

Code of
Behaviour and
Discipline
Policy

Behaviour and Discipline

The aims of primary education may be stated as:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child.
- To equip him/her to avail of him/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

The teachers of this school are committed to the realisation of these aims. The Board of Management of the school is committed similarly. The parents of the children in this school have been strongly supportive of these aims for many years.

The ethos of our school is a major factor in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. This means a strong sense of community within our school and a high level of co-operation among teaching staff and between staff, pupils, parents, the Board of Management and ancillary staff.

In formulating this code, consultation and discussions were held with:

- Board of Management
- Teaching staff

In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruptive free environment.

Aims of our Code of Discipline

The Code of Discipline aims to achieve:

- The efficient operation of the school.
- The structuring of in-class discipline which prompts an efficient and stimulating environment.
- The maintenance of good order and safety throughout the school day, including break times, sports activities and all movements between classes.
- The development of self-discipline in all pupils and care and courtesy towards others.
- The development of respect for school buildings, all school property and the general school environment.

Principles of our Discipline Policy

Our policy is based on the principles of caring, fairness, respect, tolerance, compassion and courtesy. The attitude of the teaching staff will have a critical bearing on how successful the policy is likely to be. Staff shall consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and shall respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour.

If our school is to be a happy, secure environment where the children can develop and learn to their full potential, a positive, friendly, caring and encouraging atmosphere will provide a framework which promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour that is dangerous to oneself, others or which may be disruptive or anti-social. Therefore every effort will be made by all members of teaching staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.

The school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. The agreed code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers. The school recognises the variety of differences that exists between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

General

While a child is in school he/she will be known by the names (First name and Surname) that is on his/her Birth Certificate. Any other arrangements are by agreement of the child's parents and the Principal.

Respect and Courtesy

Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and all others. They are expected to treat all other pupils, all members of staff, and visitors to the school with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of any form of vulgarity or offensive language is unacceptable.

Punctuality

The official opening time of the school is 9.20 a.m. Class for infants ends at 2.00 p.m. All other classes end at 3.00 p.m. A teacher will be on duty in the yard from 9.05am and again until 3.10pm. No responsibility is accepted for pupils outside of school times. Those collecting children from school should always be punctual. Lateness causes great anxiety especially for younger children. Teachers will call the roll each morning, no later than 10am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment, a note should be sent in beforehand to the class teacher via Seesaw or email to the principal. The teacher will record any pupils coming in late/going home early on the Aladdin system. In the case of late arrivals due to appointments the rolla will be kept open for this pupil until 12pm. After this time, the pupil has missed half of the school day and will be marked absent. Pupils leaving school early should make the teacher aware of this fact via written communication from their parents.

Safety when Entering or Leaving the School

Pupils and parents must enter and exit from the school only via the gates at the front of the school. Children must walk when entering or leaving the school. Parents should not park at the entrance gates to the school. Late arrivers and early leavers must be signed in/out by accompanying adult with school secretary.

Out of School Birthday parties

In the interest of our pupils' wellbeing, the handing out of Birthday invitations by pupils in St. Cremin's N.S. is not permitted, unless the below points are being used as a criteria. In such circumstances, invitations should be handed to the class teacher and not given out by the pupil.

The following points should be taken into consideration regarding the handing out of Birthday party invitations in school:

- An invitation to a birthday can only be handed out in school if:
 - a) All the pupils' gender classmates are being invited to the party, e.g. John is in fourth class and he invites all the boys in fourth class to his party/Mary is in third class and she invites all the girls in third class to her party.
 - b) All pupils in the class are being asked to the party.
- In the event that any other criteria is used to invite pupils to a birthday party, the school, in the interest of all pupils, ask that written invitations are not handed out on the premises.

Christmas Cards

Taking into consideration the size of classes in St. Cremin's N.S. and to avoid unnecessary expense on parents, we would ask that pupils do not give out Christmas Cards in school.

Attendances/Absences

Every absence of a child from school must be accounted for by parents/guardians forwarding a written note to the class teacher. Please contact via Seesaw, email, telephone or homework diary. If a child has to leave school early or be absent from school for part of a day, the class teacher should be informed, again via written format. This is to ensure as far as possible the safety of children throughout school hours. If a child is absent for 20 days or more, the Principal has a legal responsibility to contact the National Educational Welfare Board. It is at this point that written notes explaining absences are used should the Education Welfare Officer seek further clarification.

