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## **Behaviour Policy St. Brendan's N.S.**

### **Introduction**

This policy has evolved over the years. This version was updated in March 2021, following staff and Board of Management discussions.

### **Rationale:**

*A code of behaviour is the set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form the school's plan for helping students in the school to behave well and learn well.*

*The code of behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.*

*The code expresses the vision, mission and values of the school and its Patron. It translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.*

*The code of behaviour enables school authorities to strike an appropriate balance between their duty to maintain an effective learning environment for all and their responsibility to students whose behaviour presents a challenge to the teaching and learning process. The code of behaviour is a key tool in enabling the school authorities to support the learning of every student in the school.*

*Maintaining a harmonious environment can present a challenge to schools, given competing needs, time pressures and varying capacities or readiness to learn. A code of behaviour that has the support of the school community can go a long way to helping schools to meet this challenge successfully.*

*Extract from National Educational Welfare Board "Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools available on [http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](http://www.newb.ie/downloads/pdf/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)*

### **In St. Brendan's we believe:**

- Pupils learn best in a calm, purposeful learning environment.
- A belief in a positive approach to behaviour management should underpin all pupil-staff interactions.
- Behaviour management should be proactive rather than reactive.
- Consistency of approach is a key component of behaviour management. This relies on close staff communication and willingness to "buy-into" the positive approach to behaviour management.
- Staff training and school community support is another key component to managing a positive approach to behaviour. Staff training in Studio 3 and the Incredible Years strongly influences our approach to behaviour management in the school.
- Behaviour has meaning. All behaviour is communication. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise.
- Behaviour can be learned. This means it can change.
- Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people. Understanding the context is central to understanding the behaviour.

- What teachers, other adults and other students do in response to a student's behaviour is critical in influencing the choices students make about how they behave.
- Effective teaching and learning are closely linked to good behaviour.
- Positive acknowledgement is a very effective way of influencing and promoting good learning behaviour.
- The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

#### **A code of behaviour is required by law:**

*A code of behaviour shall be prepared in accordance with such guidelines as may, following consultation by the Board with national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, be issued by the Board. Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 23(3)*

#### **School Ethos:**

Every pupil in St. Brendan's N.S.

- has the right to be educated in a safe, happy and stimulating environment where they can maximise their academic and social & personal development
- has a responsibility to acknowledge that there are clear expectations for appropriate behaviour
- must understand that behaviour that impacts negatively on their own academic, social and personal development, or on that of others, cannot be allowed to continue unchecked
- must realise that violations of school rules and regulations will lead to prescribed consequences
- Through good example pupils best learn high standards of behaviour.
- encouragement to behave in a positive way will at all times be evident
- honesty and courtesy towards each other will be promoted by all
- a positive climate will be fostered
- realistic expectations will be acknowledged by all parties
- a caring and loving learning environment will be provided
- fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability or disability will be expected
- kindness, respect and understanding is encouraged at all times

#### **Curriculum**

St Brendan's N.S. believes that

- the implementation of an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils contributes to good behaviour.
- careful planning by all the concerned people with clear objectives and a differentiated programme to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities will be of utmost importance in our school.
- progress and achievements will be rewarded thus encouraging each pupil's efforts.
- record keeping and monitoring of pupils progress will contribute to a consistent approach within the school when dealing with behaviour issues

#### **Classroom Management**

St. Brendan's N.S. believes that

- classroom management and teaching methods all have an important influence on pupil's behaviour.
- the relationship between teacher and pupils, the encouragement given, access to the resources and the arrangement of the classroom furniture all have a bearing on the way children behave

- teaching methods should encourage active learning and an enthusiasm for the subject
- praise should be used to encourage good behaviour
- self-esteem and positive self image should be developed by each child's work being valued and appreciated.

### **Who is the Code of Behaviour for?**

The Code of Behaviour will support the behaviour of the majority of pupils in our school. However, in the case of pupils with Emotional/Behavioural Diagnosis, an individual behaviour plan may need to be implemented. In this case, the terms and procedures of the Individual behaviour Plan will take precedence over the Code of Behaviour. In general, it is the preference of the school that all pupils adhere to the Behaviour Code and it is seen that it can be a useful tool in support of pupils with very challenging behaviours.

