



St Paul's N.S.

The Code of Behaviour  
&  
SEN classes Behaviour Policy and Procedures

Relationship of St. Paul's National School code of behaviour to the aims of the school are:

- "To develop in each pupil a manner of behaviour which incorporates an attitude of caring for, and responsibility to other people."
- "To encourage in each child a respect for the rights of others"
- "To encourage in each child a respect for property, both personal and communal, in the school and elsewhere"

Aims of this Code of Behaviour

- 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 appropriate and inappropriate 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 with minimal disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioral expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents and pupils to understand the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behavior and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

We will ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice by consulting 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008 to develop our policy.

Guidelines for behaviour in our school:

The **GOLDEN RULE** of St. Paul's National School, Walshestown is:

**"TREAT OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WAY**

**YOU WOULD BE LIKE TO BE TREATED"**

The Following rules are based on this principle of respect for others, so that school can be a place where children and adults can work, learn and play in a safe, healthy and happy environment. The rules are kept to a minimum and are at all times devised with the health, safety and welfare of the school community in mind.

**1. Whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour**

- Staff
- Board of Management
- Parents
- Pupils

**2. Positive strategies for managing behaviour**

- Classroom
- Playground
- Other areas in the school

**3. Rewards and sanctions**

- Rewards and acknowledgement of good behaviour
- Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Involving parents in management of problem behaviour
- Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

**4. Suspension / Expulsion**

- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Appeals

**5. Keeping records**

- Class
- Playground
- School records

**6. Procedure for notification of a pupil's absence from school**

**7. Reference to other policies**

## Guidelines for behaviour in the school

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify *“the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school”*.

- Teachers and other staff members are in the school to facilitate learning and to ensure good and safe behavior. Pupils should follow instructions from a member of staff at all times.
- The behavior of pupils in school should be respectful to the other children, staff and visitors to the school at all times.
- Each pupil is expected to show respect for the property of the school, other children's and their own belongings.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in all teacher assigned tasks.
- Due consideration will be given to children coming from a socio-deprived background.
- The school has a uniform, chosen by the School Community. Children should wear this while in school.
- Phones are strictly forbidden. Any phone found at school will be confiscated and not returned to the child. Parents will make an appointment with the principal.
- Children should not bring certain items to school.

These include:

- Any item which may be deemed dangerous to other children
- Any expensive item or any item, which would be difficult to replace if, mislaid.

Section 23 (4) of the Act further states that, prior to registering a pupil, the principal teacher shall provide the parents of the child with a copy of the school's code of behaviour and that the principal *‘may, as a condition of so registering such child, require his or her parents to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour so provided is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the child’*.

## 2. Whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour

*‘A positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between teachers and the ways in which pupils and teachers treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school’ (Circular 20/90).*

### Staff

*In our school, we treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that their focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. (Circular 20/90).*

- Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his or her classroom while showing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Overall responsibility for school discipline rests with the school principal. Every effort will be made by staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. We insist on a high standard of behaviour in the school.

The school's SPHE curriculum is used to support the code of behaviour. It aims to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, and conflict resolution skills. It also aims to foster self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship.

- All teachers have received training in SPHE and are aware of our school's code of conduct and how to promote strategies to develop good behaviour skills; such strategies include circle time, discussions, role play etc.
- Staff encourage and promote respect and courtesy among the entire school community, that all pupils and adults respect each other at all times.
- Pupils are expected to be truthful, obedient and well behaved at all times.

### Board of Management

*‘The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school’ (Circular 20/90).*

- The Board of Management has been consulted in reviewing, drafting and ratifying the code of behaviour.
- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour e.g. provision of opportunities for staff development.
- The Board of Management is consulted and approval is given if it is deemed necessary to suspend or expel a child from the school.

## Parents

*'Evidence seems to indicate that schools which succeed in achieving and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline tend to be those with the best relationships with parents.'* *'Schools need the support of parents in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.'* (Circular 20/90).

- Co-operation and contact between parents and teachers is seen by us to be necessary and valuable. It is the policy of this school that parents of all pupils be given the opportunity to meet the teacher of their child on a one to one basis once a year. If it is necessary to meet at another time it can be easily arranged. However because of the demands and responsibilities of teaching and supervision parents and guardians are asked to note that if they wish to meet with the teacher at any time other than the parent/teacher meeting they should make an appointment. Teachers are not available to answer the phone during class time.
- Parents are aware of and cooperate with the school's system of rewards and sanctions
- Parents ensure their children are at school in time
- Parents attend meetings at the school if requested
- Parents help their children with homework and ensure that it is completed
- Parents ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.

## Pupils

Pupils play a role in the ongoing implementation of the code of behaviour by:

- Drafting rules for the classroom
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on our Student Council

Pupils review classroom rules regularly.

