

# Pastoral Care Policy



**St. Eithne's Primary School**

*Updated September 2012*

**Child Protection  
Behaviour & Discipline**

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## **Pastoral Care at St. Eithne's**

It is the aim of St. Eithne's Primary School, through the provision of a caring and effective Catholic education to enable all pupils to attain their full potential academically, socially, physically and spiritually whilst catering for individual needs by providing a happy stimulating environment.

We would like our school system to reflect a sense of justice, forgiveness and respect for the needs and rights of pupils, parents, teachers and all other staff. We hope to build this into the general day to day running of the school.

We shall endeavour to create, maintain and act upon a policy, which considers the pastoral needs of all members of the school community.

Pastoral care to us means that every individual within our school community is valued and respected by all others. It is important that every member of the school community is conscious of the needs of others. We aim to foster an attitude of care and respect in all staff and pupils. We ask parents to maintain the same standards that we aim to set within the school environment.

Our pupils need to develop a sense of self-worth and awareness that their classmates respect them, that their teachers value them and that all members of the school community care for them.

Linked to our pastoral care system is the need for discipline throughout the school. We hope to achieve a high standard of discipline but not at the expense of our pupils own self-esteem. Our behaviour policy has been devised with the rights and feelings of our pupils in mind. Poor behaviour often stems from personal problems or difficulties. It is not our intention to simply punish bad behaviour and ignore the reasons for it. Our pastoral support principle is that it is better to prevent poor behaviour, rather than merely to react to it with punishments.

These values are reflected in our 3 main school rules;

- Always behave courteously showing good manners and consideration for others;
- Always show respect for your own property as well as the property of others;
- No bullying, no fighting and no rough play in the school at any time.

## **Pastoral Care at St. Eithne's**

### **School Ethos**

As part of our vision we aim to create an atmosphere which is caring, sympathetic and understanding, a place where the uniqueness of each individual pupil is considered. We also aim to value all members of the school community in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and trust.

It is our intention to strive to bring each child closer to God by providing a caring, supportive Catholic environment within which each child can develop the Christian attitudes, concepts, skills and knowledge enabling him/her to live in harmony with others.

Ultimately we want a school which is organised so that children and staff are happy, confident and at ease.

We as adults at the school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in our dealings with the children and with each other. We must show an example to the children in how we ourselves behave towards them and others. We are an important influence on the children.

### **As adults we should aim to:**

- create a positive climate with realistic expectations;
- emphasize the importance of being valued as an individual within the group;
- 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;
- ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability;
- show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- Ensure that all those who work in or visit our school will exhibit behaviour in keeping with these aims and our ethos.

### **Show Kindness and Caring**

It is essential that all staff respect and show a caring attitude to all our pupils. Care and respect must be shown at all times by teachers, classroom assistants and supervisory assistants. We also ask that parents show the same respect and care to our pupils, teachers, other staff and volunteers.

### **Merit and reward**

In considering the pastoral needs of our pupils we are committed to highlighting the positive nature of children's' behaviour and achievements. We have a merit and rewards system where all children are praised for the good they do. Underachievement can sometimes foster a low self-esteem in children. We, however aim to reward all hard work and effort despite any academic difficulties that some children might experience.

Merit system: -

Pupil of the month (Behaviour)

Writer of the month,  
Artist of the month,  
Mathematician of the month,  
ICT pupil of the month,

These awards are gained due to hard work, behaviour and not necessarily the absolute best during that month. Such rewards are to impress upon the pupils that their best efforts are of great value to a school system which wants them to improve at a rate which is realistic to them.

Attendance is also valued and certificates are awarded at the end of every term for those pupils who have tried their best not to miss a single day.

### **Clubs**

We have a huge range of extra-curricular clubs for Year 4 and Year 7 children. Not only does this enhance pupils' education but it also gives them a setting which is socially beneficial. We hope to provide further opportunities for pupils in years to come. The provision of clubs gives our children a chance to develop a range of skills in a less formal and more social setting. Pupils with low levels of achievement may attend a Reading and Games Club. This is part of our Special Needs programme and benefits those pupils educationally. The provision of a games section to this club gives these children the opportunity to play with equipment that they may not normally have access to. The use of the Youth Wing further enhances the pastoral needs of the children.

### **Parental Involvement**

As members of the school community we value our parents' contribution to their children's development. We are mindful that the first teacher of the children are the parents. It is the example of parents that children will follow and it is only through a strong partnership between school and parents that our children will develop academically, spiritually and emotionally. We wish to involve parents in the many areas of the school community.

