

Code of Behaviour & Discipline POLICY



St. Ita's Special School
Drogheda
Co. Louth

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

INTRODUCTION

St.Ita's Special School is located in Crushrod Avenue, Drogheda. The school educates pupils aged between 5 and 18 years who are assessed with a mild general learning need, some of our students have a moderate diagnosis with high adaptive skills. The schools under the patronage of the Archdioceses of Armagh. It is recognised by the Department of Education and Skills as a Primary School.

The Board of Management of St.Ita's Special School revised the Code of Behaviour in line with the guidelines developing a code of behaviour: Guidelines for schools, 2008 issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB); Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circular 20/90 on School Discipline; and The Educational Welfare Act, 2000 {section 23(1)}. It is devised in line with our Mission Statement, [Mission Statement of St.Ita's.docx](#)

VISION

St.Ita's Special School endeavours to promote a positive approach to discipline and behaviour management in order to provide a happy, working environment for all pupils and staff. Our school seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment in a spirit of acceptance of each person's intellectual abilities and challenges. We aspire to do the above in partnership with parents/guardians, Board of Management and through involvement with the wider community.

Teachers are viewed as being in loco parentis during the course of the school day. Staff have an important role to play in implementing a consistent approach to the Code of Behaviour throughout the school. Staff members should be aware of circumstances and of particular diagnoses of pupils, which may affect behaviour and the context in which behaviours occur. At all times staff should adhere to our low arousal strategies (Appendix 1) to manage incidents of behaviours of concern.

RATIONALE

Essential to effective teaching and learning is a safe, supportive, and well-managed environment that respects the following rights:

- The rights of all pupils to learn
- The rights of all teachers to teach
- The rights of all to be safe

The dignity of each child is of utmost importance. We believe that each child is entitled to an appropriate education provision, regardless of individual levels of attainment and functioning.

This code of behaviour policy defines the responsibilities that all members of the school community are expected to uphold and recognise the significance of appropriate and

Meaningful relationships. It outlines a consistent standard of behaviour for the school community, inclusive of pupils, staff, parents/guardians and all other stakeholders. It recognises the close relationship between learning, achievement, communication and behaviour. It also provides for a positive support system to be employed, which promotes good standards for achievement and behaviour in line with the pupil's abilities and needs.

AIMS

The code of behaviour aims to:

- Promote a warm and accepting climate and ethos in fostering positive behaviours
- Create the conditions for an orderly and harmonious school, in which effective learning and development can take place and in which there is mutual respect for the needs and welfare of pupils and staff
- Enhance the learning environment where pupils can make progress in all aspects of their development, as guided by our mission statement; and where teachers can deliver the educational programme
- Address the specific/complex needs of our pupils by understanding the functions of the behaviours
- Ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- Create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others
- Foster caring attitudes to one another and towards the environment
- Assist parents/guardians and pupils, where appropriate, in understanding the system and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek cooperation in the application of these procedures
- To develop pupil's responsibility and independence for personal behaviour.
- To provide a fair and consistent system to deal with behaviours, including behaviours of concern

OBJECTIVES

Our school's objectives are to:

- Encourage an environment in which positive relationships of mutual respect can develop among pupils, staff and parents/guardians
- Recognise, reward and publicise the positive behaviours and achievements of pupils
- Create an atmosphere of tolerance, consideration and respect
- Prevent pupils being disadvantaged by the behaviour of others

Promote the care of and respect for pupils, staff and school community, property, resources and premises of the school and environment.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

The Board of Management (BoM) supports the following principles, which underpin an effective code of behaviour:

- Clarity of expectations and response strategies
- An understanding of associated impairments/difficulties which affect some of our pupil population and how/why they behave in a way that can be challenging
- Focusing on promoting positive behaviour
- Balancing individual needs and welfare with the educational needs and welfare of other children in the class
- Recognising that relationships are crucial
- Focusing on personal responsibility and development
- Ensuring fairness and equality
- Promoting equality in accordance with Equal Status Legislation
- Recognising educational differentiation and the complexity of needs which some of our pupils present with.
- Attending to the welfare of staff and pupils by promoting a positive and safe working environment

PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

- The right of each pupil to respect, to freedom of expression: to be heard, to be protected, to learn and to play
- The differing needs and abilities of each pupil
- The nature and impact of the pupil's diagnosis
- The level of pupil ability to communicate to and socialise with others and the impact of these needs in expressing/regulating themselves
- The environment and the sensory impacts of the environment on the pupils
- Development of each child's self-confidence and self-esteem
- The importance of communication with parents/guardians
- Encouragement and appropriate rewards for good efforts, e.g., Pupil of the week
- The times when behaviours of concern are likely to occur
- Transitioning difficulties or unstructured activities which may present difficult for the pupils to manage
- Appropriate use of management strategies, implementation of low arousal strategies at all times and other management interventions used
- The need for explicit teaching skills the value of collaboration with members the multidisciplinary team and other outside agencies such as NCSE

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Creating and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment is the responsibility of everyone involved with our pupil's learning. Responsibility to establish and maintain this environment is shared by pupils, staff and parents/guardians, MDT and other external agencies.

