



Malahide Portmarnock, Educate Together Secondary

School Positive Behaviour Policy

Roll Number 68308L, Swords Enterprise Park,
Feltrim Road, Drinan, Swords, Co Dublin, K67 W9Y8

Policy Status:
Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management May 2020
Reviewed and Ratified by BOM: 28th November 2022

Mission statement

Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School is committed to an inclusive student-centred educational experience based on collaboration, cooperation and creation. We strive to create a community of academic excellence which is welcoming, democratic, diverse and safe. Our vision is for students to become independent lifelong learners who reach their full potential and become active members of society. In MPETSS we work to develop empathy and an understanding of difference in our ever-changing world.

COMMUNITY - COLLABORATION - CREATION

Introduction

Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School is a new school which opened on 27th of August 2018 in temporary accommodation. Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School Positive Behaviour Policy is the set of practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping and encouraging students to behave well and learn well. Students who attend Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School will be encouraged to reach their full potential mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially, in an atmosphere and environment in which they feel safe, valued and secure and in which respect for self and others is the norm. Our school operates under the direct patronage of Educate Together and there are four underlying principles which form our ethos: We are a co-educational school, democratically run, multi-denominational and child centred.

This Positive Behaviour Policy helps the school community to promote the school's unique ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and minimise unacceptable behaviour. The Positive Behaviour Policy helps students, parents/guardians and staff to work together to achieve a happy, effective and safe school environment. We strive to create an ethos of respect, inclusion and accountability and of commitment to relationships.

This version of Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School Positive Behaviour Policy was initiated in May 2018 in accordance with the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board) guidelines as outlined in "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools" by a working group involving the Interim Board of Management. It was ratified by the Board of Management on Monday th May 2020.

This Positive Behaviour Policy works in conjunction with all other Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School's policies. This Positive Behaviour Policy also applies while on school outings, sporting events and trips.

Guidelines for Behaviour in the School under the Education (Welfare Act), Section 23, states that the Code of Positive Behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school."

The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences wherever it is possible within the confines of large classes.

Each student is expected to:

- Be well behaved, to show respect for self and others and to show kindness and willingness to help others.
- Show respect for the property of the school, other people's property, and their own belongings.
- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Have everything needed for class and to keep his/her personal space and belongings tidy.
- Show a readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict and to show and practice forgiveness. (Restorative Practice)

A positive, proactive approach will be taken towards discipline and every effort will be made to implement this policy in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.

A Whole-School Approach

The Positive Behaviour Policy describes the school's expectations about how each member of the school community (students, staff and parents/guardians) will help to make the school a place of excellence for teaching and learning.

Boards of Management, Principals, teachers, other school staff, parents/guardians and students have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school.

A whole-school approach requires the school to provide opportunities and support for these groups to understand and live up to these responsibilities. This means, for example, that parents/guardians have opportunities to learn how their commitment to, and their relationship with the school can impact on behaviour and learning. Students learn how their behaviour and learning, the learning of other students, and the wellbeing of staff, are linked together. Staff learn how their commitment to, and their relationship with the school can impact on behaviour and learning.

In keeping with the characteristic spirit of our school, this Positive Behaviour Policy recognises the professional autonomy of the teacher alongside the pivotal role of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Our Positive Behaviour Policy will be brought to the attention of:

- All parents/guardians via a written communication from the Principal on any change to the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- All parents/guardians and students during enrolment.
- All staff via staff handbook, staff induction, policy review.
- All students via morning 'Check In' time.
- New students via induction activities for 1st years.
- Parents/guardians and students on re-enrolment each year.
- The school community and general public via the publication of the Positive Behaviour Policy on the school website.
- The school community through student-designed posters on the walls of corridors and in class and on the website
- All students via the teacher as a topic in lessons during the 1st term of each year.
- Parents' Association, Student Council, Staff Meetings, Board of Management. These forums will provide opportunities to share information, attend talks or workshops on behavioural matters and aspects of child and adolescent development. It will also follow the democratic process allowing for discussion.

Parents/guardians and students must sign the enrolment form and the section agreeing to abide by the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

What to do if you have a concern.

Communication is key to positive behaviour in school. We encourage parents/guardians to communicate any concerns they may have about their child by contacting the school office and making an appointment with the relevant staff member in order to explore ways of helping the student.

If you have a problem you have the right to discuss it or make a complaint. Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School has a complaints procedure which is available on request.

