

## Code of Behaviour

### Introduction and Rationale

St. Mary's Primary School operates under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills and under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The school is a large school in a rural setting with a growing enrollment. It is a co-educational school and caters for children from Junior Infants to Sixth class.

This code has been drawn up for the safety and protection of the pupils and the other members of the school community. The code is based on respect for others and their property. All pupils are expected to behave responsibly, showing consideration and courtesy towards other pupils and adults at all times.

The child is placed at the centre of life in our school. Each child is special and unique. We strive to provide a happy, safe and secure environment so that all children realise their potential. To this end, school should be a well ordered and disciplined setting which is conducive to learning and where good relationships are fostered between pupils, teachers, parents and others involved in the life of the school. When dealing with behaviour a resolution is always the most favoured approach and communicating in a calm and constructive manner is always advocated.

It is acknowledged that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of cooperation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. Older students are also encouraged to model good behaviour for younger students.

In cooperation with parents, our school adopts a positive approach to discipline and behaviour. Many forms of positive reinforcement are used, praise, encouragement, stars, prizes etc.

Misbehaviour is judged having regard to age, temperament, range of ability, previous behaviour history and other relevant factors

### Aims of the Code

- To create a positive school culture that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- To promote positive self-esteem and relationships
- To foster a sense of pride and responsibility in pupils towards themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy, and respect for their fellow pupils and adults at all times
- To foster a sense of pride and responsibility in pupils towards the property of the individual and of the school
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To facilitate the education and development of every pupil
- To ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated and respected
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through effective communication
- To ensure that discipline is dealt with in a consistent and fair manner
- To ensure that behaviour expectations are consistent and fair
- To encourage the involvement of both parents and staff in the implementation of this policy

### Roles and Responsibilities

**The Board of Management** of the school has the overall responsibility for school policies. It works closely with the Principal to monitor and review the effective implementation of the Code of Behaviour. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend and expel pupils. Aspects of this authority are delegated to the principal by the Board.

**The Principal** is responsible for ensuring that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in the school. The Principal may intervene at any time and may issue suspensions and recommend students to the Board of Management for expulsion. The Principal will give particular attention to the pastoral practices of the school to ensure that pupils feel valued and respected.

**The Deputy Principal** works closely with the Principal to assist with the implementation of the Code of Behaviour in the school.

**Class Teachers** have responsibility in the first instance for implementation of the Code of Behaviour for children in their class as they are best placed (knowing the child) to decide the appropriate course of action, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and grounds or when children are in the care of the school. Examples include when on yard duty, at assemblies or when on trips and tours. Teachers will give particular attention to positive practices that promote positive self-esteem for all pupils.

**Special Education Teachers** have a supportive and consultative role with regard to the positive implementation of the Code of Behaviour with particular reference to students with learning or behavioural difficulties, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and grounds. While responsibility remains with the class teacher, the support teacher has a role in supporting the class teacher to manage children who need extra attention. The SET may work as a team with the class teacher when adopting a problem solving approach to address challenging behaviour.

**Special Needs Assistants** have a supportive role in consultation with the class/support teacher with regard to the implementation of the code of behaviour, with particular reference to students with learning or behavioural difficulties.

### **Parents/Guardians**

The support of parents/guardians is fundamental to the effective implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour.

**Parents /Guardians indicate their agreement and support of the Code of Behaviour by enrolling their child in the school. Parents are asked to talk to their child about the school rules at the start of every school year.**

### **School Pupils**

Pupils are expected to do their best to follow the Code of Behaviour of the school.

### **All Adults in the School Community**

All adults encountered by the pupils at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, including the use of praise and encouragement rather than criticism, in their dealings with the pupils.

As the adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote positive behaviour through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage and model relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- Respect and preserve the dignity of all children

### **Communication between school and home**

Good communication between school and parents will be fostered for the benefit of the school community.

Communication between parents/guardians and the teacher/principal may be facilitated in the following ways:

- a note in pupil's journal
- a letter to parent/guardian
- a phone call outside of class time
- personal contact after school or by appointment
- parent/teacher meetings
- an email or a message on Aladdin

### **Promoting Good Behaviour**

St. Mary's P.S. promotes a belief in doing one's best, a love of learning, and a strong sense of work balanced by a spirit of enjoyment and fun. In this context the importance of a whole school approach, through consistent positive communication of the school rules is recognised. All staff members are aware of the high standards of behaviour expected in the school and of their role in supporting each other to promote good behaviour within the classroom and in the school grounds or when in their role as staff member.

