

## St Mary's & St Gerard's N.S. Code of Behaviour

### St Mary's & St Gerard's (S.M.S.G.) N.S. Code of Behaviour 2024

#### Introduction

The Code of Behaviour of St Mary's & St Gerard's is formulated to clearly set out the behaviour that we expect to see in our school so that all pupils feel safe, happy and can learn and play together. This policy seeks to reflect the current practice in our school through our classroom management, our relationships, our teaching and our school culture. The Code of Behaviour aims to promote pupil well-being and build their social, emotional and behavioural regulation.

Our school context informs the approach to encouraging good behaviour. This context includes a focus on

- Pupil Well-being
- Being warm, welcoming & friendly
- Spending time outdoors in nature
- Being flexible, knowing our pupils well

This policy has close links to the following policies:

- SMSG Anti-Bullying/Cinealtas Policy
- SMSG Wellbeing Policy
- SMSG Special /Additional Needs Policy
- SMSG S.P.H.E. Plan & Policy

#### Underlying Principles

Our Code is based on the following principles:

- Trust  
We explicitly use the word trust in our conversations with our pupils. We always reinforce the fact that we trust them, that they can and do make good choices. We build trust by being true to our word, explaining our decisions as much as possible and being fair and consistent.
- Values  
Our values are love, respect, faith and kindness. These are implicit in our interactions and explicit also in our teaching and in our school day. These values are reinforced at school assemblies, circle times, in our School Creed

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- **Strong relationships**

All staff are committed to the idea that children respond best to positive affirmation, rather than negative. We are warm and enjoy strong relationships with our pupils. We always know our pupils and families well and this spirit of cooperation builds a positive atmosphere.

- **Respect**

This is modelled and expected in our interactions in our community. Behaviour will often be addressed using this lens. "Was the behaviour respectful? Did you show respect to the other pupil/ your teacher? Our curricular approach builds pupils for their place in the world, and we emphasise respect for our community and our world.

- **High Expectations of pupils**

All teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and these expectations are shared with the class. Class rules and contracts are set out and regularly referred to. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to do. There is a strong sense of pride in our school in the teaching and learning that takes place. Good behaviour allows teaching and learning to go smoothly.

- **Inclusion**

Our teachers understand the impact of additional needs on a pupil's behaviour. We will put behavioural support in place and adapt as much as possible to promote inclusion of all. We will apply the code in an empathic manner while always maintaining the health and safety of all in our school.

The following approaches are used in our school to support good behaviour :