The responsibilities of each school member of the school community are as follows:

Board of Management

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment
- Provide adequate training and guidelines to staff where necessary to address issues of behaviour of concern in a safe and respectful manner.
- Support/advise the principal in devising/implementing the code of behaviour and identify limits of behaviours which can be managed from a health and safety perspective or impact on the education or welfare of other pupils
- Forming sub-committees where necessary to deal with issues relating to behaviours of concern
- Seek further support and advice/training from external agencies
- Ratify the code

The Principal

The Principal maintains consistent enforcements of the school's behaviour policies, rules and procedures, defines expectations that are enforceable; supports each initiative and where possible, provides tools and resources and funding to support the school staff. The Principal also obtains feedback to refine policies and expectations.

The overall responsibility for discipline in the school rests with the principal. The Deputy Principal assists the Principal in promoting positive behaviours and implementing School Discipline and maintaining as far as possible a supervisory presence in the school.

Staff

Each teacher is responsible for maintaining good behaviour within their classroom and shares a common responsibility for good order within the school. Staff should maintain a safe learning environment for pupils in the classroom and school. Staff should be open-minded, consistent, communicative and objective. Teachers provide clear and reasonable expectations, establish positive relationships with pupils; set age and ability appropriate rules, supply pupils and parents/guardians with feedback and are encouraging and consistent when dealing with pupil

Behaviour. All staff must adhere to the Low Arousal Strategies when dealing with behaviour incidents.

Management of incidents of behaviours of concern are dealt with by the teachers, or by the SNAs under the direct guidance of the teacher, in a caring, supportive, objective, considerate and fair manner. A non-exhaustive list of behaviours of concern which our pupils may engage in is listed in Appendix 2A pupil will be referred to the principal by the teachers for serious incidents of behaviour/breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor behaviour of concern, whereby the school's behaviour management protocols (Appendix 3) have been implemented fully by the teachers and are not sufficient to address the behaviours.

If difficulties occur at lunch time or break time, a familiar staff member (who will know the pupil well) may manage the behaviour if guidance or protocol from the class teacher is in place. The teacher on duty will provide assistance when required and will monitor the situation at all times. The teachers on duty will manage the behaviour otherwise and may seek additional support from staff where necessary. Subsequently the teacher on duty will advise the class teacher and the principal where appropriate.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff have the right to expect that:

- Pupils will behave on school property and at school activities so as not to interfere with the learning, rights or welfare of others
- School management will provide leadership and support
- They will have the positive assistance and co-operations of pupils, parents and colleagues in the performance of their duties
- Be treated with respect by the school community
- They do not suffer personal injury as a direct result of their interaction with Students

Every teacher, special needs assistant (SNA) or other school employees will:

- Model the school's standard of behaviour, serving as a positive role model
- Support one another and maintain a safe and positive atmosphere
- Be familiar with and implement the low arousal strategies at all times when dealing with incidents of inappropriate behaviours
- Encourage parent/guardian participation in the school by regularly communicating with home
- Monitor the progress of pupils and inform pupils and parents/guardians
- Endeavour through all the strategies at their disposal to enable pupils with behavioural issues to overcome their difficulties so they can gain full access to the curriculum and a greater quality of life
- Read, be familiar with and follow the code of behaviour policy and at the beginning of each school year discuss school rules and expectations with the pupils

- Implement the school's behavioural management strategies to manage low and high levels of behaviours of concern under the direction of the class teacher
- Consistently implement any behaviour support plans which are in use
- Get to know the pupil well, the means of communication they use and what they like.
- Work within the school community to support pupils in managing their behaviours and regulating themselves
- Teachers refer pupils for assessment with the multidisciplinary Team when necessary

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

To help maintain standards of behaviour, the staff in St.Ita's Special School rely on the goodwill, support and co-operation of parents/guardians. We ask parents/guardians to:

- Communicate regularly with the school about factors that are likely to affect the behaviour of their child in school
- Provide weekly contribution towards their social outings
- Instil a positive attitude towards education, which recognises their efforts and promotes a positive ethos for learning and efforts made in learning
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain a productive teaching and learning environment
- Provide role models in order to establish positive values concerning achievement as well as respect for fellow pupils, school personal and property
- Attempt to attend school events and meetings, and to give positive input and support to the school
- Talk to their child about their behaviours, if this is appropriate to the individual child.
- Act as a positive role model for their child in their relationship with the school.
- Be aware of school rules/procedures and encourage and support their child to abide by them
- Attend planned meetings with teachers and the MDT and support school functions
- Provide the school with all necessary details of their child and any concerns that they may have about the school, or any significant changes in their medical needs or home circumstances
- Make themselves available to discuss issues regarding their child's education and Welfare in school

PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every parent/guardian has the right to expect:

- Teachers and other staff will provide effective instructions for pupils, display an Interest and enthusiasm for learning and show respect for the pupils in their care
- Staff will act as good role models, provide support and monitor programmes and instructions in the school
- Staff will enforce the code of behaviour in a fair and consistent manner

- Staff will communicate with parents/guardians. The frequency of communication Will vary in accordance with the needs of the pupil and with the professional opinions of the teaching staff. Methods of communications include:
- Face to face meetings (Parent-Teacher meetings, Individual Educational Plan Meetings)
- Phone calls
- Notes/comments in home-school journals
- Per-term updates will be posted on our school website put our web link o

PUPILS

Pupils are encouraged to understand and practice the rules and expectations, co-operate with school staff, and treat other pupils with respect, with due consideration being given to the individual pupil's ability.

