

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School	<b>RETNS CODE of Behaviour:</b>  <i>Supporting Behaviour for Learning and Building Positive Relationships</i>	 <p>RATHFARNHAM EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL</p>
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### ***Introductory Statement***

The Board of Management, in consultation with our staff, our parents/guardians and children, revised the Code of Behaviour in Spring 2021. It was drafted by the Code of Behaviour Committee in early 2021 and shared with the staff, Board of Management, parents/guardians and children for consultation.

The policy is in accordance with the requirements as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School (NEWB,2008)*

## **1 Vision and Aims**

Educate Together schools believe in the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference, and justice and equality for all. In Educate Together schools, every child will learn in a child-centred, equality based, inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting which values the voice of every child and member of the school community. Educate Together schools are committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential, while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society. In sum, children will learn together to live together. The Educate Together values also aim to give children an understanding of social, ethical and moral standards in the areas of honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility.

We aim to ensure that these core principles and values underpin all activities and learning in the school and are inculcated in the children through the Learn Together Curriculum and Restorative Practice values.

The Board of Management of RETNS believes that in order to create and maintain a happy, safe and effective learning environment for all, children must practise high standards of behaviour. These must be mutually agreed, widely promoted and actively supported by school staff and parents/guardians. We strive to create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour, and in which relationships of respect, trust and support grow, both amongst the children, and, between the children and the adults who care for them. Children are expected and helped to take personal responsibility for their own behaviour, so that they may gain maximum benefits from their time at school and mature into caring, responsible citizens. The school respects and celebrates the individuality of each child. However, the needs of a child whose behaviour is a cause of concern will be balanced with meeting the needs of all children in the school, and with the need to provide a safe and productive learning environment for all.

This policy has been drawn up to comply with all relevant legislation and to incorporate best practice. It applies to all children, and must be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

## **2 Creating a Positive School Environment**

### **2.1 A whole school approach**

In RETNS we endeavour, through the ongoing and consistent application of the Educate Together ethos and Learn Together values, to foster a positive school environment which benefits the entire school community. The Learn Together values aim to give children an understanding of social, ethical and moral standards in the areas of honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility. Our overall aim is to ensure that all pupils feel happy, successful and connected in our school.

We have a restorative approach to promoting positive behaviour. It is based on a set of core values and focuses on building relationships within the school community. We aim to build trust and empathy, and find solutions when problems arise. A restorative approach promotes positive behaviour by focusing on fairness, personal accountability, honesty and respecting others. Through the development of empathy,

children can come to understand the importance of seeing things from a variety of perspectives and be supported in creating positive relationships.

Effective and consistent teaching and whole school management, in conjunction with home-school collaboration, will support children build positive relationships and will create a positive school atmosphere. This includes:

- having in place well considered policies and procedures
- creating routines that are easily understood
- explicit teaching both in class and at assemblies about the school's values. A different value will be highlighted each month
- adopting a restorative approach to building, maintaining and restoring relationships (see section 2.7)
- setting clear boundaries
- being fair
- trusting children to take responsibility
- 'catching' children behaving well, and giving positive feedback when they do so.

Positive behaviour messages are reinforced continuously. At the beginning of each school year, Positive Behaviour Week is marked. Children and their teachers draw up a classroom charter for positive behaviour, which are put on display as a reminder for all throughout the school year. When drawing up the charter, teachers will reference the School Expectations (Section 2.5 of this policy). First to sixth class pupils and their parents/guardians read and sign the school expectations in their journals at the beginning of each year.

Positive behaviour themes are discussed throughout the year, especially through assemblies, Circle Time, the Learn Together Programme, and the Social, Personal and Health Education programme. Furthermore, new parents'/guardians' meetings, class meetings, progress meetings and other meetings provide regular opportunities to discuss positive behaviour with parents/guardians.

## **2.2 Equality of Participation and Access**

The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 ('the Acts') prohibit discrimination on the nine grounds of gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. This Code of Behaviour is underpinned by respect and equality for all members of the school community. Respect and equality are reflected through the school ethos, in the classroom, in the delivery of the curriculum and through the school climate. RETNS recognises and values diversity, and believes all children are entitled to access the services, facilities, or amenities that are available in the school environment.

In line with the above principles, often through the Learn Together and SPHE programmes, issues of equality, which are central to the school ethos, are frequently discussed and given practical application. This will also apply to the Code of Behaviour so that we are ensuring equality for the whole school community when promoting positive behaviour and creating a quality learning environment.

## **2.3 Children with Additional Educational Needs**

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with additional needs may require assistance in understanding certain expectations. Attention will always be given to meeting the needs of the child and to possible reasons for particular behaviours. Specific strategies may include the following:

- Class teachers, Support teachers and ANAs will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that children with additional educational needs can understand. Their

understanding of the school's expectations will be checked from time to time, especially where a child with additional needs is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the school's expectations

- Some children may need opportunities to practise observing the rules, with feedback on their progress
- Where necessary, Specialised Behaviour Plans will be put in place in consultation with parents/guardians, the Class teacher, Support Teacher, and or Principal. They will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be always considered
- The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with additional needs in adhering to expectations, thus providing peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging, and respecting diversity among individuals
- RETNS will consider input from trained professionals/appropriate agencies (e.g., NEPS/TUSLA, privately sourced healthcare professionals) when dealing with behavioural issues
- Teaching and methodologies employed by the support team and ANA includes the discrete teaching of many social and personal skills (e.g., recognising emotions, responding appropriately to situations, turn taking etc.) which will help with self-regulation and behavioural issues. Restorative Practice values and approaches will be incorporated when providing positive behaviour strategies for children with additional needs.