Our Pedagogical & School Approaches to behaviour	Practical Examples of this approach
Positive Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>catching the pupils being good</i></li> <li>• <i>two stars and a wish</i></li> <li>• <i>Whole Class Reward e.g. Hot choc,ice cream</i></li> <li>• <i>Group Reward ( groups at transition times)</i></li> <li>• <i>Individual reward</i></li> <li>• <i>Stickers, stars</i></li> <li>• <i>Prizes such as "Gaeilgeoir na Seachtaine"</i></li> <li>• <i>Kindness Jar (kindness in yard)</i></li> <li>• <i>Lucky Duck prize</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• framing behaviour in positive language</li> <li>• modelling, narrating</li> <li>• Circle Time</li> <li>• Golden Time</li> <li>• Positive notes home</li> <li>• Praise on Good News Board</li> <li>• Sharing of assembly messages on the Newsletter.</li> </ul>
Sensory Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular movement breaks for pupils who need them</li> <li>• movement breaks in all classes during transitions</li> <li>• active learning</li> <li>• sensory room</li> <li>• Chill Out spaces on corridors</li> <li>• Chill Out spaces in each classroom</li> <li>• Fidget and sensory items</li> <li>• Sensory Trail on corridor</li> <li>• Meditation, mindfulness</li> </ul>
Emotional Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zones of Regulation</li> <li>• Friends For Life Programme</li> <li>• Weaving Wellbeing Programme</li> <li>• SPHE programme- Staysafe Walk Tall</li> <li>• Nurture Approach (where relevant)</li> <li>• Warm, welcoming</li> <li>• Focus on building pupils emotional language</li> <li>• Displays and resources that build this regulation in the school &amp; on corridors</li> </ul>
Restorative practice	See R.P. 5 Questions below
Cinealtas & Anti-Bullying Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Anti-Bullying Policy; Sean Fallon A-B Programme</li> <li>-No Blame Approach</li> <li>• Pupils praised for being kind</li> <li>• Art, drama, religion, SPHE based on Kindness theme</li> <li>• School Assemblies on kindness themes</li> <li>• School assemblies on Anti-Bullying themes</li> <li>• Wellbeing ,Anti-Bullying &amp; Cinealtas Noticeboards</li> <li>• Buddies</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Including new pupils in games , groups</li> <li>• Yard -quiet benches for reading</li> <li>• Outdoor chess boards for pairs</li> </ul>
Pupil Voice & Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve student council in sharing the rules at assembly each September</li> <li>• Circle Time in classes</li> <li>• Golden Time, choice of activity</li> <li>• Listening to pupils; suggestion box, circle times, pupil anti-bullying surveys, Oral Language debates, class discussions</li> <li>• Class Contract</li> <li>• Class Check in Meetings &amp; morning meetings</li> <li>• Behaviour Contract* (See below)</li> <li>• Resolution of a yard situation involving the class; pupils suggest solutions, rules, sanctions</li> <li>• Pupils involved in meetings regarding their behaviour (Sen Classes)</li> </ul>
School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on learning outdoors</li> <li>• Friendship Buddies?</li> <li>• Friendship Bench</li> <li>• Chess</li> <li>• Gardening,planting for each class</li> <li>• Outdoor classroom</li> <li>• Movement Trail</li> <li>• Outdoor seating</li> <li>• Quiet spaces on yard</li> <li>• Ball-free days on Monday &amp; Friday</li> <li>• Teachers greet each pupil individually in their lines before school</li> <li>• Principal &amp; Deputy Principal at gate and lines each morning to welcome pupils</li> </ul>
Agreed Staff Approach to behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch them being good</li> <li>• One minute conversation before lunch daily to remind pupils of the expected behaviour in yard (Jun iNfs-1<sup>st</sup>)</li> <li>• Whole-school approach to behaviour</li> <li>• Whole-school approach to pupils with challenging behaviours</li> <li>• Whole School approach and culture of positive affirmation, growth mindset</li> <li>• Best practice for management of behaviour &amp; regular staff discussions to address issues arising</li> <li>• Some examples:</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Tactical ignoring</i></li><li>• <i>Re-direction of behaviour</i></li><li>• <i>Seating plan change</i></li><li>• <i>Clear expectations</i></li><li>• <i>Positive language</i></li><li>• <i>Adapt approach to meet needs of certain pupils</i></li><li>• <i>Reinforcement of desired behaviours</i></li><li>• <i>Sensory breaks at transitions between lessons</i></li></ul>
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### **School Rules & Expectations of behaviour**

- We have a clear set of school rules which we discuss regularly, outlining clearly the type of behaviour that is expected and valued in our school community
- We have an additional set of Yard Behaviour Expectations to ensure that pupils are safe and that we are all clear about what is expected of pupils and how we deal with any issues arising (*See Yard Rules and Yard Table below*)
- We use a Restorative Practice Approach to solve pupil disagreements. (*See the 5 Questions below*). This can be carried out under teacher supervision with a small group or pair of pupils. It can also be a whole class discussion.
- School Rules are taught and reinforced at assemblies. They form the basis for discussions about behaviour. They are concise and worded to be accessible to all pupils in the school (*see School Rules below*)
- Many class teachers form Class Contracts with their classes. These can be more detailed depending on the age and context of the class. (*see Classroom Rules below*)
- Circle Time can be used to explore issues in a positive way that are arising for a class.
- The Yard Behavior Table below outlines how behaviour is managed on yard

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Our School Rules	Our Yard Rules
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We are respectful</li><li>2. We are kind</li><li>3. We are good listeners</li><li>4. We are responsible</li><li>5. We do our best</li><li>6. We include everyone.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are responsible</li><li>• We play fair</li><li>• We include everyone</li></ul>

### Classroom Behaviour

An example of a Classroom Agreement

1. *Be kind to everyone*
2. *Listen and share*
3. *Solve problems together*
4. *Help each other to grow*
5. *Use friendly words*
6. *Take responsibility*
7. *Include everyone*
8. *Respect personal space*
9. *Celebrate differences*
10. *Stay Curious*

### Restorative Practice Questions

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about it since?
4. Who has been affected by these actions and how?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

