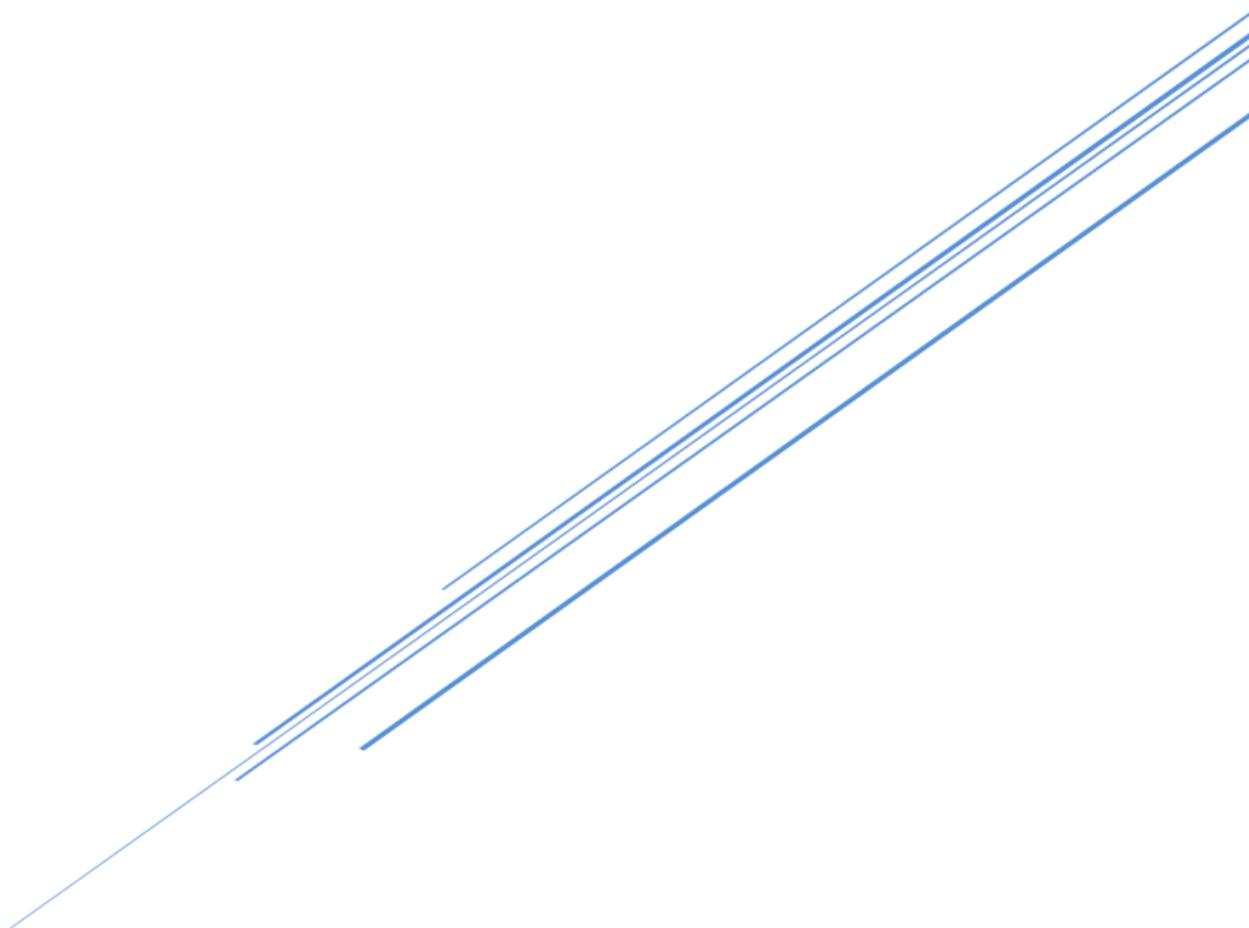


# Code of Behaviour

St. John's Special School, Dungarvan.



*Feb 23rd 2021*

*Review Date: Feb 2022*

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## **1.0 Mission Statement**

St. John's Special School is a co-educational, Catholic, Special School which strives to provide a well-ordered, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed.

As St. John's is a school with a Catholic ethos we strive to develop a spiritual and good moral foundation, it also has due recognition for all other religions.

St. John's will strive to promote, both individually and collectively, the professional and personal development of staff through staff development programmes.

St. John's will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts.

St. John's will endeavour to enhance the self esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

St. John's will promote gender equality among all staff and pupils.

Our aim is that each pupil, on leaving school, has developed as far as possible competence in life skills and social skills to take their rightful place as young adults in our society.

Our aspiration is that pupils will leave St. John's as confident, independent young adults with a knowledge and appreciation of their social, cultural and physical environment.