Illness

Any infectious illness should be notified to the school immediately. Children should return to school only when fully recovered.

Personal Property

Children must have their names on their coats, jumpers, and on all personal property such as school books, copies, etc. A sheet containing 21 personalised name stickers will be given to your child in their first week at school.

School Property

Pupils must respect all school property and treat all school books and equipment with care. Parents will be held responsible for the cleaning, repair or replacement of any school property or equipment wilfully damaged or vandalised by their children. Copies and books are to be covered and kept neatly for the duration of the year.

School Environment

Pupils must keep the school environment clean and litter free. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with all Green Schools initiatives and display a sense of pride in their school.

Behaviour in Class

- Pupils must have all books and materials required. A school book Rental Scheme is in operation. This helps to alleviate the pressures on parents with regard to the cost of books and ensures pupils have their books.
- All pupils are expected to work to the best of their ability. Written work must be presented neatly.
- Respect and courtesy are basic to classroom behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils, towards a teacher, ancillary members of staff or towards any visitor to the school is unacceptable.
- Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour that interferes with this right, e.g. regular disruption of the class or persistent disturbance of others is unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with their teacher's instructions as given so that an effective education programme can be undertaken.
- Uniform: Pupils are expected to wear their full uniform each day.

Corridors, Toilets and Yard Areas

The general rule should be to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself. Pupils should behave in an orderly manner at all times and especially when going from one area to another within the school buildings or in the school yard. Pupils must not run around school corners so as to minimise the risk to themselves and all others.

Pupils must not behave in any way which endangers others i.e. roughness, fighting, kicking, striking, spitting and punching, tripping or verbal abuse.

Teachers will seek to ensure that standards of safety are observed and shall prohibit games or activities considered dangerous. Any directions given by teachers on these matters are to be followed implicitly.

There are two main morning breaks. The short morning break for all pupils is at 11am. There is one lunchtime break at 12.30pm.

Aggressive behaviour or foul language will not be tolerated in the school.

Inclement Weather

On such days pupils are required to remain in their classroom. They must observe any directions given by teachers and safety procedures must be followed at all times. They will be supervised by the Principal, yard duty teacher and SNAs on duty.

Playing Areas

Again respect and consideration for others are the basics. Any form of verbal abuse or physical abuse of others is unacceptable and is considered serious misbehaviour. Pupils are required to use the playing areas assigned to them.

Accidents

If a child is involved in any accident it must be reported to the teacher on yard supervision or to any other available teacher. The teacher may decide to attend to the injuries at the First Aid station or call a First Aid Officer. Staff members completed First Aid training in 2018. This will be refreshed in 2023. Parents will be informed or asked to bring the child to a doctor or hospital if the attending adult believes the injury to be serious. In the event that a parent is not contactable via telephone or an incident is deemed to be very serious, staff will assume 'in loco parentis' and will contact ambulance or medical services if required. Staff are required to record all serious injuries in the accident book on the date of the incident. Parents will be informed or asked to bring the child home. For further information see Safety Statement.

Bullying or Intimidation of Others

This is always regarded as a serious offence. All forms of threatening behaviour are unacceptable. Children must be able to attend school and to go home safely without fears. If children are being bullied or threatened either verbally or physically, teachers must be told, so that the matter can be dealt with effectively, as outlined in the Anti – Bullying Policy.

Dangerous articles i.e. knives, sharp objects, aerosols, matches, lighters or any other objects considered dangerous are prohibited from the school grounds.

Recycling

Pupils and parents are requested to co-operate with the school's policy on recycling.

Homework

It is the policy of this school to assign homework on a nightly basis, Monday to Thursday. Teachers shall make every effort to make the curriculum correspond to the aptitude of the pupils. Thus homework assignments may vary in the interests of the pupil. Homework is an important part of a child's learning. It links the home and the school and can be a means of self discipline and good study habits for the pupil.

Parents are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in their child's homework. Parents are asked to sign homework diaries nightly to maintain a positive home-school link. If homework causes undue stress or worry to the child, parents are asked to talk to the teacher.