Parents in the first instance can keep us informed about their child's health and general stability in the school environment. Parents may become involved in school clubs, educational visits, fund raising activities and of course parents are invaluable in the help they give their children with reading and homework.

### **Parent Meetings**

Before their first term at St. Eithne's parents of new pupils are invited to a meeting during which they receive an insight to the running of the school, the aims and the general ethos which is promoted.

Parents will be able to meet their child's teacher twice each year. The first, a short informal, meeting will enable them to find out how their child is settling into their new class and the second meeting, later on in the year, to discuss his/her progress and behaviour etc.

If parents have an urgent enquiry about their child they will always be welcome at the school.

We ask parents to let us know that they are coming by sending a note or verbal message with the child or by telephoning. Should a parent wish to contact the class teacher or principal and a lengthy discussion is envisaged they are advised to make an appointment.

Such an appointment is not necessary if only a quick inquiry is all. Parents must report to the school office during school hours.

We keep parents informed of events past and events to come through a school newsletter issued from the school every month. Any other more immediate information is sent out to parents in letter form.

### **Caring for our children around the school**

Our child protection and health and safety policies detail all the precautions that are taken to care for the safety and physical well-being of all our children. Pupils are carefully supervised during breaks in the school and out in the playgrounds. All adults have a responsibility for the well-being of all our children. {All permanent staff who have contact with pupils have access to a copy of DENI booklet Circular 1999 / 10}

Our secretary is a qualified, certified First Aider. If a child is ill or has had an accident he/she will be attended by the secretary. The child will be made as comfortable as possible and parents or named contact will be alerted. If hospital treatment is deemed necessary an ambulance may be called.

Should there be a toilet accident extra clothing may be supplied by the school. We shall do our best to minimize the embarrassment to the child and if necessary contact the parent. If a pupil has an infectious disease, parents will be contacted by the principal and informed of the exclusion period. We ask parents to inform the school about infectious diseases at all times.

Should a child be confined to home because of a long term illness the WELB will be informed and a home tutor will be provided. This home tutor will liaise with the class teacher and provide the best possible education within the circumstances.

### **Pastoral Care for Staff**

When we set about creating a vision for our school, teachers expressed the desire that all members of the school community be treated with care and respect. All members of staff are therefore required to act accordingly.

### **We have agreed that it is one of our aims to value all members of the school community in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and trust.**

For the good of all staff we believe that it is essential that:

- All regulations, rules and roles are clearly defined for all staff.
- Members of staff who are unclear about any of these should ask the principal, vice-principal or

- any senior staff member.
- All teachers are promised absolute confidentiality and the opportunity to discuss problems with
- senior members of staff or the principal.
- Teachers will be involved in decision making and kept fully informed on all school issues.
- All teachers will be consulted with regard to inset and courses will be provided to cater for the needs of the school and the professional development of the staff.

### **Staff Code**

We also have a “Staff Code of Conduct” in relation to child protection matters. This is included in the appendices of the Child Protection Policy contained within these documents. It is the duty of all members of staff to behave in a manner that befits adults in their position. In the school environment we are responsible for other people’s children and in this role we must behave accordingly.

To gain the respect of our colleagues we must first act in a manner appropriate to our responsibilities. As people who work with children we realise that there we must always show an example to them. Staff are also expected to dress in a manner befitting their station. There is a staff dress code (see teachers' Handbook or assistants' handbook).

## **ST. EITHNE’S PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

St Eithne’s is a Catholic Primary School which regards each child as a precious gift from God and considers the welfare of each child as paramount.

At St Eithne’s we seek to provide a safe and secure learning environment and to develop a child protection programme integrated into all areas of the school curriculum which will foster a sense of security in each child and develop his / her confidence and independence. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in the Appendix to this policy statement.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

At St Eithne's we realise that the class teacher is the first stage in the pastoral care of the child in the school. Teachers may observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop or thrive.

The school environment, the different systems, clubs and normal every day running of the school will also be taken into account when considering the protection of our pupils.

