



# St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Deputy Principal: Gráinne Connolly

Roll Number: 16333Q

RCN: 20118839

## St. Patrick's Junior School Code of Behaviour

### Introduction:

St. Patrick's Junior National School is a junior co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The Staff of this school have and will continue to have a lively regard for the improvement and general welfare of our pupils. We will treat them with kindness and consideration combined with firmness. This policy is written taking the particular needs and circumstances of our junior school into account.

### Aims:

The aims of this policy are

- To create an inclusive, nurturing and happy environment in which pupils can, through developing positive self-esteem and self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way
- To ensure the wellbeing of all members of the school community

### Principles:

- We recognise that students who have a sense of belonging, feel connected, feel listened to and are actively engaged in their spiritual, social, emotional, academic and physical learning will be better able to self-regulate and maintain appropriate behaviour in school.
- We adopt a whole school approach to application of the code of behaviour. Staff members take collegiate responsibility for behaviour in the school. This means that any staff member can correct any pupil's behaviour. All staff members have the same standards/expectations of behaviour and all staff members follow the same procedures.
- We focus on preventative measures and restorative practice so students are supported in practicing good behaviour.
- We recognise that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- We recognise that a variety of differences exist between children and we understand the need to tolerate these differences. When needed, corrections/consequences will be appropriate to the behaviour and the child in question.



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- We recognise the need to ensure that the code is administered in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- All members of staff adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school and “catch the child being good”. With this in mind we have adopted the **Restorative Practice** Approach to behaviour management.
- All pupils are taught our Anti-Bullying Code (set out in Appendix 1)

### **Standards of Behaviour that are expected**

Children must:

- Follow the school rules.
- Attend school regularly.
- Be on time. School opens at 08.50 am and school gates close at 09:10am. **We recommend that children are in class by 09.00 am at the latest every day so they have a chance to greet their classmates, take part in morning activities and transition smoothly to the school day.**
- Show respect for other children and all staff of the school
- Be respectful with school property and the property of others
- Follow the school motto “Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Actions”

### **School Rules:**

The rules of the school are based on the principle of mutual respect and have been kept to a minimum.

1. All pupils and parents are expected to follow the Code of Behaviour, which parents sign on enrolment, in its entirety. **This is a condition of acceptance of enrolment.**
2. Children may only leave the school during school hours if collected by a parent or legal guardian. Parents give the school a list of people who are permitted to collect their child at the beginning of Junior Infants and this can be updated when necessary. If the child is to be collected by any person not on that list, a request must be submitted via email to both the class level email address (circulated to parents at the beginning of each school year) and to the school email - admin@stps.ie - naming the person who will collect the child.
3. All members of the school community (staff, pupils & parents) must be treated with respect.
4. All property within the school must be treated with respect.
5. All forms of aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour or play are forbidden.
6. No bad language is allowed.
7. School Uniform and school tracksuit must be worn on appropriate days.
8. The school’s healthy lunch policy must be followed.
9. These rules are explained to the children in an age appropriate way, using our kindness motto: “kind hands, kind words, kind actions”.

**Implementation:**

School management, teachers and parents all have a role in ensuring children are in compliance with the Code of Behaviour:

**School Role:**

- Provide the necessary resources to help create and nurture an inclusive, happy environment for all pupils
- Provide clear consistent expectations for respectful behaviour from every member of the school community to every other member of the school community
- Provide clear channels for parent teacher communication

**Teachers' Role:**

- Build relationships with pupils
- Use proactive classroom management strategies
- Encourage self-calming strategies such as use of the calm corner / tent when pupils are frustrated or upset
- Ensure children are prepared for transitions wherever possible by use of whole class and individual visual timetables, verbal preparation etc
- Ensure regular whole class movement breaks throughout the day to facilitate pupil regulation
- Teach and model use of appropriate vocabulary in challenging conversations / when in disagreement with a peer
- Positive reinforcement
- Comment positively on appropriate behaviour, kindness, helpfulness etc.

