

# Athy Model School

## Athy Model School Code of Behaviour

### **Ratification**

This revised Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010, circulated to ancillary staff after ratification, and circulated to all parents/guardians after ratification.

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**This Code was submitted to the Patron for approval.**

### **Introductory statement**

Athy Model School's Code of Behaviour is the result of the ongoing consultation and collaboration between the principal, staff, parents, and Board of Management. It was reviewed and reformulated in February 2010 in the light of "Developing a Code of Behaviour - Guidelines for Schools", issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The revised Code was drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management and the parents and in discussion with the pupils. This will ensure a whole school approach to behaviour in our school.

In drawing up the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and the circumstances of the school and our pupils. The aim of the code is to ensure that the individuality of each pupil is respected, while acknowledging the right of each pupil to education in a relatively disruption free and safe environment.

In the code, "the principal" refers to the principal of Athy Model School and the "Board of Management" refers to the Board of Management of said school. When the term "parents" is used it denotes the parents or legal guardians of the child.

### **School Ethos**

Athy Model School is a primary school under the patronage of the Department of Education, with a Church of Ireland ethos. We endeavour to enable each child to acquire a set of moral values based on the ethos of the school.

We encourage parents and children to involve themselves in the activities of both the Church of Ireland community and the wider community. However, we have due recognition of all other beliefs and cultures and we respect cultural and religious diversity.

### **Vision and Mission Statement**

Our vision of our school is of a safe and happy place where each child is nurtured and valued in an atmosphere of fairness, tolerance and respect.

Our school promotes the holistic development of each child so that he or she may realise his/her potential as a unique individual.

We aim to foster the values of respect, honesty, courtesy, responsibility, tolerance and consideration for others.

We endeavour to enable each child to develop his/her skills, through access to the Revised Curriculum, to the best of his ability.

We cherish and foster positive, co-operative relationships between teachers, staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.

We value and encourage good parental communication and involvement, based on mutual trust and understanding.

## **Aims**

To promote positive behaviour in our school.

To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.

To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.

To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

## **Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour**

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our code. Our school ethos emphasises care, respect and responsibility.

Athy Model School promotes in the children and staff a team spirit, a sense of working together and helping each other out through good behaviour and minimum disruption.

Each child has the right to work in a safe disruption free environment.

All adults in the school (staff, parents and visitors) have a responsibility to model the behaviour that is expected from students.

Good school and class routines are in operation.

We aim to foster a good working relationship between teachers and parents, thus promoting positive behaviour in pupils.

We acknowledge positive behaviour through praising children on their behaviour and by rewarding them at the teacher's discretion.

Problems are noticed and dealt with as soon as possible.

Teachers develop clear and simple classroom rules in discussion with the children.

Children are aware that misbehaviour will incur clear, consistent consequences.

SPHE is used as a structure within which to address the teaching of social skills, self-esteem and respect and care for others.

## **Rewards and Praise**

Our approach to rewards and praise include the following:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval;
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book;
- Stickers, smiley faces, ink-stamps and/or stars on pupils work;
- Assembly- Student of the Week every Friday;
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation;
- A word of praise in front of a group or class;
- Awarding some special responsibility or privilege;
- Informing parent - verbal communication;
- Special Class treats;
- Certificates of Merit;
- Affirming desirable behaviour during Circle Time;
- Photos of award winners taken and displayed.

We encourage parents to help their children keep the school rules, by talking to their child about good behaviour and treating others well.

## **Our School Rules**

- We show respect to all people in our school.
- We are polite and mannerly.
- We treat all property with respect.
- We are kind and helpful.
- We walk carefully within the school.
- We play carefully on the yard.
- We line up when the bell is rung.
- We do our best in class.

Each class teacher draws up their own classroom rules in consultation with the class at the beginning of each year. Teachers will ensure that all pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and why. The rules are displayed prominently in the classroom and referred to regularly.

## **Minor/Unacceptable behaviour:**

Behaviour that is hurtful including all forms of bullying

Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning

Threats or physical hurt to another person  
Damage to property

## **Strategies for dealing with minor/unacceptable misbehaviour:**

- Reasoning with the pupil;
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve);
- Child moved to somewhere else in the classroom or required to work away from others;
- Detention at break-times (procedures for detention need to be stated if used) stay in, sit on chair, supervised by staff member, or child is left standing at wall in playground.
- Temporary separation from peers/class; children will be given work which they will be expected to finish;
- Essay and or extra homework (at weekends if needed) linked with the behaviour - signed by parents;
- Parents/guardians informed verbally or by a note in homework diary. Parents will be informed as soon as it is perceived that difficulties are developing with regard to their child's behaviour.
- Teachers will keep a record of continuous inappropriate behaviour and all incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Behaviour noted in pupil's annual report.
- Parents requested to meet class teacher.

## **Serious Misbehaviour**

Being constantly disruptive in class

Telling lies

Stealing

Causing wilful damage to school/other pupil's property

Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission

Using unacceptable language

Using verbal abuse or making racist remarks

Bringing weapons to school or using objects as weapons in school.

Bullying (See separate Policy Document)

Making threats of physical violence to a teacher or fellow pupil.

Any act of assault against pupils, staff member, visitor/parent and so forth.