Pupils are introduced to 'The Golden Rules', a positive and child-friendly version of the school rules, from Junior Infants and are encouraged to be responsible for their own behaviour. The Golden Rules are explained by the class teacher **at the start of every year.**

'The Golden Rules which guide our behaviour are:

1. I am gentle.
2. I am kind and helpful
3. I listen
4. I am honest
5. I work hard
6. I look after property

For Infants these are summarised as:

I have kind and safe hands

I have kind and safe feet

I use kind words

## **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules or a class contract with the children. These reflect and support the school guiding principles as they apply in the classroom and are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences. **In each class the rules are taught through a series of lessons at the start of the year and are revisited regularly in class and in assemblies throughout the year**

The guiding principles which underpin our code of behaviour are:

- Pupils should respect the right of others to learn and play in a secure and safe atmosphere
- Pupils will always be gentle, kind, helpful and courteous ( kind hands , kind feet & kind words)
- Pupils will follow the class teacher's instructions including any supervising teacher
- Pupils should bring to school each day the books, copies, pens, pencils necessary to do their work properly and take care of these items
- Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their appearance, be neat and clean and wear the correct uniform.
- P.E. gear should be worn on appropriate days only
- Healthy lunches are advocated
- Pupils should complete assigned homework to the best of their ability, which may be oral/written, memorisation, project, reading or other tasks. Written work shall be completed in a neat and presentable form.
- Pupils should follow classroom rules on tidiness, safety, e.g. school bags under the table, speaking in turn, lining up to go out, proper care of school equipment and furnishings
- Pupils should move around the school in a safe and appropriate manner

## **Incentives and Rewards**

### **Learning Good Behaviour**

Opportunities to practice positive behaviour and to teach pupils strategies for resolving conflict and managing their behaviour arise as part of the school curriculum. Circle Time in SPHE, Role Play in Drama and many Religious Education lessons provide such opportunities. As outlined in the Incredible Years Programme, promoting positive growth in relationships with students is essential. A nurturing teacher-student relationship built on trust, understanding and care fosters students' cooperation and motivation and promotes learning, social and emotional development and academic achievement.

**Achievements:** Pupils achievements in Sports, Music, Drama and other activities are acknowledged by the class teachers. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate and praise pupils' engagement in these activities e.g. after matches and concerts, at assemblies and by a visit to the classroom from the Principal or Deputy Principal.

**Good Behaviour:** Teachers are very conscious of the value of praise in encouraging students to keep the school rules. Students are praised by teachers for good behaviour when moving around the school, lining up in the yard, displaying courteous and respectful behaviour etc.

### **Restorative Practice Questions to help resolve situations**

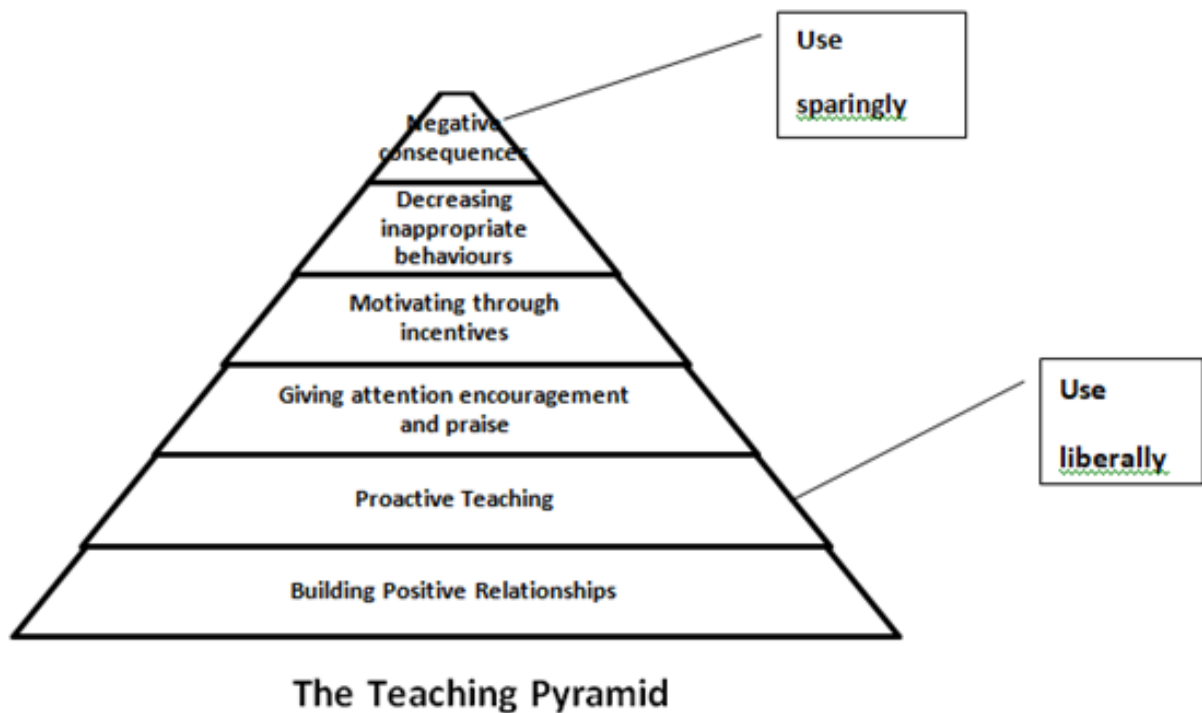
1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking of at the time?
3. What have you thought about it since?
4. Who has been affected and in what way?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?