### **Aims of Behaviour Code**

The aims of the behaviour code are:

- to create within the school an environment which encourages and reinforces good mannered and well behaved pupils
- to outline acceptable standards of behaviour
- to promote self esteem and positive self image
- to develop a sense of mutual respect among the school community and increase concern for the feelings of others
- to encourage self discipline
- to ensure a consistency of response within the school to both positive and negative behaviour
- to encourage cooperation between home and school and thus aid the implementation of the behaviour code
- to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the expectations of the school and the rules and regulations of same
- to promote the safety and happiness of all pupils and staff

### **Standards of Behaviour**

Acceptable standards of behaviour are based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility.

The difference between right and wrong will at all times be emphasised and the pupils will come to an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Pupils will be encouraged to aim at conforming to the school's behavioural goals and over time will achieve standards of behaviour that are acceptable within the school and within society.

The school's standards of behaviour express the kinds of behaviour and relationships that will create a positive environment for teaching and learning. They describe the behaviour expected of all members of the school community.

Standards are the means by which the school will:

- provide clarity for students about the school's high expectations for their behaviour
- set goals for students that will guide them in moving towards mature and appropriate behaviour

- serve as a practical tool for teaching and learning.

The process of developing the code of behaviour provides opportunities to:

- agree the content and focus of the standards expected in the school
- develop rules or charters that reflect the standards
- agree ways of using the standards to promote good behaviour.

## Rules and Regulations

Rules and regulations in St. Brendan's NS shall

- be kept to a minimum
- be clear and easy to understand
- be consistently applied and enforced
- be open to their development by all the concerned people, teachers, parents/guardians and pupils

The purpose of rules and regulations in our school is to establish clearly the areas of responsibility and the standards of behaviour that the school expects of its pupils, and to outline clearly to children, parents/guardians and teachers what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

We believe that when pupils are given responsibility in the school and are involved in the development of the code of behaviour, they are more likely to behave in an appropriate manner. It is important that pupils understand why the code is important and that they play a part in making it work eg they can see that the code works in a fair way.

We will set standards that set high expectations for student behaviour. The standards are clear, consistent and widely understood.

We actively seek parents support for the school by encouraging good learning behaviour at home

Our School rules can be summarised into the following 5 rules

We should always show respect for each other  
 We should always respect property  
 We should always be kind and considerate towards each other  
 We should always stay safe  
 Always tell the truth

Our motto for good behaviour:

**CARA= Caring and Respectful Attitude**

## Rules of the School

1. Respect for teachers and school staff at all times
2. Respect and courtesy for other pupils
3. Respect for school property. Damage to property, graffiti and littering are all offences of this rule
4. Children should attend regularly and punctually. In the event of a pupil being absent for any reason a note to that effect should be sent to the class teacher explaining the reason for absence (See Attendance Policy)
5. Pupils are not allowed to leave their class or school premises without permission from teachers or parents/guardians
6. Homework is expected to be done when given and a written explanation by parent/guardian should be furnished in the event of homework not being completed.

7. Pupils are not allowed to have chewing gum, crisps or popcorn on the school premises
8. Glass bottles or cans are not permitted in the interest of safety.
9. The school uniform must be worn at all times
10. All school safety regulations as outlined in the Health and Safety Policy must be adhered to at all times
11. Participation in school activities is expected
12. Bullying of any type is unacceptable (see anti-bullying policy)
13. Children are expected to follow the class rules which have been drawn up by pupil's class teacher in conjunction with class pupils.
14. Children are expected to obey playground rules.

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of the school year each class will collectively agree a set of Class Rules which are then clearly displayed in a prominent place in the classroom.

### **Playground Rules**

Playground rules are displayed at the exit doors of both the senior and junior playgrounds.

#### **Senior Playground Rules:**

1. Walk to and from playground
2. Do not throw litter
3. Keep off the grass and slippery banks, unless with the permission of the teacher on duty.
4. If you need to leave playground you must check with teacher
5. Rough play, kicking, fighting, horseplay or pushing is not allowed
6. Abide by the rules of games
7. Include pupils in games
8. Pupils from the senior classes may be timetabled to play on the basketball court and only those who are should be there on the specified day
9. Spoiling and interrupting games is not allowed
10. No pupil is allowed to deliberately hurt or injure a teacher, an assistant or another pupil
11. No bullying
12. When called line up quickly and quietly
13. Walk into school in a calm and quiet line to be ready to resume learning once indoors
14. *Enjoy Playtime*

#### **Junior Playground Rules**

1. Walk to and from playground
2. Do not throw litter
3. Keep off the grass and slippery banks
4. If you need to leave the playground you must ask the teacher
5. Rough play, kicking, fighting or pushing is not allowed
6. Include other pupils in your games
7. Spoiling or interrupting games is not allowed
8. No pupil is allowed to deliberately hurt or injure a teacher, an assistant or another pupil
9. No bullying
10. When called line up quickly and quietly
11. Walk into school in a calm and quiet line to be ready to resume learning once indoors
12. *Enjoy playtime*

