



Benincasa School

Code of Behaviour

Introduction

Mission Statement

Founded by the Dominican Sisters at Sion Hill in the late 1950s, Benincasa was included in the Department of Education and Science system in 1962. Benincasa is a Catholic school under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Trust and the patronage of the Archbishop of the Diocese of Dublin. The school offers a specialised education to children who for personal / emotional reasons are unable to benefit from mainstream education.

Based on a Catholic philosophy and the Dominican ethos the school strives to nurture the dignity and uniqueness of each child, to include the child's family and to avail of the supports which can be accessed. Mindful of the right of the child to have access to the highest quality education appropriate to needs, Benincasa strives to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in a supportive and caring environment taking into consideration the need of each child.

Benincasa School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly, learning environment, where children, parents, staff and Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

The school community of parents, school staff and Board of Management have a central role to play in the children's social and moral development in the same way as it does in their academic development. As a community it is recognised that in seeking to define 'acceptable standards of behaviour' it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations to be fulfilled. The children bring to school a wide variety of life experiences and it is the goal to guide and encourage each child towards standards of behaviour which are acceptable and in keeping with a school setting based on the basic principles of respect, honesty, consideration and responsibility for the whole school community.

Rationale.

The review of the Code of Behaviour was conducted to ensure that it complies with legal requirements and good practice as set out in 'Developing a Code of Behaviour 'Guidelines for Schools'. (National Education Welfare Board 2008), it is also a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 23 (1) which refers to the obligation on schools to

prepare a Code of Behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. The policy has been revised in consultation with all the school partners including Board of Management, Staff, pupils and parents. This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with legislation as well as all relevant policies and procedures including:

The Education Welfare Act 2000

The Child Protection and Safety Statement

The Anti Bullying Policy

Health and Safety

Grievance Procedures

Data Protection

The policy is also required to put in place procedures which will ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in an ordered, secure and disruptive-free environment. The Code must act in accordance with legal obligations and must be accompanied by a process of accountability.

School Ethos

Benincasa is a school for children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties under the Patronage of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin and the trusteeship of Le Chéile. In accordance with the Catholic and Dominican ethos of Benincasa, pupils and staff in the school have the right to:

- recognition of a unique identity
- be treated with respect and dignity
- learn and work in a safe environment
- be protected from any form of abuse

Pupils and their parents or guardians have further right to:

- individual consideration of needs by staff who have responsibility for the children's protection.
- expect staff to undertake duties and responsibilities in accordance with the school's policies.
- be informed of the schools Behaviour Policy and other relevant policies including policy on bullying and complaints as well as the expected conduct of pupils and staff.
- Be informed about the school's complaints procedure

Where does the Policy apply?

The standards and expectations contained in the Code of Behaviour policy apply in the school and in any situation where the student, although outside the school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities and attendance at events organised by the school. Where a student is alleged to have engaged in serious misbehaviour outside school, when not under the care or responsibility of the school, a judgement whether or not the code of behaviour applies. (The school Board may need to get legal advice where the situation is complex).

Our Vision

It is our vision to provide a happy and secure environment which is conducive to the learning and personal development of each child. To help us achieve this vision, the support and co-operation of pupils, parents and staff is essential. Our guiding vision is to inculcate in each pupil a sense of belonging to and pride in Benincasa School. Pupils, parents, teachers and other staff are expected to uphold the ethos of the school in a spirit of co-operation and partnership.

The school places great emphasis on encouraging positive behaviour in pupils and programmes will be implemented in the classrooms which will encourage this (SPHE, Grow In Love religion programme etc.) Good behaviour is based on good relations among parents, children and staff. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community with the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, parents and pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair, consistent manner where the limits of behaviour are clearly defined and children become familiar with the consequences of behaviour outside these limits. The over-riding principle governing the code is respect – respect for ourselves and others, property and for the environment.

While the Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school, within the school, the overall day-to-day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal, staff and students. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within the classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

Aims of the Code of Behaviour

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour.
- To create a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning.
- To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- To encourage students to take personal responsibility for learning and for their behaviour.

- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights and needs of others.
- To help young people to mature into responsible participating citizens.
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships of mutual support among students, staff and parents.
- To ensure consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour.
- To ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood.
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice is at the core of our school's policy. The Principal has trained in Restorative Practice and works in conjunction with staff, who are all trained in C.P.I, to further enhance their skills in managing behaviours of concern. This is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it, to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. It gives the children an opportunity to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The code of behaviour should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Pupil behaviour in class
- Pupil behaviour in the playground
- Policy on Pupil behaviour in the school environment and behaviour on school outings
- Policy on School attendance
- Policy on Promoting positive behaviour in the school
- Policy on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour
- Policy on Suspension/Expulsion

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that policies are in place and are being implemented in the school. The whole school community of staff, pupils, parents and others is responsible for supporting and implementing these policies on an ongoing basis in the school.

Adult Behaviour:

Responsibility of Adults/Expectations of Adults

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

Board of Management

The Board of management is expected to:

- provide a comfortable, safe environment.
- uphold the characteristic spirit on the school and be accountable to the patron in this respect.
- to consult and keep the patron informed of decisions and proposals.
- support the principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Formally record the adoption of the code of behaviour, commencement date and decisions about when the code will be reviewed and ratify the code.
- ensure the Code is communicated to the whole school community in a coherent format.

The Principal

The principal is expected to:

- promote a positive climate in the school
- ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- arrange for a review of the code every four years (Board of Management term), or earlier if required.
- Bring the code to the attention of all staff including new members

School Staff

Teachers/SNA are expected to:

- Be familiar with, support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- be cognisant of their duty of care.
- create a safe, welcoming atmosphere for their pupils.
- praise desirable behaviour.
- facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential.
- be courteous, consistent and fair with pupils and parents.
- keep opportunities for disruption to a minimum being alert to individual triggers for negative behaviour.
- keep record of serious/gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of minor negative behaviour.
- provide support for colleagues.
- Formulate and execute behaviour plans in consultation with the Principal and parents/guardians where appropriate.

Parents/Guardians

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their children attend school regularly.
- encourage their children to follow the school's Code of Behaviour

- make an appointment beforehand if they need to see a class teacher. In the event that a parent/guardian needs to see a class teacher urgently, arrangements will be made.
- treat all members of the school community with respect.
- provide a note for all absenteeism via the Homework Journal or Aladdin
- inform class teacher of any change of collection procedure for their children.
- co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulty to others.
- communicate to the school problems which may affect their child's behaviour.

Expectations

Staff can expect to:

- be treated with respect.
- Work in a well-maintained physical environment relatively free from disruption.
- get support and co-operation from colleagues and parents in order to achieve the school's aims and objectives.
- be listened to and participate in decision-making, which affects their own work and that of the school in general.
- work in an atmosphere that encourages professional development.
- get support and professional advice from the Board of Management, Department of Education and Skills, the National Education Welfare Board, the National Council for Special Education, the National Educational Psychological Services and TUSLA to help to cater for the psychological, emotional and physical needs of their pupils.
- have grievances dealt with and use the agreed procedure – referral to Principal/Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Parents

Parents can expect to:

- be treated with respect.
- have a safe and welcoming environment for their child.
- obtain recognition for individual differences among pupils having due regard for the resources that are available.
- have fair and consistent procedures applied to the school's dealings with pupils.
- receive progress reports in accordance with agreed school policy (P.T. meetings and end of year reports)
- receive information on school's policies and procedures.
- Have complaints dealt with according to agreed procedures i.e. Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA Complaints Procedure – see Appendix H)

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Communication of the Code of Behaviour (including Anti-Bullying Policy) to the School Community.

- *Incoming students:* A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy will be given to parents.
- Parents/guardians will be required to sign an undertaking supporting the policy. Failure to do so will result in refusal to admit a pupil and withdrawal of offer of a school place.
- *Current students:* A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy will be distributed to the parents/guardians of current students following this review and ratification of the policy.
- All staff have been involved in this review. A copy of the Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy will be distributed to all staff members and to members of the Board of Management following ratification of the policy.
- The school's Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying is available on the school website benincasa.ie

Success Criteria.

The success of this policy will be measured against its success in promoting positive behaviour in the school and in preventing and dealing with inappropriate behaviour when it occurs. Its success will be measured against the practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers and being supported by the parent body of the school. Feedback from pupils, parents and staff will also inform this decision.