## **Strategies for dealing with Serious Misbehaviour**

- Verbal communication with parents informing them of problem/incident/concern.
- Letter of apology from pupil, so-signed by parent for each incident.
- Pupil may be required to fill a personal response sheet.
- Meeting between parents and the class teacher.
- The parents will be invited to meet the class teacher, the principal and/or the chairperson to discuss serious incidents of misbehaviour.
- Suspension to another class.
- The pupil may be kept in detention at all/some breaks for a specified period until the school feels that the behaviour has ceased or will not re-occur.

- In the event of a serious incident of misbehaviour or where a pupil is continuously disruptive he/she may be suspended by the Principal/Board of Management for a minor fixed period (one to three school days).

*The Board will convene to examine the issues. The Board may consider sanctions including immediate suspension pending discussion with the parents/guardians (see below).*

### Programme of Intervention for children with ongoing difficulties

A Behaviour Plan may be considered when a child consistently exhibits challenging and disruptive behaviour.

Social skills programme, promotion of friendship and self esteem as part of S.P.H.E.

Yard games/activities may be organised if the behaviour is taking place on the yard.

Use of a behavioural check-list (e.g. the learning environment checklist from the NEPS booklet "Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support") to evaluate whether any modifications could be made to the learning environment.

For pupils who exhibit particularly challenging behaviour, support services may be requested to assist in responding to the needs of the pupils. Sources of support may include, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Special Education Support Service (SESS), HSE Community Psychology Services and the National Council for Special Education.

## Suspension

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious misbehaviour:

- The pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

The Board of Management and Staff of Athy Model School will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 - 12).

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed.

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person. Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in very serious misbehaviour (see above).

In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil the Staff and the BOM will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student.

### These factors include:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour,
- The context of the behaviour,

The impact of the behaviour,  
The interventions tried to date,  
Whether suspension is a proportionate response and the possible impact of suspension.

## **Procedures in relation to suspension**

Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.

The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.

The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73).

The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.

Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.

A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians.

A suspension will not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective.

### The letter will confirm:

- the period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any programme of study to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management the right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).

The suspension will be recorded on the NEWB 'Student Absence Report Form' (when applicable).

When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the class teacher or principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the chairperson of the Board of Management.

If a pupil continues to misbehave, she/he may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.

As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.

The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.

**Section 29 Appeal** - when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about how to appeal.

## Expulsion

Subsequent to the above suspension procedures and meetings with parents/guardians, if serious/gross incidents of misbehaviour continue, the pupil will be recommended for permanent expulsion by the Board of Management.

The grounds for expulsion include the following:

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

Authority to expel is reserved to the Board of Management.

In determining the appropriateness of expelling a pupil, the BOM will refer to the factors to consider before proposing to expel a student. These factors are similar to those mentioned above in relation to suspension.

In exceptional circumstances, pupils may be expelled for a first offence. This may apply in the event of:

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

## Procedures in respect of expulsion – six steps.

Step 1 - A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

Step 2 - A recommendation to the Board of Management

Step 3 - Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing

Step 4 - Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Step 5 - Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Step 6 - Confirmation of the decision to expel

Note: A detailed outline of each of these is available in Chapter 12 of the Guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour. This is available in the school office or can be accessed on the NEWB Website - [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie)

Section 29 Appeals (p86). A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (DES). A form for such an appeal is available from the DES.

## **Keeping records**

### **Class Level**

Teachers keep a record of child's behaviour, as necessary.

### **Playground**

The staff on yard duty will inform the class teachers and/or the principal of incidents of misbehaviour on the yard. Depending on the nature of the incident, these may be recorded in the incident book.

A record will be kept of letters or phone calls to parents in relation to pupil's behaviour. A record will also be kept of communication with outside agencies and with the Board of Management. These records will be stored in the pupil's individual file.

### **Section 29 Appeals**

Documentation pertaining to Section 29 appeals will be kept and stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office.

### **Records of Suspension**

Records will be kept of investigation and decision-making (including notes of all investigation, the decision-making process, the decision and rationale for the decision, the duration of the suspension and any conditions attached). These records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the school office.

Report to the Board of Management - The principal will report all suspensions to the Board with reasons for and the duration of each suspension.

A report will be made to the NEWB in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines.

Records in respect of expulsion - all data, letters, etc. will be kept as above.

### **When and where the behaviour will be subject to the Code**

The standards expected in the Code of Behaviour apply in any situation where pupils are still the responsibility of the school. These include school tours, swimming, going to and from the church, fieldtrips and after school games and concerts.

### **Implementing and communicating the Code of Behaviour**

- All parents will be issued with a summary copy of the Code of Behaviour.
- Parents and pupils will be asked to read and accept it, by signing the attached form.
- The full Code of Behaviour will be made available in the school to all parents. Parents will be asked if they would like the full code to be sent to them.
- Special effort will be made to ensure that pupils with special educational needs understand the school rules.

### **Pupils with special educational needs**

Pupils with special needs will be required to follow the school's 'Code of Behaviour' but teachers will use their professional judgment in relation to regularity and level of sanctions.

**Procedure for the Resolution of Complaints:**

Complaints are taken under guidelines laid down in agreement between COI General Synod, INTO and Board of Management Guidelines. The Complaints Procedure is available in school or on the school website.

If I choose to break the rules,  
this will happen.

**Step 1: Verbal warning.**

**Step 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> Verbal warning**  
choice of consequence or return  
to expected behaviour.

**Step 3: Consequence is**  
followed through.