Attendance at School:

Punctuality and regular attendance by the pupil are expected. Parents/guardians should write a note in the pupil's home-school journal when early departure from school is requested. Parents/Guardians of a pupil absent from school shall notify the class teacher in writing with the reasons for the pupil's absence. There is a statutory obligation as outlined in the Educational (Welfare) Act, 2000 to report pupil's absences to the National Welfare Board, irrespective of the reasons given for the absences. This will happen if a pupil has missed a total of 20 days in the school year, even if those absences are accounted for.

PUPIL'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils have the right to expect that:

- Clear and relevant lessons will be presented taking into account their individual needs and strengths
- They will be able to work in a school environment, which is pleasant, respectful, positive and conducive to learning
- School staff will be courteous, caring and understanding in the dispensation of their Duties
- They will be treated fairly and with respect
- They can attend school without fear and/or disruption of the educational process/programmes or their welfare
- An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will be drawn up with consultation with parents/guardians and themselves where appropriate.

Taking into account pupil's abilities and ages, they will be responsible for:

- Striving towards self-discipline according to their ability
- Showing respect for all people in the school community, their rights and respecting property/the school environment
- Following direction and co-operation with staff
- Making the most of education opportunities through active classroom participation and involvement in school activities
- Taking pride in their work and what they have accomplished
- Agreeing on individual goals with the class teacher.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD BEHAVIOUR IN ST.ITA'S SPECIAL SCHOOL - OUR SCHOOL RULES - OUR SCHOOL AGREEMENT - THE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS:

1. We play and work safely
2. We have kind hands and feet
3. We are nice to everybody (pupils and adults) in school
4. We speak nicely to each other
5. We walk nicely in our school
6. We work together
7. We try our best
8. We always tell the truth
9. We have quite inside voices
10. We hand up our phones to our class teacher or our principal

These rules will be displayed in our classrooms. These rules will be explicitly taught, regularly revisited and taught.

A copy of these rules/code of behaviour policy will be available to all parents/guardians via the school website www.stitasspecialschool.ie. New rules may be introduced as and when Circumstances arise. Staff are committed to addressing behaviours of concern and helping all Pupils learn from these behaviours.

- Rules are expressed in positive terms
- Rules are discussed and displayed in classrooms, school corridors and addressed at assembly
- Rules and routines are explicitly taught
- All rules are modelled by staff
- Use of augmentative communication systems to assist understanding
- Some skills are specifically taught in literacy and/or SPHE curriculum. These include communication skills and appropriate ways of interacting and behaving
- Parental involvement is encouraged in dealing with behaviour of concern
- Social stories to be used to clarify expectations
- Pupils will be redirected/distracted or reasoned with in order to cease or avoid behaviours of concern

- Behaviour support plans at classroom levels may need to be drawn up and implemented, if deemed appropriate and necessary
- Should behaviours of concern continue, interventions/advice/support from the Deputy Principal and the Principal, and if necessary, members from the MDT will be sought. External agencies may also be approached for advice and support.
- Concise arrangements for supervision are in place and are reviewed regularly.
- A high level of organisation and supervision is in place at all times of arrival and dispersal of pupils and also during wet days when pupils remain indoors for breaks.
- Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area except on the grounds of health and safety.

DESIRABLE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Given the level of ability and complexity of needs of some of our pupils, these are the desirable standards of behaviour that the school aspires to and that are actively promoted/encouraged on a daily basis.

- Pupils show respect to each other, themselves, staff and school property/environment.
- Co-operate with staff and other pupils
- Be kind to others. Treat each other as they would like to be treated
- Acknowledge and reward the accomplishments of all
- Work together, listen to each other and wait their turn
- Contribute to providing a safe, happy and caring school environment
- Show good manners, e.g., say thank you, please
- Be honest and fair
- Work hard and do the best they can
- Be aware of others' personal space
- Listen and follow instructions
- Play nicely, fairly and safely
- Share with others
- Try to be as independent as they can
- Take responsibility for personal belongings
- Wash their hands after using the toilet/ as and when necessary.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

In the interest of safety

Pupils are required to use the allocated entrance and exit areas

- Pupils must not climb over any of the boundary fences, walls or boundaries
- Pupils are expected to remain with staff members at all times within the grounds of the school
- Staff must accompany / supervise pupils during transitions.

IN RELATION TO SOCIAL OUTINGS/SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Pupils are encouraged to

- Enter and exit bus in a safe manner with escort and/or SNA support
- Wear seat belts/harnesses
- Demonstrate knowledge of using transport, if level of their understanding allows
- Remain seated
- Take responsibility for personal belongings
- Listen and respond to instruction from school staff/bus escorts
- Adhere to school behaviour guidelines
- Comply with the rules of the /road safety, as far as their ability allows
- Refrain from engaging the driver's attention when in transit
- Show respect for the bus environment

LIMITATIONS

This document is not designed to list all possible breaches/violations which may occur, nor state all the possible consequences of behaviour but to serve as a general guide to pupils, teachers, staff, school management team and principal in regard to solving individual problems.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Fostering good, positive behaviour and acknowledgement of good work plays an important role in overall discipline and in a pupil's desire to feel significant and important. Positive behaviour should always be encouraged and acknowledged. However, the school recognises the variety of differences/ abilities and complexity of needs that exists among our pupils and the need for us to accommodate these differences.