Review and Evaluation

This policy, or sections thereof, may need updating arising from changes to legislation, Circulars from the Department of Education and Skills or in light of events or experiences.

Approval by the Board of Management.

This document was approved by the Board of Management.

Maighread Ní Ghallachóir Chairperson

Date: 13/02/2025.

Challenging Behaviour

Definition

Challenging behaviour is “behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; drastically reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger; and makes the possibilities for future placement difficult.” (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996)

These behaviours include the following categories: Self-injurious behaviour: aggressive behaviour that harms others: non-compliance: disruptive, nuisance or threatening behaviour to others: absconding: attention seeking: inappropriate sexual behaviour: destruction of property: socially inappropriate behaviour: substance/alcohol abuse: temper tantrums: passive challenging behaviour.

Children are encouraged and guided to develop respect for themselves, other children and all adults with whom they come in contact. The following behaviours are not acceptable:

- **Aggressive behaviour:** pinching, biting, scratching, punching/slapping/pushing or pulling, kicking, head butting, pulling hair, using objects against people and themselves.
- **Non-compliance:** lying down, non co-operation, resistance to teaching, refusing to do things.
- **Disruptive, nuisance or threatening behaviour:** shouting, screaming, swearing, verbal abuse, remarks/discrimination and curses. Gestures or threatens to harm. Teasing, arguing, interrupting, obstructing, taking food or drink from others, setting off fire alarm, invading personal space.
- **Absconding:** wandering outside the classroom without permission, running away or trying to run away.
- **Attention seeking:** constantly misbehaving in order to seek attention.
- **Sexually inappropriate behaviour:** inappropriate sexual language or sexual gestures including inappropriate comments about the sexuality of others (peers/staff).
- **Destruction of property:** damage to property belonging to self, other children or adults or damage to school property.
- **Socially inappropriate behaviour:** spitting, coughing in the direction of another, interrupting others, provoking others, making inappropriate comments.
- **Substance and alcohol abuse:** drinking any alcoholic drinks within school hours or before coming to school, using any other substances at any time.
- **Temper tantrums:** outbursts of bad temper.

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- **Temper tantrums:** outbursts of bad temper.
- **Passive challenging behaviour:** glaring, refusing to respond, averting gaze, withdrawal.

Minor challenging behaviour:

Will be dealt with at class level and privileges will be withdrawn as appropriate.

- Will be written up in each child's Incident Book.
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students.

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing

- will be written in the child's Incident Book
- will be reported to parents/guardians
- appropriate and proportionate consequences

Damage to Property - procedures

- child will be spoken to by staff directly involved
- will be reported to class teacher and written up in child's incident book.
- will be reported to parents/guardians
- property will be replaced or paid for, money will be logged and a record kept of money owed.
- a written apology will be given to the owner of the property, signed by parent

Aggressive behaviour – threats

- will be written in child's report sheet and recorded in Incident Book
- will be reported to parents/guardians

Aggressive behaviour – assaults

- will be written up in the child's Incident Book.
- will be written up in the Health and Safety Book which is held by the School Safety Officer
- will be notified to the Health and Safety Authority if an adult is absent from work for more than three days as a result
- will be reported to parents/guardians
- following this assault, the child will be warned that if another assault is made, the child will be suspended for one day. Normally a targeted assault will receive one chance, on second assault suspended if appropriate. However, this may change depending on the severity of the assault.
- If a child is suspended for a day, a parent will accompany the child to the school on the child's return
- If consistent assaults are made on a child or adult, the child will be suspended for more than one day with a meeting held to discuss possible reduced time table or if the placement is suitable
- Written apology, signed by parent will be given to person assaulted.
- Class exclusion
- Where appropriate, the child's name will be given to the Juvenile Liaison Officer.

Serious Challenging Behaviour

Serious offences will be dealt with using procedures from Developing a Code of Behaviour from NEWB

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher.
- A written report will be made on the incident and kept in the pupil's file in the office and recorded in the Incident Book.
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed/ review behaviour plan after each incident.
- If behaviour persists, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will speak to the child and give a warning. Pertinent outside agencies will be kept informed so that plans can change and evolve accordingly.
- If the behaviours continue, contact will be made with parents/guardians with a view to drawing up a behavioural plan.
- In the event of the situation not improving, the child will be suspended by the Principal for one day(The Chairperson will be informed). Internal suspension will be used for M1 (The youngest class)
- For the next serious infringement, a suspension of two days will be given.
- Further serious infringements may warrant longer suspensions of up to 5 days. This will be brought to the attention of the Chairperson.
- Continuous disruptions and/or violent behaviour may result in a decision to expel the pupil. This will be considered where the student's behaviour is a course of persistent and significant disruption to the learning of others.

