

# *Réalt na Mara (C)*

## *Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*



### **Code of Behaviour Policy**

Good behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school. Réalt na Mara GNS provides a sound and creative education for the young girls in our parish in a caring environment. Réalt na Mara GNS employs teachers who are aware of the great responsibility and trust placed in them to educate all pupils in this school during their most formative years. In *Réalt Na Mara Girls School*, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

#### **Aims of the code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights 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
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the parent's handbook, availability of policies and an ethos of open communication
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

#### **A Whole school approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour**

An effective Code of behaviour requires the co-operation of all stakeholders in the school. To this end there are specific roles and responsibilities in achieving high standards of behaviour in our school.

#### **Responsibilities of the Board of Management**

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

#### **Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

- To make our children aware of the Code of Behaviour/ school rules and to encourage its implementation
- To support our children's education
- To support teachers who provide our children's education
- To support the Principal in providing a positive school environment
- To ensure children attend school regularly and on time
- To ensure our children are prepared for school daily

# *Réalt na Mara (C)*

## *Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*

- To ensure homework is completed
- To assist children in understanding the consequences of their behaviour in school.

Parents are a vital component of the School Community. Our teachers are aware of the essential role of parents in the education of their daughters.

Parents/Guardians must be actively involved in the lives and education of their young daughters.

Parents/Guardians and teachers both enhance our daughters' feelings of safety and security and their enjoyment of school life.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to join our active Parents' Association at some stage.

### **Responsibilities of the Principal**

- To create and promote a positive atmosphere within the whole school environment
- To reinforce the school motto of 'Respect' for all
- To ensure Code of Behaviour is implemented
- To support teachers and staff in on-going development of skills

### **Responsibilities of the Church**

- To support our School Community with spiritual guidance

### **Responsibilities of the Teachers**

- To adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. This code offers a framework where positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are used by our staff.
- To create a positive, happy environment within the classroom
- To implement the code at classroom level
- To recognise behaviour both good and bad and deal with appropriately according to the code
- To communicate with parents
- To place a greater emphasis on rewarding rather than on sanctioning in the belief that this, in the long run will give us the best results.
- To recognise and encourage positive qualities in children.
- To treat with kindness, fairness and with respect. In this way a good relationship will develop between pupil and teacher.
- To motivate our children to learn.

### **Responsibilities of Ancillary Staff**

- To treat children with the same kindness, fairness and respect that they receive from Principal and Teachers.

### **Responsibilities of Pupils**

- *To show respect and consideration for others and the environment*
- *To show respect for teachers*
- *To show respect for school property*
- *To complete homework neatly and on time*
- *To follow class rules as set out by Teachers*

### **BEHAVIOUR**

- Overall responsibility for discipline rests with the School Principal.
- Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within their classroom
- A pupil will be referred to the Principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.
- Teachers will keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions, e.g., suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.
- Where gross misbehaviour occurs, communication with parents will be verbal or by letter through the school office. Parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's behaviour.

## *Réalt na Mara (C)*

### *Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*

- Where there are serious repeated instances of misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the BOM will be informed and parents will be requested in writing to attend the school to meet with the Chairperson and Principal.
- If the matter is unresolved the Chairperson and Principal will meet with the Board of Management who will make a decision.
- Suspension and in extreme cases expulsion may be considered.
- Parents have a right to appeal this decision

#### **School Rules**

1. Children are expected to show respect, courtesy and consideration to teachers, fellow pupils and visitors to the school. The same level of good behaviour is expected while on school tours and other outings.
2. Children should treat peers with respect, and have good manners at all times.
3. A sense of self-respect must be developed in children.
4. Children must respect all teachers and staff in the school.
5. Children must respect classroom rules and directions
6. Children must be made aware of the importance of attending school regularly with a neat clean appearance without jewellery or nail polish.
7. Children are expected to keep books, copies and homework neat and clean.
8. Children must respect the school's and peers' property.
9. Children are expected to be punctual at all times.
10. Children must share the responsibility of keeping the classroom and school grounds tidy and litter free
11. Children may not leave school grounds without permission.
12. If pupils are absent a note (in the homework journal from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>) stating the reason for the absence, is required preferably beforehand, but certainly afterwards.
13. If pupils are being collected early we require notification, preferably in writing. Please avoid lunch time collection between 1pm and 1.30pm.
14. Children must wear school uniform every day except PE days when tracksuits should be worn.
15. If pupils are absent for a period of 3 days or longer please contact the school office by email (office@realtnamaradonacarney.ie) or by phone (041 9887684) A doctor's certificate should be given to the office for long absences.
16. With the exception of wet days, children are expected to leave the classroom at break times to take exercise and fresh air. All food is eaten in the classroom. Movement in and out of the classroom and in the corridor should be at walking pace.
17. The distribution of Christmas cards, birthday invitations and/or birthday party packs is not allowed by children during school time.

#### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children, based closely on the school rules. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible they emphasise positive behaviour (e.g. 'Walk' and not, 'Don't run'). Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

#### **Incentives/Reward System**

Part of the vision of *Réalt Na Mara School* is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements. Rates of praise for behaviour should be as high as for work.

# *Réalt na Mara (C)*

## *Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*

The following are some samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or homework journal
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Good behaviour stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- 'Bualadh Bos' in class
- Awarded a certificate at assembly

**Positive Behaviour** is also encouraged through the student council, monthly assemblies, regular reassignment of seating arrangement in class, homework passes, visit to Principal, special class treats like baking.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of **minor misbehaviour** include:

- Showing a lack of respect to peers or adults.
- Homework not done and no note from Parent
- Disruptive behaviour in class, talking out of turn, lack of focus.
- Wearing jewellery or nail polish.
- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school
- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions.

Examples of **serious misbehaviour** include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of **gross misbehaviour** include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious Damage to property
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

Bullying is **repeated** aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- **PHYSICAL:** includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.



## *Réalt na Mara (C)* *Donacarney, Morníngton, Co. Meath.*

8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents
10. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

### **Suspension**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious 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.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

### **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal. Inform parents in writing of alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. Give parents and students the opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
2. A recommendation to the B.O.M. by the principal (see page 84 National Educational Welfare Board guidelines)
3. Consideration by the B.O.M. of the principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing. (see page 84 NEWB Guidelines)
4. B.O.M. deliberations and actions following the hearing. (page 85 NEWB Guidelines)

## *Réalt na Mara (C)*

### *Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*

- VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. "Cyber/text" bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and are dealt with in more detail in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

*Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.*

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – already outlined in our Code of Behaviour.

*In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.*

#### **Sanctions**

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Detention during break or after school
7. Communication with parents

*Réalt na Mara (C)*  
*Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath.*

5. If B.O.M. is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after Tusla have received written notification. The NEWB should be notified using a Notice of Intention to Expel form which is available on [www.schoolreturn.ie](http://www.schoolreturn.ie) or from their helpline (1890 36 3666). This form should be completed and sent to Educational Welfare Services, Tusla - Child and Family Agency, Floor 4, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8
6. Consultations arranged by the EWO.
7. Confirmation by Board of Management of the decision to expel

### **Children with Special Needs**

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and or principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

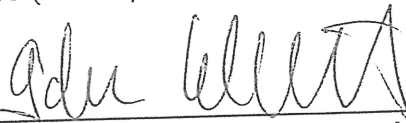
The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

### **Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life (in the past or present), which may affect the child's behaviour.

Signed:   
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 24/4/18

### **References**

Circular 20/90 Suggested Code of Behaviour for National Schools  
Tusla Guidelines on developing a Code of Behaviour in Schools.