As a staff, we believe in promoting positive behaviour by

- Ensuring that pupils are treated fairly and equally
- Accepting pupils where they currently are at, and aiming to foster behaviour through explicit teaching and modelling
- Promoting an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum. All efforts will be made to match the curriculum to the abilities, aptitudes and interests of each pupil
- Teaching pupils to speak nicely and respectfully
- Teaching pupils to leave classrooms safely
- Teaching pupils how they are expected to behave in school, allowing for their varied abilities and ages
- Teaching pupils' self-care skills and personal hygiene
- Giving positive attention
- Good quality teaching, using varied teaching approaches
- Consistent communication of school rules (visual display of same)
- Developing a pleasant, safe, calm, positive and stimulating learning environment
- Using strong communication systems consistently by all staff members, e.g., PECs, LAMH
- Verbal/gestural affirmation by all members of staff
- Choice of preferred activity and rewards
- A co-ordinated approach by all staff working with the pupil
- A co-ordinated approach between the school and home
- Communicating achievements to parents, other pupils and Principal
- Striving for high standards and having high expectations, presuming Competence
- Granting appropriate recognition and rewards. These may include stickers, stars, small treats, 'pupil of the week' award.
- Getting the class to give a clap
- Delegating some special privileges or responsibilities/duties
- Teachers and S.N.A.s creating moments of success and then acknowledging them
- A visit to another member of staff or the principal for commendation.

The type of strategy chosen by the teacher to deal with minor behaviours of concern will depend on the competency and ability of the pupil as well as the context of the situation.

- Use of facial expression
- Use of a firm tone of voice
- Reasoning with the pupil
- Removing others from the vicinity for their safety, only as necessary.

- Sending a note home in their school journal, a message on Seesaw/email
- Sending a pupil to the principal.

SOCIAL, PERSONAL HEALTH EDUCATION (S.P.H.E) AND LITERACY CURRICULUM

The school's SPHE and Literacy curricula are used to support the Code of Behaviour. It aims to help our children develop oral language and communication skills, personal and social skills. Social Stories may also be used to help explain issues/feelings/events or situations to our pupils when necessary.

Extra-curricular activities such as sport and break times will also be used as vehicles for teaching skills for appropriate and responsible behaviour and relationships.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE YARD/PLAYGROUND

- Activities are organised in a way that minimises behavioural difficulties. New pieces of equipment can be requested to engage the interests of the pupils and provide a more structured approach to break/lunch times.
- The level of supervision contributes to the promotion of positive behaviour on the playground.
- Individual protocols and designated staff are in place to ensure the success of all pupils during these times.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

We value the uniqueness of all pupils within a caring school community. We believe that all staff and pupils have the right to work in a safe, secure, caring and respectful environment. We can maintain a safe environment by reflecting on the decisions and outcomes; learning from past experiences; being proactive rather than reactive; seeking professional advice and support from our multidisciplinary team, and external agencies, such as NCSE etc.

Behaviours of concern can come under 'Minor' and 'Serious Breaches of Discipline'. Judgement on the part of staff is based on a common sense and understanding approach with regard to the nature and frequency of breaches of discipline (behaviours) and the intent and function of the behaviour, coupled to their level of cognitive/communicative ability and other diagnoses. Consideration of all the facts will be taken into account by staff.

Pupil behaviour needs to be considered from an alternative perspective to that of systems at play for typically developing and communicating pupils. There are a range of factors, personal, interpersonal and environmental that influences our pupils' behaviours as the pupil tries to manage and adapt to the many elements of the school environment.

Promotion of a supportive school environment includes physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions -- General health and well-being, levels of communication and social skills, learning and behaviour are closely linked, so the promotion of a supportive school environment involves development of a health fostering culture. A healthy diet,

positive self-esteem, physical fitness, community nature and academic tasks can all be fostered through school programmes with the aim of fostering effective and positive behaviour simultaneously.

Behaviour support programs must foster inclusiveness, catering for diversity of student's needs - There are no 'one size fits all' strategies for addressing behaviours of concern. Pupils are individuals, with individual needs, and behaviour issues arise from a range of developmental, lifestyle and environmental factors specific to each pupil. Support strategies must therefore be similarly unique and specific for each issue that arises.

Behaviour support programs should be pupil-centred -- Behaviour support programs are implemented, when deemed necessary for the individual pupil, to foster structure, routine, autonomy and learning, so that pupils can feel safe, and conditions are conducive for maximising learning potential. Focus is on encouraging a sense of belonging, value and acceptance.

We acknowledge that all behaviour is communication, and our first step is to try to ascertain what a pupil may be trying to communicate to us. Pupil behaviour may also be linked to the quality of the learning experience and positive teacher-pupil relationships are crucial to achievement of behaviour and learning outcomes -- A relevant, stimulating curriculum, presented via effective pedagogy, is the key to pupil engagement in learning, which in itself promotes pupil wellbeing and positive pupil behaviour. Positive relationships come via positive communications, whether teaching, encouraging, acknowledging or correcting.