Aims

The aims of our Positive Behaviour Policy are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where all students can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, open-mindedness and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognizing the differences between students and the need to accommodate and accept these differences.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To assist parents/guardians and students in understanding the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and to ensure their co-operation with its implementation.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To resolve issues arising in a fair and transparent manner.

In this school we use the Restorative Practice model in order to resolve conflict.

Our Standards:

- Be Ready
- Be Responsible
- Be Respectful

Matrix in student journal regarding how this looks in the school setting.

Attendance

A Positive Learning Environment is enhanced by attendance and participation.

Students are expected to attend school on time every day and get involved in school life. This will enhance personal wellbeing and help build a positive school atmosphere

Notification of a child's absence from school

It is very important to let the school know of your child's absence for any reason.

Every child aged between 6 and 16 must receive an education. That is the law. If you are a parent or guardian of a child aged between 6 and 16 you have a special role to play in ensuring that your child doesn't miss out on his or her education. The National Educational Welfare Board was set up under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

What a Parent/guardian must do if your child cannot be at school

Parents/guardians must upload a note on the iClass App filling in the required sections.

Very often, there will be good reasons for a child not being in school and these will be taken into account if they are explained to the school.

What the school must do if your child misses a lot of school

Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School has a text messaging service to alert parents/guardians of any absences, on the day of absence. The school must tell the National Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) if your child has missed 20 days or more in the school year or if it is concerned that your child is missing too much school. If a school tells TUSLA that your child is missing too much school an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit you to see how they can help to make sure that your child attends school more often.

Regular attendance at school contributes to a good environment for teaching and learning. (Please read in conjunction with our attendance policy, currently being developed).

Restorative Practice: In our school we take a Restorative Practice approach towards resolving conflict. Within this framework, the emphasis is on restoring relationships rather than on exacting punishments. The building, nurturing and repairing of relationships is a key issue in supporting learners in schools. Restorative justice focuses on finding an acceptable way forward for all the parties involved in a dispute.

We recognize that there are three distinct approaches to resolving conflict.

1. Use restorative justice questions

Restorative Questions 1

To respond to challenging behaviour.

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Restorative Questions 2

To help those harmed by others' actions.

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

2. Negotiation:

The students are taught the skills needed to negotiate with others in times of conflict. We teach the students to clearly and directly communicate if another student or a member of staff is behaving in a way that is upsetting them.

The students are encouraged to say 'Stop' if someone is teasing them or annoying them in any way. We consider ourselves to be a telling school and we encourage them to report any issues to staff.

We see this assertive communication as a very important step in each child's personal development. Through our SPHE programme students are asked to take four steps if they find themselves in a conflict situation (i.e. Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk). We also discuss conflict resolution in our Ethics lessons.

3. Mediation:

Mediation is regularly used to help students to resolve conflict. The mediator helps the students in a dispute to resolve their differences amicably and aims to create 'win-

-win' solutions. Mediators encourage the students to communicate their feelings and to give an account of what has happened. In the mediation process students are encouraged to listen and to understand the situation from both sides.

Mediators must be impartial and as non-judgmental as possible.

It is hoped to also train some students as peer mediators in the future.

Arbitration:

Unfortunately, not all conflicts are resolved through negotiation and mediation. Sometimes conflicts are resolved through arbitration where the teacher or principal intervenes and decides whether sanctions are necessary to end a conflict.

Rewards and Acknowledgement of Good Behaviour:

We believe that students are more likely to behave well when the standards are clear, consistent and widely understood and they are given responsibility in the school. Students are offered the opportunity to become members of the student council and Associate Board of Management members.

Students can be acknowledged for exceptional behaviour for example by:

- A quiet word
- Receiving comments on VShare
- Teachers may also send post cards home praising exceptional effort in their subjects.
- A letter/phone call to the parent from the Tutor/Progress Leader
- A letter/phone call to the parent/guardian from the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Award Certificates for different positive behaviour

Interventions

All members of staff have a shared responsibility in operating the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. Visiting staff, student Teachers, Language Assistants etc., are expected to abide by Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together Secondary School's Positive Behaviour Policy. All staff are taken through this in their induction. All staff and visiting staff are also asked to familiarize themselves with the school's policies. Copies of all school policies can be found on the school website.

Subject Teacher

The subject teacher has responsibility for discipline in her/his own classroom and may give extra work or otherwise deal with inadequate work or other low-level behaviour in her/his classroom.

Class Tutor

The Class Tutor supports the Subject Teachers and students, records incidents, monitors attendance and progress and deals with persistent low-level misbehaviour in a restorative way with the student.

