

STRATFORD N.S. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

WHY A DISCIPLINE POLICY?

- 1 Children are entitled to their individuality, yet a school atmosphere of good order is the right of all pupils so learning can take place in a secure social environment.
- 2 The long-term objective is that pupils will develop internalised self-discipline.

R U L E S

- 1 Children must respect others and their property.
- 2 Children should do their best in their school and homework, making sure all work is done well, neatly and in good time.
- 3 Children should be truthful and accept responsibility for their own actions.
- 4 Children should walk at all times in the school building, as running can lead to accidents.
- 5 Pupils must present themselves for class in good time and with the necessary books and equipment.
- 6 Pupils must dress with modesty, as defined by the school. Hair must be its natural colour and cut in a style acceptable to the school.
- 7 Chewing gum, laser pens, penknives, skates or skateboards, and valuable items not essential for school are not allowed. Toys which The School deem to be dangerous are also excluded. All of these items will be confiscated and returned only to the parent.
- 8 Lunches must respect the Kosher requirements and must not be swapped between children.
- 9 Mobile phones must be switched off and must remain in the pupils' schoolbags while on the school premises. Use of a mobile phone during the day requires

the permission of the class teacher. Disruption caused by failure to comply with the rule will mean the confiscation of the phone and the withdrawal of permission to bring mobiles to school. The confiscated phone will be returned to the parent only, on request.

- 10 Digital cameras, including mobile phones with inbuilt cameras must not be used to photograph pupils or school personnel without their prior consent being obtained. Likewise it is strictly forbidden to use mobile phones or other devices with sound recording facilities to record other pupils or school personnel, except with their prior consent.
11. Pupils are not permitted to use personal electronic gaming devices in the school.
12. Any device covered in Rule 9, 10 and 11 which is used contrary to the rules will be confiscated, to be returned only to the parent. Where a previously confiscated phone or camera is confiscated again, the privilege to bring such equipment to school will be withdrawn in that case.

The purpose of these rules is to give pupils an easy way to remember the code as a guide to behaviour. They are subject to interpretation within the fuller, more detailed documents attached.

It is expected that parents will encourage their children to comply with school rules and thus contribute to the welfare of all our pupils and the smooth running of the school.

MORNING ARRANGEMENTS

- 1 The School Gates and Front Door **open at 8.10 a.m.** Pupils should not arrive on school property before this time as they are not insured whilst on the premises. National School pupils who are unavoidably dropped off early at the school should go directly to the Lunchroom and follow the directions of the Supervisor on duty. Supervision is only provided for those who comply with the expected standard of behaviour.
- 2 Hebrew pupils should remain in the Lunchroom until taken out by their Hebrew teachers. Non-Jewish pupils are **not required** to be at the school prior to 9.45am, unless they are attending a Christian Religion Class.
- 3 Pupils attending a Christian Religion Class should report to the lunchroom or other appointed supervised area, where they should await collection by their religion teachers.

- 4 At 10.00a.m. all non-Jewish pupils should be seated and quiet in the lunchroom.
- 5 Pupils should move in a proper manner from the lunchroom to their classrooms when directed to do so by their teacher.
- 6 At **10.05am** both Hebrew and Non-Jewish pupils should be in their seats in their classroom and in a state of good order to facilitate the prompt beginning of class.

End of the Day Arrangements

1. Parents are expected to arrange for their children's prompt safe transport home.
2. Neither the school nor its staff can accept any liability for pupils left behind on the premises.
3. Parents collecting children should do so from the National School Courtyard
4. Attendance at extra-curricular activities is conditional on the parent collecting their child promptly.

WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

1. Pupils should come to attention promptly at the teacher's command.
2. Pupils should respond to a general question by putting up their hands, not shouting comments aloud or creating disorder.
3. There should be only one pupil in the toilet at any one time.
4. Pupils should sit in their places until told otherwise by the teacher.
5. Pupils should always walk and never run in the classroom.
6. Pupils should act with respect towards all fellow pupils and their property in class. Pushing, fighting, striking and other unfriendly behaviour will not be tolerated, nor will interference with other pupils' property.

7. Pupils should do their schoolwork as well as they can. Where necessary, pupils should ask the teacher for help.
8. Where work is of a group or class nature, pupils should work in a cooperative and mutually supportive manner, without excluding any class member.
9. Work, which is assigned as class work or homework, should be fully completed by pupils.
10. The giving of lines as punishment is unlikely to lead to a constructive self-analysis of the pupils own behaviour but is very likely to cause a deterioration of handwriting. It should therefore be avoided.
11. Classroom detention always involves an obligation of supervision on the part of the teacher who has ordered the detention.
12. Pupils who cause disruption in the classroom by their misbehaviour or poor work performance should be reported to the principal and the cooperation of the parents should be obtained in the interests of all the children.
13. Teachers should ensure their classroom manner is in line with current correct professional standards.

