

# **A CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**

**This document has been drawn up at the request of the Department of Education (Circular 20/90) and the Education Welfare Act 2000.**

A simplified version of the school code of conduct is printed in each child's homework journal.

Discipline in the school is an essential element in the socialisation of the children, in the formation of their characters and in the whole process of education. This will involve a strong sense of community within the school and co-operation between teachers, pupils and parents. The main aim of the discipline policy is that we should strive to have a happy caring and positive environment. In such an environment children learn to have respect for themselves, for each other, for teachers, for school property and the school environment. Glenasmole NS recognises the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment. The Department of Education has issued suggested strategies for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. We will adhere to these. Every effort will be made to have a positive attitude towards behaviour in the school. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these. The controls used will not affect the children's freedom, self-esteem or self confidence, but will strive to enable the children to evaluate their own behaviour, in terms of what is right and wrong. Using a questionnaire, an input was sought from all parents in the school. The findings of this survey are reflected in this document.

## **GUIDELINES TOWARDS A POSITIVE POLICY FOR SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**

These are based on the guidelines issued by the Department of Education in Circular 20/90.

1. The Principal's management style is a crucial factor in encouraging a sense of collective responsibility among staff and a sense of commitment to the school, among pupils and their parents. The Principal has responsibility to ensure that the school's code of behaviour and discipline is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils.
2. The Board of Management plays an important role in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in the school. It is supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline. The Chairperson of the Board of Management visits the school and is satisfied that the rules for national schools are being followed. The Board of Management and Principal play a positive role in fostering understanding and co-operation between teachers, parents and pupils in helping the school to adapt to the needs of the children.
3. This policy creates a positive school ethos where learning and development take place and promote the highest possible degree of consensus about standards of behaviour among staff, pupils and parents. Pupils respond positively to this policy when it is clearly understood and applied in a consistent manner. Pupils are consulted about the relevance of individual rules and regulations. Pupils will immediately report an incident to a member of staff, as a time delay makes investigating and dealing with the incidences difficult. Pupils are expected to abide by this code of behaviour.
4. The school needs the support of parents to meet the legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline. Parents are made aware of the aims, values and disciplinary requirements of the school. The majority of parents take responsibility with regard to the behaviour of their children seriously. Some parents,

however, do not fully appreciate the need to provide their children with firm guidance and positive models of behaviour. Schools can more easily implement a policy on behaviour and discipline if they receive the active support of the parents.

5. Parents co-operate with schools by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules. They visit the school when requested to do so. They play a major role in ensuring that homework is allocated due time and effort by the child. They also sign the journal each night. Parents are familiar with the school homework policy. Parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes that produce good behaviour in school. The school authorities inform parents about problems with their children's behaviour before a serious situation is allowed to develop. When parents are enrolling their child in Glenasmole NS they are asked to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour is acceptable to them and that they should make all reasonable effort to ensure compliance of the code by the child.
6. The school provides a welcoming atmosphere. It encourages parents to become involved. Parents are not only told when their children are in trouble but also when they have behaved particularly well.
7. The staff report repeated instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal while at the same time keeping a written record. This will contain the warnings and/or advice.

#### **REWARDS FOR ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Any of the following will be used to reward good behaviour

- Praise, acknowledgment and reinforcement of good behaviour.
- Stamps, stickers, tokens, vouchers, certificates are used.
- Roll of honour, additional treats, person of the week and other such awards are in use.
- A video appropriate to the age level of the children may be shown as a reward for the children.
- Children lead their class, are leaders in their group and get other such privileges.

#### **SAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

**Junior Classes:** Being physical with other pupils, using unacceptable language, spitting, hurting other pupils, mistreatment of equipment, shouting up out of turn, not returning in a reasonable time from the toilet, failing to obey class rules on repeated occasions, speaking in a cheeky tone to the teacher or other staff members and not showing appropriate regards for the school's code of conduct.

**Middle and Senior Classes:** All the above and the following behaviour such as: talking when the teacher is talking, answering back in a careless manner, distracting other pupils from their work, inappropriate comments or questions, interfering with other pupils' work and possessions, refusal to do as the teacher says in the first instance, not completing homework properly on a regular basis, not showing sufficient regard for the school code of conduct, poor effort at tasks, being talkative and disorderly when in lines exiting and entering the school building and not having homework journal signed.

8. Any of the following strategies and sanctions will be used in instances of unacceptable behaviour at the teacher's discretion.

At the first sign of unacceptable behaviour in the classroom the pupil receives a reminder to behave properly.

