

# Code of Behaviour and Discipline of Four Masters National School.

## **Introductory Statement:**

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The views of all members of our school community i.e. parents, staff and Board of Management are represented in the code. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

## **The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Four Masters National School are:**

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance 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.

## **General Principles:**

**Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.** The code offers a framework within which positive technique of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers.

**The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions** in the belief that this will, in the long run, give the best results.

**The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children** and the need to accommodate these differences.

**It is agreed 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, pupils and parents.

**The rules are being kept to a minimum and are being positively stated** in terms of what pupils should do.

**All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil.** This should help to reduce boredom, lack of interest or lack of progress.

## **Roles and Responsibilities regarding implementation of Policy.**

### **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

### **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

### **Teachers' Responsibilities**

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.
- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognize and affirm good work.
- Prepare schoolwork and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.

### **Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's schoolwork.
- 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.

### **Pupils' Responsibilities**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials / books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.

## **School Rules**

The school's standards of behaviour describe the behaviour expected of all members of the school, both staff and pupils. These values are put into practice through simple, clear and consistent school rules and routines which are built on: .

- Respect for yourself
- Respect for others
- Respect for your school

The school has four core School Rules:

- 1. I come to school every day, on time and prepared.**
- 2. I have respect for people and for property.**
- 3. I do my best in class and allow others to do the same.**
- 4. I behave in a proper manner around the school.**

These rules are explained in more detail in Appendix A.

These rules are brought to the attention of the children through the class teachers on a regular basis

Behaviour that does not conform to one or more of these rules can be considered unacceptable.

The list of rules may vary slightly from time to time, depending on circumstances and as the need arises.

For each rule we have certain expectations, and these are explained and taught to all pupils.

The success of the school's code of behaviour depends on consistency in the implementation of these rules. This will be achieved as follows:

- Promotion of the School Rules
- Rewards and Incentives for keeping the rules
- Prevention Strategies
- Sanctions for breaking the rules

## **Promotion of the School Rules**

All pupils are taught the School Rules when they start and they are revised consistently throughout their remaining years in the school. Parents are given a copy of the rules at registration and they are encouraged and expected to talk to their children about the rules and to encourage their children to keep them.

Individual rules will be highlighted at regular periods for special attention.

The School Rules are promoted through the entire school community as follows:

## **Notice Boards**

The School Rules are displayed prominently on notice boards throughout the school.

## **Assembly**

Assembly takes place fortnightly. It forms a valuable role in our whole school approach to developing self-esteem, promoting positive behaviour and effective discipline. Good work and achievements are highlighted, celebrated and rewarded. The School Rules are emphasised and explained. Specific school routines for the classroom and yard are emphasised and explained.

## **Newsletters**

A Newsletter is sent to home on a regular basis to inform parents of events taking place in the school. The School Rules will be highlighted in the Newsletter and parents encouraged to reinforce these with their children.

## **Parent Information Booklet**

All Parents / Guardians are provided with a copy of the school's code of behaviour before registration as required by Section 23(4) of the Education (welfare) Act 2000.

Parents are expected at Registration to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with the code by the child.

## **Prevention Strategies**

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. 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.

It is also necessary that teachers are aware of specific issues that children with Special Educational Needs have. It may be necessary that allowances be made for certain aspects of our code of behaviour and in some cases sanctions outlined here would not be appropriate. Other strategies would be used to deal with inappropriate behaviour.

## **General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour**

1. Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
1. Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
2. Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
3. Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
4. Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in

which case the school must be informed in writing, stating the reason for absence.

### **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

### **Strategies/Incentives used in Four Masters to affirm Positive Behaviour.**

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Student of the week – whole school approach.
- Individual class merit awards, points awards or award stamps; homework passes.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.
- Commendation at assemblies by principal.

### **Sanctions for Classroom Misbehaviour**

The school strives to solve issues at the lowest level possible. Teachers encourage, support and show pupils how they may be able to resolve issues themselves. Most issues will be resolved at this point. Where sanctions are imposed they will be graded and reflect the seriousness of the behaviour.

