



## *Thomastown National School*

Thomastown, Golden, Cashel, Co. Tipperary

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### **Code of Behaviour**

#### **Introduction and Rationale**

The Board of Management of Thomastown NS is required by legislation to prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Education Welfare Act, 2000, stipulates that the school Code of Behaviour must be prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

#### **Mission Statement & the Code of Behaviour**

In line with our Mission Statement every individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive and supportive atmosphere. We, as a staff, believe our Code of Behaviour has an important role to play in fulfilling these aims and objectives.

Thomastown National School aims to treat every child, irrespective of ability, creed, race or gender, with dignity, fairness and respect.

Implementation of this Code of Behaviour is central to the provision of effective teaching and learning in Thomastown NS. It is a reflection of our school ethos and central to our Mission Statement.

#### **Our Mission Statement**

Our school aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Management work in partnership, where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian atmosphere.

## **Where and When the Code of Behaviour will apply**

This Code of Behaviour will apply to all school activities, regardless of timing and location. This will encompass the normal school day, activities that may extend beyond normal opening and closing times and all extra-curricular activities such as school tours, outings, performances and sporting pursuits.

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

Our Code of Behaviour aims:

- to create a safe, secure and positive environment where teaching and learning can occur
- to promote a friendly, happy atmosphere which will help every child to reach their full potential
- to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and consideration for all
- to promote positive behaviour and self-discipline where the children take ownership of their own behaviour
- to help our children to realise that they have choices about the behaviours they exhibit
- to help our children to mature into responsible and full participants in a learning community
- to assist Parents / Guardians in understanding the expectations and procedures that underpin the Code of Behaviour
- to ensure that all procedures of reward or sanction are implemented in a fair manner throughout the school

## **Responsibilities in Relation to Behaviour**

The teachers and adults encountered by the children in Thomastown NS have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other. Our example has an important influence on the children.

As Teachers and Adults we aim to:

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- promote, through example, honesty and courtesy
- model the good behaviour we expect from the children
- provide a caring and effective teaching and learning environment
- encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability or disability
- show appreciation for the efforts and contributions of all

The children in Thomastown NS can help enormously to make our school a positive, happy and effective learning environment by adhering to the school rules.

The Parents and Guardians of the children in Thomastown NS have the responsibility to ensure that their children abide by the expectations outlined in this Code of Behaviour.

All Parents and Guardians should aim to:

- familiarise themselves with the Code of Behaviour and discuss same with their child
- encourage their child to abide by the school rules
- encourage punctuality every day
- encourage full attendance
- label their child's belongings for easy identification
- support their child with their homework

- inform their child's class teacher about illnesses / school absences in writing
- ensure their child is wearing their full school uniform / tracksuit
- ensure their child is eating a healthy lunch
- encourage good behaviour and respect for others at all times
- communicate with their child's teacher about factors likely to affect their child's behaviour in school
- make an appointment to meet with a teacher / the Principal with the Secretary

## **Guidelines for Positive School Behaviour**

The following standards of behaviour are expected of all members of the community of Thomastown National School:

- Respect for self and others
- Respect for school property and buildings
- Respect for other children's property
- Follow instructions from staff immediately
- Do their best in all activities
- Listen to those who are speaking, including visitors to their classroom
- Be kind and show a willingness to help others
- Show courtesy and good manners at all times

## **Classroom Behaviour**

Each teacher will have a set of expected classroom behaviours for his/her class level. Teachers may draft a list of class rules with the help of the children in their class. Class rules should emphasise positive behaviour. The following general behaviours apply to all classes.

- Co-operate fully with your Teacher's / SNA's / Substitute Teacher's instructions
- Complete your work to the best of your ability
- Present your work neatly
- Get on with your work and let others get on with theirs
- Enter and leave your classroom quietly
- Complete all homework to the best of your ability
- Help to tidy up your classroom at the end of every day
- Eat a healthy lunch every day

## **Behaviour on the Yard at Break-Times**

Children have the opportunity to play and socialise with each other at morning and lunch break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on the yard.

- Children are encouraged to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves
- Children should never leave the school grounds
- Children eat their lunch in their classroom before / after yard times
- Children with minor injuries will be treated by the class teacher
- Serious injuries will be recorded in the Incident Book and the class teacher will be informed of such injuries at the end of break. The child's parents/guardians will be contacted about the injury if deemed necessary.
- At the end of breaks the children will make their way to their line
- When the class teachers collect their lines, the children should walk in single file to their classroom
- Children are encouraged to be fair and inclusive when setting up their games
- Rough play and bad language are not allowed at any time

## Behaviour for Indoor Play

On wet days the children will remain in their classrooms during break-times. The following points will help to keep the children safe on these occasions.

- Children will stay in their classrooms at all times
- Children can play with games / activities provided by their teacher
- Teachers will be on corridor duty on wet days
- SNAs will help supervising the classes of the children they work with on wet days

## Behaviour on the Yard before school day starts

The school day begins at 9.00am. Pupils may enter their classroom when the doors open at 8.50am. Children who arrive at school before 8.50 should wait in the school shelter. Children are not allowed to play in the yard before school starts in order to protect the younger children in our school.

Parents are asked not to drop their children to school before 8.50.

## Promoting Positive Behaviour

Part of the vision of Thomastown National 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 that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solving problems. All children deserve encouragement to attain their personal best. We provide encouragement to children of all abilities and talents. Children will be praised for good behaviour. Greater emphasis is placed in rewards and praise rather than on sanctions.