## **Promoting Good Behaviour and Rewards**

St. Brendan's NS believes in promoting and actively teaching appropriate behaviour. Techniques used to encourage good behaviour will include:

- Descriptive praise that actively encourages appropriate behaviour
- Proximal praise
- Rewards for good behaviour: We value the importance of rewards to reinforce good behaviour and believe that rewards motivate pupils to behave in a positive manner
- Ignoring bad behaviour when appropriate to do so, in the context of promoting appropriate behaviour.
- positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
- good school and class routines
- having clear boundaries and rules for students
- there are good relationships between teachers, parents and students and a happy school atmosphere
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from students.
- Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- Recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
- Exploring with students how people should treat each other
- Involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules.

We will acknowledge good behaviour with rewards such as :

- Praise, both formal and informal is the commonest form of reward and will be used frequently both within the classroom and in public ie at assembly to individuals and groups.
- Showing good work and good behaviour chart to Principal/Deputy principal and other staff members
- A stamp/sticker on a merit card
- Good behaviour certificates awarded
- Golden time-agreed fun activity that the class has worked towards
- Homework pass
- Treats e.g. trip to town, bouncing castle etc
- Time in the class when good work or good behaviour is acknowledged e.g. Circle Time

( see list from NEPS DESD appendix)

### **Whole-School Approach:**

From time to time the school will run a whole-school behaviour programme. The aim is to specifically teach pupils about the elements of good behaviour and reward examples of it to build up good habits with regard to school rules. A stamp book will be given to each pupil, with stamps awarded for good behaviour by the class teacher, or any other adult in the school. On completion of each stamp book, the pupils will receive a reward/prize/treat from the Principal. The scheme will be introduced to the whole school at an assembly, with clear guidelines for all on what is meant by good behaviour eg safe hands, safe feet, quiet mouth etc.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviours displayed by children can be generally categorised under three headings

- Aggressive behaviour e.g. pushing, kicking, biting, punching, scratching
- Disruptive behaviour e.g. screaming, tantrums, verbal abuse, non-co-operation
- Destructive Behaviour e.g. destruction of property and environment

In St. Brendan's N.S. we have two defined categories of misbehaviour

1. Gross Misbehaviour and
2. Less Serious Misbehaviour

which incorporate all behaviour types and warrant different sanctions when breached.

### **Gross Misbehaviour**

- Bullying ie consistent and persistent targeting of another pupil or adult or a gross and serious incident of bullying and intimidation eg chasing a pupil in a frightening and threatening manner.
- Verbal abuse of a teacher or school staff
- Physical abuse of teacher or school staff
- Abuse of teacher's or school staff's property
- Blatant disobedience of a teacher
- Throwing furniture
- Stealing
- Vandalism
- Forging parent's signature
- Leaving school without permission
- Smoking in or on school premises and grounds
- Racist or sexist comments
- Recording of picture, sound or movie clip of another pupil and/or teacher without permission
- Cyberbullying using school computers or smartphone used during the school day from school premises or grounds and/or cyberbullying relating to a school event or incident
- Any other non acceptable misbehaviour not listed above but warrants the issuing of a red card as deemed by the Board of Management

At the discretion of the Principal, a **Red Card** may be issued to pupils upon committing any of the above offences.

### **Less Serious Misbehaviour**

- Telling lies
- Homework not done
- Use of mobile phones/ walkmans in class/playground
- Littering inside /outside class/playground
- Incorrect uniform
- Graffiti
- Bad language, swearing, rude gestures/noises
- Biting/ spitting/ kicking/punching/scratching/pushing/threatening
- Disruptive behaviour, screaming, throwing tantrums, verbal abuse,
- Physical fighting
- Abuse of a pupil's property
- Constant talking in class
- Refusing to listen in class
- Refusing to obey playground/classroom rules
- Pushing in class/line
- Swinging on chair
- Back answering/giving cheek
- Refusing to do what one is told
- Regular disobedience of a teacher
- Bad manners

- Copying school/home work
- Interrupting teacher/other pupil
- Not having full requirements to complete school work e.g. pencil, copy, books etc
- Interfering with other pupils belongings
- Eating items of food that are not allowed e.g. chewing gum, crisps
- Continuous lack of application
- Running around classroom during break time

At the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal, a **yellow card** can be issued to pupils on committing any of the above offences.

Persistent incidences of these less serious offences may lead **to a red card** being issued, at the discretion on the Principal.