**Parents' Role**

- Share information with teacher regarding situations/incidents that might affect a pupil's behaviour
- Engage with teachers regarding their child's behaviour so that school and home can work together on a joint approach to support the child regarding behaviour where necessary.

**A Whole-School Approach: Strengthening Positive Behaviour**

The school recognises the need to provide a positive environment where all feel a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. This underpins our whole school approach to positive behaviour. In this environment, pupils' needs are met and they are less likely to engage in serious misbehaviour.

An inclusive, nurturing and happy environment is created and nurtured throughout the school in the following ways:



**Support for all pupils:**

- All teachers use best practice in classroom management every day.
- Teachers regularly avail of training in all aspects of education in order to continuously use best practice in their classrooms.
- Teachers proactively build good relationships with their pupils.
- Teachers encourage the development of good relationships between pupils in each class.
- The structure of the school day is predictable.
- Classroom rules are kept to a minimum. They are discussed and modelled with pupils.
- Teachers notice positive behaviours and praise them as much as possible.
- Teachers use positive strategies to redirect pupils where necessary.
- Visual timetables are used in every classroom.
- Self-regulation spaces and activities are made available to students during the school day. This may be in the child's classroom ("calm corner"), in the calm room/sensory room or elsewhere on the school campus, always with the supervision of a teacher or SNA.
- Teachers check in with pupils each morning eliciting a quick response which will help teacher to gauge pupils' moods.
- Each classroom is equipped with a "Calm Corner" where children can go to regulate .
- Children are taught self-regulation techniques in every class and adults will help with co-regulation where this is necessary.
- Staff members have been trained in the use of restorative practice.
- Staff members have been trained in the use of appropriate visual/non-verbal supports for children who need these.
- Staff members have been trained in de-escalation and crisis prevention techniques.

**Support for some pupils:**

- Small group and individual level approaches build upon existing supports and prioritise early intervention. These processes typically involve evidence gathering to help identify need, targeted enhancement of school experiences, exploration of competencies to be developed and reshaping of systems that may contribute to unwanted/inappropriate behaviour.

**Support for a few pupils:**

- This level of support provides individualised responses to address unmet needs. Strategies may include environmental adaptations, interpersonal supports, skills competency development. Pre-planned reactive strategies will also be used where necessary to help calm and de-escalate.

## **Rewards for good behaviour**

Behaviour reward systems are used in St. Patrick's JNS to reinforce appropriate behaviour such as trying their best, attending to teacher, kindness to peers, helping in class, tidying up their desk etc. They are never given for academic achievement.

Whole class, group and individual reward systems are used in our classrooms. Some classes also run a "Table of the Week" competition each week. Rewards can take the form of tokens such as stars, cubes in a jar, class dojo, or other similar systems.

**Whole class rewards:** The class works together on a targeted behaviour or behaviours for a pre-arranged prize, such as a dance party, 30 minutes Golden Time, a class picnic (lunch outside) etc. When any individual shows the targeted behaviour their reward token is recorded on the class reward chart. When the required number of tokens has been reached the whole class participates in the reward.

**Group rewards:** Each group works together for a prearranged prize. When any pupil in the group shows the desired behaviour, the award is recorded and when the required number of reward tokens has been reached the whole group participates in the reward.

**Table of the Week:** When any pupil in the class shows the desired behaviour, they receive a token which is credited to that pupil's table. At the end of the week the table with the highest number of tokens is "Table of the Week".

**Individual rewards:** An individual pupil works on a targeted behaviour for a pre-arranged prize. When the required number of tokens have been earned, the prize is awarded. The target behaviour, the number of tokens necessary to earn the prize and the nature of the prize are all tailored to the individual pupil.

While reward systems are in use in all classrooms, not all reward systems will suit all class groups. Therefore, the teachers use their professional judgement in deciding which system or systems they will use with any given class.

## **Misbehaviour**

Where minor misbehaviour occurs in the classroom the teacher will use the following strategies:

1. Verbal Reprimand:
  - Gain attention
  - Name unwanted behaviour
  - Refer to desired behaviour
  
2. Second Verbal Reprimand:
  - To child on his or her own
  - Unwanted behaviour referred to
  - Desired behaviour named
  - Reminder of consequences of further negative behaviour.