CORRIDOR SAFETY

1. Pupils should move in a safe and mannerly fashion, using the right hand side of the corridor. They should **walk** and should **never run**.
2. Move aside to facilitate the movement of younger pupils, school visitors, teaching staff etc.
3. Make sure we put bags, coats, etc safely away, so they aren't thrown in the corridor.
4. Clean your feet on the doormats provided and keep the corridor safe and clean.

PLAYGROUND ORGANISATION

1. All boys and girls of all classes have equal rights to use the playground in safety.
2. Where one class is using the yard the responsibility of supervision will normally rest with that class teacher, unless alternative provisions have been made.
3. All pupils must go outside into the playground during class play times. If you have a cold, bring a letter from your parents and go to Mrs Daly's room during the play time.
4. Enjoy yourself in the playground and try to help others to enjoy the playground too. Stay off the walls and trees and take care you don't hurt younger pupils.
5. Avoid arguments and fights. Stratford does not allow the bullying or excluding of pupils.
6. Roller-skates, skateboards, rugby balls and Frisbees are not allowed for reasons of safety.
7. During lunchtime, use the toilets in the pre-fabs.

BULLYING

1. Stratford N.S. is firmly committed to the provision of an intimidation free environment for our pupils.
2. Bullying can be physical, emotional or verbal.
3. Three criteria distinguish bullying:
 - a) The hurt doesn't follow on from what would be normally considered as provocation
 - b) The action is repeated or continuous
 - c) The victim is perceived as being weaker than the bully.

Reporting of Bullying

1. The school encourages pupils to fully disclose bullying behaviour.

2. Where a parent fears bullying is taking place the matter should be reported to the school and the child should be encouraged to reveal the matter fully.
3. The school will investigate all reports in a manner fair to all parties.
4. Where it has been established that bullying has taken place it will be treated as serious misbehaviour.

Some Further Notes on Bullying

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, emailing or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour, which must not be condoned. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

What to tell your child to do if they feel they are being bullied

- Tell the teacher immediately. Tell your parents when you get home.
- Help the teacher to investigate it. Tell a friend about what is happening.
- Tell the bully to stop.

What to do if you fear your child is being bullied

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help her/him.
- Discuss with her/him what to do next - he may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
- Encourage her/him to tell his teacher.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

If your child tells you s/he is being bullied (INTO Advice for parents)

- Stay calm and don't overreact no matter what you are feeling. Your reaction may convey a sense of anger or disappointment to the child and could be counter-productive.
- Children who are bullied often feel a sense of failure and guilt. Your response should explain that they are not at fault and that this is a problem which can be overcome.
- Teaching the child that s/he has the right to say 'No' and to carry him/herself in a confident way will deal with many situations. Establish the right to tell and talk about the problem.
- Talk to the teacher. Bullying is a hidden activity and with classes of up to 30 it can be difficult for teachers to detect. Teachers need the support of parents in tackling this problem.
- If the bullying is physical, don't tell your child to hit back. Schools cannot encourage children to engage in violent behaviour and conflicting advice will only confuse the child. Also, telling a vulnerable child to hit back is asking the impossible of them and will only add to their sense of failure when they find they cannot do so.
- Children can be vulnerable and need help to socialise. You can facilitate this by inviting children to play and by enlisting the help of other parents.
- It is important to tell children that some situations are impossible for them to deal with on their own and that safety must come first. Advise your child that
- sometimes, if threatened, it would be better to give money or possessions, get away and then tell. It is important in a situation like this to praise a child for using commonsense.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied

- Tell a teacher (privately if necessary)
- Tell his/her parents - they will contact the school.
- Talk to the person who is being bullied - you may be able to help her/him.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends - tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
- Know and follow the school code of discipline.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents

- Alleged bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation.
- This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend.
- All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require.
- Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal.

- Reports of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school will be investigated by the Principal.