It is important to be FAIR as this will help everything to work much better for all

ENGAGE with everyone who is affected by the decision

EXPLAIN why the decision needs to be made and any contributing factors

Make sure everyone knows what is EXPECTED of them in the future



### Classroom Reward Systems

A class system of positive reinforcement through individual and group rewards motivates and encourages pupils to keep the class rules. To support pupils to develop their potential to the full we recognise the value of encouragement and praise. Through a reward-based system, students show interest and increased participation in everyday classroom duties and responsibilities. Motivating students to learn is part of the challenge that teachers face when teaching content and giving rewards and offering praise often results in more effort and motivation and improved behaviour on the part of students.

The following are some samples of how praise might be given;

- Names of students who have made great efforts posted on classroom door
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book or journal
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents, written or verbal communication.
- A system of merit marks or stickers (individual and groups)
- Group of the day/week
- Certificates at end of term or beginning of next term for good behaviour
- Student of the week: A4 holder on each classroom door – best boy and best girl named on it for the week
- Trophy for 2 pupils from each room at end of term
- Yard – Behaviour: Reward for classes at the end of month who had no name in the yard book.
- Yard – Lining Up: Reward each week for best line at lining up e.g. extra few minutes on a Friday or Monday
- Attendance – Certificates
- Class Dojo points
- Marbles in the jar

## Yard Reward Systems

Children are praised by all staff and rewarded accordingly for positive behaviour in the yard. e.g. safe play, kindness towards others, resolving conflict appropriately, good lining up, safe movement to and from the yard

### Yard Rules

1. **Children will play in a safe and respectful manner. ( kind/safe hands, kind/safe feet and kind words)**
  2. **Pupils will remain within the playground boundaries.**
  3. **Permission will be sought to re-enter the school building from the supervising teachers.**
  4. **Pupils will keep the playground free of litter.**
  5. **When the bell rings children stop playing and form an orderly line to re-enter the school.**
  6. **Children will enter and exit the school playgrounds in a safe and appropriate manner**
- If a child appears to be misbehaving the teacher will talk to them. The teacher should endeavour to establish the full circumstances of events and if anyone else was involved. If others are involved where practicable the teacher should follow a process of restorative justice to solve any conflict. (See Restorative Practice Questions)
  - It may suit to speak to the child/children in a more private area e.g. at the fence or wall to provide the child with an opportunity to compose themselves
  - The teacher will then judge whether the child should return to the general play area or if the child needs time to calm down and reflect on what has happened before being **allowed** to return to play.
  - If the incident/behaviour is such that it is judged by the teacher to warrant further consequences the teacher on duty will inform the class teacher about what has happened. The class teacher may investigate the matter further e.g. if others were involved, the nature of the misbehaviour, the child's previous history of behaviour. If the behaviour warrants further consequences the teacher may impose a sanction.
  - If the behaviour is of a serious or major nature, the incident is recorded under the child's name on the school electronic recording system and the steps are applied consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal where appropriate
  - If the behaviour in the yard is persistent and consequences do not appear to be helping the child learn, the SET may work with the class teacher on a class support plan for behaviour following the continuum of support process.

#### Notes:

1. If the teacher on duty decides that the weather is suitable then the children will go outside.
2. Children should only be sent to school if they are well enough to go outside to the yard.
3. If children have a broken bone or serious injury that allows them to come to school but would make it unsafe for them to go to the yard they may sit in the First Aid area.
4. Children are not allowed to go home at lunch-time

### Unacceptable Behaviour and Consequences

#### Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Major and Serious. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher.

#### Consequences

The aim of any consequence is always to prevent the behaviour occurring again and to help the children learn from the event

Consequences should always be proportionate to the misbehaviour. Curriculum subjects will not be withdrawn from pupils except where their behaviour is a source of danger or disruption to others e.g. during PE for a short time or if the approved sanction being used means that it is unavoidable.

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

- It must be clear to all why the consequence is being applied
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future consequences
- There should be a clear distinction between minor, major and serious offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.
- Honesty and acceptance of responsibility for one's actions should be taken into account
- Age, behavioural history, emotional maturity and cognitive functioning should be considered when deciding on categorizing behaviours and consequences

## Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The code acknowledges three broad categories of misbehaviour and examples of each are outlined below:

### 1. Misbehaviour

### 2. Major Misbehaviour

### 3. Serious Misbehaviour

<b>Misbehaviour</b> <i>(As defined by the teacher)</i>	<b>Major Misbehaviour</b> <i>(Persistent Misbehaviour may become Major Misbehaviour)</i>	<b>Serious Misbehaviour</b> <i>(Repeated Major Misbehaviour may become Serious Misbehaviour)</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. *Not doing or completing assigned work either in school or for homework without good reason (good reason is determined by the child's age, circumstances, level of ability and the nature of the task).</li> <li>2. Ignoring Teacher's instructions.</li> <li>3. Distracting other pupils from learning</li> <li>4. * Late arrival to school (consequence depends on age/class and ability to be responsible for own action- e.g. if the child left the house on time and was still late)</li> <li>5. *Unruliness and unsafe movement on corridors and school grounds.</li> <li>6. Breaking of school rules/ classroom rules.</li> <li>7. *Incomplete school uniform.</li> <li>8. Being rude or disrespectful to members of staff.</li> <li>9. Telling lies</li> <li>10. Racism without intent to offend</li> <li>11. Unintentional use of inappropriate sexual language, innuendo or gestures</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repeatedly not doing or completing assigned work either in school or for homework without good reason</li> <li>2. Repeatedly ignoring the teacher's instructions.</li> <li>3. Repeated distracting other children from learning.</li> <li>4. Repeated unruliness on corridors and school grounds.</li> <li>5. Repeated breaking of school/ classroom rules.</li> <li>6. Use of bad language and/or gestures with intent to offend</li> <li>7. Dangerous behaviour that is liable to cause injury.</li> <li>8. Physical hurting of another child. (consideration given to age and maturity level)</li> <li>9. Aggressive verbal outbursts ( consideration given to age and understanding)</li> <li>10. Deliberately damaging other peoples' property</li> <li>11. Racism, regardless of intention</li> <li>12. *Truancy</li> <li>13. Repeated telling of lies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repeated Major Misbehaviours from previous column.</li> <li>2. Stealing.</li> <li>3. Verbal abuse of a teacher.</li> <li>4. Bullying or intimidation of fellow pupils or teachers.</li> <li>5. Damage or theft of school property.</li> <li>6. Pupils leaving school grounds without permission.</li> <li>7. Persistent breaking of school rules.</li> <li>8. Physical abuse of a teacher.</li> <li>9. Racism-with intent to hurt/offend ( investigation to establish)</li> <li>10. Deliberate use of offensive remarks relating to gender identity or sexual orientation</li> <li>11. Grossly offensive gestures.</li> <li>12. Telling lies (if the school believes it to have a serious consequence).</li> <li>13. Serious physical hurting of another child.</li> <li>14. Deliberate dangerous behaviour causing injury.</li> <li>15. **Use of Mobile phones and other personal digital devices when children are in the care of the school</li> <li>16. Breaches of school Acceptable Usage Policy</li> <li>17. Inappropriate comments in relation to school staff or other students on social media platforms</li> <li>18. Inappropriate intentional use of sexual language, innuendo or gestures</li> <li>19. Inappropriate exchange of money by the children in school e.g. selling sweets, forced to give money to another child etc</li> <li>20. Bullying as defined, determined and guided by school Anti Bullying Policy</li> </ol>

**Note1:** There are certain behaviours that are a shared responsibility between the parents, children and the school.

These areas include:

- Homework completion
- Wearing of uniform
- Punctuality
- Safe travel around the school grounds
- Truancy and school refusal

When it comes to these areas there needs to be clear communication of expectations from both parents and teachers. School rules regarding these areas should be followed and conversation should take place between parents and teachers should there be concerns relating to any of these areas. The age and cognitive functioning of the child must be considered when apportioning levels of responsibility.

Note 2: While use of mobile phones is classed as serious misbehaviour the consequences are determined and outlined in the Mobile phone and Digital Device Policy

## Strategies for Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour

The following **is a guide** to matching the misbehaviour with the appropriate behaviour check:

1. Misbehaviour – Follow Steps 1 – 3
2. Major Misbehaviour – Follow Step 4-6
3. Serious Misbehaviour – Follow Steps 5-7 ( follow step 4 here if required)
4. Please see section on Expulsion on guidance when following Step 8

**Repeated misbehaviour must be communicated to parents and a meeting should be held.**

**If the parents fail to engage, the school will proceed with the policy and steps**

**If persistent misbehaviour escalates to major misbehaviour a meeting between the class teacher and parents should be held to discuss the matter.**

### Summary of Steps to assist managing behaviour from J1 to 2nd class onwards

Minor Misbehaviour	1	Oral warning
Minor Misbehaviour	2	A visual reminder such as Card on desk (behaviour alert card to parents- optional)
Minor Misbehaviour	3	Time out space in class for set time (5 mins in infants classes and up to 15 mins in 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> class) (behaviour alert card to parents- <b>optional</b> )
Major or Serious Misbehaviour	4	On a positive behaviour report card for 5 consecutive school days- Parents sign
Major Misbehaviour	5	Behaviour thinking time (up to 15 mins)
Serious Misbehaviour	6	Internal suspension and warning of suspension
Serious Misbehaviour	7	Suspension
Serious Misbehaviour	8	Expulsion

### Summary of Steps to assist managing behaviour from 3<sup>rd</sup> class onwards

Minor Misbehaviour	1	Oral warning
Minor Misbehaviour	2	Card on desk or state Step 2 verbally (note home)
Minor Misbehaviour	3	Off side time in class for set time (20 mins) (note home)
Major or Serious Misbehaviour	4	Put on a positive behaviour report card for 5 consecutive school days
Serious Misbehaviour	5	Behaviour thinking time and parents informed of reason (30 mins)
Serious Misbehaviour	6	Internal suspension and warning of suspension
Serious Misbehaviour	7	Suspension
Serious Misbehaviour	8	Expulsion

**Points to note:** The class teacher may contact or meet with the parents at any stage of managing behaviour if deemed necessary and if it is believed doing so would support an improvement in the child's behaviour. **There will be some degree of flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances and or individual needs particularly in relation to children with special needs or suspected special needs.** (See children with special needs section below)