### Sanctions

While rewards are central to the promotion of good behaviour, there is also a need for sanctions/consequences to register the disapproval of unacceptable behaviour and to protect the health and safety of the school community.

Sanction/consequences should be used as infrequently as possible.

Responses to misbehaviour in the classroom should follow a clear sequence, allowing the pupil opportunities to make good decisions during a low-level behaviour management phase **before** the misbehaviour escalates towards more serious consequences:

Behaviour Management Phase:

1. Tactical ignoring- Pausing
2. Non-verbal cue
3. Take-up time- "Thank You"
4. Incidental language- "right now we are all working on...."
5. Positive verbal re-direct- Behavioural direction... I need you to....
6. Re-engagement strategies
7. Verbal reminder of expected behaviour: Rule reminder....What is our rule for...?
8. Distractions
9. Choices- direct or deferred
10. Direct questions- what? When? Where? How? (not why?)
11. Blocking and Partial Agreement- "Maybe so but I need you to...."

Serious Consequences Phase:

12. Warning of consequences
13. Loss of privileges
14. Timeout, in the classroom or on the playground
15. Call parent
16. Work assignment
17. Yellow Card and detention during school hours ( includes meeting with parents, pupil, Principal, teacher)
18. Red Card- detention after school or miss school outing/event ( includes removal to Principal's Office; meeting with parents, pupil, Principal, teacher, BOM informed )
19. Red Card- Suspension ( includes meeting with parents, pupil, Principal, teacher, BOM permission sought, TUSLA/NEWB contacted)



Violent or destructive behaviour will merit an immediate escalation to more serious consequences.

### **Procedure**

The Board of Management of St. Brendan's NS has sanctioned that the following procedure takes place when persistent or gross misbehaviour occurs.

**A yellow card** can be issued instantly if a pupil persistently misbehaves or continues to disobey after being reprimanded.

**A yellow card** will be issued to the pupil by the School Principal. Where the Principal is not available it will be issued by the Deputy Principal, the Assistant Principal or the next senior member of the teaching staff. This card will be stapled into the pupil's homework notebook. This card will be removed when detention or other sanction is completed.

**The sanction** for receiving a yellow card is either a time out , a loss of a privilege or detention on a given day either during the lunch or break period.

The **yellow card** will explain the misbehaviour and the sanction. This will be signed by the teacher, the principal and the parents/guardians and returned to the class teacher the following day.

When a pupil must attend for detention prior notice will be given to parents/guardians.

### **Red Card**

The **red card** can be issued instantly to a pupil on committing a serious misbehaviour or following repeated misbehaviours that already merited a yellow card. It will be issued by the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal or a senior member of the teaching staff. This card will be stapled into the pupil's homework notebook and will be removed when detention or other sanction is completed.

Parents/ Guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone or letter posted on the evening of the offence and the pupil will not be allowed to return to class until parents/guardians have reported to the Principal. The pupil shall remain in the Principals Office until the situation is resolved.

The **red card** will explain the misbehaviour and the sanction. This will be signed by the teacher, Principal and Parents/ Guardians.

**The sanction** for receiving a red card is one of the following, depending on the severity of the misdemeanour and at the principal's discretion, in consultation with the teachers:

1. Detention – 1 or 2 consecutive sessions of 1 hour after school.
2. Non-participation in school outing / major activity.
3. Suspension

### **Detention**

- Detention may take place during the lunch break 12-30pm-1.00pm or it may take place on a suitable evening after school from 3-4pm.
- Two members of the teaching staff will supervise detention on a rota basis.
- A written exercise may be given to the pupil on detention.

## **Detentions, suspensions and non participation in school outings/activities will be reported to the Board of Management of St. Brendan's NS.**

### **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as: requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days. During the period of a suspension, the student retains their place in the school.

1. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:
  - the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other 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.
2. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.
3. The principal may be given authority to suspend a pupil up to 3 days, which will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management. The Principal is still accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of that authority. In the event that a BOM meeting cannot be convened in timely fashion, the Principal will contact the Chairperson, who may then authorise the suspension.
4. A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.
5. Suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour and provision will be made for the return of the pupil, taking into account the need to support the pupil towards better behaviour.
6. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person
7. A student should not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal and the Board of Management considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.
8. The school will liaise with and be advised by the National Educational Welfare Board as soon as suspension is considered as a sanction.
9. Parents will be informed in writing of the reason for suspension, the dates that it is to take place and of the right to appeal to the BOM or the DES, the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
10. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
11. The school will follow the guidelines of the NEWB in relation to suspension of a pupil.