### **Categories of Child Abuse**

We use the following definition:

**Neglect** - the persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

**Physical** - physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

**Sexual** - the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

**Emotional** - persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

### **Bullying** (See Bullying Policy)

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and when it becomes apparent immediate steps will be taken to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified. Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied should talk firstly to the class teacher. Should this become more serious then it will be fully investigated by the Vice principal or the designated teacher child protection and action will be taken to protect the victim. This may include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day. A parent making a more formal complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the V.P. within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

**Note:** *Bullying can take many forms. Mobile phones can be used inappropriately. The school has a mobile phone policy. Pupils are not allowed mobile phones and staff are not allowed to use their mobile phones in front of children. (See our Mobile Phone Policy)*



## **Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse**

The designated teacher for child protection is **Mrs L. Mc Cusker**. In her absence, **Mr V. Feeney** (2nd designated teacher & Pastoral leader), will assume responsibility for child protection matters. If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly. **He/she should not investigate** - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with [him][her], and make full notes. The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal (the V.P. in his absence) as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the CCMS's Designated Officer, WELB Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.** Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- (a) Social Services and Care Unit,
- (b) CCMS Senior Management Officer (Schools),
- (c) WELB Designated Officer.

**(This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION')**

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher, if [he][she] is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately. If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or [his][her] deputy, if [he][she] is not available) must be informed immediately. [He][she] will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or is unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the designated teacher. It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Every attempt will be made to offer support for the child whilst at school and it is hoped that the school will provide an environment in which he / she can relax and spend the school day in complete confidence and safety.

### **In School Child Protection Safety Precautions**

The school will ensure that appropriate supervision is available at all times when pupils are out during break time and lunchtime and when pupils are attending after school clubs.

When pupils are out on the playground there will always be more than one adult there to supervise them. Where possible we shall have three adults on the playground during any break or lunchtime play.

When there is an after school club there will also be more than one adult involved in the supervision of the children. Children attending the swimming club will be in a more vulnerable position than other clubs in that they have to change into swimming kit. The children will be supervised by both a male and female member of staff as well as a female pool attendant.

### **Protection from unwanted visitors**

It should be noted that no visitor / parent has an automatic legal right to enter the school premises. Parents / carers / other adults should realize that St. Eithne's is a child centred environment and as such we shall not tolerate inappropriate behaviour, bad language, drunkenness or verbal abuse. It is with our rights to have such people escorted off the premises and the police will be called if necessary. In extreme cases charges may be brought.

Our pupils and staff must be protected at all times. Children may not be taken directly out of class by an adult claiming to be the child's parent, uncle, etc. Anyone wishing to take a child out of class during school time must report to the office. Then if appropriate the child will be sent for. This is for the child's protection and to keep interruptions to class work to a minimum. If the secretary or principal suspects that the adult's claim is bogus a call will first be made to the parents of the child and later the police if necessary.

We hope that the close contact between the school and parents will foster a good trusting communication network which in turn will help to inform us of likely situations where a child might illegally be pursued by an unwanted adult.

### **School Attendance**

Punctuality and attendance are important self-disciplines required by all of us. Due to the computerised attendance register used by the school every absence a.m. / p.m. is printed for every pupil. In order to ensure that a child does not have a printed record of unauthorized absences it is vital that parents / guardians inform the class teacher when their child is out of school. Failure to do so may result in the Home / School Links teacher referring the child to the Educational Welfare Officer who then, will be obliged to call with the parent / guardian to ascertain the reason for any absence.

**All absences must be authorised by parent / guardian**

Absences authorized by parents should be credible. Parents should try to arrange doctors and dentist appointments outside school hours. Such an appointment does not automatically entitle the child to take a full day off school. We reserve the right to ask parents for evidence of such appointments.

### **Physical Nature of the School**

The school will not be easily accessed by unwanted visitors. The side gates will be closed after 9.15am, the entrances to the class areas will be closed most of the day and can only be opened by the teachers and other member of staff from inside. Access to the school will be mainly through the front door where the Secretary and Principal have a clear view from both their offices.

Recommendations have been made to place a buzzer on the front door and use this system from 9.30am until 2.15pm. This system would be inactive when parents are leaving or collecting their children.

### **Unsafe Areas**

Pupils will be made aware that certain areas in the school are out of bounds and the reasons for this. Some areas e.g., boiler house, delivery entrance etc., are dangerous locations because of the traffic, the dangerous machinery and because the children might be out of supervision range if they wander into these areas.

### **Dangers from Strangers**

Children will be regularly warned not to go with strangers, not to accept lifts even from familiar people unless this has been pre-arranged by their parents and their parents have informed the child him / herself.

Primary 1, 2 and 3 pupils are considered too young to walk home by themselves. The school will not release a child of this age unless the parent has signed an authorization slip. We strongly recommend that parents arrange for these children to be collected. An older brother or sister may take their younger brother home if the parent feels that they are responsible enough. However, we believe that only a Year 4, 5, 6 and 7 children are old enough to bear this responsibility.

