

**Positive Behaviour Policy**

**for**

**Griffith Barracks**

**Multi Denominational**

**School**



# GRIFFITH BARRACKS MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL

## Positive Behaviour Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Griffith Barracks Multi Denominational School (GBMDS) is a state funded national school situated on the South Circular Road in the heart of Dublin 8. We are a vibrant and happy school which is firmly rooted in a community of learning. Children experience an array of learning opportunities whilst at GBMDS. The school follows the Primary School Curriculum as laid out by the Department of Education and Skills. This Policy has been drawn up in conjunction with staff, parents and children. In devising the Policy, we were conscious that the individuality of each child should be accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. We endeavour to create a positive school environment where learning and development can take place, and where there is the highest possible degree of consensus about standards of behaviour among staff, pupils and parents. This policy was generated by all parties to the school and incorporating the ethos of the school.

The rules in the Policy are kept to a minimum and are positively stated in terms of what children should do. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of cooperation among, and between, staff, pupils and parents. In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by the Principal and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents, and that parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not. The children bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility.

It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles. Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore, any rules will be age appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules and by becoming familiar with our Positive Behaviour Policy. Our Positive Behaviour Policy has been guided by the principles of Educate Together, our mission statement statement:

*We at Griffith Barracks Multi-Denominational School celebrate and embrace difference, and work towards creating a learning atmosphere that is all inclusive and non-discriminatory. Teachers and Parents work together to maintain a friendly family-style atmosphere, while encouraging the children to do their best in a variety of ways. We believe that all children have much to contribute and we will try to provide each child with the opportunity to discover and develop his/her talents. We recognise the importance of local action within the global environmental context and work to improve our local environment.*

All partners have responsibilities, which require us to behave in certain ways. Many responsibilities are shared or common to the Patron Body, the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents/ Staff and parents model the behaviour they expect. Children need to be taught about behaviour. **It is important to emphasise that staff and parents are crucial to the prevention of bullying by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment**

It is very important if a child finds himself/herself a victim of any form of misbehaviour that they inform the teacher and/or parents. ***Parents and staff are crucial in the prevention of bullying behaviour by creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment. There are a set number of anti-bullying lessons taught each term.***

### **AIMS**

- To create an environment where all partners in the school community (i.e. children, staff and parents) feel safe, respected and valued.
- To promote self-discipline and regulation and equip them to cope and flourish in different situations and contexts.
- To create an environment where the children and the staff can reach their personal potential.
- To have a framework in place (i.e. positive behaviour policy) to help the school run smoothly.
- To establish clear expectations of pupils, teachers, parents and Board of Management.
- To help children to acquire and develop moral and ethical values and a respect for the belief and values of others. We do this through a number of techniques, initiatives and programmes within the school (see appendix 1).

The school officially opens at 8.40am and the yard is supervised by the principal with the support of SNA's and teachers before the official start time of 8.50am

Children are asked to arrive at and leave school on time each day. Only under exceptional circumstances, may a child leave the school during the day. We request that the parent send an email to the teacher or write a note in the homework journal and show it to the teacher. The children must be signed out through the office and a member of staff will collect your child. Classes are not to be disturbed during teaching time. ***If a child arrives in school after 9.00 am he/she will be marked late on the roll.***

## POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

The school aims to use positive reinforcement as much as possible. Examples of this include a “Student of the Week” system, stickers, golden visits, messages, individual classroom systems etc. for good behaviour. There is a big emphasis from the staff on catching the children being good. ***Each member of the school community (children, parents and staff) is crucial to the overall behaviour in the school. By each member taking responsibility for his/her own action it makes for a harmonious school. Our school policy is based on respect. We like to encourage open and honest relationships between children, staff and parents.***

***Each class is regularly covering topics relating to diversity, stereotyping, anti-bullying and respect as per ethics policy. Each class has a worry box where they can write down anything that is worrying them. These boxes are checked on a regular basis by the teacher.***

The school’s anti-bullying policy is updated annually. Anti-bullying training is provided for staff and parents. At this event the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment.

## CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Staff at the school ensure that standards and rules are communicated in a way that students with Additional needs understand. This understanding is checked from time to time; especially where a student with Additional needs is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the rules. Children with additional educational needs may need support to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school. On certain occasions, it may be appropriate to exercise flexibility in the implementation of this code. Children with additional needs are not exempt from sanction the approach used may vary. For some students visual prompts or pictures may be needed. Some students may need opportunities to practise observing the rules, with feedback on their progress. Rewards for students with special educational needs should take account of their particular learning style. In the case of students with a sensory disability, the reward should be communicated in ways that take account of that. In each case the consequence will be the same for the child with special needs but approach may be different.

## STAFF

Staff work with the children in a number of ways to ensure that there is a harmonious and child centred atmosphere within the school. Among the things the staff do to encourage positive behaviour are:

- Golden visits to the Principal and to other teachers and staff around the school
- Individual behaviour plans and
- Individual Conferencing with the students
- Students of the Week and recognition at Assembly.
- As a staff we teach all the children in the school and see all the children as our responsibility. We support each other through group consultation and problem solving to get the best possible outcomes
- This policy works in tandem with the school’s Anti bullying Policy.
- The school is involved with the yellow flag programme:  
The Yellow Flag Programme provides a practical series of 8 steps that brings issues of interculturalism, equality and diversity into the whole-school programme and allows schools to apply them to the day to day running of the school.
- Two teachers have been nominated as anti-racism officers within the school.
- The school undertakes Fun Friends and Friends for Life in first class and 5<sup>th</sup> Class. The programme helps students to develop effective strategies to deal with worry, stress and change and teaches the skills required to reduce anxiety and promote resilience. It is beneficial for all students, irrespective of their anxiety level. A parental information talk is held during the programme to make parents aware of it.

- Class Charter/Guides for a Happy Class: At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher drafts a list of class rules/class charter with the children. These reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. Class rules should be kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. They should where possible 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.
- There is a care team in operation in the school which consists of the Principal and Deputy Principal and any other staff member who attends the meetings. The care team aims to support student well being and welfare and to ensure that issues of misbehaviour are dealt with by the school before they become major problems.

### **SCHOOL RULES**

In our school we are respectful, cooperative and polite. We:

1. Use Kind hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words
2. Walk quietly around the school
3. Take care of our own and other people's things
4. Communicate respectfully with other Students and staff
5. Co-operate with staff members
6. Come to School on time and be prepared.
7. DO our best and let others do the same.

### **Important things to remember at GBMDS**

- Your opinion matters
- We speak to everyone in a respectful manner
- Punctuality is very important
- Déan iarracht Gaeilge a labhairt
- Have a healthy lunch box
- Dress appropriately and safely for school
- Always do your best
- We walk in single file down the stairs

### **Playground rules**

We will:

1. Invite others to join in our games
2. Stay in our own part of the yard and only leave the area with permission
3. Play safely and kindly
4. Dress appropriately for the weather
5. Stay where you can be seen.
6. Respond to bell and stand in line
7. We only eat food in our classroom
8. Work together to ensure that bullying does not happen, be an upstander
9. Ensure there is no name calling in the yard
10. Use our bikes and scooters only at the beginning and end of the day and walk with them from the gate to the bike shed.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

In our school, all child protection and welfare issues are dealt with in accordance with 'Children First - The National Guidelines for the Protection & Welfare of Children' & the D.E.S. 'Child Protection Guidelines & Procedures' (2001). The Designated Liaison Person is the Principal (Eddie Fox) and in his absence the Deputy Principal (Jenny McCrohan) will deal with all related issues.

In line with our Child Safeguarding Statement, prior to teaching the Stay Safe Programme, teachers assure children that their safety is of utmost importance. They ensure that children in their class are aware of how they can tell an adult if they feel unsafe in school. The School also has a student Dáil and is part of the yellow flag programme.