Homework should not take an undue amount of time. As a general guide the following is recommended:

- Infant Classes -Up to 20 minutes
- Middle Classes - Up to 30 minutes
- Senior Classes-Up to 40 minutes

If for any acceptable reason homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to forward a written note to the teacher.

If a child persists in neglecting his/her homework he/she should be sent to the Principal for investigation into the causes of the neglect.

Pupils absent from school for sustained periods.

If a pupil is absent for a sustained period of time as a result of medical advice or attending hospital, etc. parents may request school work for said pupil from the class teacher. Class teachers will not prescribe work to pupils who are absent from school for a sustained period as a result of recreational endeavours during term time, e.g., holidays, long weekends, etc.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness of pupils is to be encouraged at all times; clothes, hands, face, nails and hair. Children should keep their desks and the area surrounding their desks tidy at all times.

Corridors and toilets are to be litter-free at all times. The toilets are to be used properly at all times. All hats and gloves should be put into school bags during class time. Classrooms are to be tidied every evening before dismissal. Children are encouraged to clean their feet before entering the school.

Uniform

The school uniform consists of a crested wine jumper/cardigan, a white polo t-shirt (long sleeved or short sleeved) and navy trousers or skirt/pinafore with tights. Navy tracksuit bottoms (with no zips or brand names clearly visible) can be worn on P.E. days. During May and June pupils can wear shorts to school. School shorts can be either navy or white shorts. The Principal will contact the parents in relation to the wearing of shorts via email. The uniform supplier is Tots Paradise in Mullingar (www.mullingaruniforms.com)

Mobile Phone

It is prohibited for a student to take a mobile phone to school. From time to time a parent may request their son/daughter carries a mobile phone in their possession if the pupil is not going home after school. If such a scenario arises then parents should ensure the phone is turned off and given to the class teacher at the start of the day. Pupils are not allowed to bring a mobile on school tour, under any circumstance. Should a pupil not adhere to this rule, the phone will be taken from him/her and returned to his/her parent that evening upon return to the school.

Teachers will use their mobile phones to take photographs of pupil's work, outings or school related activities, from time to time, for the purpose of the school's Facebook/Twitter page, entering the school into competitions or for promotion of the school purposes. Teachers are therefore permitted to carry their phones on them at all times. Teachers are also permitted to use their phones in the classroom for such purposes of time setting, reminders, etc.

Chewing Gum

Chewing gum is not permitted in any area of the school.

Rewards for Acceptable Behaviour

The following are some of the ways of showing appreciation for acceptable good behaviour which are in operation in the school:

- Oral praise
- Written praise
- Teacher communication with parents
- Merit lists
- Merit star
- Reduction of homework

A detailed account of each pupil's attitudes and behaviour is given on each school report presented annually to parents. Parents are required to examine these carefully and to discuss them with their children.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable Behaviour in our school has been classified in three categories:

- Minor
- Serious
- Very Serious

Minor Unacceptable Behaviour:

Examples considered as unacceptable are:

- Talking out of turn in class, leaving the seat without permission
- Disrupting lessons by causing a distraction, shouting and not working to the best of one's ability.
- Lazy in starting work or deliberately wasting time.
- Being generally rowdy, aggressive, disturbing other children at work, being disobedient or defiant

If there is a repeated pattern of these offences this is considered serious.

Serious Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples considered as serious are:

- spitting
- Making rude signs or annoying gestures
- Using vulgar or bad language
- Frequent lack of punctuality
- Copying work from others

- Not completing school tasks
- Being inattentive during class-work
- Not completing homework without a valid reason
- Entering building or classrooms without permission
- Littering in buildings or school grounds
- Leaving designated play area without permission

Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour

Examples considered as very serious are:

- Stealing
- Bullying or threatening others
- Making abusive, insulting, offensive or insolent remarks
- Laughing or jeering at other's mistakes or disabilities
- Wilful damage to buildings, furniture, books, equipment or the property of others
- Fighting
- Showing repeated disrespect for teachers or other school employees.

Sanctions and Strategies to Show Disapproval for Unacceptable Behaviour

Positive encouragements and reinforcements are regarded as primary in helping pupils to develop responsibility, a positive attitude and self discipline. However where a pupil wilfully disregards school rules and infringes on the rights of others to participate in an ordered and structured learning environment, sanctions may be needed. The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school. When a child engages in an act of unacceptable behaviour, he/she will be given a 'Discipline Sheet' which must be signed by parents. When the pupil has amassed three discipline sheets he/she will then be referred to the Principal.