*Examples of minor, serious and very serious misbehaviours are outlined in Appendix B.*

### **Dealing with Minor Misbehaviour**

Where issues occur the class teacher may employ any of a number of strategies to respond to, or divert children's inappropriate behaviour in order to prevent it escalating into something more disruptive to learning and more difficult to manage. These strategies may include:

- Gesture/Look/Whisper
- Tactical ignoring
- Catch pupils being good
- Carrying out a useful task in the school
- Rule reminder
- Teaching rule to class or class recitation of the rule
- Expressing disappointment or disapproval
- Humour

If the teacher deems necessary the following steps will apply for managing disruptive minor misbehaviour:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Oral Warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Oral Warning
- Sent to tiled area in class (3<sup>rd</sup> time)
- Principal is sent for (use red card, 4<sup>th</sup> time)
- Pupil is sent home immediately (5<sup>th</sup> time)

### **Sanctions for dealing with incomplete homework**

Homework is part of our school policy and is completed Monday to Thursday.

If incomplete the following steps will be taken:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Day – homework completed that night and note in journal
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Day – homework completed that night and note in journal
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Day – detention to complete homework and note in journal

### **Dealing with serious misbehaviour in class**

Disruptive behaviours waste time and impinge on the good order and discipline in the school. When behaviour issues arise that require a sanction either because of the level of disruption, upset or hurt caused, or the persistence of the disruption the following sanctions will be used to show disapproval and to discourage such unacceptable behaviour.

- Sent to tiled area in class (1st time)
- Principal is called for (2<sup>nd</sup> time)
- Child is sent home

The following tables outline the steps to be taken for serious misbehaviours:

Behaviour	Consequence	Further Steps that may be Taken
Persistent minor misbehaviours	Sent to tiled area in class	Principal is called for. Parents/guardians are called. Student is sent home.
Provoking children in class	As above	As above
Name calling in class	As above	As above
Refusing to do or finish work	As above	As above
Unwanted invasion of someone else's space	As above	As above
Rough play (in class time)	As above	As above
Lying	As above	As above
Phone on during school day	Confiscation of phone by teacher	Teacher contacts parents/guardians by note, phone or in person. They must collect phone themselves.

### **Dealing with very serious misbehaviour in class**

The following sanctions will be imposed to deal with those rare instances of behaviours deemed very serious.

Behaviour	Consequence	Further Action that may be Taken
Persistent serious misbehaviour	Principal is contacted Child is sent home	Principal/Deputy Principal informed.

		Parents notified. Suspension/Expulsion and BOM notified
Stealing	As above	As above
Swearing/Bad language directed at staff, visitors or student	As above	As above
Writing or passing of <b>offensive</b> notes	As above	As above
Refusing to enter classroom	As above	Set time given to enter. 5,4,3,2,1 approach Principal informed. Parents notified.
Damage to school property or another's property	As above	Principal informed. Parents notified. Board of Management Suspension/Expulsion
Spitting, coughing, shouting in people's faces, running around the school which is a threat to spreading Covid- 19	As above	Principal informed. Parents notified. Board of Management Suspension/Expulsion
Leaving school grounds without permission	As above	As above
Bullying (including cyberbullying)	As above	As above
Name calling involving racist/sexist language	As above	As above
Angry/Threatening behaviour	As above	As above
Physical violence towards staff, visitor or student	As above	As above

### **Sanctions for Break Times**

The school yard is always supervised during breaks and the teachers in charge deal with problems that arise during play.

The emphasis is on promoting good behaviour and to support the activities organised for all classes. The yard rules are taught to pupils at the start of each school year and pupils are constantly reminded of them.

*Yard routines and rules are set out in Appendix C*

### **Dealing with minor issues in Yard**

For minor misbehaviour in the yard the following graded sanctions will apply

- Oral warning (1st time)

- Against the wall for 2,3 or more minutes to prevent a more serious issue(2nd time)

### **Dealing with more serious misbehaviour in yard**

The following sanctions apply for more serious issues in yard.