### **Expulsion**

1. Expulsion would only be considered in the most grievous and exceptional circumstances.
2. Only the Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil.
3. The school must have tried a series of other interventions, and exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour, before expulsion is considered.
4. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:
  - a. a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
  - b. actual violence or physical assault
  - c. supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
  - d. sexual assault.

5. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:
  - a. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
  - b. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
  - c. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
  - d. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
  - e. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
  - f. Confirmation of the decision to expel
6. The Guidelines from the NEWB in relation to expulsion will be strictly followed.
7. A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Educational Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

### **Parental Involvement/Partnership**

Parents/guardians play a vital role in promoting good behaviour in school and so effective home school communication is very important.

The school will expect that parents/guardians will give their full support in dealing with their child's behaviour and in implementing the behaviour code.

On enrolment parents/guardians/ will be provided with a copy of the behaviour code and will be expected to sign that they are willing to accept it in its entirety.

### **Complaints procedure**

St Brendan's N.S recognizes the important role parents/guardians play in their child's education and in the implementation of an effective behaviour code in order to provide a safe and secure environment for staff and pupils. It also recognizes that parents/guardians are partners with their child's school in providing the best possible education for their son /daughter and that the moral development of the child is equally as important as the academic achievements. However if parents/guardians do not agree with the school's decision regarding the implementation of the behaviour code they have the right to discuss the situation with the concerned parties. The procedure to be followed if parents/guardians wish to complain is as follows:

- an appointment will be made at a mutually agreed time between parents/guardians and the class teacher
- if the problem remains unresolved an appointment with the school principal will be made
- if the problem still remains unresolved at this stage the parents/guardians will have to submit a written appeal to the Chairman of the Board of Management

### **Success Criteria and Review**

The success of this policy will be seen in its ability to promote a happy and safe learning environment for all of our pupils.

Staff will review the policy annually and parents and pupils will be asked for regular feedback.

Developments particularly in the area of technology may merit an immediate review of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed in conjunction with our AntiBullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Health and Safety Policy.

## Additional Useful Information for Teachers and Parents

### Setting up Whole-class and Group Reward Systems

**Never take a reward away from a child.**

If a child has earned a reward, then it is their reward whatever the subsequent behaviour. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, this should be dealt with separately through a consequence system. This sends the message that the teacher is consistent, predictable and keeps promises.

#### **Tokens:**

- Stickers
- Certificates
- Bookmarks
- Comics
- Badges
- Colouring pictures
- Puzzles (collecting pieces to make a complete puzzle)
- Points
- Stamp
- Positive notes home
- Positive notes to principal
- Vouchers to spend on a favoured activity

#### **Social Rewards:**

- Visit to principal
- Earn a whole-class reward
- Mention of good behaviour in assembly
- Work on display
- Write name in a 'good news' book
- Drinks and biscuits

Rewards can be **individual**, **group** and/or for the **whole class**.

