

## Rathkeevin National School Code of Behaviour



This policy was formulated in April 2021, following a review and update of an earlier Code of Behaviour policy. All teachers and our S.N.As were involved in this review, with later involvement of the Board of Management, children and parents. The policy was reviewed and updated in October 2024 and ratified by the B.O.M in November 2024.

**Rathkeevin National School** is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Waterford & Lismore.

“Catholic Ethos” in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- b) and a living relationship with God and with other people; and
- c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
- d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference. In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of **Rathkeevin National School** shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

### **Mission Statement**

**Rathkeevin National School** is a school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure learning environment, where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of our pupils are identified and addressed.

While **Rathkeevin National School** is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also gives due recognition to children of all other religious beliefs and none.

We aim to provide an appropriate, stimulating and broadly challenging education for all of our pupils. We aim to encourage language learning and the appreciation of languages and their place in our culture and heritage.

**Rathkeevin National School** encourages the involvement of parents through home-school contacts and through their involvement in the development and growth of the Parents' Association.

At **Rathkeevin National School** we endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for themselves, for other people and for property and to encourage the development of personal responsibility. We aim to prepare our pupils for their place in a modern multicultural society by actively promoting equality and by celebrating the diversity we have within our school community.

We strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of teachers through staff development programmes.

**Rathkeevin National School** encourages our pupils to have respect for diversity, be environmentally aware and develop appreciation of our community.

The general aims of primary education in **Rathkeevin NS** as set down by the Department of Education:

1. To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual.
2. To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society.
3. To prepare the child for a continuum of learning.

In Rathkeevin National School, high self-esteem through praise and encouragement is central to our promotion of appropriate behaviour. We hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement so that positive behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for fostering a positive learning environment for all pupils. Class teachers have the responsibility of maintaining high standards in their classrooms as well as a collective duty as a staff to maintain high standards and expectations throughout the school.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school in an appropriate manner.

### **Aims**

- To foster a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces positive behaviour patterns
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support positive behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child



- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through parent communication, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

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### **Responsibility of Adults**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and promote an atmosphere of respect

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

### **School Rules**

No list of School Rules is exhaustive and the following list is a sample of School Rules in operation in Rathkeevin N.S.

1. We show respect for ourselves and others.
2. We show respect for our own property and the property of others.
3. We show respect for other students and their learning.
4. We are kind and are willing to help others.
5. We follow instructions from staff immediately.
6. We walk quietly in the school building.
7. We show courtesy and good manners.
8. We try to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
9. We ask permission to leave the classroom/school.
10. We try our best in class.
11. We take responsibility for our own work.

These can be summed up as 6 Golden Rules:

1. We are kind- we do not make personal comments about other children or their families.
2. We are gentle - we don't hurt others.
3. We are honest - we tell the truth.
4. We listen - we don't interrupt.
5. We work hard - we don't waste time.
6. We look after property - we don't damage things.

These six golden rules will be the main ones used for infant classes. Rules apply during school-time and during all school related activities.

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will have a lesson/ chat with his / her class about school and class rules- explaining that these are important for the school to function properly.

### **Incentives/Reward System**

Part of the vision of Rathkeevin National School is to help children to achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children and to all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements.

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

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment in a pupil's copy.
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation .
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class.
- A Homework Pass

Field trips, annual school tours and any end of year special events will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to maintain good standards of behaviour.

### **Cooperative Approach**

- Each child is encouraged to display positive behaviour every day
- Teachers continually monitor behaviour- they encourage and reward good behaviour throughout the school year
- If a school rule is broken, a teacher will speak to the child.
- If misbehaving continues the teacher will contact the child's parents/guardians.
- If there is no improvement following parent/teacher meeting and if negative behaviour continues the class teacher and Principal will meet with parent/guardian
- If there is no improvement at this stage the parent/guardian will be called to meet with the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management where the situation will be discussed in detail. Guidelines will be drawn up for future behaviour in the school and playground.
- The school reserves the right to arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians of a child at any time, should the child's behaviour be deemed to be unacceptable.
- If a parent refuses to meet with a class teacher the matter will be referred to the Principal. Any refusal to meet with the Principal and/or Chairperson will automatically be referred to the Board of Management and regarded as a serious breach of co-operation in our school behaviour policy.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

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

break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Misbehaving in class.
- Not following instructions.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning.
- Threats or physical hurt to another person.
- Damage to property.
- Theft.
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school.
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.
- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil.
- Serious theft.
- Serious damage to property.
- Serious bullying.
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

In the event of assault on a staff member, the following procedures will apply;

- (i) seek medical assistance, where necessary.
- (ii) (ii) immediate reporting of incidents to School Management.
- (iii) (iii) recording of incidents in an Incident Report Book.
- (iv) (iv) reporting of the incident to the Health and Safety Authority.
- (v) (v) reporting to the Gardaí, where appropriate.
- (vi) (vi) Ensuring that all appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect persons at risk and to prevent, in so far as is practicable, the occurrence of assault

More information relevant to Bullying can be found in the school's Anti – Bullying Policy

### **Sanctions**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour.
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning.
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following approaches may be used when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil/ discussing the incident with the pupil
  2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
  3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
  4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened.
  5. Loss of privileges.
  6. Detention during break.
  7. Communication with parents.
  8. Referral to Principal.
  9. Principal communicating with parents.
  10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)
- Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. If it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

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 at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. 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 teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other 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 2000. 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, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the 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 facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

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

Parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. This should be done through the Aladdin Connect App. Parents will be informed when their child has been absent for 12+ days of school. Under current legislation, the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed when a child has been absent for 20 days in a school year.

### **Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents 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 have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are 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 following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

- through prearranged meeting
- Through children's homework journal (Infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school.
- Newsletters/school web-site/e-mails.
- Aladdin is the preferred method of communication

### **Review**

This Code of Behaviour is constantly reviewed in light of teachers' experiences and comments from the wider school community. It will be reviewed formally within three years of ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2024 and will be reviewed as necessary or within 3 years.

Signed Diarmuid Burke Date 13/11/24

Principal

Signed Peter Aleanne Date 13/11/24

Chairperson of the Board of Management