**See Restorative Practice Questions to help resolve situations of conflict**

<b>Steps for Assisting to Manage Behaviour</b>	
<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>At all stages in the steps to manage behaviour teachers will remind children about an acceptable alternative behaviour endeavouring to prevent moving further along the line of consequences.</p> <p><b>Oral Warning</b></p> <p><b>Visual reminder or verbally state Step 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A step 2 is not usually communicated however this is at the discretion of the teacher and depends on the behaviour and the frequency of getting to this step. A written note may be sent home (e.g. behaviour alert card, a note in the journal or a message on Aladdin). Depending on the behaviour the teacher may include details of the behaviour on the child's file on aladdin</li> </ul> <p><b>Offside-Time/ Time Out in the classroom :</b> A desk or a space with a seat within the classroom for a period ( <b>5 mins in JI, 10 mins in SI, 15 mins 1<sup>st</sup> class and 2<sup>nd</sup> class up to 20 mins in 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup>class</b> and then return to be seated with the main class.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Part of the approach to dealing with misbehaviour is to emphasise positive behaviour. Within steps 1-3 every opportunity is afforded to the child to prevent moving to step 4.</p> <p>To reinforce positive behaviour at this point, teachers seek every opportunity to '<b>catch the child being good</b>' and <b>will praise efforts made by the child to improve behaviour</b> The class teacher will use positive strategies to improve behaviour alongside the steps which depend on the nature of the misbehaviour</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding every opportunity to praise a good behaviour in the classroom</li> <li>• Tactically ignoring the misbehaviour if possible</li> <li>• Moving closer to the pupil to signal behaviour change</li> <li>• Using a non verbal cue such as thumbs up for a good behaviour</li> <li>• Card systems</li> <li>• Golden time</li> </ul> <p><b>There are occasions when the offside table may form part of a behaviour plan as a preventative strategy and is <u>not</u> considered a sanction/consequence.</b></p> <p>If a child is repeatedly advancing through consequences 1-3 and no progress in behaviour is apparent, communication will be made with parents by the teacher : e.g. note in journal/ phone call, message on Aladdin and/or a meeting</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Positive behaviour report card:</b> ( use template)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Teacher will seek assistance from the principal or deputy principal by sending a request for step 4 intervention slip to the office (use template)</li> <li>• The teacher will notify parents of the behaviour details in a standard letter. This letter can be sent home with the child or sent on Aladdin. It may be handed to the parents of the children in the Infant classes. Class teachers will communicate to explain the details by a note in their journal, sending a message on Aladdin, speaking in person to the parents or phoning them. Parents must respond to indicate that they are aware of the letter.</li> <li>• Details of the child's behaviour/s will be recorded in the school records.</li> <li>• <b>Consequence: Letter states that the child is on a positive behaviour report card and the reason for this. The child's behaviour is tracked for the period of 5 consecutive school days with a focus on improving the behaviour.</b> The parents must sign the card each day.</li> <li>• At the end of the period if the child has not improved the behaviour the child may either be put on a <b>Classroom Support Plan</b> or if deemed more serious a <b>Behaviour Plan</b> ( see section below).</li> <li>• The teacher and the parents may communicate further with each other either by phone or in person.</li> </ul> <p><b>Behaviour Plan</b> As stated, if a child repeatedly reaches Step 4 e.g. more than twice within <b>a calendar month e.g, 15 of Sept – 15 of October</b>, then the continuum of support will be considered. Consultation will take place between the class teacher, SET and school management. <b>A Classroom Support Plan</b> (with checklists on the learning environment and the child's thoughts etc) will be completed and a short term plan such as a <b>simple reward chart</b> will be established. This will be reviewed after a number of weeks in consultation with the parents.</p> <p>If the behaviour is not improving a more detailed <b>Behaviour Support Plan</b> may be developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This involves further exploration for possible reasons for the behaviour The principal must be made aware of this. The Deputy Principal may be involved as SEN coordinator. All support plans must be made available to the Principal and on the child's file on Aladdin.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A positive behaviour target is set for the child to work on with strategies to reinforce the behaviour sought.</li> <li>• <b>Meeting:</b> The teacher will meet with the parents in order that both the school and the home can support the plan. This behaviour plan provides the student with the opportunity to make a fresh start.</li> <li>• A behaviour plan affords <u>all</u> children the opportunity to improve behaviour according to their own circumstances and needs and prevent further consequences. It also supports children with special educational needs by identifying a possible trigger to their behaviour, supporting their specific needs which in turn may prevent the misbehaviour.</li> <li>• Discretion in consequences and behaviours monitored will take into account the efforts of children with Special Needs</li> </ul> <p><b>Notes:</b> Part of the behaviour plan may involve a child being sent to a partner teacher as a strategy and a support ( e.g. at break time when partner teacher is supervising a class)and in this case parents will <u>not need</u> to be notified each time it occurs- only in terms of agreeing it to be part of the plan. They will have been made aware of this as a strategy when meeting the teacher to discuss the behaviour plan previously.</p> <p>There are occasions when a child may be supervised for a short period in another classroom to prevent misbehaviour e.g. if a child is upset or agitated or if the teacher is on yard supervision, lunch break and supervision in another classroom is deemed appropriate. In this instance parents will <b>not</b> be informed as the child may not have broken class rules and is <b>not</b> being sanctioned. This is usually included as a strategy on child's support plan</p>
5	<p><b>Behaviour Thinking time:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Teacher will seek assistance from the Principal or Deputy Principal by sending a request for step 5 intervention slip to the office ( using template)</li> <li>• The teacher will notify parents of the behaviour details and of the supervised reflection time in a standard letter. This letter can be sent home with the child or sent on Aladdin. It may be handed to the parents of the children in the Infant classes. Class teachers will communicate to explain the details by a note in their journal, sending a message on Aladdin, speaking in person to the parents or phoning them. Parents must respond to indicate that they are aware of the letter.</li> <li>• Details of the child's behaviour/s will be recorded in the school records.</li> <li>• <b>If a child proceeds to step 5 they will remain inside supervised for a fixed period of the lunch break.</b></li> <li>• For Junior to Second Class they will remain seated inside in a supervised area for a period of up to 15 minutes of the lunch break.</li> <li>• Third – Sixth Classes will remain in a supervised area during the lunch break.</li> <li>• The teacher and parents may communicate further with each other to discuss the student's behaviour.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> <i>If</i> a child reaches Step 5 more than twice in a one month period they may move to Step 6. This is considered in consultation with the Principal and SETs</p>
6	<p><b>Internal Suspension</b></p> <p>If internal suspension is considered by the school as the most suitable consequence the child does not participate in work with their own class for a full day. They may be in another room where they can be supervised or if conditions do not allow then at the side of their room where they complete their assigned work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher informs the principal of the details of the incident in writing</li> <li>• Teacher puts written record on school system</li> <li>• Parents are notified of the misbehaviour by a letter from the principal and a warning of suspension may be issued.</li> <li>• <b>Meeting:</b> The Principal or Deputy Principal may contact the parents to discuss the child's behaviour.</li> <li>• A behavioural plan may be considered depending on the nature of the misbehaviour ( e.g. repeated serious misbehaviours)</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Suspension</b> As a result of certain behaviour a child may be suspended.(See section on suspensions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written record by class teacher</li> <li>• Letter from principal</li> <li>• Details are outlined in this document.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Expulsion</b> As a result of certain behaviour a child may be expelled.(See section on expulsions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written record by class teacher</li> <li>• Letter from principal</li> <li>• Details are outlined in this document.</li> </ul>

