

CREEVY NATIONAL SCHOOL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

Creevy National School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual pupil is valued, encouraged and respected for his/her uniqueness and facilitated to reach his/her full potential in a positive atmosphere.

The Code of Behaviour of Creevy N.S. reflects the vision and values of our school, its patron and the National Educational Welfare Board guidelines for schools (TUSLA, Child and Family Agency). The code was developed in consultation with the staff, Student Council, Parents' Association and Board of Management. The code is mindful of the Curriculum, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Admission and Participation Policy and Child Protection Policy. It translates the expectations of the school community into practical arrangements, routines and procedures.

Aims of the Code

The aims of this code of behaviour are as follows:

- To foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected, explained, understood and supported.
- To help create a positive learning environment in which all pupils can benefit from the education system and achieve their personal best.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community as well as caring for the school and its environment.
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their cooperation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

Principles Underpinning the Code

In our school, we adopt a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive guidelines for behaviour in class and out of class are discussed and developed by pupils and staff at the beginning of the school year. Good behaviour and achievement are recognised, encouraged and rewarded. Consistent positive influences are the key to success in our school.

Where difficulties arise, we make every effort to ensure the code is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is one approach that is utilised by our school. Restorative practice provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where a breakdown in good relations occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help repair the harm done.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

1. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
2. What have your thoughts been since?
3. How has this affected others?
4. What has been the hardest thing for you?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Whole school approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour

An effective code of behaviour requires the co-operation of all stakeholders in the school. To this end there are specific roles and responsibilities in achieving high standards of behaviour in our school.

Staff

- Teachers are expected to adhere to the Code of Professional Behaviour and Practice for teachers as developed by the Teaching Council of Ireland.
- As a staff we work together to devise reward/sanction programmes as necessary and we undergo any professional development necessary to ensure that there is a united front in dealing with behavioural matters.
- The SPHE curriculum also supports our code of behaviour. This curriculum helps children to develop communication and problem-solving skills while fostering self-esteem.
- While all children are required to comply with the code of behaviour, the school recognises that children with special educational needs and/or vulnerable pupils may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans may be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher, learning support/ resource teacher, and/or principal. Professional reports and advice from outside specialist e.g. NEPS, HSE may be required.

- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) support the learning environment in school. They may remind children of expected behaviour and intervene, where necessary, when behaviour compromises the safety of the pupil or pupils around them. SNAs report instances of positive behaviour and issues that they observed to the class teacher.

Board of Management

- Members of the Board of Management were involved in drafting this policy and the board will be involved in any future review of the policy.
- The Board of Management supports the code of behaviour in the school on an ongoing basis.
- The Board of Management supports the staff in implementing the code of behaviour and supports professional development in behaviour management education and training where necessary.
- The Board of Management gives authorisation for particular sanctions in the case of serious breaches of behaviour.

Parents

- Positive relationships are built from the start with parents and they are encouraged to take an active role in the development of their child. Teachers work in collaboration with parents to develop any specific behaviour plans needed for their child.
- Parents can communicate any concerns they may have about a pupil with their child's class teacher. If concerns persist, it may be necessary to review the situation with the class teacher and/or contact the school principal.
- On enrolment day, parents are given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and the expectations for pupils are discussed, along with the role of parents in helping pupils to meet these expectations. Parents are encouraged to share information about anything that might affect a pupil's behaviour in school.
- Parents are notified if there is a concern about a pupil's behaviour, so that ways of helping the pupil can be discussed and agreed.
- The school has a Parents' Association. Parents are encouraged to get involved in this association as a structure through which they can work together for the best possible education for their children.
- Parents are expected to:
 - Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform.
 - Educate their child in matters of personal hygiene
 - Be courteous towards pupils and staff
 - Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/ principal through the school office
 - Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
 - Label pupils' coats and other property
 - Educate their child on road safety around the school and ensure their child arrives safely at the school gates at school opening time and collect them from school gates at school closing
 - Support the school in the implementation of the code of behaviour.

