



# *Merlin Woods Primary School*

## **Code of Behaviour**

### **Introduction**

Children enrolled in Merlin Woods Primary School are required to co-operate with and support the School Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation, & management. The Board of Management places Parents/ Guardians responsible for ensuring that their child co-operates with said policies in an age-appropriate way. In signing the enrolment form you are agreeing to the terms of the school Code of Behaviour and you are undertaking to co-operate with and support the school in implementing this Code of Behaviour, both in its general application and in its application to your child.

This Code of Behaviour has been drawn up in accordance with the “Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools”, issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). It aims to ensure a whole school approach to behaviour in our school and 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.

### **Aims**

The following aims of the Code of Behaviour for Merlin Woods Primary School articulate our vision for positive relationships and behaviour in our school:

- To allow for the smooth and harmonious running of the school.
- To promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the school.
- To facilitate the development and education of all the children
- To promote good behaviour and self-discipline among the children.
- To promote equality and fairness among all.
- To enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- To increase the co-operation between home and school.
- To ensure consistency in the application of rules and sanctions.

- To outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to negative behaviour.

### **Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour:**

This Code of Behaviour will provide a sound foundation for a whole-school approach to promoting good behaviour and for responding to unacceptable behaviour based on a shared understanding of what shapes the behaviour of children and positive strategies for affirming and promoting good behaviour.

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of this Code of Behaviour. Emphasis is on a holistic, preventative approach which involves all partners (Board of Management, Staff, Parents and Pupils) in the school community in understanding, drafting and implementing the school's Code of Behaviour. Restorative Practice methods are used in our school to promote and restore relationships. Through R.P. children discuss incidents and feelings, the impact on themselves and others, and how to restore the relationship and move forward.

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.

In our school, we use a range of whole-school approaches to promote positive behaviour. This includes *Dina School, The Incredible Years, Friends for Life, Mind Up, Circle Time and Restorative Practice, Whole School Raffle Ticket Reward System, Weekly Assemblies, Zones of Regulation, Continuum of Support, The Student Council*

*\*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, some of these whole-school approaches may not be utilised in the school until it is safe to do so. The school may use online alternatives where possible.*

### **The Role of the Principal**

Positive and supportive leadership from the Principal promotes successful implementation of the Code of Behaviour across the school community. The Principal will

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.

## **The Role of Staff Members**

Practical strategies for staff to encourage and promote positive behaviour in the classroom:

- Be alert to what is going on in the classroom at all times
- Praise and reinforce positive behaviour using appropriate language e.g. by saying “I like the way you are/did/said... ”,
- Use appropriate reward systems such as Star Charts, allocate extra Golden Time, Weekly certificates for Good Behaviour, intercom announcements, kindness awards, etc.
- Establish and clearly communicate expectations for behaviour, class routines and boundaries
- Explain the connection between a child’s behaviour and its consequences e.g. removal from disruption if distracting others to appropriate time-out space
- Use strategies to help children maintain these routines and boundaries e.g. using prompt card systems for keeping children on task, use of visual time-tables,
- Keep children actively involved in their learning, vary teaching methodologies e.g. mixture of whole class collaboration, group work, pair work and individual work.
- Ensure smooth transition between subjects and classrooms
- Enforce classroom rules promptly, consistently and equitably

Example of classroom rules:

- Show Me Five
- Be polite, say excuse me and thank you
- Show kindness and respect, share, help others, take turns
- Listen and put up your hand to talk out and wait to be asked by teacher
- Keep your place tidy, respect school property
- Be safe, walk while indoors

A warm and accepting classroom climate is one where children feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other.

Practical strategies for staff to encourage and promote positive behaviour outside of the classroom:

- Staff will establish and maintain consistency in terms of expectations for behaviour, routines and boundaries for children in the yard or other areas
- Staff will enforce rules promptly, consistently and equitably
- Children walk on the right hand side of the corridor and stairs.

- Children will play gently with regard to the safety of everyone in the yard.
- Sanctions: Children are removed to time-out space if behaviour is deemed to be unsafe or inappropriate.
- Physical fighting of any sort is considered a gross misbehaviour and those involved will be asked to meet with the principal to discuss the incident.

*\*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, some of these strategies to promote positive behaviour outside of the classroom may not be utilised until it is safe to do so.*

### **The Student Council:**

The Student Council Pupil voice is very important in Merlin Woods Primary School. We endeavour to create a climate of openness, consultation and participation, where pupil's views are sought, listened to and respected. Two representatives are elected by each class from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. Elected children are members of the Student Council. The council meet regularly to discuss relevant issues and contribute their feedback on policies and practices in the school.