If unacceptable behaviour continues the following sanctions may be used:

- a) Reasoning with pupil through discussion of the reasons why this is unacceptable behaviour. Discussing the affects if has or may have on other pupils, teachers or staff members.
- b) When there is a repetition of unacceptable behaviour with the same child or another child there is a reprimand indicating what had been unacceptable in their behaviour. They are given advice on how to improve and given a sample of more acceptable behaviour in this circumstance.
- c) Temporary separation from peers, friends or others is used as a sanction to reinforce what is unacceptable and encourage the child to focus on improving.
- d) Loss of privileges such as not playing with activities, not participating in quizzes, not availing of treats, not participating in extra sport activities.
- e) Detention during a part of lunchtime to focus on the need for an improvement of behaviour.
- f) Prescribing additional work either in school or at home suitable for the age level of the pupil. This may take the form of writing the correct behaviour a number of times e.g. I should always show respect for other children's possessions. This may be written 5, 10, 15 times etc depending on the unacceptable behaviour (or the number of times the child has had to be reprimanded). This may also take the form of writing out the school code of behaviour.
- g) Items causing a distraction or a safety hazard will be removed from the pupil. These will be returned to the pupil or parent at the teacher's discretion.
- h) Referral to the Principal is an option available to the other teachers. The Principal may assign any of the sanctions mentioned in this document.
- i) Communication with parents through a note in the journal, a letter explaining the unacceptable behaviour or a scheduled meeting with the parents or guardians of the children. Parents will be informed by journal in the weekly teacher's report of discipline matters that may be of concern in relation to their child.
- j) An apology, either verbal or written will be required from the offending child.

#### **REPEATED INSTANCES OF SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOUR**

***Serious misbehaviour in all classes:*** Being cheeky or answering back to teachers or other staff members, bullying other children, threatening behaviour, kicking and hitting teachers, serious theft, intentionally hitting other pupils, stealing, being untruthful, wilfully denying having done something when having been observed doing it.

#### ***Repeated instances of serious misbehaviour:***

1. A log and record is kept of incidents of serious misbehaviour in relation to child (See the Record Keeping policy).
2. The child may receive any of the sanctions listed above for unacceptable behaviour.
3. The matter is brought to the attention of the Principal.
4. The parents are informed at an early stage in writing in the child's journal or by phone where appropriate.
5. Serious incidents of misbehaviour may be referred to outside agencies e.g. gardaí, NEPS, the HSE.

6. Parents are advised in relation to approaches, which could be used with the child in handling similar discipline situations at home.
  7. The parent is given a written account of the serious misbehaviour. They are asked to discuss the incident with the child at home and to reinforce the importance of behaving well in school. Parents are asked to either sign and return the note or send a written reply to confirm that they have discussed it with their child and that the behaviour will improve.
  8. A scheduled meeting is arranged with the Principal, teacher and parents.
  9. The assistance of the Educational Psychologist may be sought.
  10. Parents may be asked to consent to having their child assessed by the Educational Psychologist.
  11. Should the assessment take place the psychologist may organise counselling for the child.
  12. The psychologist may become involved in counselling sessions with the child during school time.
  13. Depending on the psychologist's report extra resources will be sought from the Department of Education and Science.
  14. Unresolved incidents of serious misbehaviour will be reported to the Board of Management.
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1. Suspension – in instances of serious misbehaviour temporary suspension will be evoked. The Board of Management will be informed about this.
  2. The parents of the child will be informed in writing.
  3. The initial suspension period will be for three days.
  4. The child will be welcomed back to the school if they agree to abide by the school's code of conduct.
  5. Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. The parents of the child 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. The Board of Management can authorise up to 10 days suspension.

In the case of gross misbehaviour the Board authorises the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending a discussion with the child's parents. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130(6).

The following is a statement of the specific school rules and codes of behaviour to which children are expected to adhere in each class from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The children, Board of Management and parents should be familiar with these rules. Older children are encouraged and assisted to draw up their own set of codes thus helping them observe the need for a code of behaviour. Areas of the following code addresses children.

1. **Arrival – Departure:** School is open to receive children at 9.05am. Children should be in their classrooms at 9.10am. Junior and Senior Infant classes end at 1.50pm. The children in these classes should be collected at this time. The school day for all other classes ends at 2.50pm. Children should not expect to leave school before this time except in exceptional circumstances. A formal letter should be sent to the school informing your class teacher of these circumstances. Please refer to the Glenasmole Plan Arrivals and Departures.