Pupils

- At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will draft a list of class rules with the children which reflect and support the school rules, but are presented in a way that is accessible to the children. These will be reviewed regularly throughout the year.
- The children attend regular assemblies with the principal at which any behavioural concerns are raised and discussed.
- Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

Code of Behaviour

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times. Respect must be shown for the property of the individual and the school environment at all times.

The Code of Behaviour covers the following areas:

- a. Behaviour in class
- b. Behaviour in the playground
- c. Behaviour in the general school environment and behaviour on school outings
- d. Attendance at school/Education Welfare Act
- e. Homework
- f. Rules regarding miscellaneous items.

a. Behaviour in class

Courtesy and respect are essential. Disrespectful behaviour towards other pupils or towards a staff member (e.g. defiance, cheek, insolence) is unacceptable. Pupils must respect the right of other pupils to learn. Any behaviour which interferes with this right (e.g. constant disruption of the class, persistent distracting of others) is considered unacceptable behaviour.

In order that pupils benefit from their work in class full cooperation is required at all times. Pupils must cooperate with instructions given by the teacher.

On wet days, children remain in classrooms and are allowed to play with board games/cards etc. and are expected to remain seated.

The Essential Classroom Rules

1. Be ready for class
2. Good manners are expected at all times
3. Always do your best and allow others to do the same
4. Raise hand, wait for attention and listen to the person who is speaking
5. Take good care of personal and classroom property
6. Ensure you are safe in class and make it safe for others

b. Behaviour in the Playground

Pupils should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Any behaviour which endangers or offends others is not permitted. Rough behaviour e.g. fighting, kicking, spitting, pushing is forbidden. Games or activities considered to be dangerous shall be prohibited.

Any behaviour which interferes with other pupils' play is not permitted. Pupils may not leave the playground for any reason during breaks without seeking permission from the supervising teacher or SNA; this includes re-entering the school building. Time out is used in the yard when behaviour is not as expected and a yard book is utilised to record incidents of misbehaviour in the yard. Children are encouraged to behave appropriately and those who do so, i.e. their name has not been recorded in the yard book, get a night off homework each term.

The Essential out of Class Rules

1. Stay within the boundaries in yard
2. Play safely and fairly. Treat others fairly, the way you would like yourself to be treated
3. Keep yard and school environment litter free and tidy
4. Respect all school property
5. Line up quickly and quietly when the bell rings and return to your classroom in an orderly fashion.

c. Behaviour in the General School Environment and Behaviour on School Outings

Respect and courtesy to others is essential. Any kind of verbal or physical abuse towards other pupils is unacceptable. Use of foul language among pupils is unacceptable. Bullying or intimidation of other pupils is prohibited and is always regarded as a serious offence. Pupils must show respect for school property at all times. For reasons of safety and to minimise accidents, pupils should move about the school in an orderly manner.

Pupils are encouraged to be respectful of each other on their way to and from school, showing due care for other pupils, property (such as the school bus), traffic and other pedestrians. When on school outings, pupils are expected to behave in an orderly manner and show respect for the public and public property. They should always cooperate fully with their teachers and special needs assistants.

d. Attendance/Education Welfare Act

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, absences or lateness must be explained by a brief note written in the school journal and signed by a parent or entered on the school Aladdin App. Absences of 20 days or more must be referred by the school to TUSLA Education Support Service (TESS). Any child wishing to leave school early must have an explanatory note signed by their parent or the parent must contact school through the app or by email. The TUSLA Education Welfare Officer is available to support parents with attendance issues. Children with hospital or dental appointments on an ongoing basis should give a copy of appointments to the class teacher/principal. Parents/Guardians must sign out pupils who are collected early from school. Daily attendance and punctuality are required from pupils. The school opens to receive pupils at 9.20 am each morning

and closes at 3.10 pm (2.10 pm for infants). There is no supervision on school premises before 9.20 am.