- Sent against the wall of the school
- Brought to Principal's Office

If the teacher on yard seems the behaviour to be very serious they may send the child straight to the Principals Office. Further classroom sanctions may apply. Yard detention is only used for inappropriate yard behaviour.

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.

### **Bullying**

**Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others.** The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, cyber-bullying, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation and taunting. **Bullying and cyber-bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.**

### **Covid-19**

We take any misbehaviour in relation to Covid-19 very seriously. The children will be spoken to about not using the term Covid-19/coronavirus as a means of teasing or taunting. Unwanted invasion of others space will be deemed a serious misbehaviour and contact will be made with parents. Any spitting, coughing or shouting in people's faces or running around the school building will be deemed a very serious misbehaviour and will be dealt with as per our Code of Behaviour.

### **Suspension/Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilized. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than as a last resort. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances. Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of misbehaviour as well as a record of improvement in the behaviour of a disruptive pupil. Before suspending / expelling a pupil the Board shall notify the local Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with section 24 of Education Welfare Act.

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, depending on circumstances.

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. A written statement of the terms and date of termination of a suspension will be given to parents. In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board shall authorize the chairperson/principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Expulsion may be considered in extreme cases, in accordance with rule 30 and Education Welfare Act 2000. The authority to expel is reserved for Board of Management and will not be delegated. Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community e.g. Community Care services provided by Health Services Executive.

In the event of a suspension of a duration of more than 20 days or an expulsion the parents of the child may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education under section 29 and will be given information on how to appeal.

### **Reinstatement after Suspension**

The principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil to be implemented on his/her return and the principal will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### **When and Where Behaviour will be subject to the code:**

**The code will apply between the hours of 9.20 am and 3 pm i.e. during the school day. Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time or after official closing time, except where pupils are engaged in extra curricular activities organized by the school and approved by the Board of Management.** Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

### **Formulation of Code**

In formulating this code, the Board of Management considered the views of the parent representatives on the Board and all members of the teaching staff have been involved in planning the code. A copy of this code will be made available to all parents.

### **Dealing with concerns or complaints**

Concerns / complaints regarding behavioural issues should in the first instance be brought to the attention of the class teacher by appointment. If not resolved there then the concerns can be brought to the principal. If matters still remain unresolved the concerns can be formally made (in writing) to the Board of Management. There is also an appeals procedure available under section 29 of the Education Act 1998 in relation to suspension / expulsion.

The school's revised Code of Behaviour and Discipline policy adheres to the guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (May'08) in a book entitled "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools".

### **Ratification and review**

This policy will be reviewed once every year or more often if deemed necessary.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting in August 2020.

Signed: John Britton (Principal)      Date: 24.08.2020

Signed: Finola Furey (Chairperson)      Date: 24.08.2020

## **Appendix A**

### **Rules of the School Explained**

#### **1. I come to school every day, on time and prepared.**

##### **This means:**

- That you attend school every day unless it is absolutely unavoidable.
- That if you miss school you bring in a note in your journal.
- That if you must leave school during the day, you must have a note.
- That if you are unavoidably late, you bring in a note from your parent/guardian.
- That you have the proper pens, pencils, books and copies required for class.
- That you will be careful with library books, your own books, pencils, markers, crayons, etc.

##### **Because:**

- Time missed is hard to make up.
- The school is entitled to an explanation for your absences.
- The school is responsible for you during the day.
- It is expected that a late arrival to school be explained out of courtesy.
- The school expects that all pupils can come to and go home from school safely.
- It wastes time if you have not got your pens, pencils, copies and books.
- Having items not needed for class causes distraction and wastes time.
- Most of our books are rented and will need to be passed on to another pupil at the end of the year. If we don't keep our belongings in good condition they won't last for the year.

#### **2. I have respect for people and for property.**

##### **This means:**

- That you will be helpful and treat other students and all staff with good manners and respect.
- That you will keep unhelpful hands, feet, objects and comments to yourself.
- That you will call others by their preferred names.
- That bad language, biting, bullying, kicking, punching, spitting, etc. is unacceptable behaviour.
- That you will respect the instructions of all the school staff.
- That you will not pick on or bully others.
- That you use the litter bins.
- That you respect school property and the property of other people.
- That you have respect for other cultures, religions and differences.