## **2.0 Our Motto**

***In a safe and caring atmosphere, St. John's school will strive to teach the children in our care to respect each other and to develop their personalities in order to fulfil their true potential.***

## **3.0 Aims of the Code of Behaviour**

This policy was formulated in accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 23(3) and in accordance with the 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools' publication issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) in 2008.

The Code of Behaviour (CoB) is regularly referenced in school activities by the Principal and staff.

Note: The Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with other school policies, in particular the Enrolment Policy, the Health and Safety Statement, Homework Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, the Anti-bullying Policy, Attendance Policy.

The school's Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, and Junior Cycle Priority Learning Units of Personal Care and Living in a Community, in conjunction with regular pastoral care and Behaviour Planning are used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our pupils 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.

### **Rationale :**

- Each pupil will learn to display appropriate behaviours, more often than inappropriate behaviours.
- Each pupil will learn to tolerate and respect other children and staff in their environment and will learn to respect the property of the school and of the other students and staff.
- Each pupil will learn to treat their own bodies with respect.
- Each pupil will learn various coping strategies and self-regulation strategies (academic, social, self-care, daily living etc.) as replacements to inappropriate behaviours.
- Each pupil is expected to attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual.
- Each pupil is expected to do his/her best both in school and for homework.

### **The purpose of this policy is to:**

- Allow for the smooth and harmonious running of the school.
- Promote the safety and happiness of all children and staff in the school.
- Facilitate the development and education of all the children.

- Promote good behaviour and self discipline among the children.
- Promote equality and fairness among all.
- Increase the cooperation between home and school.
- Ensure the consistency in the application of rules and sanctions.
- Outline the structure of fair and agreed sanctions that will be available to teachers in response to negative behaviour.
- Enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.

## **4.0 Roles and Expectations**

There are clear definitions of the differing roles and expectations of the people involved in the everyday life of the school.

The Code of Behaviour applies to all areas of school life (for both on and off-site activities).

### ***4.1 Board Of Management***

- The Board of Management (BoM) has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The Board has particular responsibility for the ethos of the school, as well as having overall responsibility for learning within the school.
- The BoM is responsible for reviewing the CoB and deciding on what, if any changes, should be made to it, before they will ratify it.
- The BoM will review the CoB on an annual basis.
- The BoM will support various staff training that the CoB deems necessary (MAPA etc.).
- Responsibility for dealing with breaches of the CoB ultimately lie with the BoM.

### ***4.2 Pupils***

**The school expects our pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly and on-time.
- Make the most of education opportunities through active classroom participation and involvement in school activities.
- Take pride in their work, their appearance, and what they have accomplished.
- Take pride in their school and will help foster this feeling in other students.

- Obey and observe the law and all school rules of conduct.
- Strive toward self-discipline, setting individual goals and utilizing good work habits.
- Be respectful of people, their rights and property
- Speak and act in a truthful, courteous and cooperative manner
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour and accept the consequences (according to their ability.)
- Be happy in their environment
- Be inclusive of each other in respect of each other's abilities
- Be supportive
- Be approachable
- Have open communication
- Be contactable and engaged
- Be kind and respectful to staff and one another.
- Be cooperative and helpful.
- Try their best in school and to engage in all activities

**Pupils expect their peers will be :**

- Respectful of space and belongings
- Courteous
- Honest
- Inclusive of others
- Kind, friendly and respectful to each other.
- Inclusive of all peers.
- Help each other out when necessary.

**Pupils expect the school to:**

- Provide a school atmosphere which is pleasant, orderly, respectful, and conducive to learning.
- Be courteous, caring and understanding in the execution of their duties
- Enable them to participate in a wide range of activities.
- Treat them fairly, justly and with respect.
- Provide the best education possible with adapted programmes taking account of their individual needs and strengths.
- Help each pupil to become the best version of him/herself.
- Provide a safe, encouraging and fun learning environment that supports their holistic development.

### **4.3 Parents**

*The school recognises and encourages the importance of effective communication between itself and the Parents/Guardians. Their involvement and cooperation is vital to the success of their child's placement in our school*

#### **Parents/Guardians expect the school will:**

- Provide effective instruction for students, display enthusiasm for learning, show respect for the children in their care.
- Enforce the Code of Behaviour.
- Communicate with home. The methods of communicating will include but are not limited to, face to face meetings, text, email, phone call, note, communication book. The frequency of communication will vary from daily to weekly to monthly in accordance with the needs of the child.
- Exhibit leadership, provide support, and monitor programmes and instruction in the school.
- Treat them fairly, justly and with respect in all matters and they can depend on the school to support them in their efforts to do what is in the best interests of their child.
- Provide a safe learning environment which caters for all children's individual needs.
- Provide a supportive, understanding and co-operative community.
- Teach their children life skills that will assist them going forward to be the best version of themselves.

