

Danu Community Special School

Roll Number 20548N

Code of Behaviour

November 2019

Introduction

Danu Community Special School (CSS) will provide an education for students aged from four to eighteen years old who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and a Moderate or Severe General Learning Disability. Our students have complex needs associated with this diagnosis such as communication difficulties and sensory processing difficulties. The school is under the patronage of DDLETB.

In Danu CSS is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality and partnership in education. The school actively seeks to promote an ethos to provide a safe, warm, welcoming, caring environment where all members of the school community are valued and treated with respect and dignity. We believe that students learn to the best of their ability when they feel happy and secure in school. The school seeks to develop a sense of community and partnership with children, parents and staff. We believe that every member of the school community has an integral part to play in the overall wellbeing of the school.

This Code of Behaviour Policy has been developed by Danu CSS staff in consultation with school stakeholders. This Code is drawn up to ensure compliance with legal requirements and good practice set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School* (NEWB 2008).

The school will provide parents with a copy of the Code of Behaviour before enrolment of their child as a student of the school. Parents/Guardians will be asked to confirm in writing that the code is acceptable to them.

The School

- Supports a positive approach to teaching and learning, classroom management skills and whole school development.
- Works together as a whole team to create a positive atmosphere and climate where each student and staff member feels valued.
- Encompasses an educational approach to assist students to advance their learning and academic progress through a progressive and structured curriculum and the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPS).
- Encourages high expectations of all students.
- Recognises that the quality of teaching, the personal development of students and the quality of relationships in a school are fundamental to developing positive learning attitudes.
- Understands that careful planning and sensitive interventions in a classroom may considerably impact an individual student.

- Promotes an enhanced quality of life and a safe environment for all.
- Supports the ongoing need for delivery of needs-based training for staff.
- Fosters emotional wellbeing of all students and staff.

Rationale

This policy was developed to ensure

- A safe, secure and happy learning environment where our students can grow and develop into confident and capable young adults reaching their full potential.
- That best practice in relation to promoting positive behaviour is maintained at all times throughout the school.
- The school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.

Aims

In devising this Code of Behaviour, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. Our aims are

- To create a positive learning environment that facilitates, encourages and reinforces positive behaviour.
- To create a predictable, safe, structured learning environment for all our students so they can make progress with their education and develop their social, emotional and independence skills.
- To ensure that the individuality of each student is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each student to an education in a relatively disruptive free environment.
- To respect and safeguard the dignity and the individual needs of students.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where students can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote positive behaviour by providing opportunities and supports to enable pupils to make positive behavioural choices, thereby reducing incidents of challenging behaviour.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.
- To teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school and in the community.
- To assist staff, parents/guardians and students in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of this Code of Behaviour and to seek their cooperation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults encountered by the students at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the students and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the students.

The Board of Management

- Is responsible for ensuring that a Code of Behaviour is prepared and implemented in the school.
- Has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for students and staff in the school.
- Provide relevant staff training.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code of Behaviour.

The Principal

- Create and promote a positive school climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for the review of the Code as required.
- Communicate with Parents/Guardians.

Staff

- Implement the Code of Behaviour
- Promote a positive climate in the classroom and in the school community.
- To ensure consistency of response to both acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Teachers

- Create a positive learning environment that facilitates, encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- Ensure all lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of each student.
- Develop appropriate behaviour targets when planning for each individual student.
- In the event of an incident of unacceptable behaviour witnessed by others students it is the teachers' responsibility to acknowledge the behaviour and give students time to discuss their feelings or anxieties after witnessing such behaviour/incident?
- Review an incident of behaviour with staff before meeting with Principal.
- Where necessary write a Behaviour Support Plan which includes parental/guardian and SNA input
- Communicate with Parents/Guardians regularly.

Students

- Are responsible for doing their best to adhere to the Code of Behaviour.
- Are encouraged to understand and practice school rules.
- Are encouraged to cooperate with staff
- Are encouraged to treat other students and staff with respect.

Parents/Guardians

- Support their child in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any issues which may affect their child's behaviour or general well-being.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect.
- To work collaboratively with the staff on the implementation of any behaviour support plans designed for their child.

