



Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement:

This Code of Behaviour applies to all pupils of St Vincent de Paul Girls School as they participate in school activities, including those which take place off the school premises. The Code of Behaviour also applies to all pupils who are identifiable members of the school community.

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School recognises and appreciates the important role that families play in modelling, encouraging, and promoting positive behaviour. The effective implementation of this policy relies on positive and cooperative home-school links whereby our pupils see staff and families working together in the implementation of these guidelines both inside and outside the school in order to create and maintain a safe and orderly learning environment for everyone.

It is expected that the guidelines which underpin this policy are widely known and understood by all members of our school community; pupils, staff and parents. As such, the school expects the cooperation and support of the whole school community with regard to this Code of Behaviour.

This Policy will be implemented in conjunction with the other relevant policies, such as the Anti-Bullying Policy, Use of Electronic Devices Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy,

This policy was reviewed and updated June 2023

Relationship to Characteristic spirit of the school:

1. We seek to provide a sound academic education for each pupil, as well as developing the moral, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and creative faculties of each pupil.
2. We aim to develop and promote human and Christian values within the context of a Catholic community.
3. We acknowledge the individuality of each pupil and we aim to nurture self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-image.
4. Our school promotes cooperation and a strong sense of community so that all children experience acceptance. This sense of community is extended to all parents who are encouraged to participate fully in the education of their children.
5. A healthy balance is maintained between discipline and an atmosphere of openness and friendliness. We encourage all pupils to respect themselves, others and others' property.



Aims:

1. To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
2. To enhance a positive learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
3. To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
4. To create a culture of respect, tolerance and consideration for others, fostering a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and supporting good behaviour patterns based on such a culture.
5. To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their cooperation and involvement in the application of these procedures.
6. To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
7. To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
8. To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
9. To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
10. To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood by all members of the school community.

Implementation – Responsibility of Adults

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of our Code of Behaviour. The whole school community will endeavour to highlight positive aspects of pupil behaviour.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, 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 or disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.



Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

In general, children react well to routines and boundaries. Establishing and maintaining rules and routines in the classroom, school environment and in other settings such as school tours, etc. can promote positive behaviour. Our school rules are designed to encourage self-respect and respect for others. Parents can be enormously supportive of the school's endeavour by discussing the rules with their children and helping them to understand why they should be observed.

All pupils in our school are expected to:

- Behave in a responsible manner showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times.
- Show respect for all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Adhere to all school policies and procedures, in particular those which are relevant to this policy, for example: Anti-Bullying Policy, Use of Electronic Devices Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy. For example, as per our Anti-Bullying Policy (point 3) *'if a pupil is found taking or having taken photographs or video footage with a mobile phone/device of either themselves, other pupils or school personnel this will be regarded as a serious/gross unacceptable behaviour and action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. If a pupil shares/comments/likes/willingly participates in inappropriate recordings/photos/messages which can be shared on any social media platform and which are in breach of our school's policies this will be regarded as a serious/gross unacceptable behaviour and action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. The school will facilitate the investigation of alleged incidents of breach of this policy where such incidents are brought to the attention of school personnel (either by pupils themselves, their families, or members of the wider school community). In such instances, the school's investigation will be based on the evidence made available to us (for example screenshots).'*
- Arrive to school on time and stay until school ends. (Children who come in late or need to leave early for whatever reason must follow procedures set out in our school's Attendance Policy).
- Attend school regularly (Absence notes are required as per our school's Attendance Policy).
- Be prepared for their school day (Pupils are expected to bring a healthy lunch to school. Pupils are also expected to have the equipment necessary to participate fully in lessons, for example pencils, rulers etc. Similarly, if pupils are competing or training with a school team they are expected to remember to bring in their gear).
- Complete homework tasks and adhere to our school's homework policy.
- Obey instructions from school personnel and any visiting teacher/facilitator and to work to the best of their ability.
- Follow school protocol in relation to yard time/break time, and/or when under the supervision of another member of staff.



- Uphold the school's Code of Behaviour while on school tours, representing the school at various outings and/or being identifiable as a member of the school community.

Caring for Self – School Uniform

A school uniform helps a child to feel that she belongs to a school. Children need to be conscious that when wearing the uniform, they represent the school and should behave accordingly.