If a child is going to or from the school by taxi parents should inform the school principal or secretary.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all the staff at St. Eithne's to look after all pupils and ensure their safety in the school. If any member of staff feels that a child in their care is in danger physically or emotionally they should bring this to the attention of the Designated teacher. Do not investigate. It is important that we follow the procedure laid down in Appendix 1 and 2.

## **Volunteers Etc. (Student teachers and trainees)**

Volunteers can have an important and beneficial role in supporting the work of staff at St. Eithne's. A number of volunteers already assist at school events and organising fund-raising activities.

However, these volunteers have been screened and vetted, to ensure that children are not placed at risk through allowing the unsupervised and unmanaged access of unsuitable adults to the school.

Forms to be filled in are sent to the Northern Ireland group "**AccessNi**" which is responsible for all vetting procedures throughout Northern Ireland. In following these procedures we do not wish to cause offence to individuals such as parents, friends or acquaintances of staff, or sports personalities.

We hope you understand that our overriding duty is to protect the children in our care from contact with unsuitable individuals. We ask that genuine volunteers should not be deterred by the degree of scrutiny which a school accords their involvement in its work. Thanks to all our volunteers for their continued support and understanding.

In the case of Bus trips where parents may be asked to accompany children there is no need to go through the ACCESSNI procedure. However, the code of conduct for employees will apply to any adult who has been asked by a teacher to accompany them and the teacher in charge must take measures to ensure that the adult with them is responsible and that the code (explained by the teacher in charge) is adhered to.

## **BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Designated Teacher – Mr. T Mc Dowell

The school's Pastoral Team, meets at least once a term, manages the discipline and behavioural matters within the school.

- Mr. Mc Dowell is ultimately responsible for the ethos and behaviour throughout the school as well as running the school's reward system.
- Mr. Mc Dowell with discipline matters as well as the training of teachers in behaviour management.
- Mrs. Mc Cusker is responsible for child protection and vulnerable children.
- Mr. Gormley sets in place programmes and activities to promote good behaviour and well-being as extended schools' co-ordinator.

NB. Behavioural, discipline matters amongst staff is the sole responsibility of the principal. Please see the Grievance Policy.

Parents with complaints should read the Complaints Policy. All such policies are available to staff on the school's intranet (Shared information folder) and to parents on the website [www.steithnes.net](http://www.steithnes.net).

## **Definition Of Discipline**

'Discipline' is the system and ethos which aims to cultivate in pupils an acceptance and recognition of responsibility for their own decisions and actions and for their consequences. Good behaviour is conduct which assists the school to fulfil its function, namely the full development of the potential of all pupils. Bad behaviour is conduct which prevents this, either when an individual prevents his / her own development by behaving badly or when unacceptable conduct disrupts the development process for other members of the school community.

## **AIMS**

- To develop in pupils a sense of self-discipline and an acceptance of responsibility for their own actions.
- To create the conditions for an orderly community in which effective learning can take place, in which there is mutual respect between all members, and where there is proper concern for the environment.

We realise that these aims will be best achieved in the framework of a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere, in which pupils are able to give of their best, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities and are encouraged and stimulated to fulfil their potential. This, in turn, demands a positive policy of encouraging good attitudes, reward and praise (where possible) and setting a good example.

We wish to portray ourselves as a caring school in both words and deeds. To achieve this however it is important that our children feel secure and safe in the school environment. Good discipline is essential. One of the most important lessons a child learns is how his/her behaviour affects others. A caring, unselfish attitude helps a child to build relationships with others. A high standard of behaviour will also help to produce a high level of learning. Parents can play an important role in this respect. Explaining to children the need for discipline, the need to respect rules and helping them to understand this will assist the school greatly. We appreciate the concerns parents may have with regard to the safety and behaviour of their child.

Discipline problems will usually be avoided by valuing the pupil's achievements and through praise and encouragement. We hope to develop a good self-image and self-esteem among our pupils. A minor misdemeanour is usually settled by a reprimand from the class teacher. For consistent breaches of discipline a child may spend some time in supervised break –time detention. However, if your child begins to show persistent and challenging behavioural traits, the parent/guardian will be contacted by the teacher immediately.

## **Expected Behaving Appropriately**

School rules are simple to understand and essential to the smooth running of the school. Tied in with our aims these rules are devised for the benefit of all our children. We have established three "General Behaviour Principles" and may be adding to these as the years go on. Pupils and staff will be involved in further creating rules appropriate to our school.

