

# COOSAN NATIONAL SCHOOL

## School Behaviour and Discipline Policy

### **Introduction:**

Coosan National School aims to provide a happy, secure and friendly learning environment where children, parents/guardians, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

This will enable the child to live a full life and will equip him/her to avail of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

The staff of Coosan National School is committed to the realisation of these objectives. Our aim is to create a happy, secure environment for our pupils in which there is a sense of good order and a reasonable approach to discipline. In this way a large group of students can be organised so that the school can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.

### **The Code of Discipline aims to achieve:**

- The efficient operation of the school.
- The structuring of in-class discipline, which prompts an efficient and stimulating environment.
- The maintenance of good order and safety throughout the school day, including break times, sports activities and all movements between classes.
- The development of self-discipline in all pupils and care and courtesy towards others.
- The development of respect for school buildings, all school property and the general school environment.

## **Principles of our Discipline Policy**

1. Our policy is based on the principles of fairness, respect, tolerance, compassion and courtesy. Staff shall consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and shall respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour. Implementation of discipline in general shall be a team effort - every teaching member of staff has a right to correct any child in school whether that child is a pupil of his/her class or not.
2. If our school is to achieve a happy, secure environment where the children can develop and learn to their full potential, a positive, friendly, caring and encouraging atmosphere will provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour that is dangerous to oneself, others or which may be disruptive or anti-social. Therefore, every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Teachers shall talk to children regularly, during class time, about school rules and the reasons behind them.
3. The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. The agreed Code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.
4. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

### **The following are expected of pupils/parents/guardians:**

1. **Respect and Courtesy**  
Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner. They are expected to treat all other pupils, all members of staff and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of any form of vulgarity or offensive language is unacceptable.

**2. Punctuality**

Pupils must be on time for school each day and return to class punctually after breaks. The official opening time of the school is 9.20 a.m. Class for infants ends at 2.00 p.m. All other classes end at 3.00 p.m. No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside of these times. Those collecting children from school should always be punctual. Lateness causes great anxiety, especially for younger children.

**3. Safety When Entering or Leaving the School**

Parents/Guardians and children must enter and exit the school using only the designated entry/exit gates. Children must **walk** when entering or leaving the school and must use the footpaths in the school at all times.

**4. Cyclists**

Cyclists must dismount and walk when entering or leaving the school. Cyclists are asked to park their bicycles in the designated cycle bays in the school.

5. Parents/Guardians are asked to park in a responsible manner at all times. Please respect the disabled parking spaces and keep school entry/exit points free at all times.

**6. Attendances/Educational Welfare Act**

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000 absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in the school journal and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Absences of 20 days or more must be reported by the school to Tusla. Any child wishing to leave school early must have a note signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and collected at the classroom door. The parent/guardian collecting the child signs the "Sign Out Book" located near the classroom exit or in the office, should the child be collected at break times. Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of the appointments to the class teacher. Daily attendance and punctuality are required of pupils. After a pupil has been absent, a note from the parent(s)/guardian(s) must also be brought to the class teacher upon the pupils return to school.

**7. Homework**

It is the policy of the school to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from class to class. Homework is recorded in the pupil's journal. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should sign the homework journal to confirm that the homework has been fully attempted. If for some reason homework cannot be completed in full, parents/guardians are asked to note this in the homework journal.

Generally, homework is not given at weekends. Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on text books and copy books is not permitted. Please refer to the School Homework Policy for further information.

**8. Personal Property**

Children must have all items of personal property clearly labelled i.e. uniform, school books, copies etc.

**School Property**

Pupils must respect all school property and treat all schoolbooks and equipment with care. Parents/Guardians will be held accountable for the cleaning, repair or replacement of any school property or equipment wilfully damaged or vandalised by their children.

**School Environment**

In keeping with our Green School ethos, pupils are asked to keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully in any organised clean-up activities wearing appropriate safety gear i.e. gloves.

**Behaviour in Class**

1. Pupils must have all books and materials or equipment as required.
2. All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
3. Respect and courtesy are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, towards a teacher, ancillary member of staff or towards any visitors to the school is unacceptable.

4. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with this right, is unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with their teachers' instructions so that an effective education programme can be undertaken.
5. Uniform
  - Pupils must come to school in full uniform, clean and tidy.
  - No jewellery is allowed except a watch, single pair of small earrings (i.e. ear studs or sleepers, one in each earlobe).
  - Facial piercings are not permitted.
  - No make-up/fake tan may be worn.
  - Pupils with long hair are expected to wear it tied up, in a neat and tidy fashion (not obstructing vision), with no unnatural colours allowed.

### **Behaviour Out of Class**

Pupils should treat others, as they would wish to be treated themselves. Pupils should behave in an orderly manner at all times and must walk when going from one area to another within the school building.

Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting and pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited. Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted.

Pupils are required to play only in their designated yard areas. Pupils may not leave the yard during breaks without the permission of the supervising teachers.

All pupils are required to line up promptly and in an orderly manner at the end of breaks.

Football is never allowed in the school yard during school time.