Effective behaviour support requires collaboration, with sound internal support structures and links to external support agencies - For effective behaviour support, the teacher welcomes support from internal school support personnel, and the school welcomes support from external support agencies.

PROCEDURES FOR TEACHING BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

Opportunities for teaching the skills involved in reaching the standards of behaviour expected in the school include:

- The SPHE and Literacy (Oral language and communication strand) curricula and integrated curriculum opportunities (sport and break times) will be used as vehicles for teaching skills for responsible behaviour and relationships.
- The School Rules will be displayed on the corridor of the school and in the classrooms

PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTING AND ACKNOWLEDGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

- Strategies will be appropriate to the general nature of the pupil population and the specific nature of the individual. Classroom Positive Behaviour Management Plans/ Individual plans will be devised and implemented when necessary. Such strategies may include praise through verbal/augmented communication modalities, visual

schedules which allow for choice, rewards for effort, pupil of the week, choice of preferred activity, and should be tailored to suit the individual needs and likes of each child.

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING AND DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

- Try to identify if there are any health or medical issues distressing the pupil, try to ensure that the pupil (particularly one who has limited communication) is not displaying behaviour of concern as a response to physical pain. It may be a good idea to consult with parents/guardians and possibly ask them to arrange a check-up with a dentist or GP to rule out any possible physical causes for the behaviour. Teachers will complete the Classroom Support Checklist S1 and record on Aladdin
- Environmental assessments try to plan for situations that the pupil finds challenging within the environment and make the necessary adjustments to the environment (e.g., minimising unpleasant stimuli, sensory stimuli, reducing the volume of noise, maintaining familiar routines and structure where possible.
- Supervise, distract and redirect tries to anticipate problems and prevent them, if possible, be ready to intervene quickly if necessary. This may be intense and time consuming initially but long-term benefits will be significant. Distract the pupil or redirect them to another activity or area where there are fewer opportunities for acting out and provide encouragement of the first occurrence of positive behaviour.
- Respond quickly and consistently to incidents of behaviour. Keep responses and language to behaviours to a minimum by use of the low arousal strategies (Appendix 1).

Some pupils with a learning difficulty may experience difficulties managing emotions such as stress, anxiety and frustration which may lead to behavioural outbursts. It can therefore be of assistance for individuals to learn how to identify the physical cues or bodily sensations which indicate that they are becoming agitated and then to develop a range of alternative responses or activities to assist them to calm down. Examples of these may include taking a few deep breaths, counting to ten, going for a walk, listening to music, moving away from the scene, playing on an iPad, jumping on a trampoline or asking for a break or help.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN (MINOR, LOW LEVELS OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR)

Definition of challenging behaviour: 'Behaviour within the context of your school, which prevents participation in appropriate education activities, often isolates children from their peers, affects the learning and functioning of other pupils, drastically reduces their opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities, makes excessive demands on teachers, staff and resources, places the child or other in physical danger and makes the

possibility for future placement difficult' (Harris, Cook and Upton, 1996) in NABMSE: A Nationwide study of Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools in Ireland, 2004.

LOW AROUSAL APPROACHES- to be used for minor and serious behaviours of concern-for managing low and high levels of behaviours that challenge.

Appear Calm

Staying calm - in both voice and body language. Demonstrate positive body language by trying not to look tense e.g.- arms folded/ waving and breathe deeply. Speaking softly, slowing down and keeping instruction short.

Personal Space

Maintain a safe distance (one meter plus) while ensuring the pupil's safety, keep near an exit if able to do so.

Regulation

Allow the pupil space and time to self-regulate first, before trying any intervention.

Eye Contact

Do not stare at the individual, maintain conversational eye contact, only if comfortable and appropriate for the individual pupil. Give intermittent eye contact to help reassure.

Touch

Avoid touching the individual even if you are familiar with them, as it may not be interpreted by the individual in the manner you intend. Avoid touching pupil until they have regained control.

Noise

Surrounding noise can be upsetting to an individual, turn off noise and remove any unnecessary environmental sounds. Remove unnecessary demands or requests.

Listen

Listen to what the individual is communicating, sit or kneel while maintaining a safe distance. Make it clear that the child is being listened to. Help the pupil to identify and express their upset and needs. Stay at their level.

Distract

Try to distract/redirect or engage the individual, with minimal language used, in a chat or activity that they like in a discreet manner. Offer a preferred object or activity now or later and ensure it is followed through. Allow the child time to recover from the incident

before moving on. Only one staff member's voice to lead the interaction with the pupil. Other staff should not engage with the child.

Remove other people

It can be easier to remove other people from a situation as opposed to the individual who is upset. Allow lead staff member to make this decision.

De-Brief

It is important to talk to all persons involved in the incident, to understand and examine how and why the incident has occurred. The information can assist in future management of incidents and give staff the opportunity to talk about how they feel.

Teachers who know the pupil will choose the strategy best suited to deal with the behaviour of concern, but at all times staff will engage in the low arousal approach as detailed above.

