



Monkstown Educate Together
National School

Positive Behaviour Policy

MONKSTOWN EDUCATE TOGETHER

NATIONAL SCHOOL

**KILL AVENUE
DUN LAOGHAIRE
CO DUBLIN**

ROLL NO 20060G

November 2009



Positive Behaviour Policy

FOREWORD

An initial draft of this document was compiled by a sub-committee made up of staff and parent representatives in consultation with staff, parents and the children of METNS Community.

The Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS) facilitated a planning day which was entirely devoted to reviewing our then existing Code of Behaviour.

A questionnaire was sent out to parents and feedback was collated by the sub-committee. Responses from children were recorded by teachers during school classes.

This sub-committee gave careful consideration to material researched by the members, and with feedback from PTA and staff, finally agreed on a draft document for consideration by the Board of Management.

After consideration, the Board of Management adopted the within policy as its Positive Behaviour Policy in substantially the form presented by the sub-committee.

The policy was then submitted to the Patron for approval.

We are pleased on their behalf to present this document to the school community for information and reference. We are very grateful to them for their endeavours and recommend that all parents and guardians should familiarise themselves with its contents, and discuss its relevance with their children.

This Positive Behaviour Policy constitutes the code of behaviour for the purposes of Section 23(2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. In accordance with Section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, parents wishing to enroll a child in the school shall be provided with a copy of this Positive Behaviour Policy and it shall be a condition of registering a child as a student of the school that the parents of that child confirm in writing that the Positive Behaviour Policy is acceptable



to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by their child.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all parents and children. The policy has been ratified by the Board of Management, approved by the Patron and will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Signed: _____

Rosario Kealy, Principal

Amy Brooks, Chairperson



POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

We are very pleased to produce our revised Positive Behavior Policy (the "Policy"). The Policy has been drawn up in conjunction with staff, parents and children. In devising the Policy, we were conscious that the individuality of each child should be accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. We endeavour to create a positive school environment where learning and development can take place, and where there is the highest possible degree of consensus about standards of behaviour among staff, pupils and parents.

The Policy offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the teachers and other staff members. The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results. This is a whole school policy and it is vital that our children are given the information that is required and the consequences that follow when standards of behaviour are not met.

The rules in the Policy are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what children should do. It is agreed that a high standard of behavior requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of cooperation among, and between, staff, pupils and parents.

In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents, and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not. The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility.



It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules and by becoming familiar with our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy has been guided by the principles of Educate Together, our vision statement 'Learn Together to Live Together', and our mission statement.

Mission Statement

Monkstown Educate Together strives to create a happy, safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where the uniqueness of each child is celebrated. We aim to provide a space where children are educated and where all members of the school community can grow, develop and achieve their full potential. We aspire to excellence in an atmosphere of respect, openness and joy.

Aims of the Policy

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To prevent and eliminate bullying
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through ethos of open and effective communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of the Policy



Responsibility of Pupils

Pupils have been involved in drafting the Positive Behaviour Policy and in the on-going implementation of the Policy.

- Drafting classroom guides/charter
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on Student Council
- Buddy systems

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the children at school and at home have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children. The Policy as it applies to staff, and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'
- Ensure that our children come to school, on time, refreshed and prepared for work
- Taken an active interest in the learning and concerns of children
- Work towards effective communication between adults and children within the school community

General School Rules:

1. Respect people in our school community.
2. Respect property in our school.
3. Play and work safely.
4. Be polite and considerate at all times.
5. Stay inside the school grounds and boundaries.



6. Be on time. Absence notes must be provided.
7. Observe the Dress Code, and any other policies (e.g. Health and Safety Policy) adopted by the school from time to time.

Class Rules:

1. Do your best and let others do the same.
2. Be fair and honest with classmates and staff.
3. Observe classroom routines promptly.
4. Move around the classroom quietly and carefully.
5. Respect the class charter(1st – 6th)
Respect the guides for a happy class (Jun. /Sen. Infants)

Playground rules:

1. Always play safely and kindly.
2. Observe the policy of 'kind hands, kind feet and kind words' at all times.
3. Keep inside designated boundaries.
4. Always ask permission to leave the yard.
5. Respond to the 2 bells.
6. Protect and care for the living things in our school grounds.

Procedures for Yard supervision

1. General school rules and playground rules apply.
2. Report Book available for duty teacher.
3. Pupil information should be on display in each classroom.

Dress Code

The school does not require children to wear a uniform. All T-shirts, sweaters and other forms of clothing bearing the school logo are optional. The only exception is that children playing on sports teams representing the school will be required to wear a common sports strip.

There are however, some basic rules about dress which need to be observed. All children should come suitably dressed for attending a primary school where the age is 4 years to 12 years.



In particular:

- It is essential that the clothes the children are wearing are safe for playing on the yard, for example:
 - Shoes should be flat and tied properly;
 - Very wide and/or very long trousers or skirts are not suitable for safety reasons;
- Bikini type and off the shoulder tops, extremely short skirts or shorts are not suitable dress for school;
- No underwear should be showing;
- Children should dress in tracksuit and runners/trainers for PE and movement activities;
- Special astra - turf trainers/football boots are required for the pitch for 5th /6th class;
- Jewellery (other than small stud earrings in pierced ears) is not permitted;
- The use of make up is not permitted;
- We recommend sun cream/ hat for your children during the summer term.