### 3. Positive strategies for managing behaviour

*'The most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place'.* (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for teachers INTO 2004: 5).

#### Classroom

- "Ground rules"/ behavioural expectations in each class that are consistent with the ethos as expressed in the code of behaviour and which set a positive atmosphere for learning
- Pupil input in devising the class rules
- Teachers ensure that pupils understand and are frequently reminded of how they are expected to behave
- A clear system of acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and sanctions for misbehaviour
- Classroom management techniques that ensure a variety of activities and methodologies to sustain pupil interest and motivation

#### Playground(s)

We consistently praise and promote good behaviour at all times among our children.

- A concise set of playground rules which emphasise positive behaviour and make clear what activities are permitted is communicated to Staff and pupils.
- There is a duty rota drawn up indicating the teachers and SNA responsible for play and lunch time supervision. There are two people supervising in both sections of the playground i.e. junior and senior areas. The senior children i.e. those from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are allowed to play at the front and rear of the building, therefore two teachers supervise in either area. There is one teacher and an SNA supervising in the junior playground i.e. at the rear of the building and, in the event of an accident or if a child needs attention, there will be an adult available to attend the child and also one to remain in the playground with the others.
- Should there be a concern about a child or a group of children at play, the Staff and SNA will be advised and vigilant at break times and any noteworthy observations will be communicated to the relevant parties.
- Some of the older children will be encouraged to teach the younger children playground games.
- The children remain indoors on wet days. Each class stays in their own classroom, and the four adults on supervision move between the rooms. The children can watch age appropriate content on IWB, do some drawing, read, play board games, or any other suitable activity.

- Children who have been requested, by written permission from their parent/guardian, to remain indoors may do so and remain in on a chair outside staffroom/ secretaries office.
- Children line up at the door of their respective classroom and their teacher supervises as they leave the room for the playground. After break they go straight into their classroom on hearing the yard bell.
- Children are encouraged to use the toilets before playtime. There is a designated toilet available for use during breaks, which a child is free to use if requested. Children who are ill enough to go home may remain outside the office until such time as a parent or guardian comes to collect them.
- In the case of any incident of misbehaviour, the teacher on duty will deal with the incident at the time and refer it to the class teacher after break. The gravity of the incident will dictate the appropriate measures used in managing the incident further.
- Children who misbehave during playtime may be removed from the playing area and asked to reflect on their behaviour.
- Teachers keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of disruptive pupils.

### **Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 23, states that a school outlines 'the measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outlined'.

*'The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.'* The measures are as follows:

- a. Reasoning with the pupil
- b. Conference with the child (including advice on how to improve)
- c. Temporary separation from peers, friends or others within their class.
- d. Loss of privileges eg. Time out from Golden Time , loss of a responsible job, time out in the yard.
- e. Prescribing additional work in the form of writing eg. Writing out the school's behaviour rules or an appropriate written activity pertaining to the misbehaviour. This written work shall be sent home to be signed by a parent/guardian, and then returned to the school.
- f. Temporary removal of the child to another classroom with a written assignment that has to be completed before he/she returns.
- g. Referral to Principal Teacher
- h. Communication with parents in the form of a meeting between class teacher, principal and parents/guardians where a behaviour contract may be agreed between the pupil and the school that will be monitored daily by the class teacher, the principal and the parents/guardians.
- i. Suspension
- j. Expulsion in accordance with the guidelines of the National Education Welfare Board Act 2000
- k. Bullying behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Involving parents in Management of Problem Behaviour.**

Initially misbehaviour should be dealt with by the class teacher by way of a warning and/or advice. The class teacher may contact the parents by phone to arrange a meeting. Any parents with concerns should meet with the class teacher first. In the case of more serious or persistent poor behaviour the principal may be involved. The Board of Management may also become involved depending on the seriousness of the misdemeanour. Teachers may keep a record of consistently poor behaviour displayed by the pupil(s).

It is important to be aware that *'Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious misbehaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort.'* (Circular 20/90).

Parents are contacted when the level and frequency of the misdemeanour are established.

In very serious cases of misbehaviour the principal will contact the parents by phone if possible and if not, by letter, to determine a mutually agreeable time to visit the school to discuss issues that have arisen

When the parents come to the school the principal and/or class teacher may meet with the parents in an appropriately appointed room to discuss the issues that have arisen. Together the parents, principal and teacher shall decide on an appropriate course of action in dealing with a difficult pupil. Whatever is decided shall be pertinent to the misdemeanour and best suited to the individual pupil. The decision will be discussed with the child and, he/she with the parents must agree to be bound to follow this course of action.. Parents may be informed daily for an agreed period of time on the pupil's improved behaviour.

