

# Mary, Mother of Hope Junior National School

## Code of Behaviour

### Our School Ethos

Mary, Mother of Hope Junior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

Children of all faiths and none are welcome in our school.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values.

A spirit of mutual respect and acceptance of difference is promoted within the school community. The school seeks to foster an appreciation of, respect for and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

The school aims at fostering a sense of community between Management, Staff, Parents, Pupils and the wider community.

The school aims at promoting the full, holistic and harmonious development of all aspects of the child, including his/her relationship with their faith, with other people, their community and with the environment.

The community of Mary, Mother of Hope JNS place the safety and protection of our children at the core of our thinking.

The school staff aims at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment.

Staff are encouraged to develop and share their personal and professional skills and interests. Ancillary staff in the school, are highly valued and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.

The school recognises and celebrates the dignity and value of each individual child. Staff are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils in their care and promote inclusion of all children.

Regular communication between home and school is central to the positive experience of the child in school. We aim for parents and staff to value, respect and support one another. We seek to collaborate as partners, in leading the young people in whose education we play such a crucial role.

The school's code of discipline reflects Christian values promoted in the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope.

Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church.

Prayer is a feature of the school day. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of the Catholic Church in co-operation between home, school and parish. Children are given the opportunity to participate in liturgical celebrations.

The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

## **Aim of the Code of Behaviour**

This Code of Behaviour was developed in order to foster a positive and supportive learning environment in the school, so that our children feel respected, secure and happy.

This requires the co-operation of all the school community, including the children, parents, teachers, staff and Board of Management.

## **Principles underlying the Code of Behaviour**

- (a) The underlying principle of our Code of Behaviour is reflective of the overall ethos of our school, in which the uniqueness of each child, with different needs, cultural backgrounds, experiences, abilities and capacities is recognised.
- (b) We seek to support children in all aspects of their development, including their behaviour.
- (c) It is by providing our children with an environment that promotes, develops and maintains supportive and respectful relationships that the aim of this Code of Behaviour can be achieved.
- (d) We aim to nurture the children's personal development, their sense of responsibility and their awareness of the needs of others so as to enable them to become active and responsible citizens.
- (e) We recognise the right of all children in our care to an educational experience in an ordered and relatively disruption free environment.
- (f) Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will yield the most effective results.

## Statement of Positive Behaviours

These have been drawn up in school with children and staff. They are couched in positive terms, and each statement is a definite behaviour which the children can understand and to which they can relate.

- ✓ **We are kind**
- ✓ **We are responsible**
- ✓ **We keep our classroom happy and safe**
- ✓ **We show respect**
- ✓ **We take pride in our school**

**We are kind** is based on the expectation that children will think of how their behaviour affects others and treat all members of the school community - pupils, staff, parents, visitors - in a thoughtful and caring way.

**We are responsible** is based on the expectation that children are responsible for their own actions and the impact those actions have on others. It is also expected that children take responsibility for their work and that it is always completed to the highest standards appropriate to the child concerned. They are also expected to show responsibility by coming to school on time and fully prepared for the day which includes wearing the appropriate uniform, with homework fully completed and with everything they need for the school day.

**We keep our classroom happy and safe** is based on the expectation that children behave in a manner which is appropriate to the classroom by following teachers instructions without delay, being polite and mannerly, treating their classmates and teacher well, working hard and moving about the room in a safe and orderly way.

**We show respect** is based on the expectation that children treat their schoolmates in the way in which they themselves would like to be treated, that they do not destroy or interfere in any way with people's property and that they are polite and mannerly in the presence of staff.

**We take pride in our school** is based on the expectation that children keep their school and classroom clean and tidy, that they wear their uniforms, that they behave in an exemplary manner when representing the school on trips and that they show support for all members of the school community.

## Bullying

In discussing the issue of bullying with our children, we will reinforce the following message:

- Bullying is always wrong.
- I should never bully others.
- I should always tell my parents or teacher if it happens to me.
- Mary, Mother of Hope National School is a 'bully- free' zone.

This information is developed further in the school's policy on bullying.

## School timetable

School begins

8:50 a.m.

School Closes:

Junior Infants & Senior Infants 1.30p.m.

## Strategies

### **a. Encouraging Positive behaviour**

Encouraging Positive behaviour is best achieved by fostering a positive atmosphere in class and throughout the school. Praise may be given by means of any one of the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in pupils journal or notebook
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Stamps, stickers, stars, certificates etc.
- Fair Play Award for Yard
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- An acknowledgement to parent, either written or verbal.
- Star Pupil Award
- Positive comments from another teacher
- Special announcement on P.A system or at Assembly
- Golden Time
- Homework Pass
- System of merit

### **(b) Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour**

There are many strategies, which are open to the teacher and school in showing disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy pursued.

- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Reprimand, including advice on how to improve.
- Communication with Parents - verbal or written.
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privilege
- Writing of explanation or apology
- Referral to Principal or Deputy-Principal.

- Note of misbehaviour recorded by the teacher
- Detention
- Suspension/expulsion in accordance with (Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by circular 7/88)

### **Communicating the Code of Behaviour to Parents.**

Working together with parents as a team underpins everything that we do here at Mary, Mother of Hope JNS. When children are enrolled in our school, parents are asked to read and sign up to our Code of Behaviour.