Our uniform consists of:

Green skirt / pinafore/ trousers

Green jumper / cardigan

Cream Shirt

Green socks / tights

Plain, black, flat-soled shoes, tied with a buckle, laces or velcro. (No slip-on or high-heeled shoes)

Tie & Crest

School tracksuit with white polo shirt

Sports shoes for P.E. sessions

- All pupils in our school are expected to wear their full school uniform, including plain black shoes, at all times. (A note in the Homework Journal is required to explain absence of school uniform. If a child is attending an event after school, full uniform must be worn to school. Arrangements for changing must be made outside school premises)
- All pupils in our school are expected to wear their school tracksuit on PE days, as specified by the class teacher.
- Long hair must be tied back at all times
- In the interest of safety, jewellery is limited to one set of studs in the ears. No rings, necklaces, bracelets
- A regular watch for telling the time may be worn (no 'smart' watches)
- Make-up, nail varnish, false nails, fake tan tattoos/transfers are not permitted
- Natural hair colour only

If pupils cycle to school, we strongly advise that a cycling helmet should be worn.

Healthy Food Policy

Please refer to our Healthy Eating Policy and encourage your child to eat a healthy lunch. A small treat is allowed on a Friday



Behaviour in Class

It is important that the classroom environment is such that the teacher may teach effectively and the pupils progress appropriately. Each pupil must therefore respect the right of others to learn. Any behaviour which interferes with this right is considered unacceptable and will incur sanctions. Bullying whether physical, verbal, psychological or cyber is not permitted. Each pupil is required to cooperate fully with the teacher's instructions. At the beginning of each academic year the class teacher, in consultation and collaboration with the children will draft a set of class rules. These reflect and support the school rules, while being applicable and appropriate to the children at each class level.

Behaviour in the Yard

Every effort is made to ensure the comfort and safety of the pupils in our care. Conduct which in any way threatens the safety and well-being of the individual or the group is therefore not permitted. This includes rough behaviour such as fighting, kicking, dragging, spitting etc. During yard time pupils may only leave the yard to enter the school if the teacher on duty has given permission, and pupils must be accompanied by another member of staff.

Pupils will abide by 'Yard & Break Time Rules' as displayed in each classroom.

Incentives and Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

All children deserve encouragement. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements, including positive behaviour.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the ways in which school staff – at their discretion – encourage, support, and show their appreciation for pupils' responsible and positive behaviour:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class and/or at school assembly (for group recognition)
- A system of merit marks or stickers
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parents/guardian, written or verbal communication.



Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross, (see Appendix A for a non-exhaustive list of behaviours and actions which may fall into these categories).

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher. Minor unacceptable behaviour on a regular basis will be considered serious unacceptable behaviour and will be responded to accordingly.

In cases of repeated serious unacceptable behaviour, or in single instances of gross unacceptable behaviour, parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet with the teacher (and, where appropriate, the Principal) to discuss their child's behaviour.

Any sanction imposed as a result of such behaviour will be discussed with the pupil, the relevant teacher, and the school Principal. Parents will be kept informed.

Open communication between school and home is vitally important. Should a family have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, the school will facilitate a meeting which can be arranged through the proper channels at a time convenient for both parties, without infringing on valuable teaching time. 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. Similarly, where behavioural concerns arise in school, school staff will seek to engage a pupil's family at an early stage rather than as a last resort.

Sanctions

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

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions
- Group punishment should be avoided as it breeds resentment
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus
- The age and development of the pupil are taken into consideration

***Pupils should not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, except on the grounds of health & safety.



Suspension and Expulsion

The decision to suspend a pupil will only be made on serious grounds and may be made as a result of a single incident. Suspension may be considered for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour.

The Board of Management delegates authority to the Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, to deal with suspension issues for a maximum of two days.

Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved. Due regard may be made to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes. Any relevant medical information will also be taken into account. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Before serious sanctions such as, suspension or expulsion are used, the pupil and their parents will be fully informed about the complaint and will be invited to the school as a matter of urgency. Both the pupil and their parents will be offered the opportunity to respond to school authorities before a decision is made.

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. The Board of Management as required by law will, at all times, follow fair procedure when proposing to suspend a pupil as outlined in paragraphs 10.3 and 10.4.7 of the National Educational Welfare Board's publication Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools.

Where the decision is made to suspend a pupil, the Principal will formally notify the pupil's parents in writing and will advise them of their right to appeal to the Board of Management and of any relevant right of appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act (1998). In order to facilitate such appeals, families will be given four days' notice of the proposed suspension date(s).