#### **The school expects parents/guardians to ...**

- Maintain regular communication with their son or daughter about school matters.
- Instil a positive attitude toward education which recognises that effort and ambition lead to success.
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a productive teaching and learning environment.
- Provide role models in order to establish positive values concerning achievement as well as respect for fellow students, school personnel, and property.
- Require their son or daughter to attend regularly and punctually, and to comply with school routines.
- Contact the school if there are areas of mutual concern and make themselves available to discuss issues regarding their child's education.
- Try to attend school events and meetings, and to give positive input and support to the school.
- Encourage their children to accept responsibility and be accountable for their behaviour.

- Be respectful towards staff.
- Be supportive and cooperative in promoting positive behaviour.
- Help the child to make progress in all aspects of their development.
- Parents/Guardians input, review, and approval are required before implementation of behavioural strategies.
- Upon enrolment of their child, Parents/Guardians are given all policies and are required to sign a disclaimer stating that they have read, understood and agree with the policies, the school's ethos and the practices employed by the school to ensure safety of staff and pupils.
- Ensure their children have the necessary books and materials for school.
- Inform the school of medication their child may be taking and subsequent changes to the dosage of that medication.
- Provide medical personnel in the school with information on a child's current medication, and the extent to which it may affect their learning or behaviours.
- Consent to behaviour support plans that are devised to meet a targeted behaviour.

## **5.0 Rewards, responses and sanctions available in our school**

The emphasis in our school is on promoting good behaviour rather than punishing negative behaviour.

The school places particular emphasis on recognising the achievements of pupils.

### **5.1 Rewards**

- Age and/or ability appropriate rewards to be decided on an individual cases
- Treats – play Music, go on social outings, field trips, using play equipment
- Praise the good behaviour/use peers to model exemplary behaviour
- Pupil given a responsibility or doing a job
- Go around to other classes to show good work output (pre Covid)
- Let pupils choose an activity they enjoy on completion of a task
- Find a pupil's motivator and use it for positive reinforcement
- Announce over zoom assembly
- In-class rewards - praise, smiles, high fives, Behaviour Chart, Class Dojo (points given for positive reinforcement), Go Noodle, class clap, stickers, token economy
- A mention to parents, written or verbal communication.
- Golden Time
- Positive Reinforcement.

## 5.2 Sanctions

### Five Phases of Sanctions

#### Phase 1: In class

- Quiet word.
- Reminder of class or school rules.
- Short instruction
- Seek explanation
- Change position in class
- Loss of minor privileges
- Removal from group
- Removal from activities
- Verbal warning
- Levels of sanctions used depends on child's comprehension of sanction system
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – Redirection
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> – Verbal correction, Lámh signs, visuals, social stories
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Removal of child from situation, for health and safety reasons, may be necessary
- Staff debrief and reflection after incident to ensure best practice for similar incidents in the future and for continued development of student involved in the incident.
- Behaviour chart
- Class dojo (points not added)
- Less time given for Golden Time.
- Seek an explanation.
- Note home in the communication book to highlight the behaviour or concern.

**Phase 2: Wider Involvement (One or more of the following may be employed)**

- Liaison between Class Teacher and SNAs. Where the inappropriate behaviour is persistent and becomes disruptive to both the processes of teaching and learning, a meeting will be held between classroom staff to agree and implement strategies to discourage the unwanted behaviour (Note written to home in communication book regarding same).
- Liaison between Class Teacher and Home. Parents informed of behavioural issues and parental advice and support sought regarding the issue.
- Principal is informed verbally and through incident report documents. Principal/Deputy Principal involved to liaise with staff involved and parents.
- Principal makes a decision on whether to involve outside agencies/services (OT, NCSE, NEPS etc) to work on strategies and best practice for dealing with the issue at hand.
- *Class Teacher responsible for adopting strategies developed in cohesion with NCSE/OT/SLT/NEPs etc.*
- Seek Advice from Wider School Community (colleagues with experience).

**Phase 3: Involvement of Board of Management.**

*(In the event that a solution cannot be achieved from the above)*

- Official Meeting between parents/guardians, class teacher and School Disciplinary Committee (Principal and a Post Holder).

- If a satisfactory resolution is not reached the principal will inform the parents/guardians in writing that the BoM is being informed formally of the situation.
- The BoM discuss the difficulties being experienced and notify the parents/guardians of the outcome of those discussions. Example, the BoM will continue to monitor the situation allowing time for the school to explore with parents/guardians how best to address the student's behaviour.
- The Board of Management reserves the right to place a student on a phased integration basis. This will be done in conjunction with external supporting agencies e.g. NEPS, NCSE etc. The rationale behind phased integration may be due to stabilisation of behaviour or during a transition period or whilst the school awaits additional resourcing. The school will devise a schedule for gradual reintegration to a full school day for the pupil concerned.
- Where there is a serious incident where staff are injured or hurt the BoM reserves the right to ask a pupil to remain at home for a day(s), in order to re-group or debrief. This is not a suspension.