It has always been our experience that parents are appreciative of our efforts to resolve any issues as promptly as possible. Co-operation and contact between parents and teachers is considered by us to be necessary and important in delivering an all round education to the child. It is our policy that parents of all pupils be given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher on a one-to-one basis once a year at the parent/teacher day. However, if at any other time a parent has a concern, they are encouraged to contact the school to arrange an appointment with their child's class teacher. This information is available in our school information booklet which is given to parents on enrolment of their child.

- In instances where there is no response from the parents, or any improvement in the child's behaviour is evident then a (second) letter will be sent seeking to resolve the problem.
- In circumstances where there is consistently poor behaviour or if the pupils fulfil all or any of the criteria for suspension or expulsion then the pupil may be suspended or expelled, depending on the level of misdemeanour, the parents having been notified. (See procedures for suspension on the next page/Anti-Bullying policy)
- A decision to expel a pupil shall be a decision taken by the Board of Management. (See guidelines on Expulsion below)

### **Managing aggressive or violent misbehaviour**

If a child persists with serious emotional behavioural problems e.g. constantly disrupting the class, assaulting other children, by striking out, biting or any other form of anti social behaviour, the following steps will be taken:

- The parents/Guardians will be informed immediately.
- The members of staff together with the SEN/SET are acquainted with the situation and advised to be vigilant while on supervision duty etc.
- Teachers who have previously taught the child will be available to assist in the creation of individual behaviour plans. The parents/guardians will also be consulted when devising these plans.
- Through the Special Educational Needs Organiser, appropriate support will be sought from services available
  - e.g. Health Service Executive, NEPS, ...
- Following a discussion with the parents/guardians the pupil may be referred for psychological assessment
- There is a mentoring system for newly qualified teachers to support them in this area.

In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour causing a risk to the safety of the pupil himself/herself or the safety of other pupils or staff, the school may consider the temporary exclusion of the child while consultation with SENO and/or EWO takes place about appropriate resourcing, or alternative placement.

### **Suspension / Expulsion procedures**

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify... *'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned'* and *"the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student."* (Sections 23(2) c, d)

#### **Suspension**

The Board of Management of a recognised school has the authority to suspend a pupil. The Board of Management of St Paul's N.S has delegated this authority to the Principal. In the case of serious misbehaviour the Board has authorized the Chairperson and /or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending discussing the matter with the parents. She may suspend a pupil for a period up to three days.  
Board.

A student should not be suspended for more than three days. If the principal proposes a suspension that is longer than three days then the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcome.

However the Board of Management of St Paul's has authorised, the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a board meeting cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

#### **Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern.**

Other interventions will have been tried first (See above) but if the staff feel that these have not worked then a child may be suspended. The decision to be suspend a child will be for one or more of the following reasons:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of others.

- 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.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for an automatic suspension;

For example: A serious physical/verbal assault on a member of staff/pupil/visitor,  
 Serious and deliberate damage to property and/or theft of items of value.  
 (This is not an exhaustive list. These are only some examples.)

The principal shall inform the education welfare officer, by notice in writing, when *a student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days. (Sections 21(4) a )*

Circular 20/90 states that *'Parents should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated'*.

Teachers keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to the school. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort. The following procedures will be followed:-

- Parents will be notified by letter or phone call and asked to call to the school to discuss the matter.
- Should there be no improvement or the letter ignored a second letter will be sent seeking to solve the problem.
- If there is still no improvement in the pupil's behaviour he/she may then be suspended, parents having been notified by letter of the details of suspension.
- As a final step the pupil may be expelled after a decision has been taken by the Board of Management.

#### **Expulsion (permanent exclusion)**

It is the right of a Board of Management to take *'...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.'* Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any person will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on the circumstances.

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

The strategies adopted by the school for Suspension (see above) may also be used when considering expulsion. If the school authorities are satisfied that they have exhausted all these strategies, and that the pupil's behaviour is still deemed to be unacceptable, then that pupil shall be expelled.

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 a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion are similar to those for suspension except in their degree of seriousness and persistence. The school authorities must also have tried a number of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

#### **Expulsion for a First offence.**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. These may include:



- A serious physical/verbal assault on a member of staff/pupil/visitor,
- Serious and deliberate damage to property and/or theft of items of value.
- Supplying illegal substances to other students.

#### **Procedures in respect of expulsion.**

Expulsion may be considered in extreme cases. (In accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88.)

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education Welfare Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misdemeanour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

- ☐ A detailed investigation is carried out under the direction of the Principal whereby the student and parent are informed of the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it may lead to expulsion. The student and parents will be given every opportunity to respond to these allegations before any decision is made.
- ☐ A recommendation is made by the Principal to the Board of Management.
- ☐ Consideration by the Board of the recommendation, and the holding of a hearing.
- ☐ Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- ☐ Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- ☐ Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Details of each of the above procedural steps can be found in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour:

Guidelines for schools' page 83-86. A photocopy is attached to this document. It is also available for inspection in the school.