## **General Behaviour Principles**

- Always behave courteously showing good manners and consideration for others;
- Always show respect for your own property as well as the property of others;
- Hands feet and objects to yourself at all times. This means no fighting or no rough play in the school at any time.

*A number of simple rules are asked of the pupils. These are put in place for reasons of safety and so that children will develop socially as well as educationally. These rules are as follows:*

### **School Rules**

- Follow directions and obey the adults who are responsible for you;
- No running in the corridors at any time;
- No chewing gum allowed in the school grounds;
- Always show good manners and children give way to adults;
- Classes must always walk quietly in a single line about the school;
- Place litter in bins;
- Respect all property, your own, other peoples and school property;
- Tell the truth and be kind to each other;
- Play safely and happily during break times;

### **Behaviour outside school**

Children have a responsibility to behave appropriately when on school trips and when they represent the school at competitions within and outside school hours. We feel that St. Eithne's children should also behave reasonably on their way to and from St. Eithne's. Should there be a breach of this code it will be investigated and appropriate action taken. Sanctions may be imposed in accordance with this policy.

### **Staff Approach**

The attitude of all staff is of great importance. It is we who in the end determine the environment in which good staff / pupil relationships can develop.

We are expected to:

- Set the right example to pupils in matters of dress, punctuality and commitment;
- Consider ourselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of pupils within sight or sound of them.
- Discipline is indivisible and we should not ignore bad behaviour because we are not on duty or teaching;
- Gain the respect of pupils establish the right relationships in class. These relationships call for more sensitivity and tact;
- Remember that our influence depends on attitude, character, example, teaching skills and the rapport established with pupils;
- Praise should be used to encourage good behaviour as well as good work;
- Criticism should if possible be delivered in a controlled manner as a private matter between teacher and child to avoid embarrassment or misunderstanding;

We have agreed that personal verbal attacks on pupils by pupils, on pupils by staff and staff by pupils is a form of bullying. Adults or children who lose control can consider this

behaviour as a form of bullying. Such behaviour is unacceptable. We will endeavour to create an environment in which no person maliciously shouts at another. When shouting becomes evident it usually indicates that control has been lost.

### **The Curriculum and Learning**

An appropriately structured curriculum and effective learning contribute to good behaviour. Thorough planning for the needs of pupils, the active involvement of pupils in their own learning, and structured feed-back all help to avoid the alienation and disaffection which can lie at the root of poor behaviour. We will always aim to provide lessons which have clear objectives, understood by the children, and differentiated to meet the needs of all children. We have also agreed that marking and record keeping can be used as a supportive tool although it must also be of value and provide feed-back to the children on their progress and achievements.

We shall always endeavour to show children that their efforts are valued and that progress matters.

### **Classroom Management**

In the classroom organisation, management of resources and time and teaching strategies are important influences on our children's behaviour.

We value the:

- relationships between teacher and children,;
- strategies for encouraging good behaviour,;
- arrangements of furniture and access to resources and classroom displays.

We realize that these all have a bearing on the way children behave. We aim to manage all the above so that we can reduce uncertainty and disruption and foster an environment conducive to the development of a positive self-image in children. Our teaching methods will be devised, where possible, to encourage enthusiasm and active participation for all. Our lessons aim to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding which will enable the children to work and play in co-operation with others.

When minor breaches of discipline occur the teacher will follow the recommended staged approach. The classroom teacher must use a sensitive, common sense approach and ensure that the action taken matches the indiscretion. Teachers will keep a record of persistent minor offences using "Lee Cantor" strategies and record in a merit/demerit book all behaviours good and bad. This can be within the teachers planner.

A teacher may need to call a parent in to discuss the behaviour of their child; a note of this will be kept in the Home Liaison Folder which is kept in a locked cabinet in Mr. Mc Dowell's office.

Prevention is always better than cure. It is important for pupils to know that they are under some supervision and that checks are made. The presence of staff or supervisory staff on duty, or of a teacher is a more effective way of obtaining good behaviour than punishment of those caught misbehaving when left to their own devices.

## **REWARDS - THE POSITIVE SIDE OF DISCIPLINE**

We believe that an emphasis should be placed on the positive approach of encouragement and praise, rather than on the more negative one of criticism and punishment. Criticism should always include advice on how to improve and should be constructive in its approach.

