



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

Administrative Policy: Code of Behaviour

Introduction:

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Convent School is setting out, in this statement, the code of behaviour of the school, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000; and using the guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), 2008.

The Board trusts that this statement of policy will be of assistance to parents and guardians.

The Board also wishes to state that the Chairperson and Principal of the school will be willing to clarify any matters arising from this policy statement.

1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines from the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), which were issued in May 2008. A Code of Behaviour has been in existence in Our Lady of Mercy for many years now; and it has been reviewed a number of times. On this occasion, the existing code was audited, reviewed and revised as required by the NEWB guidelines. All of the members of the school community had an opportunity to contribute to this review i.e. the Board of Management, students, parents, all staff (including teachers, SNAs, the school secretary, caretaker and cleaner), and any others who are in regular contact with the students. Working together on the code provided the school with an opportunity to:

- help to build a shared commitment to the values and ethos of the school;
- give all the partners in the school community a sense of ownership of the code;
- create consensus about the kinds of behaviour and relationships that foster learning;
- build a shared understanding of how **bad change to disruptive** behaviour affects learning; and
- strengthen positive relationships of respect and trust.

2. Vision and Aims



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

In devising this code of behaviour, consideration has been given both to the Mission statement of this school and to the general aims of Primary Education.

The Mission Statement of Our Lady of Mercy Convent School, Booterstown is as follows:

To educate, encourage and celebrate our children and the wider school community as together we grow in body, mind and spirit.

Tá ár dTiarna linn.

The Aims of Primary Education (DES 1999) are:

- (i) - to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- (ii) - to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- (iii) - to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

Mindful of this Mission Statement and of the Aims of Primary Education, the main aim of this revised Code of Behaviour of Our Lady of Mercy Convent School is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated, while acknowledging the right of all children to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. Therefore the code has the following goals:

- creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour;
- creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning;
- encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and for their behaviour;
- helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens;
- building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents; and
- ensuring that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of the members of the school community are widely known and understood.

3. Content

Audit:

The objectives of the audit were to (i) to identify aspects of the current code that are working well; (ii) to reveal any differences between the practice suggested by the Guidelines and the operation of the code: and (iii) to identify areas that the Guidelines suggest should be covered but that are not addressed by the existing code.

At a Staff meeting in October 2016, it was agreed that the existing Code of Behaviour was serving the school very well in practical terms; and that it was generally understood among the members of the school community that there were high expectations in relation to good behaviour. However, there were a number of areas of the existing code that were identified as requiring revision in order to make it more readable and user friendly. It was generally felt that the code was too long and



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

repetitive and would put parents off reading it .In particular it was felt that some of the sanctions listed in the code were not used or suitable and should be removed. It was also felt that the School Rules and **Expectations** needed to be discussed with Student Council and amended. After making some very small changes, these amended rules were approved by staff. Finally, it was regarded as essential for the success of any revised Code that a consultative process involving the whole school community would be adopted. At a subsequent BOM meeting, it was therefore decided that the draft revised code would be circulated to all parents/guardians requesting that comments would be returned to BOM.

Principles of revised code of behaviour:

To enable achievement of the goals as set out above under '2.Vision and Aims'), the following basic principles listed in the NEWB Guidelines were recommended for use by all members of the school community as a standard by which to evaluate the draft revised code of behaviour:

- Providing clarity;
- Affirming that everyone's behaviour matters;
- Focusing on promoting good behaviour;
- Balancing needs;
- Recognising that relationships are crucial;
- Focusing on personal responsibility;
- Ensuring fairness and equity;
- Promoting equality;
- Recognising educational vulnerability;
- Attending to the welfare of students;
- Attending to the welfare of staff; and
- Promoting safety and freedom from threat.

A whole-school approach to the code of behaviour

In Our Lady of Mercy, it is recognised that the learning programme in the school, and how it is presented to students, has a significant effect on student behaviour.

Therefore, we strive to use all of the policies and practices in the school to create an ethos that supports good behaviour. School management and staff recognise that the following aspects of school life may impact on behaviour:

-Relationships among teachers and students; change to **all members of the school community**

- Students' sense of belonging to the school community
- School and Classroom environment
- Relevance of curriculum to students' lives
- Classroom Management
- Break-time management
- Pupil having all the required materials needed in school
- Making adjustments for, and valuing, diversity; and preventing any form of discrimination
- Parental involvement



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

Every effort is made to ensure that the above aspects are working to promote good behaviour. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement can be utilised by teachers.

Setting standards of behaviour:

The standards of behaviour expected should create a positive environment for teaching and learning. The school **Expectations** (see Appendix 1) translate standards into practical guidelines about the behaviour expected of students; and reflect the age and stage of development of the students. The students (via their representatives on the Student Council) are involved in developing the current school rules, which have been:

- * kept to a minimum;
- * written in clear, simple language;
- * stated positively;

In Our Lady of Mercy, these rules are communicated and referred to regularly; and teachers and SNAs check that they are communicated in a way that students with special educational needs (SEN) can understand. All adults in the school (staff and parents/guardians) have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other.

Promoting good behaviour:

Promoting good behaviour is the main goal of the code; and this requires consistency across the teaching team. Strategies employed to encourage and promote good behaviour in Our Lady of Mercy include the following:

- positive everyday interactions between teachers and students;
 - good school and class routines;
 - clear boundaries and rules for students;
 - that the students understand what is expected of them;
 - recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour. The use of rewards is part of the strategy.
 - involving students in the preparation of the school (and classroom) rules.
- Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school.