The Act of 2000 (section 24) stipulates that where a board of Management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled, the board is required to inform the NEWB of its decision, and the reasons why in writing.

The decision to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after the NEWB have received notification in writing. The new Notice of Decision to Expel form should be used for this purpose.

On receipt of this Form, a letter of acknowledgement will issue immediately from the National Welfare Board.

The date of receipt will be clearly indicated on the acknowledgement. The '20 school days' begin when the form is received by the NEWB.

This notice will only be completed and returned after all internal school processes have been exhausted.

When a school has expelled a student, and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the Student Absence Report Form.

*(Section 24(5))*

**Parents have a right to appeal a decision to expel a student under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, and will be informed accordingly of this option.**

## **Keeping records**

### **Class level**

Teachers are required to be vigilant in relation to record keeping for children who engage in difficult behaviour. Positive as well as negative behaviour should be recorded. Positive behaviour is publicly acknowledged and commended at our weekly assemblies.

### **Playground**

- Staff make a report of misbehaviour to the class teacher, who then records it.

### **School records**

- There is a school incident book which can be easily accessed from the general office for the recording of any serious misdemeanor.

## **Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school**

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify, *"the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school."* Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. We encourage our children to attend school by

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- A system for acknowledging and rewarding good or improved attendance is in place.
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Adapting the class and school timetables to make it more attractive to attend and to be on time
- Parents and Guardians are made aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.

Parents and Guardians are requested to send in a note informing teachers in writing of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence. These notes are recorded on Aladdin. The school uses the standard forms to report on pupil absences to the National Education Welfare Board online. (*See forms on [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)*)

## **Reference to other Policies**

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour are

- SPHE plan
- Anti-bullying
- Enrolment
- Health & Safety
- Special Educational

### Success Criteria

- The smooth uninterrupted day to day running of the school.
- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

### Roles and Responsibility

- The Board of Management will study the document and ratify it if they are in agreement.
- The teachers, SEN and the principal of the school together with the support of the parents will implement the policy.
- The class teacher, SEN and principal will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The principal, teachers and SNA will ensure that the implementation of the policy is strictly adhered to.
- Pupils should be encouraged to be responsible for their actions and to be aware of the impact of their actions on others.
- Parents are encouraged to be supportive in the implementation of the policy.

### Implementation Date

The policy will apply from the time it has been ratified.

### Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed in three years, as a result of any school improvement plan or in line with new legislation.

### Ratification & Communication

The BOM officially ratified the policy including the appendix for the S *St Paul's N.S. SEN classes Behaviour Policy and Procedures* classes on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

## **Appendix 1**

### **Factors to consider before suspending a student The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

### **The context of the behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- What is the age, stage of development and cognitive ability of the student?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

### **The impact of the behaviour**

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?
- Does the behaviour have a particular or greater impact on some students or teachers?
- Does the student understand the impact of their behaviour on others?

### **The interventions tried to date**

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of those interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Are any other interventions such as peer mediation, restorative justice approaches or family conferencing available?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent services)?

### **Whether suspension is a proportionate response**

- Does the student's behaviour warrant suspension?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

### **The possible impact of suspension**

- Will suspension allow additional or alternative interventions to be made?
- Will suspension help the student to change the inappropriate behaviour?
- How will suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?
- Will suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability of the student?

## **Appendix 2**

### **Factors to consider before proposing to expel a student–**

#### **The nature and seriousness of the behaviour**

- What is the precise description of the behaviour?
- How persistent has the unacceptable behaviour been and over what period of time?
- Has the problem behaviour escalated, in spite of the interventions tried?

#### **The context of the behaviour**

- What are the circumstances of the incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. in class, in a particular teacher's class, in the yard, in a group)?
- What factors may have triggered or provoked incidents of serious misbehaviour (e.g. bullying, cultural or family factors)?
- Are there any factors that may be associated with the behaviour (e.g. particular home circumstances, special educational needs)?

#### **The impact of the behaviour**

- How are other students and staff affected by the student's behaviour?
- What is the impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning of the class?

#### **The interventions tried to date**

- What interventions have been tried? Over what period?
- How have the interventions been recorded and monitored?
- What has been the result of these interventions?
- Have the parents been involved in finding a solution to the problem behaviour?
- Has the intervention of NEPS or other psychological assessment or counselling been sought, where appropriate?
- Is the student or parent involved with any support service and has this agency or support service been asked for help in solving this problem?
- Has any other agency been asked for assistance (e.g. Child Guidance Clinic, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services)?
- Is the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student to change their behaviour?

#### **Whether expulsion is a proportionate response**

- Is the student's behaviour sufficiently serious to warrant expulsion?
- Is the standard being applied to judging the behaviour the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student?