Appropriate relevant behaviour is effectively praised. Rewards may include:

- A quiet word, encouraging smile, approving look;
- A written comment on pupil's work, either in general terms 'well done', or even better, in a more detailed way, picking out specific points or ideas that gave pleasure;
- A visit to a more senior member of staff and / or the head for commendation, e.g., a written comment or star;
- Private praise;
- A public word of praise in front of a group, a class, a year or the whole school;
- Public written acknowledgement through a special Merit or Record of some kind;
- Public acknowledgement by presentation at an assembly or by giving some special responsibility;
- Some system of merit marks or points, with or without public acknowledgement of that award;
- Marks, grades and assessments for behaviour as well as work;
- School plaques, medals or certificates, formally presented or otherwise, for good behaviour, community support or a positive approach;
- Prizes which reflect endeavour, not least by way of service to the community;
- Use of school reports to comment favourably, not only on good work and academic achievement, but on behaviour, on involvement and on general attitudes;
- A letter to parents informing them specifically of some action or achievement deserving praise.

## **Preventive Measures & Sanctions**

The staff have agreed that when considering sanctions, it is important to have a fairly long and varied list, on the grounds that it is not sensible to reach the ultimate sanction too soon. Whatever the sanction may be, it is less likely to be effective if over-used. Staff are discouraged from bypassing earlier sanctions so that the next step is always available for use and the school does not find itself forced to take extreme measures through lack of alternatives.

In all disciplinary actions it is essential that the pupil understands fully that it is the behaviour which is not acceptable and not the pupil as a person. At St. Eithne's we are fortunate that we have very few disciplinary problems. We follow an assertive discipline programme which ensures continuity throughout the school and which rewards good behaviour.

## **A Staged Approach to disciplinary Procedures**

Early in 1999/2000 a team of specialists conducted training with all teachers on this assertive discipline. They returned again in 2004 to revisit the strategies. This course has assisted us in determining what constitutes minor breaches of discipline etc. and helped us to decide what measures are to be taken.



The staff agreed a number of measures to be taken in class to help maintain discipline and give all pupils the opportunity to enjoy a sensible working environment. A number of measures were agreed which involved rewards, consequences and sanctions. These measures are to be found in Appendix 5.

Because of the difference in age, understanding and maturity slightly different rules have been agreed for each year group. Teachers will inform parents of their agreed methods in the first meeting.

However these measures can be summarized briefly as they are below.

### **General procedures of classroom discipline**

When there are minor breaches of discipline the classroom teacher will use a sensitive, common sense approach, ensuring that disciplinary 'action' matches the 'indiscretion'.

### **The Staged Warning System**

Teachers in class will allow pupils a three stage warning system when it appears that minor misdemeanours are about to accrue.

- Stage 1: Pupils will be told what they have done wrong, why it is wrong and that they are now at warning stage number 1.
- Stage 2 & 3: The next two stages will be similarly processed with explanation and clear direction as to what stage the pupil is at.
- Stage 4: Now the pupil may incur a minor punishment for persistent misbehaviour.
- *They may be stood out for a specific time (no more than 5 minutes).*
- Past Stage 4: Should the child continue to misbehave further sanctions may be necessary.

#### **Examples:**

- This might involve exclusion from break time for a two minute period,
- At the next stage a 5 minute period exclusion if this threat has gone unheeded.
- Should the child misbehave in a manner which is beyond the normal mildly disruptive behaviour then the option of reporting such behaviour to the Vice-principal is to be considered.

#### **Acts of Violence:**

When a child lashes out, bumps into another, shoves or pushes with the result of harm to another child this is still considered an act of violence. A teacher must use his/her discretion and judgement in determining the severity of the act.

- An accident can result in hurt but the perpetrator will need to be advised by the teacher that his/her actions have been unwise;
- A deliberate push or nudge which causes hurt should be seen as a misdemeanour and a sanction put in place by the teacher which is appropriate;
- A slightly more serious act of violence (deliberate scuffle, elbowing, slapping, poking) should be reported to the parent and the Vice-principal and the Principal made aware.
- A much more serious act of violence (fighting, lashing out, deliberately causing physical hurt to another child) should be reported to the Vice-principal and the Principal. Parents will be informed and an appropriate course of action taken.

## **If a child is withdrawn from his her group, he /she will remain in full view of the teacher in the classroom**

Persistent minor breaches, recorded and dated by the class teacher, should be reported to the Vice Principal (Whole School Behaviour) who may decide to consult with parents/guardians or advise class teacher to do this before taking official 'action'.

Certain types of behaviour are considered unacceptable e.g. bullying, theft, physical violence against other pupils and / or staff, vandalism, truancy.