*Staggered arrival and closing times are in place for the duration of the COVID Pandemic to ease congestion and congregation of pupils and parents. The principal will communicate any changes to this arrangement going forward.

e. Homework

It is school policy to assign homework on a regular basis. The time taken for this will vary from child to child, but should in most cases take between 10 and 45 minutes. Homework is generally recorded in the pupil's journal or homework folder. Homework may also be assigned on the schools Aladdin App for home school communication or on your child's Google Classroom account. Parents should ensure the work has been fully attempted. If for some reason homework (or part of it) cannot be completed, parents are asked to note this in the homework journal or send a message through the Aladdin app or by email to the teacher.

Written work must be done neatly and carefully. Graffiti on textbooks and copy books is not permitted. Generally, homework is not given on weekends.

f. Rules regarding miscellaneous items

- Pupils are expected to wear the school uniform (school crested teal jumper, grey trousers or skirt, white shirt, school tie and black school shoes) each day. In the interest of fairness and equity for all children, it is important that all children wear the school uniform. This is enforced and sanctions will be put in place if children are continually in breach of the code of behaviour in relation to uniform.
- School tracksuits and runners should be worn on the appropriate PE day. The class teachers will inform pupils and parents of the PE day(s).
- Pupils are permitted to wear stud earrings and watch only.
- Mobile phones, toys and electronic devices are not permitted. Any infringement of this rule will involve the confiscation of the phone and any other electronic equipment and will only be returned to the parent or guardian of the pupil.

Rewards for Good Behaviour

Good behaviour is constantly acknowledged by teachers, deputy principal, principal, and SNAs throughout the day. The following are samples of how praise might be given:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's copy or journal
- A visit to another member of staff or principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents.
- Each teacher recognises and acknowledges good behaviour in their own class and may develop systems of rewarding individuals/groups of children on a regular basis e.g. vouchers, class dojo, homework passes etc.

- At regular assemblies with principal or on the intercom, specific children and classes are praised for improvements in behaviour or exceptionally good behaviour.

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated minor misbehaviours the class teacher may contact parents.

In the case of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

- Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school
- Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum
- Not following instructions
- Homework not done without explanatory note
- Rough play
- Answering out of turn.

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying*, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Using a mobile phone or device without explicit permission from a teacher
- Threats or physical hurt to another person in person or online
- Damage to property
- Theft
- Bringing dangerous equipment to school
- Leaving school/school activities without permission.

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Serious bullying*
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

A single incident of gross misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension.

*Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

- PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.
- VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions. This may be in person, online (cyber bullying) or by phone.

Incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with under the school's Anti Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour. The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner. Issues in relation to bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher. This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Sanctions

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

- helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable (see restorative practices)
- helping pupils to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping pupils to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other pupils and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected.

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the pupil, or other pupils or adults, safe.

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

1. Reasoning with pupil
2. Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
4. Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
5. Loss of privileges
6. Staying in during break
7. Communication with parents regarding behaviour and sanction
8. Referral to the Deputy Principal
9. Referral to Principal
10. Principal communicating with parents
11. Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

Suspension and Expulsion

The procedures as outlined in the NEWB guidelines for schools (2008) will apply. Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents 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 be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil the Board will follow procedure as outlined in the NEWB Guidelines and the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Conclusion

The essence of this code of behaviour is that our students learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to develop self-discipline. A high level of cooperation and communication is seen as an important factor in ensuring the efficacy of this code of behaviour. Structures and channels

designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff, management, pupils and parents have been established and together we hope to ensure a positive, safe teaching and learning environment is maintained for all staff, pupils and parents.

Related Policies available online or by request:

1. Anti-Bullying Policy
2. Health & Safety Statement
3. Admission Policy
4. Child Safeguarding Statement

This policy was reviewed by the staff, representatives of the Parent Association, Student Council and BOM in February 2021.

The BOM ratified the Code of Behaviour on 3rd March 2021.

Review Date: March 2024