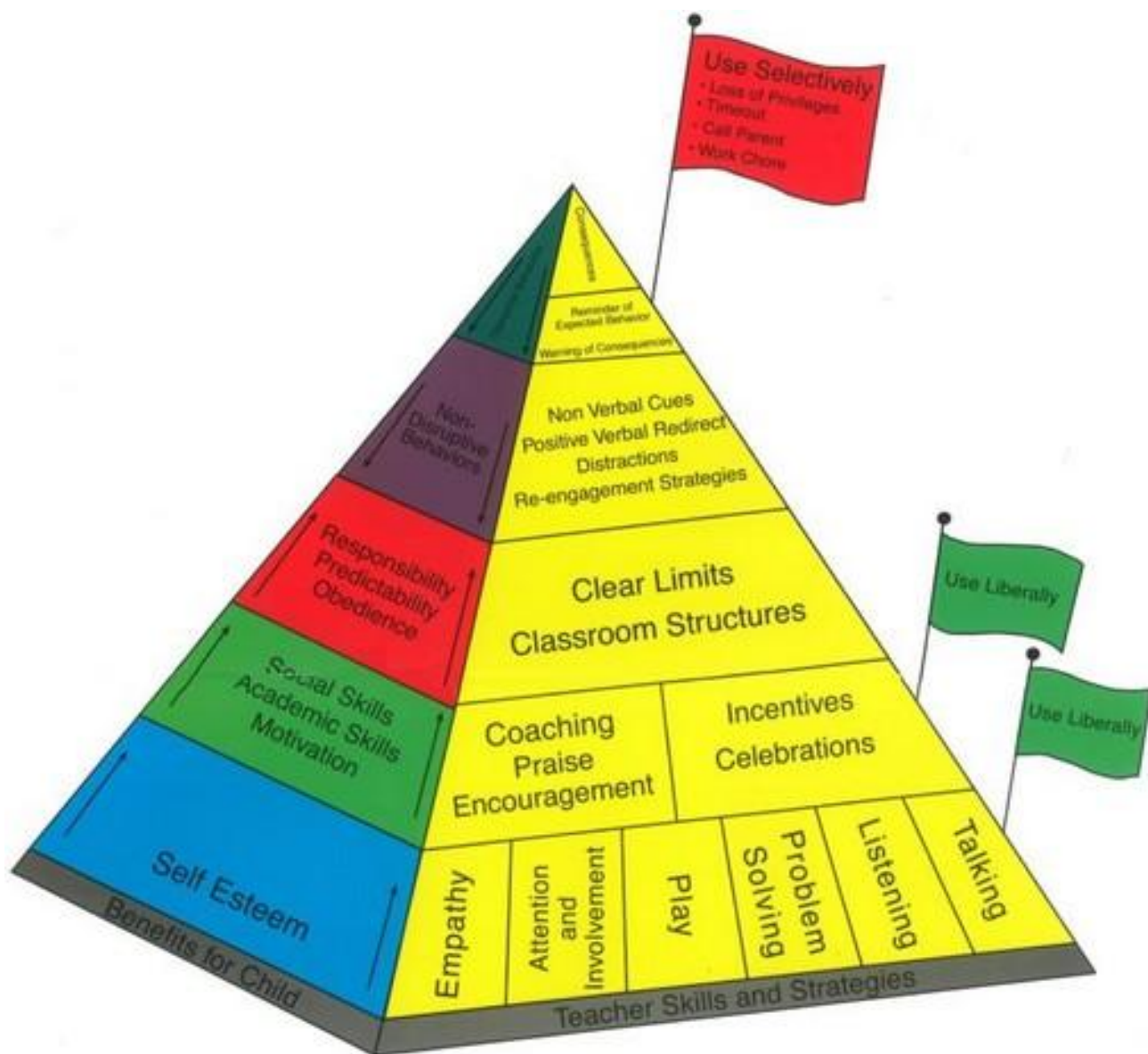
A combination of individual and whole-class reward systems can work very effectively. This encourages both a positive group atmosphere and individual achievement. However, be careful with small group rewards as this can lead to competitiveness and divisiveness in the class if 1 pupil lets the group down continually. Teachers can manage this carefully by ensuring this pupil is seen to earn rewards for the group.

#### **Privileges:**

- First in the line
- Extra time on preferred activity
- Helping the teacher
- Watering the plants/caring for animals/feeding birds
- Sit in a special seat
- Work on a hobby
- Choose a PE game
- A responsibility in class
- Listening to a CD
- Reading favourite book
- Playing a game
- Writing on the board
- Extra computer time
- Tutoring younger pupils
- Working on a special project
- Choosing a circle time game
- Staying in at break time
- Extra play time
- Choosing a favourite video for the class

#### **Natural rewards:**

- Praise
- Smiles
- Positive attention
- Frequent marking and positive comments on work
- Encouragement
- Winks
- Positive signal, e.g. thumbs up



## Teaching Pyramid™

## Time Out

What is it? 'Time Out' can be described as an extended form of 'ignoring', where the pupil is removed for a short period from all sources of reinforcement. It is a consequence which is reserved for 'severe behaviours' such as:

- aggression towards teachers and other pupils, e.g. hitting, extreme verbal abuse;
- destructive behaviour;
- extreme non-compliance, i.e. refusing to do as told about three quarters of the time.

## Benefits

1. Time Out provides an immediate consequence for serious misbehaviour and a means of reducing the impact of disruptive behaviour on peers.
2. It gives the pupil a period of time for reflection and calming down and fosters the development of the pupil's sense of responsibility.
3. It also provides important breathing space for the teacher and other pupils.
4. It is a means of communicating that the behaviour is unacceptable and that other pupils' rights/needs must be safeguarded.
5. When clearly located with the classroom discipline plan, it may be accepted as a consequence for behaviour, rather than seen as a punitive measure.
6. It allows the teacher to model a non-confrontational response to conflict.

## Setting up a Time Out System

Setting up a Time Out system requires careful planning and should be clearly located within an overall classroom management plan and supported by a school-wide discipline policy. The Time Out policy should also be explained clearly to parents.