#### **The possible impact of expulsion**

- To what extent may expulsion exacerbate any social or educational vulnerability of the student?
- Will the student be able to take part in, and benefit from, education with their peers?
- In the case of a student who is in care, what might be the implications of expulsion for the care arrangements?

### **Appendix 3**

#### **St Paul's N.S. SEN classes Behaviour Policy and Procedures**

##### **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 St Paul's N.S.'s commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment in our SEN classes. The policy is designed to ensure the rights of children in the SEN 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, a lack of 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 hinder 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 Paul's N.S. SEN classes 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 Paul's SEN classes we believe that school and home should work co-operatively 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 – including PECS, Lámh or system advised by OT
- 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 Paul's N.S. promotes Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers in our SEN 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 SEN 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
- implementing 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 written when needed in the school incident book
- Facilitate a 'de-brief' 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 SEN 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 Paul's N.S SEN classes 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 with the child
- Will be dealt with at class level as appropriate
- Will be written up in each child's ABC chart
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students

***Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:***

- Will be discussed 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 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
- 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 Paul's N.S. SEN class, 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 Paul's N.S. must adhere to the Challenging Behaviour Policy. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are made aware of it. Parents must sign a statement saying that they will adhere to the policy.

#### **Responsibilities of volunteers and pupils on placement:**

- 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.



## Managing Behaviours of Concern appendix to Code of Positive Behaviour Policy:

### Introduction

This policy stems from St Paul's N.S. commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment for children with special educational needs. This policy is designed to ensure the rights of children with special educational needs and the staff who support them, so that everyone can learn, work, flourish 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 always endeavour to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building positive relationships with the pupils.

In St Paul's N.S. we believe that children react well to rules, routines and boundaries. In order for rules and routines to be effective, we feel that continuity and consistency are of the utmost importance.

### Definition of Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are often defined as "Culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities" (Emerson, 1995).

In our school, behaviours of concern are those behaviours that interfere with the child's learning and/or that of others. These behaviours can be triggered by a wide variety of factors and influences, such as being a new pupil in the school, transitioning to a new teacher, or by other external events in their lives.

Children are encouraged and guided to develop respect for themselves, other children and all adults with whom they come in contact with.

### BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is defined as the manner of conducting oneself. It also reflects one's response to one's environment or stimuli. Behaviour may be conscious or unconscious (e.g. quickly pulling one's hand away when one touches something hot). Many factors may contribute to a child's particular behaviour.

#### *Internal factors include:*

- age and stage of development
- personality and temperament
- personal history and experience
- physical, sensory or medical factors
- skills, ability to learn
- beliefs about self and others
- resilience and self-efficacy

### **External and interpersonal factors include:**

- parental and family patterns and relationships
- social networks - friends and peer groups
- neighbourhood and community factors
- the status and standing of different groups in society
- school factors
- time, opportunity and support for personal and social development

### **6 KEY ASSUMPTIONS IN UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR**

Ref: Daly, Patricia. (2019) *Small changes can make big differences*, Limerick: CDU

- **Behaviour is not random:** It is connected to events which occurred before the behaviour and is reinforced, positively or negatively, by reactions to the behaviour. It is therefore controllable in terms of interventions targeted at antecedents, or “triggers” and consequences
- **Behaviour works, has meaning and is not random:** It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise. The functions of behaviour which negatively affect learning are:
  - o Getting attention, from adults or peers
  - o Getting an object – something the child wants e.g. a ball, a chase
  - o Avoiding something e.g. attention or a particular task
  - o Getting or Avoiding a sensory experience or human contact
    - **Children want approval:** Adult approval, particularly affirmation and approval from key adults such as teachers, is as important to children as the air they breathe. Your approval is the strongest reward you have in the classroom
    - **Children want to learn:** This has been demonstrated time and again, both in scientific and psychological studies, and is borne out by the experience of teachers over the years. Some may have particular difficulties with the learning process, but they all want to learn
    - **Children who know “what” and “how” cannot always “do”:** It takes a while for children to fully know, understand and apply social interactive skills. Not all children grasp them easily and they need to be taught and supported
    - **Some behaviour has hidden dimensions:** These are related to a particular child’s unique life experience. We see what happens in the classroom and in the playground but we cannot see the child’s unique history or underlying “invisible” conditions e.g. anxieties, sensory difficulties or learning difficulties. We should always be aware of this, especially with children who display challenging behaviour.