In exceptional circumstances, and 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. The school reserves its right to impose an immediate suspension.

When a period of suspension ends, the pupil and their parents will be invited to meet with the Principal before returning to school. Both the pupil and parents must give a satisfactory undertaking that the suspended pupil will behave in future in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and other relevant policies. 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.

Fair procedures will be used at all times ensuring the right to be heard and the right to impartiality in relation to any investigation or decision making. All matters will be dealt with in confidence, insofar as is possible.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

A decision to suspend a pupil may be reconsidered/reversed in the event of the following:

- An alternative strategy being agreed following consultation between school management and the pupil's family
- A new circumstance coming to light which will be fully considered by the Board of Management

- A successful appeal to the Board of Management
- A successful appeal pursuant to Section 29 of the Education Act 1998

Expulsion

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act. The authority to expel a pupil rests solely with the Board of Management.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.



5. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

These procedures assume that the Board of Management is the decision-making body in relation to expulsions.

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing

Appeals

At the time when parents are being formally notified of a suspension or expulsion, they and the student will be informed about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be given information about how to appeal.

Children with Additional Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding and adhering to expected standards of behaviour. Where deemed necessary, specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and relevant school personnel. The development of such behaviour plans will involve consultation with the pupil's family and relevant school personnel, under the guidance of external agencies or professionals if and as appropriate.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist them to provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.



Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

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

- Informal parent/teacher meetings and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Communication through children's homework journal
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- Contact via phone as required
- School website
- Newsletter

Methods for the recording of breaches of behaviour.

The Principal and teachers will note times, dates and incidents as necessary.

Further Procedures and Practices:

- Teaching of the curriculum is adapted and modified to suit individual children's needs.
- In order to resolve any concerns they may have relating to their child's education, we encourage parents to make contact with the class teacher promptly, rather than engaging in group discussions on social media sites and/or by other means. This will bring about an effective resolution where the child's welfare and progress are the focus of the discussion.
- We recommend that mobile phones should not be brought to school for safety reasons. If a child brings a mobile phone to school, protocols and procedures must be followed as set out in the relevant school policy (Use of Electronic Devices Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Anti-bullying Policy).
- Parents who come into the school grounds may not approach pupils with regard to perceived problems. All such matters should be referred to the teachers.



Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from parents through informal communications and at parent teacher meetings.
- Positive feedback from pupils.
- Positive feedback from teachers based on teacher observation.
- That a pleasant and cooperative atmosphere continues to prevail and is noted by visitors to the school.

Roles and Responsibility:

- The Board of Management will provide a comfortable and safe environment, supporting the Principal and Staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.
- All staff will be aware of the Code of Behaviour, will adopt the policy, and will co-operate and monitor its implementation.
- Coordination and overall monitoring will be undertaken by the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Parents will be aware of the policy and will understand the importance of compliance and co-operation, encouraging and supporting their children in its implementation.
- Pupils will be encouraged to follow class and school rules, showing respect for oneself, for others, for others' property and for all school property
- Support staff will be aware of the policy and co-operate in its implementation.

The Code of Behaviour Policy for St Vincent de Paul Girls' School was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in June 2023.

Signed by:

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____

Communication:

Policy to be provided to all new pupils on enrolment.
Policy to be made available to the Parents Association
Policy to be displayed on the school website.



Appendix A

Minor Unacceptable Behaviour	Sanctions
<p>The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of minor unacceptable behaviours</p> <p><u>Disruption to teaching and learning, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking when the teacher is talking and/or when another child is talking • Shouting or speaking out of turn • Disrupting learning – either the pupil's own or that of others • Making silly and disruptive noises <p><u>Disruption to the smooth running of the school, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to maintain an acceptable noise level on corridor • Demonstrating an overly-casual attitude to staff or adult members of school community • Non adherence to school uniform requirements, as set out in this policy <p><u>Unacceptable yard behaviour, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to adhere to yard boundaries and/or yard rules • Rough play on the yard 	<p>The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this. In addressing minor unacceptable behaviours Teachers will investigate and reason with pupils, using where applicable restorative actions. Teachers may take any of the following steps: The list is by no means exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve • Temporary separation from peers within class • Prescribing extra work (applicable to behaviour) • Temporary loss of privileges • Temporary loss of responsibility • Temporary loss of yard time