**Note: It is open to the Principal to intervene at any stage in the steps for assisting to manage behaviour if the principal believes such an intervention may be of benefit.**

## **Pupils with Special Needs and suspected Special Needs**

All pupils are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The pupils in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs to adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals. Some pupils may be required to follow an individualised programme devised by the class teacher to help them learn positive behaviour appropriate for the classroom and school environment. Such programmes will be drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians and will require support from parents/guardians at home. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Support teachers may have a supportive and consultative role in the devising and implementation of such programmes.

For a child initially exhibiting repeated and persistent challenging behaviour, the classroom teacher and support teacher can consult and decide whether the behaviour is underpinned by possible additional physical, cognitive, emotional and social or specific learning needs. Depending on the age of the child and nature of the behaviours, the class teacher may initially choose a **Classroom Support Plan, implement** an individual reward chart and may liaise with the parents. If further interventions or investigations are warranted it may be decided to proceed with the Continuum of Support, work through the checklists (learning environment, thoughts about school checklist, consultation with parents list etc) and implement a **School Support Plan which will encompass a Behaviour Plan. This** should be drawn up following discussion with parents, with a few small specific targets and should be implemented for a number of weeks. At this point following review a decision should be taken to move on to additional school supports or to seek the assistance of external professionals. A new **School Support Plan** should be put in place, and reviewed. Following this stage, a decision may then be taken to move onto **School Support Plus**, where information may be gathered with help from external agencies. Again a plan is put in place and reviewed. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) can be involved in a consultative role at all stages.

The behaviour plan should be reviewed regularly and where necessary a new priority goal be introduced. The NEPS psychologist and the NCSE can be consulted at any stage in the above process or if the challenges increase or persist.

There are occasions when all the above interventions do not work and the Code of Behaviour needs to be fully enforced as the mainstream school is a workplace and safety and education of all children and adults is of paramount importance

## **Suspension**

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This may be delegated by the Board to the Principal. Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. The Board of Management must ensure that fair procedures are in place in the case of a suspension.

### **Reasons to suspend**

The decision to suspend requires serious grounds such as

- the students' behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students. Any behaviour that is persistently disruptive to learning or potentially dangerous can be a serious matter.
- 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.

Factors relating to the behaviour should be considered before suspending a child but a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

**Automatic suspension:** A Board may decide that particular behaviours incur suspension as a sanction. (Child suspended from the next day)

**Immediate suspension:** Although notice is normally given for suspension there are times when it may be necessary to suspend a student immediately. 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. Fair procedures must still be applied. (Child to be collected immediately or suspended from the end of that day) Consideration should be given to a number of areas for immediate suspension e.g. threat to safety, theft, assault by a student who understands the seriousness of the misbehaviour, online bullying, vandalism, intrusive photographs taken without permission. An immediate suspension should be rare and a decision to suspend should not be taken lightly.