### **INFLUENCES ON PUPIL BEHAVIOUR**

There are many potential influences on student behaviour, and many factors that can lead to behaviour that is challenging for schools to deal with. These include:

- **Biophysical factors:** such as medical conditions or disabilities
- **Psychological factors:** including emotional trauma or lack of social skills
- **Behavioural/social factors:** including where a student’s problem behaviour has been learned through reinforcement, consequences or adaptation to social practices (a student with a learning difficulty repeatedly misbehaves knowing that he/she will be removed from the class and this will avoid his/her learning difficulty being exposed)
- **Student group dynamics:** such as bullying and teasing, cliques or student apathy or hostility
- **Environmental factors:** e.g. the level of classroom noise or seating arrangements
- **Classroom organisation issues:** such as inconsistent routines, inadequate materials or obliviousness to cultural differences
- **Teacher behaviour:** e.g. boring or disorganised lessons, over-reaction to misbehaviour or over-reliance on punishment.

In many cases, there is no single “cause” of challenging behaviour, but it is the result of several factors and influences operating in combination.

### **BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN**

The following behaviours where excessive and infringing on the rights of others are not acceptable:

**Aggressive behaviour:** pinching, biting, scratching, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling, kicking, head butting, pulling hair, using objects against people and themselves.

**Non-compliance:** lying down, non-cooperation, resistance to teaching, refusing to do things.

**Disruptive or threatening behaviour:** shouting, screaming, swearing, repetitive vocalisation, verbal abuse, remarks/discrimination, curses, gestures or threats to harm, teasing, arguing, interrupting, obstructing, taking food or drink from others, setting off the fire alarm, invading personal space.

**Absconding / Flight risk:** wandering outside the classroom without permission, running away or trying to run away.

**Attention seeking:** constantly misbehaving in order to seek attention.

**Sexually inappropriate behaviour:** inappropriate sexual language or sexual gestures including inappropriate comments about the sexuality of others.

**Destruction of property:** damage to property belonging to self, other children or adults or damage to school property.

**Socially-inappropriate behaviour:** spitting, interrupting others, provoking others, making inappropriate comments.

**Temper tantrums:** outbursts of bad temper, emotional reaction

**Self-injurious behaviour:** head banging, scratching, biting and poking.

**Passive challenging behaviour:** glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, withdrawal.

It is very difficult to list all possible misbehaviours and eventualities. However, we expect the children to behave in a manner which does not compromise the safety, wellbeing and education of themselves or others.

Positive parental input is paramount in ensuring that the children are supported and encouraged to respect and abide by our values and school rules. We look forward to full co-operation in these matters.

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## 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 Paul's N.S., we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour.

The following are some of the strategies that have been developed throughout our school for pupils with SEN to promote positive behaviour:

- The use of visual cues to reinforce verbal instructions
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules

- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Individual behavioural plans
- Regular communication with parents –email, daily journal
- Teaching of social skills
- Use of social scripts(stories)
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child (if capable) – Restorative Practice

#### **SCHOOL STAFF**

##### **THE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

The school will establish a Behaviour Management Team whose function is to advise and assist those directly involved in a behaviour of concern situation when it arises.

The Behaviour Management Team will consist of those staff members who have special training or experience in the area of Behaviour Management, comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, senior staff members.

Those directly involved may be experiencing a behaviour of concern for the first time and will require advice and assistance in dealing with it. This can be a junior teacher or SNA.

##### **STAFF TRAINING**

In St Paul's N.S. we promote Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers to develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. The school staff have trained in Restorative Practice

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR 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 co-operation.

- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour.
- The creation of Behaviour Management Plans where needed.
- Participating in professional development that contributes to skill development in the pupils and a clearer understanding of students with challenging behaviour.
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur. Incident reports will be written when needed.
- 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 in relation to concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Providing suggestions which could assist in the development of Behavioural Support Plans and Individual Educational Plans.
- Cooperating with interventions and behavioural strategies that are proposed by the child's teacher and the principal.
- Working co-operatively with the school with the best interest of the child at heart.

**The Principal will be responsible for**

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the 'Behaviours of Concern 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 opportunities for specialised teachers within the school to develop higher level skills so they can provide additional support and advice within the school.
- Seeking outside support and advice, such as: support from our NEPS psychologist and the NCSE in relation to behavioural supports for pupils with SEN.
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted e.g. reduced day, suspension, expulsion (as a last resort).
- Health and Safety: In the event that a pupil poses a risk to themselves or others, they will be removed from their class or setting to ensure their safety and the safety of others. If this is not possible, the other children will be removed. If the threat to safety persists, the child's parents/guardians will be asked to take the child home.

**Sanctions (in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy)**

**Minor challenging behaviour:**

- Will be discussed with the child (Restorative Practice)
- Will be dealt with at class level and privileges will be withdrawn as appropriate.
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students.

**Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:**

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour – the parents may be asked to take the child home.
- Will be dealt with appropriately.

**Damage to property:**

- Child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- Will be reported to class teacher.
- Will be reported to parents/guardians and the parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The parents may be asked to take the child home.
- A written/verbal apology will be given by the child/parent to the owner of the property.



**Aggressive behaviour – threats:**

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be reported to parents/guardians.
- The parents may be asked to come to the school to discuss the child's behaviour and appropriate sanctions may be put in place.

