

## St. Kevin's G.N.S.

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Kilnamanagh, Dublin 24  
Roll No.: 19466E  
Telephone: 01-4517981  
Fax: 01-4526339  
[info@stkevinsqns.com](mailto:info@stkevinsqns.com)



### **Code of Behaviour**

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 clearly agreed consequences for any infringements of these rules.

Parents/guardians can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

As far as possible a code of behaviour acknowledges the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

#### **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 safe and responsible use of the internet during school hours and to encourage a continuation of these good habits, to ensure safe and respectful internet use outside of school.
- To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood by parents/guardians by making school policies easily available and by cultivating an ethos of open communication.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy

**Responsibility of Adults: Teachers, SNAs, Secretary, Caretaker, Students on Placement, Parents and Guardians.**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children, school staff and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to lead by example:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations
- Promote, through example, respect, honesty and courtesy
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ability and disability
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all
- To discourage physical or verbal aggression and encourage *‘Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet’*.

- A Code of Conduct that enshrines respect, integrity, care and trust is expected of Teaching Staff, SNAs, Ancillary Staff, Students on Placement, Parents and Guardians. This ensures that the rights of the children are upheld.

**School hours :** **Infants**      **8.50 – 1.30**  
                                  **1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>**      **8.50 – 2.30**

1. Students must show respect for themselves and others
2. Students must be organised and prepared for school at every class level.
3. If a student is leaving early or arriving during the day for any reason, the adult meeting them must sign them in and out.
4. **Punctuality** is an important life skill to be developed.  
 Children must sign the ‘Late Book’ if they arrive through the front door of the school. From 3<sup>rd</sup> Class up, work missed in the morning through lateness may need to be completed at a later stage.  
 Children at school before 8.50 are unsupervised.
5. Good school **attendance** is vital. Absences of more than 20 days in the year will be reported to the attendance officer (as per DES regulations)  
 Good habits of attendance and punctuality should be formed in the early school years.  
 Pupils wishing to leave school early must have a note signed by parent/guardian or be collected at classroom door by parent / guardian.  
 Pupil’s absences and lateness must be explained in verbal or written form.  
 Students may not leave the school between 8.50 and 2.30 unless accompanied by an adult authorised by parent/guardian.
6. On P.E. days pupils should wear the school tracksuit, polo shirt (white) and runners (preferably Velcro runners for younger pupils).
7. On all other days pupils should wear full school uniform, with flat – heeled shoes. (Junior Infants have the option to wear tracksuit every day)

8. After a survey conducted with families and staff, we have made changes to our uniform. They are as follows:
  - Junior and Senior Infants may wear tracksuit every day of the week.
  - From First Class up the children will continue to wear tracksuit on P.E. days and uniform the other days.
  - This must be observed, unless a child has a diagnosis which precludes them from wearing full uniform. A suitable alternative must be worked out between parent/guardian and school.
  - Navy trousers may be worn in place of the navy skirt, if preferred.
  
9. Pupils and their books should be neat and clean.
  
10. **Homework** assigned must be completed on time, in full and to the highest possible standard.  
Homework should be checked and signed nightly by parent / guardian.  
If homework is not completed, there should be a brief note of explanation from parent/guardian.
  
11. As a staff we encourage a 'Healthy Eating Policy' and discourage crisps, sweets and chocolate. However, **one** treat is allowed on a Friday.
  
12. Students must respect other students and their learning and show kindness and willingness to help others. Allow teachers to teach, and students to learn.
  
13. Pupils must respect and obey all teachers and staff and be courteous and mannerly to all the school community including visitors.
  
14. Fighting, name calling, bad language, provocation of pupils or other improper behaviours are forbidden.
  
15. Bullying of any kind, physical, verbal, psychological is absolutely forbidden.

16. Students should walk quietly throughout the school building.
17. If sent on a message, students are expected to always go in pairs and do their task without delay.
18. Children are not allowed back into their classroom at yard time unsupervised.
19. Pupils must respect school property and the property of others.
20. Disruption of class work will be regarded as extremely serious misbehaviour.
21. Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in school by helping with programmes such as the 'Green School' initiative, Prefects, Student Council and school choir.
22. **No mobile phones/smart watches are permitted in the school.**  
In exceptional circumstances where a satisfactory written request is received and passed by BOM, they may be allowed, but may not be switched on while on school premises. They must be given to the class teacher for safe – keeping during the school day. (The school will not be responsible for any phone/smart watch lost or mislaid while in school)
23. Parents/guardians should not disrupt the school day without good reason. If parents/guardians wish to speak to a teacher about a serious issue they should make an appointment with the Principal or with the class teacher and not disrupt class teaching time.
24. Parents/guardians of Infants should ensure that children are toilet trained before coming to school. (except in exceptional cases)
25. Teacher should be made aware of any illness, disability or problem or family situation which might interfere with child's development.
26. Hair should be kept clean and checked on a regular basis for head lice and long hair **must** be tied back.