- ▶ Ignore inappropriate behaviour if possible
- ▶ Loss of/delay of a preferred activity for a short period of time, if pupil can manage/ understand this or option to choose an alternative activity or redirect. Curricular subject areas and breaktime will not be used for this.
- ▶ Visual supports and/or social stories used to communicate with/support and clarify to pupils
- ▶ Facial expressions carrying a message of disapproval, saying "NO", again only if pupil can tolerate such a response without a re-escalation of a behaviour
- ▶ Timely intervention, with attention or praise or with what you know works for a particular pupil
- ▶ Visual signs -"wait"
- ▶ Group activity with child if appropriate

After the incident, a report will be documented, and parents/guardians will be informed of the incident. Teacher and staff involved will reflect upon possible triggers/consequences of the pupil to assist to manage accordingly in the future, if possible. Behaviour Management Protocol (Appendix 3) will be implemented for repeated incidents of low-level behaviours of concern.

SERIOUS BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

Some pupils may present with behaviours of concern of a more serious and sometimes persistent nature. While we accept that these pupils have priority needs in the area of behaviour management and are committed to providing them with the support, planning and procedures which will assist them to overcome their problems we are also aware of the right of other pupils and staff in the school to a safe environment which is conducive to learning.

Strategies to deal with Serious Behaviours of Concern

While our preferred aim is to prevent the development of serious behaviours of concern, the following strategies are agreed upon by all staff should challenging behaviour occur:

During Incidents of Behaviours of Concern

- LOW AROUSAL APPROACHES as detailed above and also where necessary

Seek Assistance

Call for help and ensure that staff work in a co-ordinated manner when assistance arrives. If the pupil is going to harm himself/herself or other pupils or staff, then staff will intervene in a manner that is reasonable and provides guidance for the pupil, as deemed necessary for the safety of all involved. This intervention will be the same as any prudent parent would apply as part of their duty of care to their child.

Adaptation

Adapt the environment if necessary.

After the incident of Behaviour of Concern:

- If it is a serious behaviour the incident will be reported to the Principal and record the Incident in an objective and factual manner, detailing the antecedents, behaviours and consequences as soon as possible to ascertain if a pattern can be established.
- Debrief- i.e., talk to a colleague about what has happened and your reactions to it.
- Learn what you can from the situation- discuss and review in line with reflective practice. Document where necessary.
- Inform parents/guardians by phone or in person of the incident and discuss plans or measures to prevent recurrence.

Where the behaviour is very serious such as repeated aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards other pupils or staff, the parent/guardian may be asked by the principal to take the pupil home for the rest of the school day.

In addition,

- A pupil may be suspended from school if it is deemed necessary;
- Staff may require more human resources to minimise time spent with a pupil;
- Staff may seek a medical or professional input;
- A meeting may be called by the Principal in consultation with the teacher and MDT to discuss the matter with all relevant personal ;
- Individual Behaviour Support Plan for pupils may be drawn up in consultation with NEPS, NCSE, HSE and any other appropriate agents.
- The NCSE may be contacted for information, advice and support
- The pupil may be referred for intervention with the MDT

EXTRA BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

If a child is deemed to present with on-going and serious manifestation of behaviour problems, he/she may benefit from a more intensive intervention plan. This option will be fully discussed with parents/guardians and may take place on a withdrawal basis from the child's own class. Frequency and duration of lessons will depend upon the pupil and the behaviours of concern, which they are presenting with.

The focus of this time will be on:

- Discovering the functions of the child's negative behaviour of concern and finding a means of serving that function through more appropriate methods
- The introduction of planned activities matched to pupil's strengths and needs
- A focus on teaching language and communication
- Providing students with opportunities to control parts of their environment through choice
- Establishing positive support based on assessment of the child's needs.

Where behaviours persist or pose a persistent challenge to other pupils or staff, the school uses the following processes

- Use of risk assessments where necessary
 - Referral to school MDT
 - Establishment of a Behavioural Support Plan in consultation with MDT and with parents/guardians
 - Meetings/phone calls to parents/guardian as part of the process
 - Keeping incident reports where applicable.
 - Sourcing extra training for staff
- RECORDING BEHAVIOURS Incident Reports are kept in the office
1. Incident Report Folder - recording incidences of a possible Insurance or, serious nature. Incidents are completed and parents/guardians will be informed of incidents by the class teacher and/or Principal.
 2. Incidents will be recorded by the class teacher if deemed necessary. Incident Reports should be signed by the class teacher and SNA, or persons present.

All serious Incident Record Sheets are available in the school's main office and used for the recording of serious incidents on school transport services. The relevant bus escort completes this. Parents/guardians are notified where necessary and additional support from school staff and/or members of the multidisciplinary team may be sought to ensure safety and compliance on the school buses.

Class teacher and where involved, MDT members keep records of and report/recommendations/interventions relating to pupils. When necessary, a copy of same will be kept in the pupils' file in the office/GDPR room and on Aladdin.

Incident Report to relevant authorities

- The principal may notify the Chairperson of the Board of Management and Insurance Company, where necessary of serious incidents.

Parents/guardians and school staff can work together as a team to:

- Prevent behaviours from becoming a problem.
- Give pupils the level of school support they need to succeed.

Disciplinary Procedure: Suspension and Expulsion

The Board of Management is required by law to maintain a level of safety throughout the school and on all school activities consistent with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and discharges this duty through its employees, the principal and staff. Pupils enrolled here in St. Ita's School are obliged to co-operate with and support the schools Code of Behaviour.