Parents should ensure that their child/children are not on the school grounds before or after official school opening or closing times. Supervision is not provided before or after official school opening or closing times except for extra curricular activities.

2. **Regard and Consideration:** You need to be aware of the regard and respect that you should have for each other. You need to behave in a mannerly fashion in class and outside during break time. Children should stay inside school boundary walls. During class never distract others, interrupt the teacher, interrupt other pupils, wander about the classroom, fidget, waste time deliberately, use bad language, work carelessly, misbehave in teachers' absence of sulk when corrected or encouraged to improve your attitude.
3. **School Uniforms:** The school uniforms should be worn. Parents can assist by ensuring that their children adhere to this rule.
4. **Property:** You should show respect for school property. Furniture should not be written or walked on. Great care is to be taken of the entire building and the school grounds. You can show respect by ensuring that you use the litter bins provided and collecting papers and rubbish even if you didn't drop it (always wash your hands after picking up litter).
5. **Environment:** We have beautiful trees and a wildlife garden around our school in Glenasmole NS. They should be enjoyed. You should not play or spend time under the trees. Stones, sticks, leaves or branches should not be picked up or thrown. Trees and branches should not be climbed. Please encourage other children to refrain from doing any of the above.
6. **Playtime:** Please show respect for other children during break times. Never exclude any child from play. Older children should take care of younger children. There should not be bullying of any form. You should not "play-fight", this can turn out to be a very serious situation should someone get injured. You should not give "piggy-backs" to each other, push or jump on top of other children, trip or knock any child, pull hair, call other pupils by their surnames, call children hurtful names or be unkind to each other. Please understand and follow the instructions of the teachers or the person given the responsibility of supervising you.
7. **Staff and Visitors:** You should show respect at all times towards members of staff and other school visitors. Trying to be cheeky, smart or sniggering when being spoken to, being questioned or corrected is not acceptable. It is important to respond respectfully to correction and show improvement as a result. As mannerly children, you should allow an adult to pass at all times. You should speak in a confident manner but not shout, or use a disrespectful tone.
8. **Responsibilities:** You may have been given various jobs by the teacher. Do these to the best of your ability. You will be rewarded for these at different times during the year.
9. **Absence:** Frequent absences from school are serious. This causes problems for you, for other children and for the teacher. Go to bed early each night and spend minimum time during school nights watching television. If you miss school it should be because you are unfit to attend and every effort should be made to catch up on homework and school work which you have missed.
10. **Classroom Rules:** Classroom rules are vital to give each child a fair opportunity to learn and get full benefit from their day. You are reminded on a daily basis of the rules in your classroom in relation to all aspects of your work. Try to accept these directions and make school a trouble free enjoyable place for everyone.

11. **Homework:** It is crucial that there is high priority given to homework each night. When you have developed a correct attitude to your homework, in whatever class you are in, you will be making an excellent start to your education. Homework gives you the opportunity to revise, learn, reinforce things learned in school and to work independently. In the case of older children it gives you an excellent opportunity to catch up on work which you are having difficulty with at school. In Glenasmole NS homework will vary from day to day and from class to class. It is important to understand that children with good ability will be able to complete homework assignments a lot quicker than children with a reading, writing, mathematics or concentration problems. Take care of your homework journal and it should only be signed by your parents when they have checked it and are satisfied that your best efforts have been put in to complete your homework.

See Glenasmole Plan Homework Policy for recommended time that should be spent on homework (concentrated work). Failure to complete homework or a poor presentation, unless accompanied by a note, is not acceptable and you should expect the disapproval of your teacher. Children will be rewarded for a good effort in homework by having no homework at the weekend.

12. **Serious Misbehaviour:** Serious misbehaviour should never be seen in Glenasmole NS. Examples of serious misconduct are being cheeky, teasing/bullying, abusing property, using an angry tone towards the teachers or people in charge, noisy disruptive behaviour, deliberate disobedience, kicking, spitting, telling lies, stealing, a careless attitude to homework and forging a parent's signature.
13. **Gross Misbehaviour:** Gross misbehaviour should never be seen in the school, under any circumstances. Samples of gross misbehaviour are threatening behaviour, kicking and hitting teachers, serious theft etc.
14. **Staff:** Members of staff are your friends and protectors. We, as members of the staff should be told immediately if you have any problems, or are upset over anything. Please inform the teachers before the end of the school day so as we can attend to the matter immediately.
15. **Parents:** Teachers need the support of parents in explaining the need for a code of discipline. Repeated correction wastes time, it causes disruption in class and deprives the child and other children of the right to adequate tuition in a happy, safe, relaxed school environment.