### **MEASURES THAT MAY BE TAKEN IF A STUDENT FAILS TO OBSERVE THESE STANDARDS**

The School may take the following approaches to dealing with inappropriate conduct. In addressing this issue, the staff is committed to communicating with parents on an on-going basis, both formally and informally, depending on the circumstances.

Strategies/sanctions, which will apply to all pupils from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class, may include the following:

- An Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) may be drawn up for the child in conjunction with the parents (seen as a positive step)
- A verbal reminder will be given to a child, in private where possible, which will include reasoning and advice on how to improve their conduct
- Temporary separation from other children, until the child is calm and ready to resume work.
- Removal of the child to another classroom for a short period of time as a calming measure.
- Loss of Golden Time. Loss of privilege is always as a consequence of inappropriate behaviour.
- A letter/email home asking the parents to remind their child of the Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1)
- Detention for part/all of break
- Asked to spend part of break on the Time Out Stop.
- Conferencing – What happened? – What I was thinking at the time? – What I am thinking now? – Who did I affect? – What do I need to do to move on? – What could I do next time?
- Teachers should take particular care that they help the student with special educational needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. A decision should be reached on a case by case basis as to the effectiveness of applying the above, given the age of the child and the severity of the disability.
- The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all students including those with special educational needs

- Meeting with child/children
- Teacher communication with parent – message in journal/reminder email/ writing out the story of what happened (sent home to be signed by parent).
- Prescribing additional work (including written apology for misbehaviour).
- Referral to the Principal.
- Written warning from Principal.
- Communication between Principal and parents.
- Detention in school and after school.
- Referral to Board of Management.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

The above is not a step-by-step approach. These strategies will be used at the discretion of the teacher, depending on the situation and the age of the child.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of minor misbehaviour are dealt with by the class teacher/ member of staff. In cases of serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents will be notified at an early stage and maybe invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child’s behaviour. The classification of misbehaviour as minor, serious or gross, is, in some cases, a matter of judgment and it is acknowledged that the person best placed to assess this is the member of staff who witnesses the behaviour in question.

The following is a non- exhaustive list: Examples of Minor Misbehaviour:

- Interrupting class work
- Arriving late for school
- Running in the school building
- Littering around the school
- Being discourteous or unmannerly
- Not completing homework without good reason (to include a note from a parent/guardian)
- Talking out of turn
- Being disruptive in class
- Disobedience
- Minor breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules

Examples of Serious Misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation) which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour
- Telling lies

- Rudeness or disrespect in addressing a staff member
- Deliberate , continual disobedience
- Threats or physical hurt to another person which falls short of Gross Misbehaviour
- Minor damage to property
- Minor theft
- Use of unacceptable language
- Name calling
- Inappropriate behaviour or gestures
- Serious breaches of General, Class and Playground Rules
- Persistent minor misbehaviour will be classified as Serious Misbehaviour

Examples of Gross Misbehaviour:

- Verbal abuse or physical assault on a staff member or pupil
- Leaving school premises without permission
- Persistently engaging in activities which have been identified by members of staff as dangerous
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Endangering self or fellow pupils in the class or the yard
- Bringing weapons or dangerous substances to school
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour toward a staff member or pupil
- Very serious breaches of general, class and playground rules
- Persistent incidents of serious misbehaviour will be classified as gross misbehaviour

### **SUSPENSION & EXPULSION**

Since the founding of the school in September 1994 to date, a very small number of pupils have been suspended and none have been expelled. These sanctions are used extremely rarely. Nevertheless the school must and does reserve the right to invoke these sanctions if and when the circumstances so require. Before serious sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion, are used, where possible, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will, as far as possible, be utilised.