The steps in setting up and implementing Time Out in the classroom are summarised below.

**Location:** In the classroom this requires an empty chair away from the busiest areas of the classroom and any interesting resources. It should be somewhere where the pupil cannot make eye contact with any other pupil. Names such as thinking chair, quiet chair are appropriate. It is helpful to have an agreed back-up location, e.g. another teacher's room for pupils who refuse to do Time Out in their own room, or where this might be part of an agreed discipline sequence.

**Decide which behaviours will result in Time Out:** Time Out is used for severe behaviours. It is helpful to give a warning for non-compliant behaviour; however, violent or destructive behaviour should lead to immediate time out. Pupils should be clear about the behaviours that lead to Time Out.

**Length of Time Out:** A useful rule of thumb is one minute per year of age and not more than ten minutes. A timer (e.g. egg or sand timer) is essential.

**Teaching pupils about Time Out:** Explain to pupils the behaviours which lead to time out. Teach and role-play how to handle going to the Time Out chair. Teach and role-play with pupils how to help the pupil by ignoring their behaviour while in Time Out.

**Giving a Time Out:** First give a warning (unless the behaviour is violent) and wait for pupil's response. Using a calm, firm tone of voice, tell the pupil what they did and that they must go to Time Out: 'You hit Mary, go to Time Out.' Set a timer. This is helpful for young pupils who have a poor concept of time, and in many cases watching the sand flow through the timer can be calming. The teacher should remain in charge, i.e. teacher says when Time Out is over: 'Anne time out is up.'

**When Time Out is up:** When a pupil is returning from Time Out, it is important to welcome them back to the class. This can be a simple 'come back to your table, let's try again'. Then look for the first behaviour

which can be reinforced through praise. If the Time Out was for non-compliance, repeat the original direction and look for the first opportunity to reinforce compliance (refusal to comply or repetition of behaviour means the sequence starts over).

**Refusal to go to or stay in Time Out:** For younger pupils, it may be effective to gently take them there. For older pupils, a minute can be added for each refusal up to three minutes extra and then a warning about taking Time Out in the back-up location may be given.

**Doing Time Out in another room:** The guidelines above in relation to location and length of time should apply in the back-up room also. When a pupil is sent to do Time Out in the agreed back-up room (another classroom) a note should be sent stating the length of time they are to spend out of the class. When the pupil arrives at the class, the receiving teacher should say, 'You can sit there for x minutes and set the timer.' There should be no other conversation with the pupil until it is time to tell the pupil that they may return to their own classroom. When the pupil returns to their own classroom, the teacher welcomes them back and looks for the first opportunity to reinforce positive behaviour.

Time Out – Other general guidelines to consider:

**Things to avoid:**

- Criticism, negative commentary and angry responses which may escalate behaviour
- Responding to secondary behaviours such as muttering under breath which can also escalate behaviour
- Expecting remorse
- Empty threats and delayed responses; if the behaviour warrants a Time Out or if a warning has been given, implement the Time Out, otherwise the pupil will continue to test the limits

**Record Keeping**

The teacher needs to keep a record of who has been sent to Time Out, when and for what. If a pupil is in Time Out frequently, then they may not view it as a sanction, and other methods may need to be adjusted to effect a change in behaviour. Examples include rewards altered and more praise given for any positive behaviour the pupil is showing.

Other forms of Time Out The time out procedure described here needs to be distinguished from other forms of Time Out which teachers use effectively.

These are

- preventative: seeking a reason to remove a pupil from a situation as a confrontation is brewing, e.g. to deliver a message;
- a less disruptive consequence for off-task behaviour: moving a pupil to a separate table to complete their work if they can't work quietly in a group;

brief cooling off/thinking time within the classroom which is part of an agreed strategy between teacher and a pupil who may have difficulty controlling emotional responses

**YELLOW CARD**  
**ST. BRENDAN'S N.S.**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to inform you that your child has broken the school rules in relation to

\_\_\_\_\_

He/ She must attend for detention on

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_



## Red Card (Detention)

### RED CARD ST. BRENDAN'S N.S.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to inform you that your child has broken the school rules in relation to

\_\_\_\_\_

He/ She must attend for detention on

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

## Red Card (Banned from School Outing)

**RED CARD**  
**ST. BRENDAN'S N.S.**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to inform you that your child has broken the school rules in relation to

\_\_\_\_\_

He/ She will not be allowed to go on the following school outing

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

## Red Card (Suspension)

**RED CARD**  
**ST. BRENDAN'S N.S.**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to inform you that your child has broken the school rules in relation to

\_\_\_\_\_

He/ She is suspended from St. Brendan's N.S. for the following date/s

Date/s \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

**Relevant legislation and legal instruments**

**The Constitution of Ireland** The rights of parents and of the child in the matter of education as set out in Articles 42 and 44.2.4. of the Constitution of Ireland must be respected as fundamental in the school code of behaviour. The requirement for fair procedures derives from Articles 4.3 and 42.4 of the Constitution of Ireland.

