computer time (or other special activity), lunch-time music, no homework on an agreed night, class treat, etc. The teachers will monitor the outcomes of such schemes, in order to evaluate their effectiveness.

In giving praise, staff will be sensitive to the age and personality of the children. Certain children may prefer private praise (such as notes of approval in their copy books) to being singled out and embarrassed by public praise.

As well as praising individual children, the staff may direct praise at particular groups/classes - thus encouraging the children to share a positive group identity and fostering cooperative behaviour.

B. Whole-School Approach to Responding to Misbehaviour

The following procedures will apply when a child's behaviour does not meet the agreed expectations:

1. Strategies and Sanctions

The following strategies and sanctions may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

Lower Level strategies/sanctions

- Non-verbal signals, such as a look or a frown
- Reasoning with the child (and referring them to the Class Charter that they have agreed to)
- Verbal reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Playground Timeout (stay at a specified point for 5 or 10 minutes)
- Classroom Timeout (work at another table for 5-15 minutes)
- Written reprimand (Blue card: see Appendix A)
- Communication with parents
- Prescribing additional work (including 'sorry cards' or behaviour related worksheets)
- Loss of Friday 'Golden Time'



Higher Level strategies/sanctions

- Written reprimand (Blue card)
- Referral to the **Reflection Room*** (see below)
- Classroom Timeout (child to work in another classroom for 30-90 minutes)
- Communication with parents (including face-to-face meetings: staff-parents/guardians-child)
- Prescribing additional work
- Pupil on Behaviour Report for one week (signed daily by parent: Appendix C)
- Loss of playground privileges (child plays on alternative playground for 1 – 5 days)
- Loss of privileges in relation to particular class activities or outings e.g. trip to Science Fair, trip to local park, baking activity, visit to school library etc.
- Referral to the Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal/Principal
- In-school suspension (in liaison with the Principal): child works in another classroom for 1-3 days (and child plays on an alternative playground)

Severe Sanctions (implemented by Principal and/or Board of Management)

- Communication with parents (including face-to-face meetings: principal-parents/guardians-child)
- Suspension (see point 6)
- Loss of privileges in relation to key school events: annual school tour, sports day, end-of-year event for 6th class, etc.
- Expulsion (see point 6)

When implementing the strategies and sanctions above the principal and teachers will, where possible, be sensitive to the age and personality of the child. They will listen, at an appropriate time, to the child's explanations for behaviour. They will make clear that it is the behaviour that is being criticised and not the person. Where possible, teachers will encourage children to discuss, reflect on and contribute to the solving of behaviour problems. In such cases, the child and the teacher may agree on an appropriate way forward or sanction. (In older classes, some strategies and sanctions may be discussed and agreed on when the children and their teacher formulate the Class Charter at the beginning of the school year.)

In all cases, the principal and teachers will make **fair and reasonable judgements** on the strategies or sanctions to be employed. They will **avoid any early escalation to severe sanctions**.

***Restorative Practice – 'The Reflection Room'**

Through use of our 'Reflection Room', we engage in the process of Restorative Practice, which emphasises 'restoring relationships' rather than 'punishing wrongdoers.' This process also gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning.



Restorative Questions in Response to Challenging Behaviour:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
3. Who has been affected by what you did?
4. What are you thinking/feeling now?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

The children are taught the following general sanctions:

2 blue cards in a 5 day period = a 12.30-12.50 playtime/break-time in the Reflection Room.

4 blue cards in a Term = letter home from Assistant Principal.

2. Informing Parents

When a child's behaviour does not meet expectations his/her parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. The normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised.

If a child receives four Blue Cards in one term, a **letter** from the Assistant Principal will be posted home to parents/guardians detailing the behaviour (and informing them of any sanctions or further actions.)

If a child is referred to the Reflection Room four times or more in one term, a standard **letter** from the Principal will be posted home to parents/guardians detailing the behaviour (and informing them of any sanctions or further actions.)

3. Referral to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal

A child will be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal for a serious breach of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

4. Suspension or Expulsion

During 2010-2011 our Board of Management considered *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools,'* as issued by the National Educational Welfare Board. In particular, the Board decided to accept in full the recommended principles and procedures regarding Suspensions and Expulsions. Some of the key provisions include: an end to 'informal suspensions' - where a child is sent home early as a sanction, that sanction would be recorded as a suspension; the authority of the Principal to suspend a pupil for up to three days - longer suspensions would be referred to our Board for approval; principles regarding 'immediate suspensions' (NB: *as is already the case at this school, any physical fighting amongst older pupils would lead to children being sent home, and serious physical aggression involving younger pupils would usually lead to children being sent home*); procedures regarding investigations and the rights of pupils and parents to respond or appeal.