Communication with Parents/Guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to issues concerning their child's wellbeing and education. A high level of cooperation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in their child's life which may affect the child's behaviour. The following methods of parent/guardian-teacher communication used include

- Formal parent/guardian teacher meeting
- Phone calls from school to home and home to school
- For some students daily communication notes
- Letters/notes from school to home and home to school
- Text a Parent

School Rules

Students can bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. Students need limits set for them in order to feel safe and secure and develop the skills required to function appropriately in the school community. Together we work towards standards of behaviour based on general principles for our school rules

- All students have a right to learn
- All teachers have a right to teach
- Everyone has a right to be safe

The school rules will be adhered to by every student in Danu CSS. A set of photographs illustrating the school rules with our students demonstrating them, will be displayed in the classroom and in the shared area. They are set out by the Board of Management under the grounds of:

- Health and Safety: Physical or verbal aggression towards staff or other students is not acceptable.
- The constant disruption of learning within a classroom or school-wide setting.
- The wilful damage of school property.
- The use of phones/ICT that may invade the privacy of other pupils or staff.

The School Rules are as follows:

- Be a good friend
- Be careful
- Be gentle
- Be honest
- Good Listening
- Do your best

School Incentives

Good behaviour is encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded. There is a whole school approach to affirm and promote good behaviour. Every Friday a weekly class certificate will be given to a student who has followed the school rules. Alongside awarding weekly certificates a variety of age/interest appropriate incentives to encourage/reward good behaviour. Examples of some incentives that are regularly used include:

- Verbal praise and encouragement for positive behaviour
- Reward systems such as token boards, choosing a preferred activity
- Given responsibility of important jobs in the classroom or in the school.
- A positive comment sent home in a student's communication journal 'good news'
- Extra time on preferred activity
- Going on social outings.
- In addition, each class teacher will develop and maintain class rules appropriate to the age and needs of the students. The class teacher and SNAs will aid and assist the implantation of these class rules.

Limitations

This document is not designed to list all the possible violations which may arise or to state the possible consequences of unacceptable behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the student, the teacher, the principal and parents/guardians of students to be used to solve individual problems.

Unacceptable Behaviour

Any staff member who deals with an incident of unacceptable behaviour must report to/consult with the class teacher. The class teacher will deal with any incidents of unacceptable behaviour and will report any incidents to the principal.

Instances of a **minor** nature are dealt with by the appropriate staff. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour, Parents/Guardians will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and /or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviours listed below, while not exhaustive, may be considered **serious** offences but need to be qualified on an individual basis. Incidents will be logged on an Incident Report form that will be submitted to the Principal. Patterns of behaviour will be analysed with a view to identifying "triggers". Functional Analysis will be carried out by the staff in the classroom. Data on behaviours will be used to draw up individual positive Behaviour Support Plan. This Plan will be drawn up by the class team and MDT in consultation with Parents/Guardians to be adhered to and reviewed regularly.

Examples of Serious Unacceptable Behaviours

- Behaviours that interferes with teaching and learning
- Behaviour that compromises the safety of an individual or a group
- Persistent refusal to take instruction
- Damaging or throwing property during school activities and not responding to immediate correction
- Abusive/ violent language directed towards other students or staff member. Harassment by word, action or gesture. Threatening behaviour towards other students or staff.
- Bullying to the point where another student or staff member is upset or frightened.
- Any Physical attack
 - hitting another student or staff member
 - kicking another student or staff member

- biting another student or staff member
- pulling the hair of another student or staff member
- spitting at another student or staff member

While we endeavour to achieve the highest level of good behaviour amongst our students, we recognise that when implementing the policy, consideration must always be given to the level of understanding of the individual student. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.

Bullying

Parents will be expected to cooperate with the school at all times when dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the schools Anti-Bullying Policy.

Sanctions

The aim of any sanction is to try stop the behaviour reoccurring. A sanction is a form of positive intervention and should be used to help the student learn about acceptable behaviour and skills. Teachers should take particular care that they help the student to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour and be appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the student. Sanctions, as far as possible should relate to and be applied as near as possible to the unacceptable behaviour and it should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

Students will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area as a sanction, except on the grounds of health & safety.

While sanctions may have to be put in place, the focus will be on using proactive strategies to find the message behind the unacceptable behaviour and what is being communicated, the need to teach alternative, functionally equivalent skills. Danu CSS focuses on a low-arousal approach and creating as therapeutic an environment as is possible so that our students feel content and safe in their school. Strategies may be developed and implemented to assist the student and may include individual timetables, a Behaviour Support Plan with specific incentive schemes, and development of appropriate management techniques. These measures will be reviewed, monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis for individual students.

Challenging Behaviour

In the event of extreme challenging behaviour where the principal and class team deem there to be a Health and Safety concern for staff and students, Parents/Guardians will be contacted to collect the student from school at the time of the incident.