#### **Phase 4: Suspension**

The BoM of St. John's School has the authority to suspend a pupil.

Suspension can form part of a plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension should:

- Enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents/guardians.
- Give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions
- Impress on a student and their parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirm serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension the school will observe the following procedures.

1. Inform the student and their parents/guardians about the complaint.
2. Give parents/guardians and students an opportunity to respond.

Immediate Suspension – A pupil may be suspended for a single incident of serious misconduct.

These serious grounds include:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils.
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

The BoM delegates authority to the Principal to apply up to a three day suspension. The Principal contacts and informs the Chairperson of the BoM of the suspension as soon as possible. The BoM will then decide on whatever further action needs to be taken. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the BoM for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.

Where a meeting of the board cannot be convened in a timely fashion the BoM delegates to the Principal the authority to impose a suspension of up to five days with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board.

At this point the school may make:

- Referral to Social Services if appropriate.
- Referral to Gardai if appropriate.

## **Phase 5: Expulsion**

### The Grounds for Expulsion

The Board of Management of St. John's School has the authority to expel a student having complied with the provisions of section 24 of Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This authority is reserved to the Board of Management.

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, only taken by the BoM in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

### A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.

- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, the school has tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

### **Expulsion for a first offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence, e.g.

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other pupils in the school
- Sexual assault.

## **6.0 Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour/ Aggressive or Violent behaviour**

A large part of supporting our students and families involves the reduction of inappropriate behaviours. We have an obligation to our students, families, and staff members to make the focus on reducing inappropriate behaviours as a priority. We also have an obligation to implement behavioural interventions that are ethical and effective that start from the least restrictive alternative.

In developing Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) for our students we keep the following in mind:

- BSPs will emphasise the development of desirable behaviours rather than the suppression or elimination of undesirable ones.
- All staff of St. John's, will frequently review each student's behaviours, both adaptive and maladaptive, with their colleagues.
- The school will regularly recruit professionals to conduct training on supporting behaviours. The training may consist of verbal reviews, role plays, and observations.
- All staff members of St. John's will be trained in an initial 20 hour training on MAPA (Managing Actual or Potential Aggression); the primary focus on the de-escalation and verbal intervention procedures, and emphasis placed on physical intervention being a last resort after all attempts at verbal intervention have failed and the individual poses a threat to the welfare and safety of themselves or others.
- All staff members of St. John's shall request the assistance of others, if needed, when students exhibit severe behaviour problems.

### **6.1 What is MAPA®?**

MAPA® means the Management of Actual or Potential Aggression.

This helps people deal with aggression in a calm way that keeps everyone safe.

People communicate through actions as well as words.

Aggressive or violent behaviour happens when people are frightened, frustrated, upset, angry or lose control.

Aggressive or violent behaviour can mean:

- People harming themselves
- People harming others
- People damaging property

MAPA® is a set of ideas and skills to help people who are aggressive or violent to calm down.

This can include guiding people to a safe place or holding them to prevent harm.

**x MAPA® is not:**

MAPA® is not about using force

MAPA® is not about causing pain or injury

MAPA® should never be used as a punishment or to make sure rules are followed.

**✓ When do we use MAPA®?**

Every person that we support will have an individual plan (Behaviour Support Plan).

The plan will set out the support needed.

We work out which are the right skills to use with each person.

The plan will help staff use the right MAPA® skills to keep you safe.

The plan should include MAPA® skills that are right for you and agreed by you and everyone involved in your support.

MAPA® can also be used in an emergency when people are at risk of being hurt.

Treating people with respect and dignity is an important part of MAPA®.

**What should MAPA® feel like?**

MAPA® skills are designed to make you feel safe.

People who learn MAPA® are trained to use skills:

- Which allow you to move safely
- For the shortest time possible
- To keep everyone safe

We do this because it is the best way of keeping everyone safe and it is what the law expects us to do.

**Parental/ Guardian Consent to St. John's Special School,  
Dungarvan**

**Code of Behaviour and use of MAPA®**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Please Tick your Consent
I consent to the Code of Behaviour February 2021 at St. John's Special School.	
I understand that in order for MAPA® to be used on my child he/she will have an individual behaviour plan (Behaviour Support Plan).	
I understand that there may be incidences whereby in an emergency situation MAPA® may have to be used, without an existing Behaviour Support Plan.  *It is our policy that a plan will be drawn up in this incidence at the earliest convenience*	

Parental/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_