Class Charter/Guides for a Happy Class

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher drafts a list of class rules/class charter with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but 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. They should where possible emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not 'Don't run') Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Incentives

Part of the vision of Monkstown Educate Together is to help children achieve their personal best - academically, intellectually and socially. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based solely on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children. All



children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements and improvement towards goals. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

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

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book/homework 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
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication

Reward Samples

- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Homework Vouchers
- Certificates
- Golden Time
- Student of the week
- Recognition at Assembly
- Small prizes/sweets

Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the Positive Behavior Policy. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, special needs assistant, 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 children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs 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.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of minor misbehavior are dealt with by the class teacher/member of staff. In cases of serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be notified at an early stage and maybe invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

The classification of misbehavior as minor, serious or gross, is, in some cases, a matter of judgment and it is acknowledged that the person best placed to assess this is the member of staff who witnesses the behavior in question.

The following is a non- exhaustive list:

Examples of Minor Misbehaviour

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Talking out of turn
- Being disruptive in class
- Disobedience
- Minor breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour
- Telling lies
- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member



- Deliberate , continual disobedience
- Threats or physical hurt to another person which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour
- Minor damage to property
- Minor theft
- Use of unacceptable language
- Name calling
- Inappropriate behavior or gestures
- Serious breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules
- Persistent minor misbehavior will be classified as Serious Misbehaviour

Examples of Gross Misbehavior

- Verbal abuse or physical assault on a staff member or pupil
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behavior toward a staff member or pupil
- Very serious breaches of general, class and playground rules
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour

BULLYING

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be a serious problem which some children encounter and one which is of great concern to parents and teachers. It is a problem which requires cooperation between schools and parents in seeking solutions. Bullying can be physical, verbal or emotional and may be carried out by groups or by an individual. Name calling, teasing and taunting, rude gestures, intimidation and extortion are some of its forms.



Signs of Bullying

Possible signs that a child is a target of bullying:

1. May begin to do badly at school.
2. May have unexplained bruises or scratches and may be evasive when questioned about them.
3. May begin to bully other children in the family.
4. May be unwilling to go to school or to walk to or from school.
5. May come home regularly with books or clothes torn or missing.
6. May be unhappy about going to school.

Why do some children engage in this behaviour?

1. They may be bullied themselves by parents or siblings.
2. They may feel inadequate and lack confidence.
3. They may feel under pressure to succeed at all costs.
4. They may find it difficult to socialise with their peers.
5. They may be very spoiled and unchallenged at home.

What do you do if your child is engaged in this behaviour?

1. Get your child to acknowledge that he/she is involved in such behaviour.
2. Try to find out if this is a temporary response to something else in the child's life.
3. Talk to your child and try to get him/her to understand how the targeted child feels.
4. Talk to the child's teacher.
5. Such children often suffer from a lack of confidence. Don't compare your child's achievement with others. Praise helpful kind behaviour at every opportunity.

What to do if your child is being bullied

1. Stay calm and don't over-react. Your reaction may convey a sense of anger or disappointment to the child and could be counter-productive. Let him/her know that they are not at fault and that this problem can be overcome.
2. Build confidence and independence.



3. Teach the child that he/she has the right to say "NO".
4. Talk to the teacher.
5. If the bullying is physical – don't tell the child to hit back.
6. Children who are loners can be more vulnerable and need help to socialise. You can facilitate this by inviting children to play and by enlisting the help of other parents.
7. It is important to tell children that some situations are dangerous and that safety must come first. Teach them to *get away and tell*.

Procedures to be followed if bullying behaviour is reported

1. The class teacher will talk to the children concerned and try to reach a solution.
2. If this is not successful the Principal will talk to the targeted child/children and to those accused and get them to write down (if possible) what happened.
3. The Principal will speak to any others who witnessed the incident.
4. The Principal will make an assessment of the situation, and convey that outcome to all the pupils concerned, the class teacher and parents. Sanctions may be imposed. Parents will be invited to discuss the situation.
5. Parents will be kept informed of any further developments, and the children will be monitored for an agreed period.
6. In the event of the continuation of bullying behaviour, the procedures leading to suspension in the Positive Behaviour Policy will be invoked. A single very serious incident will warrant immediate suspension.

Every child is expected to do his/her best to ensure that such behaviour does not happen, and has a responsibility to report any incidents of bullying behavior to parents or a member of staff. Parents should also encourage their children to report such behaviour. Bullying behaviour can only be dealt with if it is reported.

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Sanctions

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features:

- It should be as clear as possible why the sanction is being applied.