Suspension/Expulsion

For serious incidents where the health and safety of others is compromised, suspension/expulsion needs to be considered by the Principal and the Board of Management. Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Suspension/Expulsion will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Suspension may be considered for **gross** misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour leading to a health and safety risk. In the case of a gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to secure the safety of the students/staff, the board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three days.

Every reasonable effort will be made to contact the Parents/Guardians prior to suspension. Parents will also receive details of suspension in writing. In extreme circumstances, emergency services may be contacted.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 200. The BOM has the authority to expel a student. A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds and will only be considered under exceptional circumstances after every effort has been made to support and assist students and to address the severe challenging behaviours. The NEWB (2008) guidelines and procedures on expulsion will be followed. A copy of the NEWB Guidelines is available at https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf.

Before suspending or expelling a student, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)

In the case of immediate suspension, Parents/Guardians will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case upon their return to school. This meeting will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the misbehaviour, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour. The minutes of this meeting will be taken by the teacher and the parents can request these minutes if desired.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than 3 days by the Principal. If a proposal in excess of 3 days is being considered, the matter will be referred to the BOM. A period of up to 5 days may be sanctioned by the Chairperson in circumstances where a meeting of the BOM cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The BOM can place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension. The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current year for 20 days or more.

Following or during a period of suspension, the Parents/Guardians may apply to have the student reinstated to the school. The Principal must be satisfied that a suspended student will not constitute a risk to the student's own safety or that of other student's or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a renewed or new behaviour plan for the student to ensure their safety and the safety of others. The student will be readmitted to school as soon as a renewed or new plan is in place.

If a new plan to ensure the safety of the student and others cannot be put in place the student will be suspended from the school on the day following the incident until such a plan can be put in place. NEWB Guidelines 2008) will be followed.

Following suspension the Parents/Guardians must return to school with their child on the first morning after the fixed suspension period. The Parents/Guardians will meet with the class teacher and SNA's to discuss a plan for going forward and to discuss the incident/unacceptable behaviours.

Appeals Procedure

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;

- Permanent exclusion from a school.
- Suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year (Curricular 22/02).

Appeals must be made within 42 days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the Parents/Guardians.

Record Keeping

Staff will record details of any incidents on an Incident Report form that will be submitted to the Principal. Incident Reports will be stored in a designated file within the school system. Documentation related to Suspension/Expulsion is stored by the Principal.

A standardised system of Record Keeping, Monitoring and Recording Behaviour will be implemented throughout the school. This will enable the school to balance subjective opinion with factual information about the student's behaviour. It will use consistent and comprehensible terminology.

Regular monitoring will:

- Alert school staff of emerging problems for a particular student.
- Show trends and patterns, for example, the time of day, location or circumstances associated with either poor behaviour or instances of particularly good behaviour.
- Provide information about successes and what is working well.
- Avoid the risk of labelling a student unfairly from class to class or year to year, by providing factual data for any judgement about behaviour

A standardised record system will allow the school to track each student's behaviour and check whether efforts to change behaviour are working. All interventions aimed at helping the student to manage unacceptable behaviour will also be recorded, as will any sanction used, together with the reason why the sanction was imposed.

A written record of behaviour may be kept in relation to a student's behaviour in the classroom or when engaging in any other school activity.

Behaviour will be recorded on individual record sheets. Current behaviour record sheets will be kept by the class teacher. At all times records of behaviour will be treated as confidential.

Notification of a Child's Absence from School

A Code of Behaviour Policy must describe the procedures to be followed by parents when they are notifying the school about a child's absence. The procedures to be followed by parents in relation to a child's absence are:

- Parents must let the school know of their child's absence for any reason

- Parents must inform the school on the first day of absence by phoning the school and on the child's return to school they must bring in a letter explaining their absence.
- Parents can inform the school in the communication book, or phone the school, if they know in advance of the absence.
- Parents need to give detailed information to the school about the reasons for absence following a period of absence.
- Failure to notify the school about a student's absence will be followed up by phone call by the teacher.
- Parents need to provide the school with a Doctor's certificate for significant absences due to illness.
- Parents will be notified when their child's attendance is a cause of concern (15 days).
- TUSLA may be notified when a child has been absent for 20 days.

Success Criteria

- Observation of positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school community.
- Practices and procedures listed in this Policy being consistently implemented by teachers
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and students.

Review and Ratification

This Policy may be reviewed annually and will be reviewed by November 2021.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 14/11/19.

Signed: *Nicola Spiteres* Date: 14/11/19

Chairperson, Board of Management / School Manager