*\*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, meetings with the student council will only be held in accordance with public health guidelines, and possible alternatives used. (ie not to have pods or bubbles interacting) eg online, meeting outside.*

## **Parental involvement:**

Parental involvement is a key element to the successful implementation of a school's Code of Behaviour. Merlin Woods Primary School supports and encourages the formation of a Parents Association /Committee as a representative group for parents. This association/ committee will be consulted and involved in reviewing the school's Code of Behaviour. The Code of Behaviour will be clearly communicated to all parents.

As part of the preventative nature of the school's approach to positive behaviour, parents are informed at the earliest opportunity where their child's behaviour is deemed to be unsafe and inappropriate.

Parents are encouraged to support children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property and to

- Ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

**Parents are reminded that the staff of the school do not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time of 8.40 a.m. or after the official Infants closing time of 1.20p.m., or 2.20 pm from 1<sup>st</sup> Class upwards.**

The Board of Management and school community will ensure that systems are in place to acknowledge behaviour, progress and effort, through reward systems as outlined previously, under positive strategies for promoting positive behaviour in the school.

Most children behave appropriately, with the help of consistent and clear rules and routines in class and in school. Occasional minor misbehaviour will be attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. Some children need more active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Without additional help, they may be at risk of failing, behaviourally, socially and educationally. Additional inputs or interventions might include (in no set order):

- Referral to another teacher or adult who can work with the child
- A phone call home
- Setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the child in a supportive way
- Behaviour contracts
- Exit strategy for other pupils in the room
- Meeting with parents
- Reduced Day
- Suspension/ Expulsion

Where a child's behaviour is particularly challenging the school and parents together may engage the support of local support services such as NEPS, HSE, NCSE agencies etc.

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. Appendix 1 outlines Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour.

### ***Strategies for Dealing with Unacceptable Misbehaviour:***

#### **Sanctions**

Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach and to encourage good behaviour among pupils in the school. When this fails, a series of Behaviour Checks will be implemented. The behaviour checks are a step by step procedure for dealing with pupils who don't follow rules. They are clearly listed on a wall chart in each room and are taught and regularly discussed. Pupils know precisely how they operate.

Every day is a fresh start (except for repetitive poor behaviour where a child may start on Step 2). Pupils know that when they come to school in the morning that it is they who choose how their day will go. If unwise behaviour leads to behaviour check, it is important that pupils know what stage they reach as they have a choice to make. The choice is their responsibility. The aim of these behaviour checks is to encourage the children to become aware of and to monitor their own behaviour.

The following is a guide to matching the misbehaviour with the appropriate behaviour check:

1. Minor Misbehaviour (*Follow Steps 1 – 3*)
2. Serious Misbehaviour (*Follow Steps 3 – 5*)
3. Gross Misbehaviour (*Follow Steps 5 – 9*)

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of Health and Safety.

<b>Steps: Behaviour Check</b>	
1	<b>Oral Warning</b>
2	<b>Written Warning</b> – teacher keeps a note of incident/behaviour of child and informs child that this has been discussed and noted ( <i>Informal note in the child’s journal for repeated Written Warning</i> )
3	<b>Offside-Table</b> (a desk within the class and continue what they are doing) <i>*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, if this desk is in use it will adhere to social distancing requirements and it will be sanitised after each use.</i>
4	<b>Teacher contact parent</b> Teacher should contact home to inform parent about behavioural difficulties <i>If a child reaches this stage twice in one week, move to Step 5 (at the discretion of the teacher).</i> <i>*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, children will not be sent to a different classroom, until it is safe to do so. Instead parents will receive a phone call home at this stage to inform them about their child’s behaviour.</i>
5	Go to the senior management teacher with responsibility for Behaviour, ie Múinteoir Amanda Baynes <b>Phone call home by class teacher</b> to let the parent know what had happened in class and that their child was sent to another teacher with responsibility for Behaviour in the school
6	<b>Parents</b> requested to come to the school to meet with teacher <i>*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, this meeting may take place using online resources. If meeting is taking place in the school guidelines for social distancing and face coverings must be adhered to.</i>
7	Teacher requests for Principal to meet child <i>*Meetings will adhere to protective measures due to Covid 19</i>
8	<b>Parents</b> requested to come to the school to meet with senior management teacher with responsibility for Behaviour, ie Múinteoir Amanda Baynes or Principal, as appropriate. <i>*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, this meeting can take place using online resources or if meeting is taken place in the school guidelines for social distancing and face coverings must be adhered to.</i>
9	<b>Suspension</b> (no work will be set by the teacher)

### **Suspension/Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. 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 or gross misbehaviour, 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/or 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 health and safety of pupils and staff, the Board of Management 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 Local Welfare Education 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.

### **School Rules:**

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised within class with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

**PLEASE NOTE THE USE OF OUR ANTIBULLYING PROCEDURES AND POLICY AND COVID 19 RESPONSE PLAN IN TANDEM WITH THIS CODE OF BEHAVIOUR.**

**Record Keeping:**

In situations which require active intervention to assist children to improve their behaviour the class teacher will record observations. Teachers will use the NEPS Continuum of Support document for recording various levels of support. Link:

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_resource\\_pack.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf)

Where incidences of misbehaviour occur in the school yard the misbehaviour will be recorded in a Yard Incident Report Book. Where there is any allegation of bullying this will be recorded and kept in the child's file. All such records will be kept on file and stored securely.