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### Yard Behaviour Table

<b>Minor Misbehaviour</b>	<b>Serious Misbehaviour</b>	<b>Gross Misbehaviour</b>
<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher will listen to account and explain why behaviour is unacceptable</li> <li>• Incident will be recorded in yard book</li> <li>• Restorative practice (if relevant)</li> <li>• Time Out for period of 5-10 minutes depending on age</li> </ul>	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of details in School Incident Book (Yard Book)</li> <li>• Pupil sent to Principal</li> <li>• Time Out in another class/part of school for a set period</li> <li>• Restorative Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to Principal</li> <li>• Cool down</li> <li>• Safety established</li> <li>• Inclusion of details in (Yard Book)</li> <li>• Time Out in another class/part of school for a set period</li> <li>• Restorative Practice</li> <li>• Parents involved</li> <li>• Suspension*</li> <li>• Expulsion.*</li> </ul>

### Unacceptable Behaviour (classroom & around the school)

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: **Minor, Serious and Gross**

<b>Minor:</b>	<b>School Response</b>
<p><b>Examples-</b></p> <p><b>See App.1</b></p>	<p><i>If a child misbehaves, teachers use their professional judgement and agency to respond to these behaviours</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher will deal with these at class level</li> <li>• Pupils will be reminded of expected behaviour</li> <li>• Respect for self, others and property will be emphasised</li> <li>• Mobile devices will be handed over to teacher, stored in Principal's office and returned to Parents after 24 hours, when parents call to collect it.</li> <li>• Outside of school &amp; in school uniform: Principal involved and parents informed</li> <li>• <b>Communication with parents:</b>                      Infants: Once issue is resolved on yard or in the classroom, no need to inform parents. If so; phone call home.</li> <li>• If pattern emerges, teacher will email parent/ meet at pick up to share information and discuss in-person/by phone.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email home to let parents know what happened, on the day if possible</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Incident: Parents will be informed as per the policy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Serious: See App. 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate referral to Principal</li> <li>• Removal from activity in which he/she is involved</li> <li>• Withdrawal of privileges (e.g., special treats including school tours)</li> <li>• Restorative Practice</li> <li>• Sanctions for Bullying Behaviors is as per the Anti-Bullying Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication with home:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Principal phone call to parents on the day</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Incident: Parents will be informed as per the policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gross: See App. 3</b></p>	<p><b>Sanctions for Gross Misdemeanours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety of all is established</li> <li>• Immediate referral to Principal</li> <li>• Removal from activity in which he/she is involved</li> <li>• Time Out in another class/part of school for a set period</li> <li>• Withdrawal of privileges (e.g., special treats including school tours)</li> <li>• Restorative Practice</li> <li>• Sanctions for Bullying Behaviors is as per the Anti-Bullying Policy</li> <li>• Contact established with parents/guardians</li> <li>• Supervision or removal of offending pupil from the school pending a proper investigation</li> <li>• Suspension*</li> <li>• Expulsion*</li> <li>• The student is responsible for serious damage to property</li> <li>• <b>Communication with home:</b> 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Principal phone call to parents</li> <li>• Anti-Bullying Incident: Parents will be informed as per the policy.</li> <li>• In the event of suspension, expulsion; see notes below for procedures</li> </ul>



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### School and Home working together to Support Pupils' Behaviour

- Both Teachers & Parents have been consulted and their input has been included on this policy regarding communication with home and the Anti-Bullying Policy
- The P.A. and parents can support us in particular with regard to use of mobile phones and cyber-safety
- Parents can share information with teachers which would have an impact on pupils' behaviour
- Parents and school will always work together to come up with solutions to behaviour that are within the policy and that support the pupil
- Parents need to be informed in a timely manner about issues regarding behaviour is repeated
- Parents are kept up to date about our approach to building friendships; our Cinealtas/Anti-Bullying Policy, our use of Restorative Practice, our No-Blame Approach to bullying.
- Formal parent/teacher meetings & scheduled meetings happen by appointment. Meetings can happen informally also
- Teachers may occasionally share information regarding behaviour in the homework journal
- School notice board; good behaviour and other positive news
- Newsletters/school website/emails

### Pupil Voice

- Pupils have been consulted and their input has been included on this policy with regard to the length and nature of time out in the yard
- The Student Council help us to spread the Behaviour Message at our September Assembly
- Friendship Buddies help pupils to build their friendships
- Teacher & class discuss contracts, rules which pupils suggest for their games
- Principal will discuss behaviour issues with class arising from yard games/concerns; listen to pupil suggestions

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**Ratification and Review:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9/12/2024  
The Code will be reviewed in ....., to establish if the goals and targets set out in the plan are effective or sooner if barriers to making progress towards these goals are identified.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 