If behaviour continues and steps 1 & 2 have had no effect:

3. Loss of Privilege: Temporarily remove a non-essential privilege, such part of their golden time, choosing a game or a classroom job, until the behaviour improves. During this time, the child could be working on area they need improve on
  - This allows for natural consequences without shaming, teaching responsibility and accountability.

## **Restorative Practice**

The use of Restorative Practice in our school is in line with our focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

### **Restorative Practice procedures:**

After an incident, the teacher will use the questions below to discuss the behaviour (once the pupil is calm and ready to engage in the process) with the relevant pupils. The questions help the pupil to reflect on their behaviour and better understand how it affects others. Children are encouraged to “talk out” their issues and taught appropriate vocabulary to do so. The discussion will include restitution in the form of a logical consequence of misbehaviour from the list below.



## **Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour**

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

### **To help those harmed by others' actions:**

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

### **Logical Consequences for use with Restorative Practice:**

**Loss of Privilege:** Temporarily remove a non-essential privilege, such as part of their golden time, choosing a game or a classroom job, until the behaviour improves. During this time, the child could be working on an area they need improve on

- This allows for natural consequences without shaming, teaching responsibility and accountability.

**Reflection Time:** Instead of traditional "time-out," have a designated "reflection corner" with calming activities and prompts for thinking about their behaviour. (Calm corner is not to be used for this).

- This gives children the chance to calm down and think about what they could do differently without feeling punished.

**Restorative Conversations:** Engage the child in a conversation about the impact of their behaviour. Encourage them to express their feelings and understand how their actions affected others.

- This builds empathy and social awareness by helping them understand the consequences of their actions on others.

**Re-do or Practice Expected Behaviour:** If the negative behaviour is related to not following instructions (e.g., interrupting), have the child practice the appropriate behaviour in a low-pressure setting

- Reinforces learning and provides an opportunity to succeed without feeling singled out.

**Written or Drawn Reflection:** For children able to write or draw, have them create a short note or picture that reflects what happened, how they felt, and what they could do differently next time.

- Engages them in processing their emotions and behaviour, building self-awareness.

**Apology and Make-Amends Process:** Guide the child to make amends through actions, such as writing an apology note or helping a peer they may have upset.

- Promotes accountability in a constructive manner without inducing shame.

**Positive Reinforcement for Quick Correction:** Acknowledge and praise when the child corrects their behaviour after a reminder. This can be done privately to avoid embarrassment.

- Reinforces the idea that making good choices is possible and rewarding.

**Short Teacher-Student Conference:** Take a few minutes to discuss the incident privately, emphasizing understanding and planning better choices for the future.

- Demonstrates care and promotes an open line of communication while maintaining the child's dignity.

#### **Logical Consequences for unwanted behaviour on Yard:**

1. Verbal direction to stop unsuitable play:
  - Charging/running
  - Unsafe behaviour
  - Rough play
  - Being mean or nasty
  - Playing in areas that are off-limits

Where behaviour persists despite direction to stop:

2. Stand at the wall for a limited period of time (up to 5 minutes)
3. Shadow the teacher (for a child who needs to be on the move)



### **Consequences For Repeated/Serious Misbehaviour (anywhere in school):**

If there are repeated instances of serious or repeated misbehaviour by a pupil, the following steps will be taken in order.

1. Parents will be informed of the inappropriate behaviour / misbehaviour by email or phone call. Parents are asked to discuss the behaviour with the child and to reinforce the school rules in regard to behaviour with the child.
2. Where the unwanted behaviour persists further, the parents will be required to give a written undertaking that the child will behave in an acceptable manner in future. The child will also be required to give such an undertaking.
3. Where the unwanted behaviour persists, the parents will be asked to meet the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Class Teacher (where appropriate) at the school at a specified time to discuss the behaviour.