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

Where there is a need for a child to be assessed in relation to specific behavioural problems, the school should endeavour to raise concerns with parents/guardians sensitively and to give families as much support as possible. Referrals will be made by the Principal with the support of the parent/guardian

The following steps will be taken when serious or gross misbehaviour is persistent. These steps are in accordance with the Department of Education & Skills guidelines and Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools:

- Communication by Principal with parents/guardians – verbal or in writing
- Meeting between Principal and parents/guardians
- Chairperson of Board of Management is informed
- Parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend school to meet the Principal
- Parents/guardians must endeavour to support their child and school to comply with rules and aim to give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future. On failing this, the pupil will be suspended for a temporary period
- In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians. The maximum initial period of suspension is three school days
- The Board of Management can authorize a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupils or pupils parents/guardians
- In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management will authorize a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services

***The School's Capacity to meet the needs of the child***

The school will discuss with the parents the needs of the child and the ability of the child to adapt to the school setting.

Some children will exhibit behaviours of concern arising from distress or anxiety due to their inability to cope with what they perceive to be the overwhelming experience of being in a mainstream classroom. In such cases, it is important that both parents and school recognise children in such situations can respond by displaying behaviours of concern as a coping mechanism. Parents should be aware that such behaviours, where they are aggressive or violent, will often frighten other children and cause further social isolation.

The school will discuss with the parents what learning or social needs the child may have in relation to attending school.

The school will seek and receive full co-operation from the parents in relation to how the school will work with them and their child to meet his/her needs.

The school will analyse all relevant data pertaining to the child's behavioural issues so that the school can begin to understand the reasons why the child is behaving as s/he does.

The school will make the parents aware of the role of NCSE and the SENO and ask for all relevant data which might assist the school in seeking the required resources from NCSE or DES in relation to their child. The school will also work with parents to design and teach the child alternative and more socially acceptable responses/behaviours for

the child. These new responses or behaviours will promote better acceptance by peers and a stronger, positive relationship with teachers.

### ***Reduced School Day***

Circular 0047/2021 was issued to schools, as Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools, which came into effect from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. They can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63545-the-use-of-reduced-school-days>

In the context of challenging behaviour, reduced school days should only ever be considered in very limited and time-bound circumstances. It is acknowledged that a reduced school day may be helpful in exceptional circumstances as part of a transition or reintegration intervention, based on the needs of individual students. Any such arrangement should be short term and transitional, and designed to assist the student to attend for the full school day along with his/her peers.

- Where in exceptional circumstances schools are placing a student on a reduced school day, the school authorities:
- Must have previously engaged with the relevant support services and professionals, including the special educational needs organiser (SENO) where appropriate, and have developed and implemented a student support plan for an appropriate period of time.
- Have clear evidence-based reasons for considering a reduced school day as a relevant and appropriate intervention with the best interests of the student at the core of the decision.
- Have the written consent of the parents/guardians of the student, and must also document if parental consent is subsequently withdrawn.
- Shall notify Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) of the decision to place a student on a reduced school day no later than the first day of the commencement of each episode of a reduced school day.
- Should notify the NCSE/SENO of the decision to place the student on a reduced school day where the student has special educational needs.
- Should formulate and agree a plan for the reduced school day intervention which will specify the following: start, review and end dates; any educational supports or interventions to be provided for the student during the period of the reduced school day; the actions required to support the student's return to school and reintegration to a full-time school day.
- The plan with respect to the reduced school day intervention and return to school will have regard to any relevant medical reports or other relevant information held in the student's support file. The intervention and return to school plan must be discussed and agreed in collaboration with the parent/guardian.
- Ideally, the period for which the student is on a reduced school day, should not exceed six school weeks. A reduced school day cannot be carried forward from one academic year to the next.
- Must include in the plan of action outlined above, the name of a contact person in the school with whom the parents/guardians may communicate with, and, where appropriate, any work plan for the time during which the student will not be in attendance at the school.
- Shall provide the parents/guardians with a copy of the agreed plan, signed by parents/guardians and the school principal, and retain a copy which must be given to the Educational Welfare Officer or a member of the DE Inspectorate if requested. A copy should also be retained on the student support file. Should consider a graduated regime of school attendance which increases steadily and incrementally towards full attendance.
- Shall submit a new notification form to TESS when the period during which the student has been on a reduced school day is extended no later than the first day of renewal of the plan.
- Shall keep a record of all instances of students being placed on a reduced school day and access to this list should be made available to TESS educational welfare officers and the Department of Education Inspectorate if requested.
- Shall inform the parents/guardians of their right to withdraw consent at any time.
- Should inform the parents/guardians that TESS educational welfare officer can provide assistance and advice if required. TESS will provide support and guidance to both parents and schools in relation to the use of a reduced school day.