In accordance with the Department of Education & Skills 'Rules for National Schools' (130), the obligations on St. Ita's Schools Board of Management under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act (2005) and the guidelines as laid down by the National Welfare Board, it may be necessary to exclude a pupil from the school. The procedure necessary for suspension or for expulsion is set out in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

In certain cases, where all internal processes have been exhausted then the Board of Management will follow the procedure and guidelines as stipulated in the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 24 with regard to suspension and expulsion.

Before serious sanctions of suspension/expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians and where necessary, the National Educational Welfare Board (Educational Welfare Officer) will be utilised as far as possible.

If a pupil's behaviour is of such a continuous and serious nature that it impacts the welfare of him/herself, other pupils or staff, it may be necessary to suspend or exclude the pupil. The Health and Safety of staff as well as the Health and Safety of pupils will be taken into consideration when deciding on a particular course of action. The Board of Management has

a sole responsibility for suspension and expulsion. The Board of Management may then instruct or authorise the Chairperson/Principal to exclude/suspend such a pupil where necessary.

1. The BOM, delegate to the Principal the authority to suspend a pupil up to and including 3 school days
2. The BOM, delegate to the Principal in consultation with the Chairperson of the BOM the authority to suspend a pupil up to and including 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.
3. The BOM may suspend up to 10 school days following a full Board meeting.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPENSION FOR MORE THAN 5 DAYS AND UP TO AND INCLUDING 10 SCHOOL DAYS:

- 1) An emergency BOM meeting will be called.
- 2) If suspension is being invoked, the Principal informs the parents/guardians and states clearly the reasons for the suspension
- 3) Confirmation of the duration of the suspension is provided in writing. The maximum period of an initial suspension is three school days. The letter should confirm the beginning and ending dates of the suspension; the reasons for the suspension and the cancellation of the School Transport Services.
- 4) The Operator/Bus Eireann and the escort should be informed by the school management/class teacher that the transport will not be required during the period of suspension.
- 5) The letter should contain an appointment for a meeting, giving an exact date and time for parents/guardians to accompany the pupil to the school prior to his/her return. The letter should contain expectations that are appropriate to the child's needs and abilities to be accepted and agreed by the pupil/parents/guardians for the return to school.
- 6) The Board of Management should offer an opportunity to appeal the Principal's decision to suspend a student. Pupil/Parents/Guardians should be informed of their rights and how to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (Section 29, Education Act 1998) if the suspension is for 20 days or more.
- 7) In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed, and following a Case Conference involving the interested parties, a pupil may be allowed to attend school for only part of the day, if agreed and in the best interest and safety of the pupil and other pupils in the class. The pupil may be referred with parental permissions to the MDT for the deemed necessary interventions.

SUSPENSION

Suspension will be implemented where the pupil's

- Behaviour has a detrimental effect on the education and welfare of other students.
- Continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to his/her safety or the safety of other pupils or staff.
- Is responsible for injury to his/her own self, other pupils or staff or others.
- Is responsible for serious damage to property.

Suspension allows pupils time with their parent/ guardians to reflect on/ talk about the behaviour, acknowledge the behaviours and seek support to manage and deal with these behaviours, as appropriate. It allows staff the time to plan and seek appropriate support for the pupil.

Where there are repeated instances of behaviours of continuous and serious nature, suspension/ further suspension will be considered where all interventions have failed and have been reviewed.

Depending on the nature and the extent of the behaviour, support will be sought from the MDT, and other agencies such as the National Council for Special Education (NCSE-SENO) and TUSLA Education Support Service.

Under the provisions of Section 24 (4)(a) of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 where a pupil is suspended for a period of six or more days, the principal shall inform the Educational Welfare Officer immediately by notice in writing.

If a period of suspension in excess of three days is intended, a special decision of the Board of Management is required. (Section 11.6 NEWB Guidelines 2008) Parents may be given the opportunity to be heard by the Board before a decision is reached.

Where the total number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/ guardians or the pupil, if over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION

Suspension will be sanctioned where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious and immediate threat to the safety of him/herself, pupils or staff of the school; to allow for additional or alternative interventions to be made. The Board of Management authorises the principal to impose such a suspension in these limited circumstances. This period will not exceed three, except in exceptional circumstances the

principal may consider a longer period of suspension is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. In this case the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management authorises the principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board of Management cannot be convened sooner. The Board of Management places a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

The Parent/ Guardian must accompany the pupil to school for a meeting with the relevant staff prior to his/ her return to school.

REMOVAL OF A SUSPENSION (REINSTATEMENT)

Parents/ Guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that the suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code of behaviour. The principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupils' own safety or that of the other pupil's or staff.

In the event that such an undertaking is not forthcoming, the school Health and Safety Representative, under the direction of the Chairperson of the Board, will carry out a risk assessment on the school environment having the pupil reinstated and will make a judgement based on the result of this risk assessment. The risk assessment will be available for the parent/guardian to view and discuss on request.

A Behaviour Support Plan will be prepared by staff if required. The principal will re-admit the pupil formally back to school and when necessary to the class.