<p>Serious Unacceptable Behaviour</p>	<p>Sanctions</p>
<p>The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of serious unacceptable behaviours</p> <p><u>Persistent disruption to teaching and learning, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging in behaviours that persistently and/or intentionally prevent effective teaching and learning taking place <p><u>Persistent and/or serious disruption to the smooth running of the school, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrespect of school property or the property of others • Dishonesty, for example telling lies, failing to admit the truth, or forging signatures • Lack of respect to other members of the school community, e.g. back answering, cheating, using bad/inappropriate language, taking exception to correction, etc. • Intentional and/or targeted anti-social or nasty behaviour towards others, e.g. engaging in behaviour that is hurtful to others • Possession of a mobile phone or similar electronic device without the approval of the Board of Management including having a device switched on/in use during the school day or school related activity (other than as a medical device approved by the Principal). • Willingly participating in breaches of school policies <p><u>Dangerous and/or persistent unacceptable yard behaviour, e.g.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in physical altercations with other pupils • Physical and/or verbal and/or threat of physical or verbal aggression towards another member of the school community • Dangerous or reckless play on the yard 	<p>The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this. In addressing serious unacceptable behaviours Teachers will investigate and reason with pupils, using where applicable restorative actions. Teachers may take any of the following steps:</p> <p>The list is by no means exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve and devising a restorative action plan • Temporary separation from peers within class and/or outside the class • Prescribing extra work (applicable to behaviour) to be signed by parents & pupil • Temporary loss of privileges (longer, defined time frame) • Temporary loss of responsibility (longer, defined time frame) • Temporary loss of yard time (longer, defined time frame) • Intervention by the Deputy Principal or Principal • Communicate with the pupil's family



Gross Unacceptable Behaviour	Sanctions
<p>The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of gross unacceptable behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent disrespect of school staff including open defiance of teacher’s instruction • Serious theft • Serious damage/vandalism of school property • Deliberate and intentional setting off the fire alarm • Leaving the school premises without permission • Absence from school without permission • Possession of dangerous or inappropriate devices on school property • Inappropriate use of a mobile phone or electronic devices on school property as per all relevant school policies • Use of social media to defame and/or impersonate a member of the school community • Fighting with, or being physically violent towards, a member of the school community • Discrimination, or discriminatory insults, based on (but not limited to) a person’s race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation • Bullying, including relational bullying, identity-based bullying, and cyberbullying. • Being in possession of and/or consumption of any illegal substance • Engaging in serious inappropriate behaviours, including any illegal activity, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Smoking/vaping on school grounds/school outings ➤ Consuming alcohol or drugs on school grounds//school outings 	<p>The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and, if necessary, to help the pupils devise strategies for this. In addressing serious unacceptable behaviours Teachers will investigate and reason with pupils, using where applicable restorative actions. In dealing with gross unacceptable behaviour, the teacher will immediately inform the Principal of the pupil’s behaviour and together they may take any or all of the following steps: The list is by no means exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation and intervention by the Principal and/or Deputy Principal • Communicate with parents and where appropriate meet with parents, pupil and relevant school personnel • Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve and devising a restorative action plan • Prescribing extra work (applicable to behaviour) to be signed by parents & pupil • Loss of privileges • Loss of responsibility <p>In very serious circumstances the Principal may impose the following sanction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension <p>The authority to expel a pupil rests solely with the Board of Management and is subject to an external appeal.</p>



Appendix 2 - 'Break-time Agreement'

As per Supervision Policy

- Always show respect for yourself
- Always show respect for others, including children, staff and visitors to the school
- Play fairly, take takes
- Include others - never leave anyone out
- Use kind words - don't hurt
- 'Stay & Play' in designated yard area – no climbing on railings, benches, stay away from bicycle areas, do not distract children working in classrooms during yard time
- No dangerous or rough play - take care not to hurt anybody and always show respect for people's personal space
- No food/drinks on yard
- Reading books can be brought to yard (no pens, pencils, items/toys from home)
- Freeze when the first bell rings. Walk calmly to your line when the second bell rings.
- Line up one behind the other in your class line.
- Wait until the teacher on yard tells your line to move. Then walk in a straight line towards the school door
- Stay one behind the other on the stairs, keeping to the left
- Sanitise your hands at the top of the stairs
- At all times please remember to walk calmly and one behind the other on the corridor
- Always show respect all school property both inside the building and outside
- If your teacher is not in the room at any time - sit in your place and do your work quietly - no scissors, glue, knitting needles, sharp objects, etc. allowed