#### **Suspension Procedure**

**The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 details in Section 23(2) that the Code of Behaviour shall specify:**

- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;**

The school will follow guidelines as laid out in the *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

### **SUSPENSION**

**Griffith Barracks Multi-Denominational School will invoke Suspension / Expulsion procedures when required**

#### **Authority**

The Board of Management of GBMDS has the authority to suspend a student.

Suspension will be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried and reviewed before a suspension is considered. The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- 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 authority to suspend has been delegated by the BOM of GBMDS to the Principal for up to 3 days (*Minutes of BOM meeting Feb. 2019*) the principal will inform the BOM of any suspensions at the next Board of Management meeting.

The decision to suspend will follow an investigation into the alleged unacceptable behaviour. The investigation should give an opportunity to the student involved and his/her parents or guardians to have their views heard. Where the immediate safety of others is believed to be compromised a suspension may take place immediately followed by an investigation into events.

A suspension may be considered following continued episodes of unacceptable behaviour or in response to a single incident of serious unacceptable behaviour.

In cases of immediate suspension, the parents /guardian will be contacted immediately and requested to make arrangements to collect the student. In all situations of suspension, the parents /guardians will be notified in writing of the details of the suspension. The letter should outline;

- The reasons for the suspension
- The duration of the suspension should be time limited.
- Arrangements for return to school including any commitments to be entered into by the student on their return to school

All suspensions over 6 days should be notified to the NEWB. Where suspensions exceed 20 days the parents/guardian should be notified of their right to make an appeal to the DES under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **Expulsion (permanent exclusion)**

**The Board of Management has sole authority to expel a student.**

The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled are set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008)*.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)

GBMDS will have made all efforts to resolve issues before considering the expulsion of a student. Where the Principal forms the view based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. Where consideration is being given to expelling a student, parents/guardians will be written to outlining the grounds on which the expulsion is being considered. The letter will also invite the parent/guardian to attend a Board of Management meeting where the case will be heard, furnish them with any relevant documentation and invite them to put their case before the Board either orally or by written submission or both. All relevant documents will also be furnished to the members of the Board.

At the hearing the Principal and parents/guardians will put their case before the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be given the opportunity to question the evidence of the other party directly. The parents/guardians may also put forward a case for a reduced sanction to be imposed. Both the Principal and parents/guardians should then withdraw from the meeting while the Board consider the case before them and makes their decision.

The decision of the Board is then communicated to the parents/guardians in writing. If the decision of the Board is to expel the student, this decision is notified to the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB). The expulsion cannot take effect until the passing of 20 school days from the date of receipt of this notification by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). If the Board considers it necessary in order to maintain good order and the safety of students in the school, it may decide to suspend the student for the 20 day period.

The EWO on receipt of the notification of intention to expel the student must make all reasonable efforts to consult with the Principal, parents/guardians and anyone else that may be of assistance. The EWO will also convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Section 24, Education (Welfare) Act, 2000). The purpose of these consultations is to make provision for the on-going education of the student. These discussions may also give rise to a proposal for an alternative intervention to avoid expulsion. Such a proposal should be brought back to the Board for their consideration.

Where no alternative to expulsion is found, the Board should after the passing of 20 school days ratify its decision to expel the student. This decision should be communicated immediately in writing to the parents/guardians. This function can be delegated by the Board to the Chairman of the board and the Principal.

The parents/guardian should be notified of their right to appeal the expulsion under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

### **Conclusion**

The Safety and wellbeing of all children attending our school is of the utmost importance to us. With this in mind, a Positive Behaviour Policy has been put in place and ratified by the Board of Management.

### **EXPECTATIONS ON PARENTS**

The School has its own complaints procedure. The class teacher is always your first port of call if you have a concern about the welfare of your child.

- Do not disturb the class during teaching time.
- If your child has a problem with another child in the school, you must never approach that child directly.
- Speak to the class teacher
- Failing a resolution, speak to the Principal
- Should the issue not be resolved, please put the grievance in writing to the ***Chairperson of the Board of Management which can be addressed to the school address.***

### **Responsibility of Pupils**

Pupils have been involved in drafting the Positive Behaviour Policy and in the on-going implementation of the Policy.