The serious nature of these breaches of discipline necessitates immediate reporting of the incident by the vice principal or principal to the pupil's parents / guardians with the onus on that parent / guardian to take appropriate action. Failure by the pupil to discontinue such behaviour would require the principal to take appropriate action in consultation with his Board of Governors and in line with CCMS guidelines on discipline. This may mean suspension or expulsion but we will only use these measures as a last resort.

*NB. Suspension is a last resort and not something that can be taken lightly. CCMS, DENI and WELB must be informed every time such an event is to occur. The power to suspend is with the Board and only up to a period of 5 days. Such action once used can be repeated but the more often this is done the less effective it has become and the ultimate punishment of expulsion may be fraught with procedural legality. It must be remembered that a child's career may be at risk.*

Please note Teachers will:

- Keep a record of all persistent minor offences using "Lee Cantor" strategies and record in a merit/demerit book/;
- Don't forget to record good behaviour in the Merit / Demerit Book encouraging good behaviour;
- Record all serious incidents in detail. (Recording sheets available);
- After consultation with Principal / Vice principal, inform parents of child's persistent misbehaviour and action to be taken;
- Only send a child to the Vice-principal / Principal when either has been informed fully and is well prepared beforehand.

## **Temporary Teachers**

From time to time temporary teachers will take classes where a permanent teacher is on a course or ill. More guidance and help is possibly required for these staff members. It might be deemed as unfair to ask a substitute teacher to cover break duty given that play time is often a time when incidents occur. Please ask another teacher to cover your break duty and understand that a permanent member of staff will likely be more familiar with procedures and thus maintain better control. Teachers in the same year group should be on hand at all times to help out where necessary. The temporary teacher may be directed to give a brief report after school for the permanent class teacher on his/her return. Appropriate action will be taken if necessary and in line with the guidelines which have gone before.

## **APPENDIX 1: Role of the Child Protection Designated Teacher**

The teacher (Mrs. L. Mc Cusker) will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures, including internal school arrangement.
- Co-ordinating action by teachers in cases of suspected child abuse and reporting to the appropriate agencies and Senior Management Officer (Schools).
- Ensuring that the teaching staff and the school's Education Welfare Officer are aware of children in care or on the Child Protection Register.
- Arranging or providing in-service courses to teachers so that they might know how to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral.

The designated teacher for child protection must know:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral.
- The requirements on record-keeping.
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies, who to contact and how to liaise with them.
- The conduct of a Child Protection conference and how she (Teacher designate) or other member of staff can make appropriate contribution to it.
- The CCMS Child Protection procedures, the WELB's policy and procedures and her/his own role within them.

Please do not hesitate to contact the designated teacher if you have any doubts or questions.

## **APPENDIX 2: Concerns Procedure 1**

## **APPENDIX 3 : Concerns Procedure 2**

## **APPENDIX 4: A Code of conduct for employees at St. Eithne's**

### **1. Private Meetings with Pupils**

- a) Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b) Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c) Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

### **2. Physical Contact with Pupils**

- a) As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b) It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c) Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*)).
- d) Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e) Schools should, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas like the photographic darkroom, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances.
- f) Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*
- g) Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h) Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager.
- i) Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be

usual and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

### **3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials**

- a) Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b) When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as the AIDS education for schools and in connection with sex education programmes.
- c) If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the principal before using it.

### **4. Relationships and Attitudes**

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this booklet, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult their line manager or a representative of their professional association. From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

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### **Volunteers**

At St. Eithne's we appreciate all the work volunteers do for us and without this help we would be a poorer place indeed. This code of conduct applies to any volunteer who helps us in fulfilling our duties and is important for safeguarding our children.

### **Teachers in Charge**

Teachers may need assistance whilst on bus trips, and other activities which need extra adult help to supervise. It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to make that their choice of helper is one which does not put the children at risk as stated above. Adults chosen must be over the age of 18 and known to be trustworthy. The onus is on the staff

member responsible to make the volunteers aware of the above code of conduct and that he or she is expected to comply with this code.

## **Volunteers**

The duties of the adult must be made explicit.

### For example:

The adult may be asked to supervise a group of children and understand what this entails.

The adult may be looking after his/her own child who has a special need but must consult with the teacher in charge for any decisions to be made regarding this child.

Physical contact with pupils is not allowed and in the child centred situation be careful what is said and/or discussed in front of the children.

At no time should the supervising adult be alone with any one child at anytime.