EXPULSION (PERMANENT EXCLUSION)

Expulsion of a pupil will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme circumstances.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, "A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an Education Welfare Officer" (Section 24;4) "It is the right of a Board of Management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of the students is secured." (Section 24; 5)

Before expulsion is considered, significant steps will be undertaken to address the behaviour as outlined below:

- Meeting with parents/ guardians
- Trying to communicate to the pupil about the consequence of his/ her behaviour to the best of their ability, and only in cases where circumstances deem it necessary or appropriate.
- Ensuring all other interventions have been tried, consultation and collaboration with MDT and outside agencies if applicable.

Factors to be considered before expulsion are as follows:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions to date.
- Whether expulsion is an appropriate response.
- The possible impact of expulsion.

APPEALS PROCEDURES

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) Parents/ Guardians (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) against some decisions of the Board of Management including:

- 1) Permanent exclusion from a school
- 2) Cumulative suspension amounting to 20 days or more in any one school year ,
(Curricular 69/20)

Parents will be informed in writing by the Chairperson of the Board of Management on the implementation of the suspension/ expulsion of their entitlement to appeal. Parents/" Guardians will be given a copy of Circular 69/20 and related forms by the principal. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the Parents/ Guardians. The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated.

BULLYING-ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

"Bullying is the unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or a group against another person/and which is repeated over time. It includes relational bullying, cyber bullying, and identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying". Bullying is repeated aggression, whether it be verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

St.Ita's Special School anti-bullying policy is available on our website and will be adhered to in relation to our Code of Behaviour. One crucial consideration of this policy is that some of our pupils, due to their learning disabilities, possibly do not have theory of mind (the intent to bully others)

All parents/ Guardians of pupils will be provided with a copy of this policy on request. Parents/ Guardians of pupils who want clarification of any aspect of this Code of Behaviour/ Behaviour Management Protocol are encouraged to meet with, or contact the principal

REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES:

All school policies and procedures have a bearing on the Code of Behaviour, including but not limited to:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions and Enrolment Policy
- Health and Safety Statement

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Will depend on:

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment.
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers.
- Positive feedback from Teachers, SNAs, Parents/ Guardians and Pupils, where appropriate

These will be displayed in each class.

APPENDIX 1

Appear Calm

Staying calm in both voice and body language. Demonstrate positive body language by trying not to look tense e.g.- arms folded/ waving and breathe deeply. Speaking softly, slowing down and keeping instruction short.

Personal Space

Maintain a safe distance (one meter plus) while ensuring the pupil's safety, keep near an exit if able to do so.

Regulation

Allow the pupil space and time to self-regulate first, before trying any intervention.

Eye Contact

Do not stare at the individual, maintain conversational eye contact, only if comfortable and appropriate for the individual pupil. Give intermittent eye contact to help reassure.

Touch

Avoid touching the individual even if you are familiar with them, as it may not be interpreted by the individual in the manner you intend. Avoiding touching pupil until they have regained control.

Noise

Surrounding noise can be upsetting to an individual, turn off noise and remove any unnecessary environmental sounds. Remove unnecessary demands or requests.

Listen

Listen to what the individual is communicating, sit or kneel while maintaining a safe distance. Make it clear that the child is being listened to. Help the pupil to identify and express their upset and needs. Stay at their level.

Distract

Try to distract/redirect or engage the individual, with minimal language used, in a chat or activity that they like in a discreet manner. Offer a preferred object or activity now or later and ensure it is followed through. Allow the child time to recover from the incident before moving on. Only one staff member's voice to lead the interaction with the pupil. Other staff should not engage with the child.

Remove other people

It can be easier to remove other people from a situation as opposed to the individual who is upset. Allow lead staff member to make this decision.

De-Brief

It is important to talk to all persons involved in the incident, to understand and examine how and why the incident has occurred. The information can assist in future management of incidents and give staff the opportunity to talk about how they feel.

These will be displayed in each class.

APPENDIX 2:

Examples of behaviours of concern

- Throwing objects.
- Running away from the class, the school or when out on trips.
- Damaging your own, other peoples, or school property.
- Verbal abuse of staff or other students.
- Inappropriate touching of staff or other students as outlined in the Stay Safe Programme.
- Bringing in inappropriate or dangerous toys/ games I videos/ DVDs to school.
- Persistent disruption of teaching and learning
- Throwing litter around the school grounds.
- Bullying/harassment in any form.
- Physical or verbal aggression towards others- Behaviours such as fighting, pushing, kicking, spitting, biting, hitting, pulling hair, pinching, scratching, head-butting, bullying or intimidation.
- Any behaviour or activity , which endangers themselves or others.
- Engaging in inappropriate physical displays of affection.
- Persistent behaviour in school causing concern for the safety of others.
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes.

APPENDIX 3:

PROTOCOL FOR HIGH LEVEL CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. Risk Assessment
2. Steps 1 to 6 as below

The following steps are to be followed:

1. Principal is notified immediately post event.
2. Debriefing
3. Parents contacted.
4. Outcome recorded
5. Incident report completed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Management has final responsibility for this policy following consultation with all stakeholders involved.

Timetable for Review: Bi-Annually

Ratification & Communication Term 1 2022/2023

Reviewed by the Board of Management on:

Ratified by Board of Management on _____/_____/_____
Date

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management