**Attendance:**

**Procedure for notification of a child's absence from school:**

The parent shall ensure their child will attend a recognised school on each school day. Where a child is absent from the school, the parent of the child is required under the Education Act 2000, to notify the child's teacher, by means of a signed and dated written note detailing (a) **the dates absent** and (b) **the reasons for the child's absence**. Standard Absence Notes, available to parents from the school, or homework diary pull-out templates, or plain paper can be used for these notes. These notes should be given to the child's class teacher, on the day the child returns to school. In the interim where the absence exceeds 3 school days, the parent should communicate to the teacher, the reason for the child's absence. When the child eventually returns the written note of explanation is also required. If a child has a significant absence due to illness, the school will require a doctor's note.

Pupils must also be signed out by a parent if the child is leaving the school early.

Holidays must be organised in accordance with regular school holidays and not during term.

*\*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, if your child has been abroad they must adhere to public health requirements as per the national guidelines.*

The school is required under the obligations of the Education Welfare Act 2000 to record and report children's absences to the National Education Welfare Board. The school is obliged to

report to the NEWB when a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively.

Strategies used by the school to promote good attendance include:

- Attendance awards & prizes
- Focus on punctuality
- Phonecalls home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of an unexplained absence
- Phonecalls home on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of an unexplained absence for target children
- Meetings with the class teacher regarding attendance
- Meetings with the teacher with responsibility for attendance
- Letters home after 10 days of absence
- Letters home after 15 days of absence
- Meetings with the NEWB Education Officer and School Principal

*\*Due to Covid 19 and the protective measures in place, some of these whole-school strategies to promote attendance may not be fully utilised in the school until it is safe to do so.*

### **Acceptance of Code**

When enrolling a child as a student in Merlin Woods Primary School, the Principal will provide the parents with a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents are informed that by enrolling in our school they are agreeing to abide by our code of behaviour. As stated in the school's Admissions policy, as a condition of registering the child, the Principal will require his / her parents to confirm in writing:

1. The Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them.
2. They shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child complies with the code.

The child will also be required to confirm in writing that he/she complies with the code if it is age appropriate to do so.

### **Reviewed and ratified**

This updated Code of Behaviour was ratified by the Board of Management on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.

## Appendix 1: Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The code acknowledges three broad categories of misbehaviour as:

1. Minor Misbehaviour
2. Serious Misbehaviour
3. Gross Misbehaviour

Examples of each are outlined as follows:

<b>Minor Misbehaviour</b> <i>As defined by the teacher</i>	<b>Serious Misbehaviour</b> <i>Persistent Minor Misbehaviours become Serious Misbehaviours</i>	<b>Gross Misbehaviour</b> <i>Repeated Serious Misbehaviours become Gross Misbehaviours</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not doing or completing assigned work either in school or for homework without good reason.</li> <li>2. Ignoring Teacher's instructions.</li> <li>3. Distracting or constant talking to other pupils.</li> <li>4. Late arrival to school without good reason.</li> <li>5. Unruliness on corridors and school grounds.</li> <li>6. Breaking of school rules/classroom rules.</li> <li>7. Incomplete school uniform.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Any misbehaviours related to Covid 19- eg. spitting/ fake coughing/ saying they have the virus etc</b></li> <li>2. Repeatedly not doing or completing assigned work either in school or for homework without good reason.</li> <li>3. Repeatedly ignoring teacher's instructions or being disrespectful to teachers.</li> <li>4. Repeated distracting and constant talking to other pupils.</li> <li>5. Consistent late arrival to school without good reason.</li> <li>6. Repeated unruliness on corridors and school grounds.</li> <li>7. Repeated breaking of school/classroom rules.</li> <li>8. Consistent incomplete uniform.</li> <li>9. Telling lies (as judged by the teacher).</li> <li>10. Use of bad language and offensive gestures.</li> <li>11. Dangerous behaviour that is liable to cause injury.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Repeated misbehaviours related to Covid 19, eg spitting/ fake coughing/ saying they have the virus etc</b></li> <li>2. Stealing</li> <li>3. Verbal abuse of another child or the teacher.</li> <li>4. Bullying or intimidation.</li> <li>5. Vandalism or theft of school property.</li> <li>6. Pupils leaving school grounds without permission.</li> <li>7. Persistent breaking of school rules.</li> <li>8. Physical abuse of another child or teacher.</li> <li>9. Racism.</li> <li>10. Aggressive behaviour, aggressive verbal outbursts and/or grossly offensive gestures.</li> <li>11. Use of any banned items for the purpose of offending or injuring others.</li> </ol>