#### **The European Convention on Human Rights (1950)**

The right to education and the right to fair procedures are provided for in the ECHR which was transposed into Irish law in the *European Convention on Human Rights Act (2003)*.

#### **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**

This Convention, ratified by Ireland in 1992, provides that the State shall ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the dignity of the child. The Convention requires that the voice of the child must be heard on matters that affect them, having regard to the age and maturity of the child.

**Education Act 1998** Key provisions relevant to the code of behaviour provide for:

- access to records (section 9(g))
- publication of policies (section 15(2))
- the responsibilities of the Board of Management (sections 14–21)
- the Principal's responsibility for setting objectives (sections 22 & 23)
- information for students and Student Councils and student involvement (section 27)
- provision for appeals (section 29).

#### **Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007**

This Act amends the provisions of section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*. It provides for a range of factors which must be considered by an Appeals Committee in relation to suspensions and expulsions. It also makes a number of procedural changes to the section 29 appeals process in relation to time limits and the circumstances in which an appeal can be made.

#### **Education (Welfare) Act 2000**

The provisions of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* most relevant to the code of behaviour are the following:

- general duties of NEWB towards schools (sections 10 & 11)
- provisions relating to notification by parents of reasons for a student's non-attendance at school (section 18)
- provisions for school codes of behaviour (section 23)
- provisions relating to expulsion of a student (section 24)
- provisions relating to appeals (section 26).

**Equal Status legislation** The *Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004* apply to primary and postprimary schools. The Acts promote equality of opportunity and prohibit discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment on these nine grounds:

- gender
- marital status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age
- disability
- race
- membership of the Traveller Community.

They require reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities and allow a broad range of positive action measures.

These Acts also prohibit victimisation of any person who makes a complaint about discrimination, who opposes any acts that are unlawful under the equal status legislation, or who gives evidence in proceedings under the *Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004*, or who gives notice that they intend to do any of these.

#### **Ombudsman for Children Act 2002**

The Ombudsman for Children is empowered to investigate any action taken by, or on behalf of, a school in connection with its functions under section 9 of the *Education Act 1998*, where the school's own complaints procedure has been exhausted.

#### **Education of Persons with Special Needs Act 2004**

**(EPSEN Act)**

The *EPSEN Act 2004* provides for the provision of education plans for students with special educational needs (SEN). Under the Act, children with SEN will be educated "in an inclusive environment with children who do not have SEN", unless this should be inconsistent either with the best interest of the child, or with the effective provision for the other children.

**Disability Act 2005** The *Disability Act 2005* establishes a basis for an independent assessment of individual needs, including education needs, a related service statement and independent redress and enforcement for persons with disabilities. From 1st June 2007 the provisions of the Act are in place for children up to the age of 5 years and will apply to

**Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997**

The *Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act* removes the legal immunity of teachers from criminal liability in respect of physical chastisement of students (section 24). Section 15 of the Act forbids false imprisonment. The Act also forbids threats, intimidation, assault and the use of force and also sets out specific circumstances under which the use of force may not be unlawful (section 18).

**Health and Safety legislation**

The legislation requires Boards of Management, as employers, to provide in as far as reasonably practicable, a safe place of work for employees. The Boards of Management are also required to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that students, parents and visitors, who may be on the school premises, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

The legislation further requires the Boards of Management to conduct their business, as far as reasonably practicable, in ways that prevent improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of employees, or the health and safety of students, parents or visitors, at risk.

**Data Protection Act, 1988 Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003**

Schools that record, maintain and/or store personal data are required by the *Data Protection Acts 1998 & 2003* to protect the privacy rights of individuals. Section 2 of the Act requires that any data schools process is:

- obtained and processed fairly
- accurate and kept up to date
- kept for a specified and lawful purpose
- used or disclosed in a manner consistent with the purpose
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- not kept longer than is necessary
- kept secure.

The Act also requires that an individual be given a copy of the records upon request (section 3).

**Age of Majority Act, 1985** This Act provides that a person aged eighteen or over is an adult and has capacity to enter contracts and make decisions which affect the adult's legal and other rights. The *Education Act 1998* and the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* reflect these provisions.