A pupil may be referred to the principal for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

Serious/Very Serious Unacceptable Behaviour

The following strategies may be used to correct/respond to unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Loss of privileges
- Detention for some part of a break
- Prescribing additional homework
- Communication with parents
- Suspension (temporary)

Teachers shall keep a written record of all instances of serious misbehaviour as well as a record of improvements in the behaviour of disruptive pupils. Before resorting to serious sanctions e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage, rather than as a last resort.

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on circumstances. The parents concerned are to be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. For gross misbehaviour, or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour, depending on circumstances.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, the Board shall authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6).

Communication

Home

The Principal is available to the parents of pupils of the school at any suitable time during term time via appointment. Appointment with the Principal can be made by calling the school secretary at 0449371122 or emailing karl@stcremins.ie.

Board of Management

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of St. Cremin's N.S. and the various issues that arise in the course of the daily life of the school and he is accountable to the Board for that management. The Board does not manage the school on a day-to-day basis.

Parents elect two members to the Board of Management. The term of the Board is four years. Parents are reminded that complaints by parents against teachers follow the 'Complaints against Teachers policy' put in place by the Department of Education and Skills. A copy of this complaints procedure is available on the school website (www.stcremins.ie) and will be given to parents who are not satisfied following the informal processing of a complaint. The elected parents on the Board of Management are not part of the complaints process.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Informal meetings occur on an ongoing basis. Formal meetings: November or January

- As arranged on specific days each year when parents are assigned a specific time to discuss their child's progress with the teacher.

- By appointment at any other time via school secretary. Please be mindful that all class teachers in the school are teaching. Every effort will be made to return calls and arrange appointments outside of teaching time.

School Reports

The importance of these has already been stated. For further information see the Pupil Records Policy and the Data Protection Policy.

Homework Notebook

As already mentioned this is an important home/school link and must be regularly checked and signed by parents.

Children

Children will be anxious to show and discuss their work at home. It is important that parents speak with their children about their school work regularly.

Conclusion

This Behaviour and Discipline policy has been prepared based on the conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated to comply with any changes in conditions, statutory requirements or any suggestions from the Partners of Education. It has been compiled following the guidelines issued by the Department of Education Circular 20/90.

Ratified by Board of Management

Signed: *Mr James Bourke*

Chairperson, Board of Management (Review date: June 2024).

Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools

(As amended by Circular 7/88)

School Discipline

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. This code should be formulated by the Principal and the teaching staff, in consultation with parents and be approved by the Board.

Teachers should have a lively regard for the improvement and general welfare of their pupils, treat them with kindness combined with firmness and should aim at governing them through their affections and reason, and not by harshness and severity. Ridicule, sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine a pupil's self-confidence should not be used in any circumstances.

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden.

Any teacher who contravenes Sections 2 or 3 of this Rule will be regarded as guilty of conduct unbefitting a teacher and will be subject to severe disciplinary action.

Where the Board of Management deems it necessary to make provision in the code of discipline to deal with continuously disruptive pupils, or with a serious breach of discipline, by authorising the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school, the maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school-days. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of 10 school-days to allow for consultation with the pupil's or pupils' parents or guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed.

No, pupil shall be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without the prior consent of the Patron and unless alternative arrangements are made for the enrolment of the pupil at another suitable school.

**Behaviour Sheet for pupils of St. Cremin's
N.S., Multyfarnham.**

Pupil name: _____

What happened?

Why I got a Discipline Sheet.

I got a Discipline sheet because

We, the parents/guardians, of _____ are aware that our child has not adhered to the Code of Discipline of the school and have spoken to him/her in relation to the incident.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Acceptance of the Code of Discipline

When enrolling your son/daughter into our school, you entrust them into the care of the St. Cremin's NS team. Fairness and mutual respect to all stakeholders are important fibres of our ethos in St. Cremin's NS.

By enrolling your child/ren into our school you are agreeing to adhere to the terms of this Code.

Having read through the policy, please make the Principal aware if you do not adhere to the terms of this Code of Discipline.

We would ask every family to discuss the terms of the policy with your children.