27. Pupils are only allowed wear stud earrings. False nails are never allowed.

28. Any unauthorised vehicles are not allowed in the school car park by order of the B.O.M.

The three points we emphasise regularly are

- ❖ **Be Kind**
- ❖ **Listen**
- ❖ **Respect**

### **Class Rules**

At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules 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/guardians will be contacted at an early stage.

### **Incentives**

Part of the vision of St. Kevin's G.N.S. is to help children achieve their **personal best** - academically, intellectually and socially.

We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and that similarly children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Reward systems which are based on academic merit or particular extrinsic goals continuously apply to only a limited number of children and undermine the individuality of children.

All children deserve encouragement to attain their own best. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times 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*.

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 exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent/guardian written or verbal communication.
- Inclusion in the 'Golden Book'

### **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. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, parents/guardians 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 serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Willful disregard for any of the school rules (especially misuse of phones)
- Repeated disrespect shown to others
- Threats, physical hurt or verbal abuse to another person
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of gross misbehaviour:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property

### **Sanctions**

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features;

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour

- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus

The following steps will be taken when the children behave inappropriately. They are listed in order of severity with one being for a minor misbehaviour and ten being for serious or gross misbehaviour. The list is by no means exhaustive.

Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the features by which sanctions should be characterised. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupils devise strategies for better behaviour;

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
7. Communication with parents/guardians
8. Referral to Principal
9. Principal communicating with parents/guardians.
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)

However, sanctions should relate as closely as possible to the behaviour. Therefore, a child who does not do her work in class or has not completed her homework, may be detained at break time to finish the work.

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

It was agreed at a meeting with teachers on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 that detention at break time does not require prior notice to parents/guardians but that detention at break time, where it is a natural consequence, is an acceptable method of sanction.

### **Suspension and Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

- For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/guardians 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/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal.
  - If the parents/guardians 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.
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- If sanctions have been exhausted or there is a single incident of gross misbehaviour the Principal requests a meeting with the parents.
  - If considered warranted the Principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for three days initially. This power of suspension is delegated to the principal by the school Board of Management.
  - In certain circumstances the Principal with the approval of their Chairperson of the BoM can suspend a pupil for 5 school days
  - A meeting of the BoM may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. Suspension will be in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

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.

- 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 Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

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

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parents/guardians 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.

### **Children with Additional Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians 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 additional 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.

## **Senior Class Behavioural Card System**

While behaviour has largely remained exemplary in our school, we have decided to implement a card system in Fourth, Fifth and Sixth classes in order to ensure that behaviour remains positive.

This system will run in tandem with our positive behavioural strategies already in place. The card system will keep parents/guardians informed of any issues arising during the school day. Staff will remind children of behavioural expectations, and if the behaviour continues, the teacher will resort to the card system.

In the case of a behavioural incident your daughter's teacher will send home a yellow/red slip outlining the incident that occurred. Yellow slips indicate a minor/less serious issue. Red cards would be given for a more deliberate/serious incident.

We will also send a reflection sheet home with the pupil involved. Should this happen, please discuss the situation with your daughter and help her to reflect on the incident and what they would do differently next time. We understand that mistakes happen but hopefully this reflection will help the girls to make better decisions going forward.

Some examples of yellow card behaviour:

- breaking classroom rules (devised by the children and teacher at the start of the school year)
- repeatedly not following instructions
- chewing gum
- being discourteous/disrespectful
- incomplete homework
- repeated swinging on chairs
- messing in the line/on the stairs
- repeated interrupting of classmates or teachers
- unkind behaviour or disrespect towards classmates

Some examples of red card behaviour:

- a major incident that was deliberate e.g. physical behaviour
- intimidating/threatening behaviour
- swearing or bad language
- damaging school or classmates' property
- taking school or classmates' property without permission

The Card System is as follows:

- Two yellow cards over five school days would equal a loss of privilege e.g. golden time/class reward/class job
- If a child were to receive three yellow cards over five school days, or a straight red card, a sanction would be put in place e.g. staying in for a portion of yard time/loss of position on school teams
- Clean slate: Five school days after the initial yellow card is issued, the pupil gets a fresh start.
- Red cards are recorded by the school.

By putting this system in place, we hope to see an increase in positive behaviour. Each teacher highlights and praises positive behaviour in their classroom. In the event of repeated red cards, the school will have no alternative but to consult our behavioural policy and act accordingly.

### **Methods of Communicating with Parents/Guardians**

Communicating with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents, guardians 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 families have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents/guardians should be 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.

The following methods are to be used at all levels within the school:

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Notes from school to home and from home to school
- Term newsletter

- Text/Email from school and/or Aladdin notice.

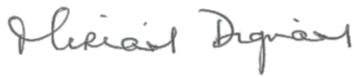
This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Signed:



(chairperson of BoM)

Signed:



(principal)