Communication With Parents about Bullying and Other Serious Misbehaviour

- 1 When there is bullying. a serious misdemeanour or a series of minor ones, the teacher will send a note to the parents, which should be signed and returned.
- 2 For more serious instances of misbehaviour, the class teacher will invite the parents to a formal meeting.
- 3 Where a very serious misdemeanour or a series of serious ones occur, the parents will be asked to meet with The Principal and the Class Teacher. Where The School considers it necessary, a representative of the school management may also be present. Failure by the parents to attend such a meeting will result in a period of suspension.
- 4 Where an instance of gross misbehaviour takes place, parents should note that a period of up to three days suspension may be placed on a pupil immediately and prior to a meeting with the parents.
- 5 Parents are advised to see the section “INTO advice regarding suspension” for further background on school policy and suspension.

Relevant Documents

Rule 130 of The Rules for National Schools (as amended by Circular 7/88 and 20/90)

INTO Advice Regarding Suspension

Procedures for an Appeal by Parents

Rule 130 - Rules for National Schools

The following is the text of Rule 130 as included in Circular 20/90 (This rule was amended by Circular 7/88).

(1) The board of management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. This code should be formulated by the principal and the teaching staff in consultation with parents and be approved by the board.

(2) Teachers should have a lively regard for the improvement and general welfare of their pupils, treat them with kindness combined with firmness and should aim at governing them through their affections and reason and not by harshness and severity. Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a pupil's self-confidence should not be used in any circumstances.

(3) The use of corporal punishment is forbidden.

(4) Any teacher who contravenes sections (2) and (3) of this Rule will be regarded as guilty of conduct unbefitting a teacher and will be subject to severe disciplinary action.

(5) Where the board of management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the chairperson or principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days.

A special decision of the board of management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the board of management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

(6) No pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

INTO advice regarding suspension

The procedure followed prior to and during a period of suspension should be seen to be reasonable and scrupulously fair. In this regard the following guidelines may be helpful:

- a record should be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils;
- parents should be invited to meet class teacher, the principal and/or the chairperson to discuss serious incidents of misbehaviour;
- communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension should be in writing. (Copies of all correspondence should be retained);
- a written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension should be given to parents;
- when a period of suspension ends, the pupil should be re-admitted formally to the class by the principal; and

- 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 chairperson of the board and the principal.

Expulsion

- In extreme cases of indiscipline, expulsion of a pupil may be decided by the Board of Management (BOM) in accordance with the terms of the Education Act, the Education (Welfare) Act and Rule 130 (6) of the *Rules for National Schools*. The latter states that pupils cannot be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the pupil at another suitable school.
- In accordance with the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act, in the event of a decision to expel a pupil the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be notified in writing by the BOM of the reasons for the expulsion. The EWO is then required to make all reasonable efforts to consult with the principal (or nominee), the student, parent(s) and any other appropriate persons, and to convene a meeting of the people involved. A pupil will not be expelled until 20 days after the EWO has been notified of the decision of a BOM to expel.
- Under Section 29 of the Education Act a parent may appeal an expulsion (or suspension where the cumulative period of suspension in any school year exceeds 20 school days) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

The Procedures For An Appeal by Parents

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides that a decision made by a board of management may be appealed by a parent (or a student who has reached the age of 18 years) to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science.

Currently the following decisions may be appealed:

- the permanent exclusion of a pupil from a school;
- suspension of a pupil where there is a cumulative period of in excess of 20 school days in any one school year;
- refusal by a Board of Management to enrol a student in the school.

It is, therefore, essential that decisions relating to the above issues are made by boards of management.

Appeals must normally be made within six weeks of the date of the decision which is being appealed. There are three stages in the appeals process.

The Board of Management and the parent will be asked to establish if the issues can be resolved locally. If that fails, the Appeals Committee may appoint a facilitator who will seek to reach agreement between the parties. The appeals will be referred for hearing to an Appeals Committee established in accordance with the Act. The appeal will normally be held within 30 days from the receipt of the appeal by the Secretary General of the DES. Appeals must be made on a Section 29 Appeals Application Form, available from the Appeals Administration Unit of the DES, Ballymahon Road, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co Westmeath

Should an appeal not be resolved at Stages 1 or 2, the Appeals Committee will determine the issue in the light of all the facts presented to it, including the views of persons called by it to the hearing and having due regard to:

- the established practices within the school, including, where relevant and available, any statutory procedures, guidelines, regulations or other provisions in operation at any time;
- the educational interests of the pupil who is the subject of the appeal;
- the educational interests of all other pupils in the school;
- the effective operation and management of the school;
- any resource implications arising from the issues under appeal;

- where relevant, the policy of the patron and the board of management in respect of the characteristic spirit/ethos of the school;
- such other matters as the Appeals Committee considers relevant.