- Where the pupil's presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the health and safety of him/herself and others.
- If no improvement is made the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management for consideration and decision as to what actions should be taken.
- When the child has had 5 days suspension, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- For long suspensions in exceptional circumstances, the matter will be kept before the Board where it will be monitored.
- If a decision is made to expel the child, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the Application Form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to parents/Guardians.
- All alternatives should be exhausted as far as possible prior to expulsion with the Board satisfied that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help the student change the behaviour. This includes exploring the possibility of medication should the student not be medicated.
- If a recommendation for medication is included in a report for the student it is expected that the student follow this recommendation.

Offences which may lead to Detention/Suspension/Expulsion.

- Physical abuse of children or staff
- Leaving the school premises or classroom without permission
- Bringing illegal substances to school or coming to school having abused substances
- Persistent abusive/threatening language directed towards children or staff
- Persistent refusal to take instruction
- Stealing or damaging property
- Bringing a dangerous item to school
- Constant bullying
- Endangering themselves or others

The above offences may result in the following:

- Staying back after school where possible
- Exclusion from major trips
- Letter to parents or guardians
- Exclusion for a number of days where there is a persistent serious offence. Warnings may be given. Exclusion will be by arrangement with parents.
- Internal exclusion from class for a number of days (Internal suspension. For the younger children in the school, internal suspension rather than external suspension should be used)
- Serious assault and persistent endangerment of self/others may result in withdrawal of school placement.

"Automatic from NEWB Handbook:

A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students that particular named behaviours incur expulsion as a sanction. However, a general decision to impose expulsion as a consequence for named behaviours does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence towards another pupil or staff.
- Actual physical violence or assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs.
- Sexual assault.

Policy on children who abscond

From time to time, children for different reasons leave the supervision of staff. This is a serious situation for the school where there is a duty of care for the child. The Board of Management cannot condone this behaviour and strongly encourages parents whose children engage in this behaviour to speak firmly to the child.

- Every effort will be made to ensure that children do not leave the supervision of staff.
- If a child does abscond despite staff efforts, staff will make every effort to encourage the child to return to the staff member. The child will be reminded of consequences.
- A child will be shadowed only if the staff considers him/her to be a danger to himself and others or is engaging in dangerous activities within the grounds or outside the gate. Staff will intervene as necessary up to and including calling the Gardai.

A child will be considered to be in danger

- If the child is considered to be unable to cope outside the classroom without an adult.

When a child absconds

- The class teacher will be informed.
- The Principal will be informed.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed through the homework book if the child remains on the grounds.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed if the child is engaged in dangerous activity i.e. on the roof/ leaves the school premises while on the run.
- Parents/guardian will be informed as soon as the child returns.

- The Principal will inform relevant staff if a child has absconded where appropriate.
- The Gardai will be informed if the student leaves the premises.

Please note

- Children who continue to engage in aggressive or dangerous activity may be removed from the premises by the Gardai.

The following sanctions will be in place for children who run. (internally and externally)

- All children who abscond will not be able to participate in activities outside the classroom with their respective class for up to 5 days (one day for first absconding, 2 days for second etc) Activities/movement break will be organised with staff on a one-to-one basis
- Child may make up time during after-school detention depending on the frequency and of absconding and severity of behaviour.
- If other classes or students are disrupted as a result of a child absconding, this may result in the child making up time during after-school detention.
- In the event of after-school detention, the Principal will be given the child's name and staff on duty.
- After school detention will take place as soon as possible, preferably the day of disruption.
- Parents/Guardian will be informed of decision by phone. Negotiation about the day will take place.
- Two staff members will provide after school detention for the duration of up to one hour. In this event the child parents will arrange for transport home.
- An adequate academic programme of work will be provided by the class teacher for the entire make up time.