Dated: 9/12/2024 Principal

**Appendix 1:**

**List of Types of Behaviours (not exhaustive)**

**Minor Misbehaviour include:**

- Boisterous play - hitting, pulling, shoving, punching, spitting
- Bringing mobile phones, smart watches, devices to school
- Being discourteous/unmannerly - name calling, giving cheek, rude comments, jeering
- Stealing items belonging to teacher/peers/classroom e.g., sweets, rubber, pencil, toys
- Not completing homework without good reason and/or without a note from parent/guardian
- Interrupting class work
- Failures to follow instruction
- Telling "white" lies
  
- Failing to line up properly or misbehaving in the line

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- Misbehaviour on school trips, on way to/from school, poor behaviour out of school in school uniform

Reminder:

- *Hair is to be kept neat and tidy. Long hair must be in a plait/ponytail or bun*
- *No hair colour, hair extensions or extreme hairstyles are allowed*
- *Nail varnish or false nails are not allowed*
- *Make-up is not allowed.*

### Appendix 2 :Examples of Serious Misbehaviour include:

- Constant repetition of minor misdemeanours (i.e., no improvement following intervention)
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or yard
- Stealing of school property
- Bullying (See separate Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Ganging up on, picking on, deliberately hurting or interfering with another pupil e.g., writing a note about another child, kicking a ball at a child intentionally
- Constantly disruptive in class - cheeky, distracting others, constantly talking
- Defiance/disrespect towards a teacher or staff member
- Over boisterous behaviour - kicking, punching, fighting
- Using unacceptable or inappropriate language repeatedly
- Seriously damaging another pupil's property or school property
- Inappropriate use of the Internet
- Behaviour that is hurtful including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school

(This list is not exhaustive)

All incidents of bullying will be dealt with as outlined in the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

### Appendix 3

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour include:

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- Assault/repeated assault on a member of staff or pupil
- Serious theft or serious damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol or cigarettes
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour (no improvement following intervention, sanctions etc.)
- In possession of dangerous substance, dangerous weapons on school premises
- Extreme damage to school property
- Harassment, discrimination, victimisation
- Serious and/or sudden aggressive, threatening and/or violent behaviour

(This list is not exhaustive)

### Appendix 4 -Suspension & Expulsion, more detailed information.

#### **\*Definition of Suspension**

- Suspension is defined as, "Requiring the student to absent himself/herself from school for a specified, limited period of school days." The Board of Management has the authority to suspend and this authority is delegated to the Principal formally and in writing.

#### **Suspension**

It is a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally other interventions will have been tried before a child is suspended and the staff will have reviewed the reasons why they have not worked.

#### **Reasons for Suspension**

The student's behaviour has had a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students

- The student's continued presence in the school at the time constitutes a threat to his/her own safety and/ or the safety of others

#### **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time will represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person present in the school. Fair procedures will still be applied.

A student will not be suspended for

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- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness

- **Rolling Suspension**

On return to the school, a student will not be suspended shortly thereafter unless he/she engages in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension.

### Procedures in respect of Suspension

- Students and parents have a right to be heard
- Students and parents have a right to impartiality
- Students and parents are informed about the complaint
- Parents and students are given an opportunity to respond.

Generally, a student will not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances. The Board of Management may authorise the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to 5 days.

### Implementing the Suspension

The Principal will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend.

The letter will confirm:

The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end;

- The reasons for the suspension;
- Any study programme to be followed;
- 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);
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management; and
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

### Records and Reports-Records of Investigation and Decision Making

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

### Report to the Board of Management

The Principal reports all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

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### Report to the NEWB

The Principal is required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB Reporting Guidelines (Education Welfare Act 2000, section 2194 (a)).

### Expulsion

#### Reasons for Expulsion

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- 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/or significant threat to safety of staff and students; and/or
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

#### Expulsion for a First Offence

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 based on a single breach of the code include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff;
- Actual violence or physical assault;
- Possession or supplying of illegal drugs to other students in the school; and/or
- Sexual assault.

The ensuing procedures for expulsion are like those for suspension.

#### Children with Special or Additional Needs

- All children are required to comply with the Code, however, the school recognises that certain children with special or additional needs may require assistance and accomodation when complying with the code.
- Pupils may be on individual plans which include working towards the school rules and expected behaviours and the input of professionals in this regard may be sought.
- be considered. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.