## Procedures in respect of suspension from school

Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- the right to be heard
- the right to impartiality

The principles of fair procedures always apply but the degree of formality will depend on the seriousness of the misbehaviour and the sanction. The level of formality required for a suspension of fewer than three days would be less than that required for a longer suspension or for an expulsion.

In a school fair procedures apply to

- the **investigation** of the alleged misbehaviour
- the process of **decision-making** as to
  - whether the student did engage in the misbehaviour and
  - what sanction to impose

The **right to be heard** means that a student and their parents are fully informed about an allegation and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter, and that they must be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. Parents may be informed by phone or in writing. It should be made clear what the student is alleged to have done.

The right to be heard does not apply in the same way in the case of an immediate suspension. The right to be heard will follow the suspension of the child. If the appeal is successful the suspension will be removed from the child's record and will not be noted for records with the Department.

**Impartiality** means that the Principal may arrange for another member of staff to investigate a situation and to present a full report on the facts to the Principal. Where the Principal conducts the investigation, as well as making a finding and proposing a sanction he or she must act fairly. The person alleging the misbehaviour, or who is the victim, or a witness should not usually conduct the investigation. This also means that a Principal/ Teacher or member of the Board of Management would absent themselves from the decision making process relating to suspension or expulsion of their own child.

### Opportunity to respond

Parents and students should be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any sanction is imposed. This would normally follow the letter warning of the suspension. This response would normally take the form of a meeting.

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted a preliminary investigation should be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. **The formal investigation should immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.**

### Period of suspension

A student should not be suspended for more than three days except in exceptional circumstances. The Board may provide guidance on longer suspensions. Suspensions longer than three days are normally referred to the board but the Board may authorise the principal to impose a suspension of up to five days. This longer suspension would normally take place with the approval of the Chairperson in circumstances where a meeting of the board cannot be arranged. The Board should normally place a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

### Appeals

A parent may appeal to the Board of Management following the decision of the Principal to suspend a student. In the case of decisions to suspend made by the Board an appeals process may be provided by the Patron as stated in the Guidelines of the Department. If a suspension is appealed successfully this suspension will be removed from the student's record at the school. If a student is suspended for twenty days in one year the parents may appeal to the Department of Education and Skills.

### Implementing the Suspension

The letter to suspend should confirm:

- The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any school related work to be done
- The arrangements for returning e.g. the parents and the student might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour
- The provision for an Appeal to the Board, Patron or Department whichever applies.

The principal should report all suspensions to the Board of Management.

## Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. The procedures for expulsion are similar to suspension except that the authority to expel a student is reserved to the Board of Management.

Expulsion is a very serious step and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour.

As in the case of all misbehaviours, expulsion as a consequence of behaviour, must be viewed in the context of a proportionate response to a student's misbehaviour.

### Grounds for Expulsion

The school should have taken steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student, including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with the parents and the student to try and find ways of helping the student change their behaviour
- Making sure the student understand the possible consequences of their behaviour
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies such as National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service executive (HSE), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), The National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

The grounds for expulsion include:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

While some grounds may be similar to those considered in suspension cases when expulsion is considered **it must be evident** that the school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believe that all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been explored and exhausted

### Expulsion for a First Offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the BOM forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that may result in such action include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence of physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the BOM will undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student. These include:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether expulsion is a proportionate response
- The possible impact of the expulsion

( See P.82 of Developing a Code: Guidelines for schools)

### Procedures

When a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedure is followed:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing
5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel

The BOM will decide which of the tasks involved in this procedure require separate or single meetings. Parents will at all times be given due notice of any meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a BOM hearing.

### Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (section 29). An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student. Parents will be notified by the school of their right to appeal a decision to expel.

## **Additional Guidance for Behaviour in Special Classes for children with ASD**

***This section applies in addition to the above Code for the children attending the Special Classes for ASD***

### **School Ethos**

Our school provides a caring and supportive learning environment that encourages positive behaviour and where all members of the school community feel valued, safe and respected. We consider promoting and teaching positive behaviour as central to ensuring academic achievement, independence and community participation.

### **Introduction**

This policy stems from A.S.D. Class commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment in our ASD class/es. The policy is designed to ensure the rights of children in the ASD class and the staff who support them, to learn and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive. Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community we will endeavor at all times to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building up positive relationships with pupils.

### **Autism and Behaviour**

People on the autism spectrum are likely to have impaired communication and social skills, challenged with empathy, over or under sensitivity to sensory stimuli and damaged self-esteem. For a variety of reasons people with autism are likely to experience high levels of anxiety. Behaviour that challenges may be a reaction to these difficulties and an attempt for the individual to control a situation, regulate their emotions and/or communicate fear, distress or frustration. People with autism can behave in ways that inhibit their access to opportunities, restrict their social inclusion and adversely affect their quality of life. Working with families to enable the children and young people we support to learn to behave appropriately in different situations is central to achieving our aim of their acceptance and inclusion.