**Because:**

- Everyone is entitled to good manners and respect.
- Bullying causes fear, hurt and misery.
- Offensive or abusive language shows disrespect and can cause hurt.
- Keeping the school environment pleasant and litter-free is everyone's responsibility.
- Spitting makes the school grounds unpleasant and may spread infections.
- You would expect the same respect for your property.
- Everyone has the right to your respect.

**3. I do my best in class and allow others to do the same,**

**This means:**

- That you work to the best of your ability and allow others to do the same.
- That you listen to your teachers.
- That you do not disturb the class.
- That you sit with the four legs of your chair on the floor at all times.
- That you do your homework each night, written and oral.
- That you always have your journal with you and take down your homework in it.
- That your parent/guardian signs your journal/work each night.
- That you put your chair up on the desk at the end of the day and help tidy the room.

**Because:**

- Everybody has a right to learn in a caring, safe and respectful environment.
- The teacher is trying to help you.
- Disturbing the class is unfair to others who wish to learn.
- It is dangerous to swing back on the two legs of your chair.
- Homework is a back-up to the work done in class.

- Your journal helps you remember what you have to do and is a means of communication between school and home.
- Getting your journal signed lets your parents see how you are getting on.
- It is important to take responsibility for tidying up after ourselves.

#### **4. I act in a proper manner around the school**

##### **This means:**

- That you must obey promptly.
- That you walk in an orderly way around the school.
- You must line up properly and wait quietly for your teacher.
- That eating or drinking is allowed within the school building only at specified times and in specified areas.
- In the yard and on wet days in the school you should obey instructions of the teachers on duty.
- That you don't break, damage or deface school property.
- That chewing gum is totally forbidden in the school building and grounds.
- That mobile phones are only allowed in school if accompanied by a note from your parent and are left in the office to be collected after school.

##### **Because:**

- This keeps the school safe for everyone.
- Lining up quietly is safer.
- Specified times and areas for eating/drinking helps to keep the school clean and pleasant.
- Obeying break time rules and teachers' instruction is safer and helps with supervision.
- Others have to use school property and repairs/replacements are expensive.
- Chewing gum messes up school furniture and flooring.

#### **Appendix B**

##### **Examples of misbehaviours**

##### **Minor Misbehaviours include:**

- Chatting
- Inoffensive language – non intentional
- Homework not being done
- Punctuality
- Inattention
- Unwanted invasion of personal space
- Swinging on chairs
- Talking or making noises while others are talking/working.
- Fidgeting

- Avoiding work (toilet visits, washing hands etc)
- Being in wrong yard
- Not lining up on whistle
- Disturbing other classes at window etc
- Interfering in others games
- Talking in line
- Running in school
- Running to the yard

**Serious Misbehaviour include:**

- All minor behaviours on a persistent basis
- Spitting on the ground.
- Phone on during school day
- Provoking other children
- Name calling
- Refusing to do or finish work or follow instructions
- Rough play
- Lying

**Very Serious Misbehaviour:**

- All medium behaviours on a persistent basis
- Stealing
- Swearing/bad language directed at others or staff
- Writing of notes/passing notes (offensive)
- Leaving school grounds without permission
- Name calling involving racist/sexist language
- Refusing to enter classroom
- Displays of angry or aggressive behaviour during any activity
- Physical fighting
- Damaging school property or property belonging to others
- Verbal or physical abuse of any stakeholder.
- Bullying (by text/internet – brought into school)

**Appendix C**

**Yard Rules and Routines**

1. Pupils must obey the teachers at all times when out in the yard.
2. Pupils must respect teachers, Special Needs Assistants(SNAs) and fellow pupils.

3. Pupils are not allowed to go into the school at yard time unless accompanied by a teacher or SNA or have been given permission to by a teacher.
4. No packaging is allowed on the yard.
5. Pupils must walk to yard and to their lines.
6. Pupils must line up in a quiet and orderly fashion.