Progress Leader

The Progress Leader has overall responsibility for Year Group. If the matter concerns behaviour the Progress Leader will apply the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor offers counselling and support, provides advice to pupils on issues such as subject choice, career guidance and study techniques.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal has responsibility for dealing with matters related to discipline.

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

Board of Management

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that good order is maintained in the school.

Sanctions

Depending on the particular behaviour/issue, the following actions may be taken:

Restorative Practice-to try to help the student amend their behaviour.

Meeting with Tutor/Counsellor/Progress Leader

Note on Vsware/Contact with Parent/Guardian

Detention/Community Service

Further sanctions may follow should the behaviour continue despite interventions to help student improve their behaviour.

Suspension and Expulsion

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 stipulates that a code of behaviour shall specify...'the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned' and 'the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student.'

Suspension: The Principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), in writing, when a 'student is suspended from a recognized school for a period of not less than 6 days ' Parents/guardians should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal and/or the class teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a student is being contemplated.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student.

Grounds for suspension:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of students.
- The student is involved in ongoing bullying and harassment of another student or a staff member. This may be in real life or via Social Media behaviour.
- Smoking/vaping in the school grounds or while representing the school Malahide Portmarnock ETSS
- The student is responsible for the theft of belongings of a member of the school community.
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- Inappropriate use of the Ipad

Note: A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. A record of any suspension will be kept on file.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension will be considered. Aggressive, threatening, violent or sexual behaviour towards a member of staff or a student will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

The Board of Management has authorised the Principal and/or the Chairperson to suspend a student from the school for a maximum initial period of three school days.

Procedures that ensure fairness when excluding a student will include:

- Ensuring other means of intervention and dealing with the behaviour have been tried.
- Parents/guardians will have been invited to the school to discuss the intention to exclude.

Implementing the Suspension:

The Principal shall notify Parents/Guardians, in writing, of the decision to suspend. This will include:

- Letter stating period of suspension - beginning and end dates.
- Reasons for suspension.
- Any programme to be followed by student and/or parent.
- Arrangements for returning to school and any commitments to be entered into by the student and parents/guardians.
- Provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.
- Right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES (Education Act 1998, Section 29).

Following suspension, a plan to reintegrate the student will include, where possible, an arrangement for a member of staff to provide support during the re-integration process. Student contracts will be put in place if necessary for the student and his/her parents/guardians. This will enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student

and parents/guardians. All efforts will be made to support the student to adhere to this contract. It will be expected that the parents/guardians will continue to support their child at all times.

The Board of Management has authorized the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The National Education Welfare Board will be notified if a student is suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days.

Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion): 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 Educational 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 students is secured.' {Section 24(5)}.

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice this should be reserved for the BOM and not be delegated.

Before a student is expelled:

A meeting is held with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change his/her behaviour:

- Ensuring the student understands the consequences of his/her behaviour, should it continue.
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

Serious grounds are:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's presence constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

A fair investigation will have taken place, taking both the parents'/guardians' and the student's perspective into account. Parents/guardians and student will be informed about the complaint. Parents/guardians and student will be given an opportunity to respond. Parents/guardians may be informed by phone or in writing. The BOM, before reaching a decision to exclude a student, will ensure its decision will be reached in an unbiased manner.

The kinds of behaviour that may result in expulsion for first offence:

- A serious threat of violence towards any member of the school community or towards visitors to the school. Also, either when the student is at school or when the student is representing the school.
- Participation in serious damage to school property or buildings.
- The student is responsible for the theft of belongings of a member of the school community.
- Actual violence, verbal or physical assault
- Bringing in or supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault
- Sexual, verbal or physical harassment towards any member of the school community or towards visitors to the school, either when the student is at school or when the student is representing the school.

All the above also apply when students are representing the school at any activity outside the school grounds.

Appeals Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998

Parents/guardians (or students who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including: (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

Parents/Guardians will be informed, in writing, by the Principal of the decision of the Board of Management to permanently exclude or suspend the student.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of their right of appeal, the associated timeframe of 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents/guardians and student.

The Board of Management is responsible for replying to the Dept. of Education and Skills if the school is being investigated and may also prepare an appeal for the Dept. of Education and Skills.

MPETSS Principal:

Aoife Kelly -Gibson:

Chairperson of the Board of Management:

David Graham

Date:

28/11/2022

Please read through this document with your son/daughter to ensure that they understand the content and expectations in school. Please sign below to agree to the addendum to the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Parent/Guardian: _____

Student: _____ Year: _____