## ***Suspension***

Examples of grounds for suspension:

- the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety to themselves and others in the school community.
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- the student is responsible for a single incident of serious misconduct.

After other interventions are tried and reasons why these have not worked are reviewed, the decision to internally suspend or suspend a student can be made. This decision will be made by the Board of Management. Each case will be looked at individually taking into account the child's circumstances.

A single incident of gross misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

## ***Expulsion***

Examples of grounds for expulsion:

- 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.

Expulsion will only be considered when the Board of Management have tried a series of other interventions and believes all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour have been exhausted.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence (for instance, a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff, actual violence or physical assault, supplying illegal drugs to other students).

### When expulsion is considered, the following steps will be taken:

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
- A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
- Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation, and the holding of a hearing
- Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.
- The decision to expel will take effect 20 days after the National Education Welfare Board has received notification in writing
- Where the school has expelled a pupil and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion will be reported on the student absence report form.

## **Methods of communicating with parents/guardians**

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to working with children. Parents/guardians and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents/guardians are being established and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher.
- A written report will be made on the incident 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.
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behaviour Management Plan will be reviewed after each incident.
- If the behaviour persists, parents will be invited into the school to attend a meeting with the teacher and the principal and appropriate sanctions may be put in place- this may be that the child is sent home or put on a reduced school day.
- In the event of the situation not improving, the child will be suspended by the Principal. (The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed).
- Further serious infringements may warrant longer suspensions. (The Chairperson of the BOM will be informed)
- If no improvement is made the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management for consideration and a decision as to what actions should be taken.
- Continuous disruptions and/or violent behaviour may result in expulsion of the pupil. This will be considered where the student's behaviour is causing persistent and significant disruption to the learning, safety and wellbeing of themselves or others.
- When the child has had six day's suspension, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- For suspensions lasting more than three days, in exceptional circumstances, the matter will be monitored by the Chairperson of the BOM, in consultation with the principal.
- 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.

#### **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 staff and the Principal. This policy should be used to assist in dealing with difficult situations.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff members of St Paul's N.S. must adhere to the 'Behaviours of Concern Policy'. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff adhere to this policy.

#### **Policy Review/Ratification**

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Behaviours of Concern 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.

Policy ratified in September 2023, to be reviewed in June 2026.

## **Modifying Behaviours in the Mainstream Setting**

We are aware that some children may need extra supports in relation to their behaviour in the mainstream setting.

We are committed to helping children to modify their behaviour to enable them to engage in learning opportunities and have a positive experience of school. Positive strategies as outlined in our code of behaviour will be utilised in the first instance.

Failing this, the following strategies will be used to encourage pupils to self-regulate and take ownership of their behaviour. Each individual child may require an individualised response which may include.

- A movement break to prevent the behaviour from escalating further
- Quiet time
- Sensory input
- Distract and re-direct
- Breathing and relaxation activities
- Removing triggers

The child will return to class and re-engage in activities when it is evident that the child has self-regulated and is calm.

When it is appropriate to discuss this behaviour with the child, a discussion can take place. The aim of this discussion is to help the child to demonstrate an understanding of their behaviour and to identify strategies to prevent this behaviour in the future.

If a pattern of behaviour is identified, extra supports will be sought to support the child and the teachers. The behaviour will be recorded through using an ABC chart. Supports may be sought from the National Behaviour Support Service (NCSE) & other outside agencies if needed.

## Policy on Manual Handling of pupils

### Introduction:

St Paul'n N.S. is vertical co-educational primary school. The school is a county school with 105 students from Junior Infants to Sixth class. St Paul's N.S. also has two ASD classes. Each of these special classes has six pupils. There are also a number of pupils in our mainstream classes with special needs. From time to time children can pose as a flight risk or as a danger to themselves or others.

### Rationale:

The school management recognises the occasional need for teachers or SNAs to lift, move or handle children in the interest of Health and Safety. This can be particularly the case in relation to Junior Infant pupils, particularly at the beginning of the year, or pupils in our special classes.

The following are examples of incidents when the principal, teachers or SNAs may need to intervene physically (intervention will be at a minimum and only used as a necessity for the health, welfare and safety of pupils and staff)

- A child runs towards an exit with the intention of leaving the school
- A child is a physical threat to another child or themselves
- A child is a physical threat to a member of staff
- A child climbs / jumps on an item of furniture and is at risk of injuring himself or another child or a staff member
- A child goes to ground and is a disruptive force in the classroom or the playground
- A child gets stranded on a piece of equipment in the playground, in the classroom, school hall or at a school event and needs assistance to descend
- A child is having difficulty transitioning from one area to another e.g. from the classroom to the PE hall.

In all cases the principal, teacher or SNA must show the utmost care and attempt to protect both him/herself and the pupil.