It remains the case that the Principal (or Board) would consider suspension (or expulsion, in accordance with Rule 130 for National Schools) as a possible sanction for *gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour* only. Immediate suspension may apply in the circumstances outlined above (fighting, etc.) or where the Principal has a serious safety concern. Parents may appeal suspensions (over 20 days in any one school year) and expulsions to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act and Section 26 of the Education (Welfare) Act. (Details are available from the school.) See also www.newb.ie, the website of the National Educational Welfare Board.

5. Written Records

The staff will keep a written record of instances of serious misbehaviour, as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of children who cause disruption.

Teachers may also use *behaviour charts* in, for example, the child's homework copy to record misbehaviour and improvements. Parents are asked to read and discuss such charts with the child.

C. The Code of Behaviour and Special Educational Needs

Where children have special educational needs, including Behavioural, Emotional and/or Social Difficulties (BESD) a multi-disciplinary approach (involving teachers, special needs assistants, parents, health professionals, others) may be taken to establish an individualised programme that will enable the child to participate in and contribute to a safe, effective, positive and respectful school environment. *'Fairness isn't about giving everybody the same; it's about giving everybody what they need in order to be successful.'* An Individual Behavioural Plan will be devised for management of ongoing, serious challenging behaviour from an individual child. Please see Appendix B for the Individual Behaviour Plan Procedure.

The Board of Management has authorised the staff to use Nonviolent Crisis Intervention strategies, including - as measures of last resort - physical techniques, to contain or restrain a pupil who poses a danger to themselves or others. (Parents will be contacted in such instances.) Ref: Staff training course, August 2010; the course was funded by the *Special Education Support Service* and delivered by the *Crisis Prevention Institute*.

D. The Code of Behaviour and School Buses

Our Code of Behaviour applies to all school activities (trips, sports events, etc.,) including travel to and from locations.

The Bus Éireann Code of Behaviour applies to all journeys to and from school under the School Transport Scheme. (Copies of the Bus Éireann Code are distributed along with the children's tickets.)

Unsafe and inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated on school buses and may result in permission to travel being withdrawn (temporarily or, in more serious instances, permanently.) Families should speak with their child's bus driver as difficulties arise. If a serious matter remains unresolved families should contact the Bus Éireann Area Inspector, School Transport Office, Bus Éireann, Waterford.



E. Reference to other Policies

Our Code of Behaviour is linked to and supported by other school policies, including:

- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Safety Statement
- Special Educational Needs policies.

F. Shared Responsibility

It is hoped that staff, pupils and parents will share a sense of responsibility for implementing this Code. Parents can cooperate with the staff by:

- Making themselves familiar with this Code of Behaviour and other school policies
- Showing interest in the measures outlined in this document (such as their child's class charter, positive notes and comments s/he may take home, behaviour related worksheets s/he may take home, etc.)
- Communicating to the school issues which may be affecting a child's behaviour
- Supporting the implementation of the practices and procedures outlined in this document

G. Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Positive behaviour in the classrooms, playgrounds and wider school environment
- Consistent implementation of practices and procedures
- Positive feedback from pupils, families and staff





APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Orange & Blue Behaviour Card system

A folder is kept beside the entrance to each playground. These folders contain a supply of blue and orange Behaviour Cards. (Classteachers and SNAs also have their own supplies of blue and orange cards for use around the school.)

Orange Cards

Orange cards are issued to individual pupils/groups/classes by teachers and SNAs upon instances of positive behaviour on the playgrounds or around the school. The cards are issued to the pupils themselves or passed to the class teacher. Some examples of positive behaviours are listed below:

1. Kind, supportive language
2. Careful, safe handling/treatment of school property
3. General safe play
4. Prompt and effective following of directions
5. Lining up immediately and safely upon blowing of whistle (single file and facing forward – no need for silence)
6. Inclusive play and language
7. Kind, supportive behaviour towards other pupils
8. Use of SALT methodology in pupil interaction/conflict.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that staff will use their discretion in judging a positive behaviour.

Each member of staff issues a quota of at least 5 orange cards per week.

Class teachers paste the orange cards on the doors of the classrooms. On Fridays, orange cards are tallied to determine 'Classes of the Week'. One junior class and one senior class are nominated. The Principal announces 'classes of the week' during school assemblies. The winning classes receive a prize/reward, as decided on by the School Council or the class themselves.

Blue Cards

Blue cards are passed to the child's classteacher by any teacher or SNA for instances of negative behaviour on the playgrounds or around the school. (The child is also informed, at an appropriate time, that they are being issued with a blue card.)