Responding to inappropriate behaviour:

As part of the whole-school approach, school staff members in Our Lady of Mercy have an agreed ladder of intervention in response to inappropriate behaviour. Three levels at which intervention may take place are outlined below. At each level, parental support may be sought, if appropriate:

| Levels of Intervention | |
|-------------------------------|--|
|-------------------------------|--|



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Support for all | Most students behave appropriately; but occasional, minor misbehaviour is attended to routinely and effectively through the skill of the classroom teacher. |
| 2. Additional support for some students | Some students need active intervention to help them to manage their behaviour. Additional inputs or interventions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way;● behaviour contracts;● referral to another adult who can work with the student (pastoral care e.g. the principal;● communication with home. |
| 3. Specialised support for a small minority of students | A small minority of students may show particularly challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. The principal and school staff build links with any local support services, as required e.g. NEPS, HSE, NCSE etc. |

Furthermore, the BOM of Our Lady of Mercy believes that bullying and harassment are totally unacceptable behaviours and has policies to prevent or address both bullying and harassment (available for inspection in the school office).

Sanctions are used in a way that ensures that the following principles are adhered to:

- (a) Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour. Hence they are used to defuse (and not escalate) a situation; and are timely and fair.
- (b) Sanctions are used consistently.
- (c) Students and parents know what sanctions are used in the school.
- (d) Sanctions are proportionate.
- (e) Sanctions are appropriate to the age and developmental stage of a pupil.

Sanctions that are considered appropriate for use in Our Lady of Mercy include the following:

- verbal reprimand;
- removal from the group (jn class);
- withdrawal of privileges;



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

- Detention during a break
- Prescribing additional work
- Referral to Principal Teacher
- Communication with parents/guardians
- formal report to the Board of Management (only in the case of particularly serious misbehaviour). See also sections below on Suspension and Expulsion, as required by the NEWB guidelines.

Implementing the code of behaviour:

The essential elements of implementing the code of behaviour are as follows:

- communicating the code and securing parental support;
- teaching the students the behavioural and learning skills they need;
- monitoring behaviour in the school and reviewing the code, as necessary.

(a) Communicating the code and securing parental support:

As part of the Admission process, parents/guardians are supplied with a copy of the Code of Behaviour. They are asked to sign the Code as a condition of admission to the school. Parental understanding and support for the implementation of the code are strengthened through activities such as: (i) encouraging parents to share information about anything that might affect a student's behaviour in school; (ii) alerting parents early to concerns about a student's behaviour; (iii) information offered through the Pa, such as talks or workshops; and (iv) parental involvement in reviewing school policies. Every effort is made by the Principal Teacher and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed.

(b) Teaching the students the behavioural and learning skills they need.

The pupils are taught the **Expectations** and are helped to understand the purpose of the Code..

(c) Monitoring behaviour in the school and reviewing the code, as necessary.

The school needs to know how the code is working and how well it is achieving its goals. Therefore, at each staff meeting, staff members are given the opportunity to discuss any concerns in relation to implementation of the code. Where the monitoring information indicates any trends of concern, a decision might be taken to review all or part of the code. Also, teachers shall keep a written record of all incidents of serious misbehaviour, as well as a record of improvements **in the disruptive behaviour of pupils**. Students are normally told when a record is being made about their behaviour, but this is not always appropriate for younger students.



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

(b) Expulsion:

A student is expelled from a school *'when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'*

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. However, expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that would only be taken in extreme cases of persistent unacceptable behaviour. As a result, the BOM of Our Lady of wishes to state that this is a sanction that it does not expect to have to impose.

As in the case of suspension, the BOM has agreed that the procedures for expulsion outlined in the NEWB publication: *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'* p.82-86 would be employed by the board, if required

Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought, also, from support services within the wider community, e.g. Community Care Services provided by the HSE.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management:

- (i) has overall responsibility for ensuring that a code of behaviour is prepared in the school;
- (ii) should make sure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to be involved in work on the code of behaviour;
- (iii) should formally record the adoption of the code of behaviour;
- (iv) must publish its policies on admissions, participation, suspension and expulsion; and
- (v) should submit the code of behaviour to the patron for approval.

The Principal

- (i) leads the audit and review of the code of behaviour; and
- (ii) has overall responsibility for ensuring that it is implemented in the school.

Teachers and other staff members

- (i) (in the review and updating of the code), bring their professional expertise in understanding the links between behaviour and learning, their experience of what



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

works to help students to behave well, and their knowledge of the school and of the school community; and

(ii) (each teacher) has responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour within his/her own classroom, whilst also sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/Guardians

(i) (in the review and updating of the code), contribute to the process by drawing on their expectations, insights and experience; and

(ii) reinforce at home the messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy school and that give consistent messages to students about how to treat others.

Students

(i) (in the review and updating of the code), contribute to the process by having their experience, insights and expectations recognised and used; and

(ii) (learn to take) take personal responsibility for their behaviour and for each other's wellbeing.

5. Implementation Date

The procedures outlined in this policy will be effective from 1st December 2016.

6. Timetable for Review

The operation of the procedures outlined in the policy above will be reviewed and, if necessary amended, every three years; and/or earlier in the event of necessity.

7. Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management and was communicated to all staff, parents/guardians and students (as appropriate).

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Proposed date of next review: November 2023



Our Lady of Mercy Convent School

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin

☎ 01 2884223 ✉ ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com 🌐 <http://www.ourladyofmercy.ie>

Appendix 1

We will try our very best to:

Be there and be on time

Bí ann agus bí in am.



Be proud of yourself and be proud to be an Our Lady of Mercy girl.

Bí bródúil.



Be kind and show respect

Bí go deas.



Look out for others and include

Cuir fáilte roimh gach duine.

everybody.



Our expectations are:

1. Wear the correct uniform on the correct day with no dangling jewellery.
2. Walk in a single file on the left-hand side.
3. Never open the main doors of the school to anyone.
4. No climbing on the bars or the trees.
5. Always sit in your seat at lunch.