### **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCEDURES: (Education Act 1998)**

#### **Suspension**

This procedure is used in the case of gross misbehaviour and/or health & safety grounds:

1. If all avenues for improvement above have been exhausted and misbehaviour continues, or there is a single incident of gross misbehaviour, the Principal requests a meeting with the parents. If considered warranted the Principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for 3 days initially. This power of suspension is delegated to the principal by the Board of Management of the school.
2. In certain circumstances the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management may suspend a pupil for 5 school days
3. A meeting of the Board of Management may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

#### **Appeal**

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

## **Expulsion**

This procedure may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

### **Grounds for Expulsion**

- Behaviour is persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- Continued presence of pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

### **Automatic Expulsion:**

The Board of Management may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

1. Sexual Assault
2. Possession of illegal drugs
3. Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
4. Actual violence or physical assault
5. Serious threat of violence against another pupil or member of staff.

### **Expulsion Procedures:**

1. Detailed investigation by school principal
2. Recommendation by principal to Board of Management
3. Board of Management considers Principal's recommendation and holds hearing
4. Board of Management decides whether expulsion is appropriate.
5. If Board of Management recommends expulsion, the Board will propose a date of expulsion which will allow a 20-day cooling off period
6. Education Welfare Officer is informed of proposal to expel pupil and effective date of that proposal
7. Parents of the pupil are informed of their right to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998
8. Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations
9. Confirmation of decision.

## BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

All members of staff in St. Patrick's JNS recognise that behaviours of concern are an attempt to communicate an unmet need.

We try to prevent behaviours of concern in the first instance by doing our best to meet the needs of our pupils and by providing appropriate levels of support for our pupils, depending on their needs. Where a pupil's needs are not readily understood, staff will take a systematic approach to assessment of the needs of this pupil within their individual context. Data gathering will involve whichever sources and methodologies teachers and the additional needs team deem appropriate. Parents are consulted in relation to their child's strengths and needs, in relation to supports and strategies being used to support their child and included in regular reviews of progress via parent meetings, emails and phone calls.

Building trust and a supportive relationship with the pupil and their family, knowing the pupil's needs, rituals and routines and using alternative forms of communication with the pupil when appropriate can all reduce the risk of behaviours of concern occurring.

### **De-escalation:**

Where behaviour is starting to escalate, staff members will

- use de-escalation techniques tailored to individual pupils
- avoid actions that may heighten agitation, such as loud voices, invading personal space, or physical contact when the student is highly agitated.
- De-escalation techniques used in St. Patrick's JNS include
  - Active listening.
  - Acknowledging what the student is experiencing emotionally.
  - Reducing the communication load on the student.
  - Using a preferred mode of communication by the student, e.g. objects of reference, choice board, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), visual supports.
  - Physical redirection to an alternative activity.
  - Problem solving if appropriate (if the student is able).
  - Offering clear simple choices, which would include self-regulation or co-regulation options.
  - Allowing adequate personal space.
  - Using nonthreatening body language such as hands by your sides or in pockets.
  - Avoiding direct or sustained eye contact in most cases.
  - Going to an alternative space (calm room, sensory room) to help regulation

When the pupil is regulated again the staff member may, if this is appropriate, discuss the pupil's unmet need and their behaviour and work on safer/more effective ways of expressing that need.



When use of de-escalation techniques fails to reduce the negative impact of a pupil's behaviour, staff will

- move to a safer position within the classroom/space
- enact a pre-planned exit strategy for peers and adults, for example:
  - moving the class to another part of the classroom,
  - sending the whole class to the classroom next door
  - sending a pupil to the nearest classroom to ask for help,
  - phoning/texting the main school office/principal's mobile and requesting help.

The method used will be dictated by the situation.

### **Crisis Situations:**

Crisis situations are defined as situations when behaviours of concern present **serious risk of imminent physical harm** to the pupil concerned and/or others within the school environment.

If it appears that a behaviour is escalating to the point that it is placing the student or others at imminent risk of serious physical harm, this is a crisis situation that may require physical restraint.

Staff of St. Patrick's will use their professional judgement to decide if the unique situation constitutes a serious and imminent risk to the safety of the individual and others.