- The consequence should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It should be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment.
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

The following sanctions are indicative of the types of sanctions which may be taken when the children misbehave. They are listed generally in order of severity. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for this. These sanctions may be invoked singly or a number of sanctions may be applied together depending on the severity of the misbehavior in question. General problems may also be discussed with particular classes or during whole-school assemblies. In all cases, the principal and teachers will endeavour to make fair and reasonable judgments on the strategies or sanctions to be employed. They will avoid where possible any early escalation to severe sanctions. Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health and safety or in accordance with the Suspension and Expulsion procedures.

Examples of Sanctions

1. Discussion/Reasoning with pupil.
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
3. Temporary separation from peers within class (time-out) and/or temporary removal to another class.
4. Teacher communication with parent – message in journal/misbehaviour slip/ writing out the story of what happened (sent home to be signed by parent).
5. Prescribing additional work (including written apology for misbehaviour).
6. Loss of privileges e.g.: Golden Time.
7. Detention during break.
8. Referral to the Principal.
9. Written warning from Principal.
10. Communication between Principal and parents.
11. Detention after school.
12. Referral to Board of Management.
13. Suspension.
14. Expulsion.



Minor Misbehaviour

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Each teacher may administer mild sanctions such as those listed at 1 to 7 above, or equivalent with or without referral to the Principal. In particular, a teacher may exercise discretion as to whether behaviour in this category properly needs to be brought to the attention of the Principal.

Sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. For example, a child who does not do his work in class or has not completed his homework may be detained at break time to finish the work.

Referral to Principal

Overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal Teacher. A child will be referred to the Principal Teacher for all serious misbehaviour and/or gross misbehaviour, and may be referred at the discretion of a teacher for minor misbehaviour, where the teacher believes that this may benefit the child in improving his behaviour.

Detention after School

Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

Separation/Detention shall be supervised by a member of staff.

Suspension and Expulsion

Since the founding of the school in September 1997 to date, only 2 pupils have been suspended and none have been expelled. These sanctions are used extremely rarely. Nevertheless the school must and does reserve the right to invoke these sanctions if and when the circumstances so require. Before serious sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion, are used, where possible, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will, as far as possible, be utilised.



Suspension Procedure

Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) for National Schools, which states:

Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the chairperson or the principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days.

A special decision of the board of management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the board of management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

1. Suspension will be considered for gross misbehaviour or serious misbehaviour.
2. Save in the case of immediate suspension, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. At such meeting, the misbehaviour will be discussed and where appropriate, alternatives to suspension will be considered. This may require the parents to give an undertaking to ensure that their child will comply with the Positive Behaviour Policy.
3. Following such meeting, (or if the parents fail or refuse to attend without good reason, the date on which such meeting would otherwise have taken place), the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period.
4. The Chairperson or the Principal is authorised by the Board of Management to sanction suspension for a period of up to three days without reverting to the Board of Management, but the Board of Management may sanction a longer period of exclusion in accordance with Rule 130(5).



5. Parents will be advised of the suspension or the possibility of suspension in writing. The terms and date of the termination of the suspension will be communicated in writing.

Immediate Suspension

Immediate suspension for up to three school days can and may be invoked by the Principal in the case of serious misbehaviour/gross misbehaviour, which constitutes a danger to the child or others, or which is unduly disruptive to the education of other pupils.

Procedure

1. Parents will be contacted immediately to take child home. The child will be removed from the classroom and supervised until parents arrive to collect child.
2. The Chairperson of the Board of Management to be informed. The Secretary to the Board of Management will be informed if the Chairperson is unavailable.
3. At the end of the immediate suspension period, the child may be reinstated in accordance with the provisions below, or the Board of Management may approve a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.
4. Following suspension, the parent will be advised in writing of the terms and date of the termination of the suspension.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

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 Positive Behaviour Policy 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 or unduly disrupt the education of the other pupils. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.



Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2000 and in accordance with Rule 130(6) for National Schools, which states:

No pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the patron and unless alternative suitable arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board of Management shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000

Appeal

Parents may appeal suspensions (over 20 days in any one school year) and expulsions to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 (as amended).

Written Records

The school will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour and gross misbehaviour, and sanctions used as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of children who cause disruption. Parents are entitled to view the records of their children in accordance with section 9(g) of the Education Act, 1998. Requests to view such record should be notified to the Principal.

Parental Concerns and Grievance Procedures

It is recognized that the implementation of this Policy requires a high level of cooperation between staff and parents, all of whom have a common aim in fostering a positive school environment where there is the highest possible degree of consensus about standards of behaviour.

Any parent who has a concern about any aspect of this Policy and/or its implementation as regards their child should feel free to raise that concern with the school. The school believes that communication with parents is vital



in this regard and would prefer to address any concerns a parent may have at the earliest possible stage.

Any parent who has a concern should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. Where a parent does not believe this is appropriate given the nature of the concern or having spoken to the class teacher needs to raise the concern further, the parent should make an appointment with the Principal. Where a parent believes that his or her concerns have not been adequately addressed by these means, the parent may contact the Chairman of the Board of Management and request that the concern be considered by the Board.

Conclusion

The Safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Positive Behaviour Policy has been put in place and ratified by the Board of Management.

We require parents to read the policy carefully with their child/children, discuss, and accept the contents.

Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.