- Drafting classroom guides/charter
- Taking part in assemblies
- Working on Student Council
- Buddy systems
- Dressing appropriately per school as per the school dress code.

## **Responsibility of Adults**

The adults encountered by the children at school and at home have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children. The Policy as it applies to staff, and volunteers ensures that the rights of the children are upheld. As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Use positive language in affirming the children.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of:
  - Civil status
  - Gender
  - Family status
  - Sexual orientation
  - Religion
  - Age (does not apply to a person under 16)
  - Disability
  - Race
  - Membership of the Traveller community
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'
- Ensure that our children come to school, on time, refreshed and prepared for work
- Taken an active interest in the learning and concerns of children
- Work towards effective communication between adults and children within the school community. Parents are reminded that writing or speaking about a teacher or any member of the school community on public fora is not acceptable and not in keeping with positive relations within the school.

Completed April 2019

## **Special Amendments to GBMDS Behaviour Policy**

### **During Covid-19 Epidemic**

#### **Behaviour Principles**

In light of the need for children to behave differently and to follow specific rules on their return to school during the Covid-19 epidemic, this amendment to the Behaviour Policy outlines specific changes to guidance that pupils will have to follow. Our sole guiding principle when making any changes or adjustments to policy is to be able to keep all of our children, families and staff safe and place their wellbeing at the forefront of everything we do. These amendments will need to be communicated to pupils, parents and staff.

## **Behaviour Expectations:**

### ***Children are expected at all times during the school year to:***

- meet amended school expectations about breaks or play times, including where children may or may not play which shall be communicated to children by the school during the school year
- follow clear rules about coughing or spitting with malintent at or towards any other person
- where applicable, follow any rules for pupils at home about conduct in relation to remote education which are communicated to children and parents during the school year

## **School Routines and Procedures:**

### ***Children are expected at all times during the school year to:***

- follow any altered routines for arrival or departure
- follow instructions on who pupils can socialise with at school
- move around the school as per specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing, one person only in the toilets)
- follow rules about sharing any equipment or other items including drinking bottles
- follow school rules relating to use of toilets

## **Hygiene and Health Expectations:**

### ***Children are expected at all times during the school year to:***

- follow school instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
- meet high expectations about sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal (re-enforce '**catch it, bin it, kill it**') and avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- tell an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus

## **Mental Health and Emotional Support:**

- Curriculum changes to support children, e.g. social stories, circle time, SPHE, wellbeing month and focus on wellbeing for the entire year.

Additional support that pupils can access above and beyond classroom provision if required – use of NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service).

Added August 2020

# Appendix 1

## **Reminder letter to Parents re Positive Behaviour Policy (Senior Children).**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Please talk to your child and remind him/her of the importance of keeping the following rule/rules:

- behaving in class
- behaving in yard
- not deliberately hurting anyone
- Listening and paying attention
- having respect for all members of the school community
- Having respect for school property, their own belongings and others

Teacher's Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

I have talked to my child about the above rules and he/she promises to try harder.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

**Reminder letter to Parents Positive Behaviour Policy**  
(Junior Children)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Please talk to your child and remind him/her of the importance of keeping the following rule/rules:

**Behaving in class**

**Behaving in yard**

**Not deliberately hurting anyone**

**Listening and paying attention**

**Having respect for all members of the school community**

**Having respect for school property, their own belongings and others**

**Teacher's Comments:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**I have talked to my child about the above rules and he/she promises to try harder.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)**

## Positive Behaviour Policy

I have read the Positive Behaviour Policy and discussed it with my child and will  
Encourage them to observe the rules of the school.

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

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Think About It Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

What was I doing at the time?	
What should I have been doing?	
How was my behaviour affecting others?	
What do I need to do now?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_