### **Inclement Weather**

On such days, pupils stay in their classrooms for breaks. They must observe implicitly any directions given by teachers and safety procedures must be followed at all times.

### **Accidents**

A child involved in any accident, or hurt in any way, must report, or be reported to one of the teachers on yard supervision or to any other available teacher or member of staff. The injured child will be looked after by the designated first aider i.e. school secretary. In the event of the child needing urgent medical attention, the school will contact the school doctor, or another doctor on duty. Parents/Guardians must leave emergency telephone numbers with the school, which can be used in the above circumstances. All accidents are recorded in the School Accident First Aid Folder. Parents/Guardians are always contacted if there is a head injury or the teacher feels the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately.

### **Bullying and Intimidation of Others**

1. This is always regarded as a very serious offence. All forms of threatening behaviour are unacceptable. Children must be able to attend school and to go home safely without fear.
2. If children are being bullied or threatened, either verbally or physically, parents/guardians, or others who are aware of the bullying, should inform the school as per school Anti-Bullying Policy Policy so that the matter can be dealt with effectively.

3. Parents/Guardians and others are advised to be alert for signs that a child may be subjected to bullying behaviour, e.g. anxiety concerning school, unexplained change of mood, difficulty in sleeping, damage to and loss of personal property, increase in requests for money, unexplained cuts and bruises, deterioration in school performance etc. Parents/Guardians should be particularly vigilant when a pattern of the above, or similar indicators, manifest themselves over a period of time.
4. All incidences of bullying are dealt with in accordance with our School Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### **Rewards for Acceptable Behaviour**

1. The following are some ways of showing appreciation for acceptable good behaviour, which are in operation in the school:

Oral praise, written praise, pupil to be given job responsibilities that they like, pupils to be given small prizes, merit lists, merit star, reduction in homework etc..

#### **Minor Unacceptable Behaviour**

2. Talking out of turn in class (if there is a repeated pattern, this is considered serious). Pupils leaving their seats without permission. (due to inclement weather, pupils are in class for breaks, safety is paramount and this behaviour is considered serious). Not wearing school uniform regularly.

#### **Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

3. Examples considered serious are:

Making rude signs or annoying gestures, using vulgar or bad language, being late often, copying work from others, not sharing with others, not completing school tasks, not completing homework without a valid reason, entering buildings or classrooms without permission, littering the building or school grounds, leaving designated play areas without permission.

### **Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour**

#### **4. Examples considered very serious:**

Bullying or threatening others, making abusive, insulting, offensive or insolent remarks, laughing or jeering at others' mistakes or disabilities, wilful damage to school buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others, fighting, showing disrespect to teachers or other school employees, disrupting lessons by causing a distraction, shouting and not working to the best of one's ability, being wilfully lazy in starting work or deliberately wasting time, being generally rowdy, aggressive, rough, spitting, being unhygienic, disturbing other children at work and being disobedient or defiant.

Positive encouragement and reinforcement is paramount in helping pupils to develop responsibility, a positive attitude and self-discipline. However, where a pupil wilfully disregards school rules and infringes on the rights of others to participate in an ordered and structured learning environment, sanctions may be needed. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school. A pupil will be referred to the principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Parents/Guardians will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

Communication with parents/guardians will be verbal or by letter/email, depending on circumstances. The parent(s)/guardian(s) concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/staff member will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the chairperson and the principal. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the board shall authorise the chairperson or principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Expulsion may be considered in extreme cases.

## **Communication**

### **1. School/Board of Management**

Parents/Guardians are always welcome at school. An introduction meeting is held each Summer for parents/guardians of children about to start school in September. Parents/Guardians of children transferring from other schools are welcome to these meetings.

### **2. Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Formal meetings:

- As arranged on specific days each year when parent(s)/guardian(s) are assigned a specific time to discuss their child's progress with the teacher.
- Parents/Guardians are always welcome by appointment at any other time.

**3. Absence**

When a child is absent from school, a note should be sent to the relevant teacher by the parent(s)/guardian(s) on the day the child next attends school. This should be written into the relevant page in the school journal.

**4. Board of Management**

Parents/Guardians elect two members to represent them on the School Board of Management. Parents/guardians should feel free to contact any Board of Management member on any matter.

**5. Parents' Association**

An A.G.M. is held at which members are elected. As a rule, meetings are held at least once a month. Parents/Guardians should feel free to request the Parents' Representatives on the Board of Management to research any matter for them.

**Community Use of School Premises and Grounds**

- There is a well-established tradition of use of the school grounds and facilities by various groups and organisations in the community.
- Extra curricular classes, athletics club, football club, community games committee etc., may make use of the school and its grounds.
- Clubs are required to take out their own insurance and to maintain good order and safety standards among the children in their care. In every case, young people using the school grounds/facilities must be supervised by an adult.
- The Rules for National Schools and Insurance Company regulations require that school facilities can only be used with the prior approval of the Board of Management. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to note this especially, as unsupervised use of school facilities, in the past, has resulted in damage to school property.

This Policy was ratified by the Staff on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2018.

This Policy was re-ratified by the BoM on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019.