During the month of September, the Code of Behaviour and the school rules are taught to the children. At the same time, parents are reminded of our Code of Behaviour and of our School Rules at our September Class Meetings.

Each week a Star Pupil is chosen from every class. The star pupil receives a certificate which they take home and their photo is displayed on the "Star Pupil Noticeboard" in the lobby which parents are encouraged to visit.

Once each month a behaviour report card is sent home to parents to read and sign. This report card is then returned to the class teacher and retained in school.

### **School Procedures for dealing with difficult behaviour**

The degree of misbehaviour 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:

#### **Minor Misdemeanours**

##### **Examples of minor misdemeanours:**

- Needlessly interrupting class work
- Not following teacher's instructions
- Behaving inappropriately in line
- Interfering with the work or property of others
- Running in school building
- Rough play
- Leaving litter around school
- Discourtesy to others

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

- Supporting the child in reaching the desired level of behaviour in the school, in a positive way
- Reasoning with the child
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Noting instance of misbehaviour in teacher's book

## **Serious Misdemeanours**

### ***Examples of serious misdemeanours:***

Continuous occurrence of minor misdemeanours

Deliberately hurting a fellow pupil

Refusing to work

Putting safety of self or fellow pupils at risk in the school, in the yard or at break time

Stealing or damaging property

Leaving school without permission

Use of unacceptable language

Telling lies

Being disrespectful

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

#### **In class**

- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Note of behaviour recorded by the teacher
- Pupil asked to speak with Principal or Deputy Principal
- Communication with Parents - verbal or written.
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privilege
- Writing of explanation or apology
- Detention
- Explore possible benefits of shortened day

#### **Communication with the home**

- Verbal communication with Parents

or

- Written note to the home explaining the misbehaviour. This may include a request for parents to meet with the class teacher and/or the Principal or Deputy-Principal.

## **Gross Misdemeanours**

In cases of gross misdemeanours, the school reserves the right accorded to schools under Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by circular 7/88, namely suspension and or expulsion.

### **Examples of Gross Misdemeanours**

Ongoing and frequent incidences of serious misbehaviour

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil

Setting fire to school property

Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on

### **Steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours**

#### **Suspension**

1. Child will be removed from peer group and brought to office
2. Chairperson of Board of Management will be informed and parents will be requested to meet with the Principal, Chairperson and class teacher if appropriate. Chairperson may delegate this responsibility to the Principal on occasion.
3. Chairperson/Principal will sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents for a maximum initial period of three days
4. All communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained
5. A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents
6. When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be readmitted formally to the class by the Principal, or where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the Board and the Principal.
7. If another period of suspension is required the BOM will be asked to make a special decision to authorise a further period of suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. In exceptional cases the BOM may authorise a further period of suspension in order for the matter to be reviewed.

**Expulsion** will be considered only in an extreme case, when all other steps and procedures have been exhausted, and in accordance with Rule 130 -(6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by Circular 7/88 i.e. " *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*".

All guidelines laid down in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare Act 2000) in relation to expulsion will also be strictly adhered to.

- 24. (1)** *Where the Board of Management of a recognised school or a person acting on its behalf is of the opinion that a student should be expelled from that school it shall, before so expelling the student, notify the educational welfare officer to whom functions under this Act have been assigned, in writing, of its opinion and the reasons therefore.*
- (2)** *The educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving a notification under subsection (1), make all reasonable efforts to ensure that provision is made for the continued education of the student to whom the notification relates.*
- (3)** *For the purposes of subsection (2), the educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving the said notification:*  
*make all reasonable efforts to consult with the principal of the school concerned or a person nominated by him or her, the student concerned and his or her parents, and such other persons as the educational welfare officer considers appropriate, and convene a meeting attended by him or her of such of those persons as agree to attend such meeting.*
- (4)** *A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.*
- (5)** *Subsection (4) is without prejudice to the right of a board of management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured*

Parents will also be informed of their right of appeal under Section 29 of the same Act.

**It should be noted that the lists included in this document consist of examples only: They are not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and/or procedural steps.**



## School Policy on Bullying

**Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.**

### **A) Indications of Bullying / Behaviour:**

Anxiety about travelling to/from school

Unwillingness to go to school

Deterioration in educational performance

Pattern of physical illnesses

Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour

Visible signs of anxiety/distress

Possessions missing

Increased requests for money

Unexplained bruising

Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her

### **B) Procedures for noting and reporting incidents:**

(a) All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A special Incident Book will be kept in the office for this purpose only

(b) Serious cases should be referred immediately to the Deputy-Principal and/or to the Principal

(c) Parents should be informed by the Deputy-Principal / Principal earlier rather than later.

(d) Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying

(e) Pupils must be taught to understand that reporting is not 'telling tales'

(f) Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with policy

(g) Non-teaching staff should be encouraged to report incidents. Discretion is important.

### **C) Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:**

1. Calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
2. Incidents best investigated outside the classroom situation
3. Teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved
4. Answers should be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why
5. Members of a gang should be met individually and not as a group
6. Meet parents of parties involved.

7. Teacher may make notes of investigation including contacts with the children involved and their parents

**D) Programme for work with pupils:**

Learning strategies should allow for the enhancement of each pupil's self-worth. This work will be supported in all areas of the school curriculum, particularly in the context of Social Personal Health Education (SPHE).