## **APPENDIX 5: Classroom Behaviour Plans**

Updated September 2011.

Each year teachers and pupils in their class work together to create a reasonable behaviour plan. These are agreed by pupils and teacher. They are clearly understood and it benefits all to be part of the process of composing such plans.

### **Examples:**

#### **Year 1.....**

1. Listen and do what all the adults in school tell you;
2. Hands up if you would like to speak;
3. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself;
4. Walk don't run.

Year 1 classes have a "Mr Sunshine Reward Chart OR equivalent". All children start off in the sunshine each day. As the day goes on they can move up into the rainbow land or and when rules are broken one might move from sunshine to cloudier areas.

#### **Year 2.....**

1. Listen and do what all the adults in school tell you;
2. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself;
3. Hands up if you would like to speak,; No shouting out;
4. Walk don't run.
5. Try your best with your work and get it finished.

Year 2 classes have a star chart to reward children. The children begin each day as a fresh start and if they achieve 5 stars the get a surprise from the "Gold Star Box".

## **Primary 3 Classroom Behaviour Plan**

1. Follow Directions
2. Keep Hands, Feet & Objects to yourself
3. Walk, Don't Run
4. No Name Calling or Teasing
5. Always do your Best

Individual Rewards

If a child breaks one of the above rules, their name is written on a laminated yellow card. If they persist, their name is written on a red card. Anyone whose name is on the red card on Friday does not receive a reward from the Treat Box.

\*All names are wiped off on Friday evening for a new beginning on Monday morning Group Rewards Year 3 classes have teams.

Each team can earn points for various reasons, eg working quietly; keeping their table tidy; following instructions; helping others etc.

The team with the most points on a Friday get a bonus treat.

\*All teams start fresh with zero points on Monday

#### **Year 4 Classroom Behaviour plans**

Reward chart for each table. Good behaviour, manners, line walking etc gains points. The table with the most points at the end of the week wins a prize. Individuals can also win a top prize at their table. Boy and girl of week chosen each week and win a prize.

Consequences –

Follow Lee Canter model of

1. Reminder of rule.
2. Warning about rule being broken
3. 2 mins time out from playtime.
4. 5 mins time out.
5. Inform VP of behaviour
6. Inform parents.

#### **Year 5 behaviour plans**

Negotiated by class based on school rules

1. BE KIND
2. ALWAYS WORK HARD AND QUIETLY
3. FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY ADULTS
4. PUT UP HANDS, WAIT IN TURN TO SPEAK
5. ASK PERMISSION TO LEAVE ROOM ETC
6. TAKE CARE OF RESOURCES
7. QUIET, STRAIGHT LINES

REWARDS/ CONSEQUENCES- SAME AS LAST YEAR

CLASS "TABLE RACE" RECORD CHART

Some children may also have separate lee canter behaviour/ work daily record sheets

#### **Year 6 Behaviour Plan –**

7 class rules have been negotiated and agreed by class during P.D.M.U. lessons. These are clearly displayed in room:

1. We respect each other and our teacher.
2. We keep hands feet and objects to ourselves.
3. We listen to teacher and each other.
4. We put our hands up to speak.
5. We talk one at a time.
6. We walk don't talk in the line.
7. We look after all property.

We have consequences and rewards.

## **Rewards**

Reminder

Warning - 5 mins. away from group

- 5 mins. off playground
- 10 mins. off playground

Note to parents

Send to principal

Praise

Good comments/stars/stampers/stickers

Teams with points system

Homework passes

Behaviour/ Incident Book

**Every behavioural incident which happens is recorded so that evidence is built up of any constant bad behaviour.**

## **Year 7...**

Our Class Rules

- Keep hands feet and objects to yourself.
- Follow all instructions given by teacher & adults.
- Listen carefully when others are speaking.
- No teasing or name calling
- Ask permission to leave the class.
- Look after each other.
- Consequences
- Reminder
- 5 mins away from the group.
- 5 mins off the playground
- Note home to parents.
- Send to principal.
- Rewards
- Stickers/stamps
- Treats
- Homework passes
- Note to parents

We record incidents of inappropriate behaviour on a tracking sheet which corresponds to the 5 stages on the Consequences section above. Children receive a stamp each day on the Reward Chart if their behaviour is fine. When they have the sheet full they get a homework pass. Also, if their behaviour is fine over the week i.e. their name is on the tracking sheet 5 or less times, they get a treat on Friday. This Behaviour Plan is agreed with the children and it is the same as what I had with them last year.