



## **Our Lady of Mercy Convent School**

Rosemount Terrace, Booterstown, Co. Dublin, A94V656

☎ 01 2884223    ✉ [ourladyofmercyoffice@gmail.com](mailto: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**



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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

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;



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- 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

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.



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### 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	
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"><li>● setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way;</li><li>● behaviour contracts;</li><li>● referral to another adult who can work with the student (pastoral care e.g. the principal);</li><li>● communication with home.</li></ul>
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.



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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 (in class);
  - Communication with parents/guardians
  - withdrawal of privileges;
  - Prescribing additional work
  - Referral to Principal Teacher (following communication with teacher, and this to be communicated to parents)
  - 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.

### Incident Report Form

An incident report form will be completed for incidents the teacher or principal deem as serious, and warrant recording, and reflection. Please see appendix 2. These forms must be signed by the principal and parents, and are kept in the student files in principals office.

### Suspension and Expulsion:

#### Suspension:

Suspension, but in school and outside school may be used as a sanction where all other sanctions have been explored, interventions have been carried out, or a severe behaviour has been identified. Communications to parents/guardians regarding the suspension of a pupil, or the possibility of considering suspension as a sanction, will be in writing. Procedures as outlined in the NEWB publication 'developing a code of behaviour guidelines for schools (section 11) would be employed by the Board of Management. Please note the principal is able to suspend a student, if the suspension is under 3 days, and approval is received from the chairperson of BOM, and parents/Guardians.

#### 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.



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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.

For more information, Please see the NEWB guidelines here:

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

### 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.

### 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.

### Bí Cinealta:

Our school's Code of Behaviour is rooted in the core values of the Cineáltas policy—kindness, respect, inclusion, and empathy. It promotes positive relationships and restorative practices to support pupil wellbeing and prevent bullying. Aligned with Cineáltas, the Code encourages a whole-school approach where every member of the community plays a role in fostering a safe and respectful environment.

## **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



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(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 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025

## **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: *M. O'Malley* (Chairperson)

Dated: 30/09/25 (Chairperson)

Signed: *John O'Boyle* (Principal)

Dated: 30/9/25 (Principal)



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**Proposed date of revision: March 2029**

**Proposed date of next review: November 2025**

### **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

Bí bródúil.

Be kind and show respect

Bí go deas.

Look out for others and include everybody.

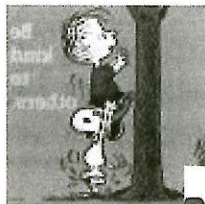
Cuir fáilte roimh gach duine.

#### **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.



Mercy girl.



**LOOK!**



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### Incident Record Form

**Child's Name:**

**Date and time of incident:**

**Description of incident:**

**Place incident occurred:**

**Consequence:**

**Further Comment (If necessary)**

**Parent contacted?**

Yes

No

**Name of parent contacted (If necessary):**

**Follow up:**

**Teacher Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Signature (if necessary)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature (if necessary)** \_\_\_\_\_



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### Behaviour Reflection

Name:

Date:

**You have made a choice to do something that means you need to stop and think about the following things:**

**1. What was my behavior?**

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**2. What were the reasons for me behaving like this?**

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**3. How did my behavior affect others?**

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**4. What's my plan to improve my behavior?**

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**5. What do I need to consider when making future choices?**

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**Signed:**