### **Definition of Challenging Behaviour**

Challenging behaviour is "behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; significantly reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger" (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996) St. Mary's A.S.D. Class's approach to Behaviour Support acknowledges that the student's behavioural difficulties may be linked to the triad of impairments, sensory sensitivities, and cognitive abilities of the individual. The school acknowledges that the students may have a dual diagnosis and the impact this may have on behaviour. All of the above factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce problematic behaviours; however the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted.

### **Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour**

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication.

Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate, which is supportive of positive behaviour. In St. Mary's we believe that school and home should work together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour. The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

The following are some of the strategies that will be used to promote positive behaviour in our ASD class:

- Develop language and communication skills
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Now/Then boards
- Daily communication with parents
- The teaching of social skills
- The use of social stories (where applicable)
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child

- The teaching and reinforcing of appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function for the child (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour)
- The use of social praise and acknowledgement
- Choice boards
- Access to preferred items/ activities intermittently throughout the day following an appropriate request or the completion of a particular task

### **Staff Training**

The health and safety of all students and staff is of utmost priority. Therefore St. Mary's PS promotes Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers in our ASD class develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. Training in both promoting positive behaviour and managing challenging behaviour will be undertaken by all staff in the ASD class.

### **Responsibilities Related to Behaviour Management Teachers will be responsible for:**

- Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment, which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage feedback
- Complementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour
- Behaviour Management Plans will be put in place where needed in consultation with the parents
- Participating in professional learning that contributes to their skill development and understanding of students with challenging behaviour
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur on ABC charts. Incident reports will be recorded when needed on Aladdin  
Facilitate a debrief where required at the end of each day with SNA's – talking through what has gone well and why, and reflecting upon more challenging situations and how they could be managed the next time they occur.
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/guardians

### **Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:**

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Contributing to management plans that concern their child and providing feedback on the results of any interventions
- Co-operating with interventions and strategies that are proposed by the child's classroom teacher and the principal
- To inform the school if their child is receiving any regular medication. Where prescribed medications are known to have a behavioural effect these possible effects will be factored in to all behaviour support measures
- Talk in confidence to the class teacher or principal about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour

### **The Principal will be responsible for:**

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the Challenging Behaviour Policy within the school
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal
- Providing the opportunity for the teachers in the ASD class to develop higher level skills so that they can provide additional support and advice within the school
- Seeking outside support and advice
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted

### **Steps in Managing Challenging Behaviour**

The approach adopted by St. Mary's in response to challenging behaviour is to affect a decrease in inappropriate behaviour by increasing appropriate behaviour. This should be achieved through the employment of reinforcement strategies and positive behaviour promotion. Only when data indicates that these positive measures have been tried and exhausted; or have been unsuccessful in eliminating or sufficiently reducing problem behaviour, should the following strategies be considered;

### **Minor challenging behaviour:**

- Will be discussed if suitable with the child
- Will be dealt with at class level as appropriate
- Will be written up in each child's ABC chart (see appendix 1)
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students

**Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:**

- Will be discussed if suitable with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians
- Will be dealt with appropriately which may include the creation of a Behavioural Support Plan

**Aggressive behaviour – threats:**

- Will be discussed if suitable with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart
- Will be reported to parents/guardians
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented Please Note: The Principal may be consulted at any stage above.

**Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious Challenging behaviour:**

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved if appropriate
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher
- A written report will be made on the incident and kept in the ABC chart and recorded in the Incident folder
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the principal
- Each incident will be reported to parents/guardians
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented in consultation with the parents

If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behavioural Plan will be reviewed after each incident

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend a meeting at the school with the Chairperson, the Principal and the Class Teacher

If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with the class teacher and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act - in line with the suspension policy listed in sections 4 and 5 above

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils and staff of St. Mary's, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with parents – in line with the suspension policy listed in sections 4 and 5 above

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the 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 re-admit the pupil formally to the class if that decision is made. The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it's an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of themselves, to other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made to exclude the child from the school.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act

If a decision is made in relation to expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the application form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to the parents/guardians

Please Note: The above steps are in keeping with our school Code of Behaviour.

Please Note: Behavioural interventions implemented in the school will only be done so with full parental/guardian support. In situations where parental/guardian support for the best practice intervention as selected is not forthcoming, a meeting will be held with the child's family to present and examine all of the alternative interventions available. The potential effectiveness, outcomes, and consequences of each intervention will be discussed with reference to the school's duty of care towards all its students and staff. After all outcomes and risks have been examined a decision will be proposed. If agreement can't be arrived at then the matter is referred to the Board of Management.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- All staff members of St Mary's must adhere to the Code of Behaviour.
- To be familiar with school policies
- To follow guidance given
- To request support and advice when necessary

### **Limitations**

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the students, the teacher, and the Principal to be used to solve individual problems.

### **Policy Review**

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Behaviour Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals, to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified

### **Ratification**

**Ratified by Board on 25/05/2021 to be implemented from 26/05/2021**