The following are examples of how praise will be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A visit to another teacher / Principal for commendation
- Words of praise in front of class
- Words of praise after yard in front of whole school
- A mention to Parents/Guardians, written/verbal communication

## Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children are required to comply with the spirit of the Code of Behaviour. Thomastown NS recognises that some children with SEN may need extra time and help in understanding some rules. Specialised Behaviour Plans may be necessary at times. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with the class teacher, parents, SET Teachers and the Principal. All will work together to make sure the child receives all the support they need. Any professional advice from our NEPS Psychologist will be taken into consideration.

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

## **Special Class for children with ASD**

The children attending the ASD class will have Individual Behavioural Strategies in place.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

Three levels of Misbehaviour are recognised: minor, serious and gross. All everyday instances of minor misbehaviours will be dealt with by the class teacher or the supervising teacher at break-times.

#### **Minor Misbehaviours**

Examples of Minor Misbehaviours include:

- Interrupting work in the classroom
- Being discourteous / unmannerly
- Running in the corridors
- Rough play on the yard
- Unfinished Homework

Class teachers will keep a running record of minor misbehaviours. If a pattern of minor misbehaviours appears, the class teacher may inform Parents/Guardians.

#### **Serious Misbehaviours**

Single instances of serious misbehaviour will be dealt with by the class teacher in conjunction with the Deputy Principal / Principal. Any single incident may be brought to the Parent/Guardian's attention at the discretion of the Deputy Principal / Principal.

In cases of repeated serious misbehaviours Parents/Guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the class teacher and Deputy Principal / Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of Serious Misbehaviours include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful including threats, bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation
- Using violent and/or aggressive behaviour towards others
- Verbal abuse of a teacher / adult
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning on a daily basis
- Damage to school property
- Theft

#### **Gross Misbehaviours**

Parents / Guardians will be informed immediately by the Principal if there is one incident of gross misbehaviour.

Examples of Gross Misbehaviours include:

- Physical abuse of a teacher / adult / other child
- Serious aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher / adult / other child
- Bringing dangerous implements to school
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Serious damage to property e.g. structural damage to school building, broken window

- Bullying over a prolonged period of time after earlier interventions
- Carrying drugs / alcohol / cigarettes / dangerous substances

## **Sanctions for Unacceptable Behaviour**

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

- learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- see that their behaviour affects others
- understand that they have choices about their behaviour
- understand that their choices have consequences
- learn to take responsibility for their choices / behaviours
- discuss and devise strategies to prevent the behaviour occurring again

Sanctions should:

- reinforce the Code of Behaviour
- signal to other children that their wellbeing is being protected
- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- be clear so that the child understands why the sanction is being applied
- make it clear that changes in behaviour are needed to avoid further sanctions
- make a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- relate to an individual and not a group
- focus on the child's behaviour not on the child himself/herself

The Class Teacher will:

- ask the child to stop the behaviour
- discuss behaviour and reason with child
- advise child on how to improve the behaviour
- ask the child to move away from his/her class group to consider the behaviour
- ask the child go to a nearby class to consider his/her behaviour
- loss of privileges e.g. free play / activities / representing the school / attendance on a school trip
- inform the Principal / Deputy Principal about on-going disruptive behaviour
- make an appointment with the child's parents to discuss the issue

The Principal, class teacher and parents will consult with each other on a regular basis and will make all efforts to help the child to understand that disruptive behaviour is not acceptable.

## **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as 'requiring a student to absent himself / herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days' (NEWB Guidelines)

Exclusion for part of a school day or asking Parents/Guardians to keep a child from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a child has engaged in a serious or gross misbehaviour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single instance of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

- The seriously detrimental effect on the Education of the other children of the child's behaviour to date
- Whether the child's continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to health and safety
- The child is responsible for serious damage to property

The purpose of the suspension is to give the child / parent / guardian / staff time to consider the child's actions and to consider the implications for the other children in the class group. It will also provide the school with time to devise ways to help the child improve the child's behaviour in the future.

The Principal can suspend a child for periods of up to three days. If a longer suspension is proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB Guidelines.

## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a child. This authority will be exercised in line with the procedures outlined in the Development of a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools NEWB.

## **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, Parents / Guardians are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the BOM, including suspension and expulsion.

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

Following or during a period of suspension, the Parents / Guardians may apply to have their child reinstated to Thomastown NS. The Principal must be satisfied that the child's reinstatement will hold no safety risks to other children or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of an Individual Behaviour Plan for the child in conjunction with the Class Teacher and Resource Teacher if required. The Principal will formally re-admit the child to his/her class.

## **Communicating with Parents and Guardians**

Communicating with Parents/Guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy which can be implemented at home and at school. A high level of co-operation and open communication is an important factor which encourages positive behaviour in the school.

Thomastown NS encourages Parents to talk in confidence to teachers and/or Principal about any significant development in their child's life which may affect their child's behaviour.

The parents and guardians of any new children starting in Thomastown National School will be provided with a copy of our Code of Behaviour.

## **Record Keeping**

It is very important that all incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and kept up to date. Patterns of poor behaviour can be spotted early and interventions (e.g. an Individual Behaviour Plan) can be put in place as soon as possible.

## **Ratification and Review**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in October 2020. It will be reviewed again in October 2022.

## **Communication**

This policy is available to all school personnel and parents. A copy of the Code of Behaviour is available on our school website.

<p>Signed:</p> <p><i><u>Michael Fitzgerald</u></i> (Chairperson of Board of Management)</p> <p>Date: 20/10/2020</p>	<p>Signed:</p> <p><i><u>Marie Donovan</u></i> (Principal)</p> <p>Date: 20/10/2020</p>
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