The reasons for issuing a blue card include the following:

1. Offensive or threatening language
2. Leaving the playground without permission



3. Causing damage to school property or the property of others (e.g. damage to playground equipment; throwing items over fence, etc.)
4. Unsafe behaviour or unsafe/inappropriate use of playground equipment e.g. climbing ball court walls, using equipment in an unsafe/inappropriate manner – skipping ropes, hockey sticks, using balls to target or injure others
5. Refusal to follow instruction/direction on playground
6. Failure to line up in a timely and safe manner on playground
7. Rough/overly physical play on the playground
8. Repeated failure to follow classroom instructions
9. Repeated failure to follow Class Charter
10. Continuous disruption in class
11. Unsafe behaviour in the classroom
12. Intentionally hurting others.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive and that staff will use their discretion in judging a negative behaviour.

Once a class teacher has been given a blue card for a child, they paste it into a behaviour tracking book which all class teachers are issued with. Each class teacher then decides how they wish to deal with the behaviour, assessing each child as an individual.

However, the children are taught the following general sanctions:

2 blue cards in a 5 day period = a 12.30-12.50 playtime/break-time in the *Reflection Room*

4 blue cards in a Term = letter home from Assistant Principal.

The teacher on duty on the playground and the SNAs do not determine if a child is to be placed in the reflection room. Only the class teacher may impose this sanction. Therefore, all staff on yard only use the vocabulary of the blue/orange cards when speaking to pupils and do not refer to the Reflection Room.

Appendix B

Individual Behavioural Plan procedure (Adapted from Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support. National Educational Psychology Service, 2010.)

For the management of ongoing, serious challenging behaviour from an individual child such as:

- The consistent refusal of a child to obey instructions
- Persistent seriously disruptive behaviour
- Exhibitions of unpredictable and, possibly, violent or aggressive behaviour.



The needs of pupils with special educational needs can be best considered in terms of a continuum and therefore support given is also on the basis of a continuum:

1. **Classroom Support**

This incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs. Personnel involved: parents, class teacher, SNA (if applicable.)

2. **School Support**

This involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of an Individual Pupil Learning Profile. Personnel involved: parents, class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, SEN co-ordinator.

3. **School Support Plus**

Where pupils' special educational needs are severe and/or persistent and an Individual Behaviour Plan is required (see procedure below). Personnel involved: class teacher, parents, learning support/resource teacher, SEN co-ordinator, principal, NEPS psychologist, other outside agencies.

A team meeting to prepare an Individual Behavioural Plan shall be convened. All those involved with the child may be invited to attend (for example, principal, teacher(s), parents, special needs assistant and school psychologist).

The agenda for the meeting shall comprise: an assessment of the strengths and needs of the child, to include his/her academic and attainment record; behaviour record; interests; any special educational needs; temperament; priority needs - both short term and long term, in terms of learning and behaviour.

A plan shall be agreed between school and home. The Board of Management is informed of the plan.

The plan shall include:

- Strategies for encouraging positive behaviour (praise, encouragement, incentives)
- General strategies for dealing with poor behaviour / lack of engagement with learning
- Supports for staff / other children in the class
- Rewards for good behaviour both at home and at school
- Sanctions or consequences for poor behaviour both at home and at school
- Resources available (materials, personnel, equipment) to implement the plan
- Arrangements for monitoring targets
- Referral to outside agencies
- Agreed home-school communication going forward i.e. parent / teacher contact, behavioural diary
- Agreed timetable for action and date for follow up meeting.



In some instances, parents/guardians shall be told that a risk assessment shall be done on all activities the child is involved in to ensure his/her safety and the safety of others. This may apply particularly to school tours and other out-of-school-activities. This may mean that the child will not be allowed to take part in some school activities for his/her safety and that of others in the class. Again, the school's Board of Management is kept informed of such situations.

APPENDIX C

Behaviour Report (Sample):

Due to a number of significant misbehaviours that occurred on (dates), (child's name) is **On Report** from (date starting) until (date ending).

Each day (class teacher) will write a brief report on (child's name) behaviour.

This is then to be signed by the child and his/her parents/guardians.

Should (child's name)'s behaviour not reach the agreed expectations over this period, the following sanction will be put in place: _____

(The Principal/Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal) will sign the report on (date).

Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____		Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____	
Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____		Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____	
Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____		Day: _____ Child's Signature: _____ Parent's Signature: _____	

Signature of Assistant Principal/Principal/Deputy Principal: _____ Date: _____



Gorey Educate Together National School

Our Whole-School Charter

'VISION WITH ACTION'

A
SAFE
PLACE



OUR
BEST
TEACHING
& LEARNING!



FRIENDSHIP
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A
BULLY
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RESPECT
FOR
EVERYONE



"ACTION WITHOUT VISION IS ONLY PASSING TIME, VISION WITHOUT ACTION IS MERELY DAYDREAMING, BUT VISION WITH ACTION CAN CHANGE THE WORLD."

NELSON MANDELA