#### **Examples of crisis situations where there is an imminent risk to the student's safety or to that of others:**

- A student is putting themselves in danger, for example running into a road or towards explicit danger.
- A student starts to self-injure by banging his/her head with force on a hard surface.
- A student starts to throw large items, such as computers or furniture at peers or adults.
- A student physically attacks another person.

Any use of physical restraint will be:

- **Timely.** Physical restraint will be a last resort, only carried out where it is necessary to the health & safety of the pupil or others in the environment.
- **Measured.** The minimum amount of physical restraint to maintain or reestablish safety for the student, peers or adults will be used. Physical contact will be removed in favour of shadowing as soon as the student can regain control of him/herself (Shadowing is moving one step back from physical contact and staying close enough to make physical contact if needed).
- **Appropriate.** The minimum amount of physical restraint to manage the emergency and safety of all concerned will be used. Any additional needs the pupil may have, including self-management, language difficulties, sensory needs, medical

considerations (such as stability issues, unsteady footing or coordination difficulties) and social differences will be taken into account, as will the vulnerability of the student in relation to their prior experience of trauma, where staff are aware of same.

- Where possible it will be **carried out by appropriately trained persons**. Staff of St. Patrick's have accessed approved training for minimising the use of restrictive physical interventions
- **Reviewed**. All incidents of physical restraint will be reviewed subsequent to the event and a report prepared. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the incident as soon as possible.

St. Patrick's JNS will comply fully with the advice contained in the Department of Education publication "Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations – Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students" and/or any further/updated advice from the Department of Education to schools in this regard.

## ABSENCES

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in St. Patrick's Junior School. However, we are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular **punctual** attendance at school. Every minute of every school day is important.

In the case of an absence, parents are required to email the teacher at the class level email address (circulated to parents at the start of each year) stating the reason for the absence. The email should be sent as soon as possible and on the child's return to school at the very latest. Where no email is received or reason is given for the absence, the absence will be recorded as "unexplained". All instances where a child is absent for 20 days or more in the course of a school year are reported to Túsla (Túsla Education Support Service).

### **Absences due to Term-Time Holidays:**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, S. 17). Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (9)). Therefore, the school cannot give "permission" for holiday absences during term time.

If a parent decides to take a child out of school for holidays, the parents are required to complete and sign the Holiday Notification Letter to say they are doing so and that they are aware they are in breach of the Act in doing so. (Holiday Notification Letter at Appendix 3).

**Pupil Illness:**

St. Patrick's Junior National School follows the most recent advice of the Health Service Executive in relation to when it is appropriate to exclude a child from school due to illness. In line with this advice, children should be excluded from school for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea to protect others from possible infection.

This policy was agreed and approved by the staff and Board of Management in 2025. It will be reviewed in 2027 or sooner if necessary.

Signed:



Very Rev. Fr. Melwyn Mullins  
Chairperson, Board of Management.

Date: 20/1/2025



## **Appendix 1**

### **Anti-Bullying Code**

Our Anti-Bullying Code will be displayed in each classroom.  
Junior and Senior Infants will focus on number 1-3.  
First and Second Classes will display 1-5.

### **Our Anti-Bullying Code**

1. Be kind to everyone.
2. Play together and stay together
3. Friends mind each other
4. We call repeated unkind actions or words bullying – SAY “NO” TO BULLYING!
5. Tell someone you trust if you are bullied. Keep telling until someone helps you.

***This is a telling school.***

**Appendix 2**

**ST. PATRICK'S JNS, SKERRIES.  
HOLIDAY NOTIFICATION LETTER.**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class level (circle):            JI        SI        First Class            Second Class

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, S. 17).

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (9)).

Therefore, the school cannot give "permission" for holiday absences during term time.

We, the parents of the above named child are taking our child out of school for holidays

from (date) \_\_\_\_\_ until (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

We fully understand that this is contrary to our legal obligation under the Education Welfare Act, 2000.

We further understand that should our child's absences reach or exceed 20 days in a year the school is obliged to report this to the Education Welfare Board/TÚSLA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

Where there are two guardians, both must sign.