## **2.4 Following School Routines**

This section outlines the standards of behaviour that are expected under a range of headings:

### **2.4.1 Attendance**

If enrolled in the school, children are legally required to attend. School attendance is vitally important, and any avoidable term-time absence is strongly discouraged. If a child is absent, parents/guardians must notify the school either in advance, or otherwise on the day of return, through Aladdin. The Principal is legally required to notify any absences of 20 days and over in any school year to Tusla ( the Child and Family Agency).

### **2.4.2 Punctuality**

School commences at 8.50am every day. The start of the school day is as vital and integral to the educational experience as any other part of the day and it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure their children are present at this time. Lateness is very disruptive. In cases of persistent lateness, parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the Principal to discuss the reasons and to seek solutions to the problem.

### **2.4.3 Being safe**

Children must ensure they behave in a manner that is safe and secure for themselves and those around them, both during school hours, and immediately before and after the school day. This includes, but is not limited to: dismounting from bicycles, scooters, skateboards and the like before entering the school grounds; not bringing animals into the school grounds (with the exception of support/guide dogs); staying away from out-of-bounds areas (such as railings, flowerbeds, trees, coned areas and the staff car park); not running in the school buildings; never leaving school or a school activity without permission; and not re-entering the school building at the end of the school day without permission. Children must comply immediately with all adult requests aimed at ensuring health and safety.

#### **2.4.4 Respecting property**

Children must respect their own belongings, the possessions of other people and all school property. Additionally, they are expected to respect the environment. This includes being tidy and refraining from littering, wilfully damaging school property and stealing.

#### **2.4.5 Relationships with others**

Any interpersonal relationships must be appropriate to the primary school environment. We place great emphasis on the need for respect, honesty, responsibility, kindness and forgiveness. We focus on equality, collaboration, teamwork, and the building of a strong and positive school identity in keeping with the Educate Together values and ethos.

Children are expected to be respectful and listen to their teachers, to other staff members and their classmates and respond in a way that promotes their own learning and well-being and that of others. Children must not isolate others, nor engage in name calling, nor spread rumours. Bad language, verbal and physical aggression are not tolerated. Bullying is taken extremely seriously and procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### **2.4.6 Break times**

Children eat their lunches in their seats and may not bring food outside of the classroom at break time, for health and safety reasons.

Outdoor breaks are an important part of the day, but do require specific rules. Children are expected to follow instructions for safe and orderly movement between classrooms and the yard, and within the yard itself. Children must stay within their designated zones and not enter the planted areas/wildlife garden (unless permission has been granted). Children may only engage in the activities that have been permitted for their age group and may only use the toys and games from their own class boxes. Rough play (e.g. 'Trains', 'Bulldogs', pushing people off mounds, ) and argumentative behaviour are not allowed. A yard book is used for communicating behaviour issues amongst staff members.

If inclement weather does not permit outdoor breaks, children must stay seated and engage in quiet activities such as reading, drawing, colouring or puzzles. The use of computers and scissors is not allowed during indoor breaks.

#### **2.4.7 School work**

All children are expected to participate in all school activities and do their best during each task. It is important that they have the right books and equipment in order to do their school work and that they strive to maintain a neat working space. They should listen to instructions, and not distract others or disrupt the class.

#### **2.4.8 Homework**

See Homework policy (*currently under review - 2021*)

#### **2.4.9 School outings**

Children are reminded that they are representing the school when they are on outings. They must adhere to the Code of Behaviour, and all instructions designed to ensure the health and safety of the group,

given by staff, volunteer helpers, drivers and tour guides. Children may not bring money with them when they go on school outings, unless in exceptional circumstances.

#### **2.4.10 Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important part of a child's life. All children from junior infants to second class benefit from special assemblies at which their birthdays are noted. Furthermore, teachers may choose to acknowledge children's birthdays. If they do so, it is important that no pupils are left out (for example, if their birthdays fall on non-school days). No birthday party invitations, cards or presents may be distributed by children, their parents/guardians or minders within the school grounds at any time. Neither may treats be brought in by children to mark their birthdays.

#### **2.4.11 Dress code**

Please refer to RETNS Dress Code

#### **2.4.12 Personal electronic devices**

Children should avoid bringing devices into school, as there is a risk of damage and/or theft and the school cannot be held responsible for this under any circumstances. If a child needs to have a device in school - for example to ensure they are contactable by their parents/guardians on the way home from school – prior written permission for a Mobile Phone Licence must be sought from the Principal. Children may not have any devices switched on, nor on display, during any part of the school day. These restrictions apply both within school grounds at any time and outside of school grounds during school outings. Please refer to RETNS Guidelines on Mobile Phones.

#### **2.4.13 Online activity**

Please refer to RETNS ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Breaches of this policy will be seen as breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

#### **2.4.14 Dangerous substances**

Cigarettes / vaping devices, alcohol, drugs and weapons are illegal for school age children. They may never be brought onto the premises by children.

### **2.5 School Expectations**

School expectations are devised with regard for the learning, health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. It is necessary that expectations are clearly stated, and applied consistently and fairly. The main expectations are:

- Be prepared for school every day
- Listen, pay attention, and always try to do your best work
- Be helpful and respectful towards all members of the school community
- Take an active part in creating and following your class charter.
- Play your part in ensuring our school environment is clean and tidy
- Take responsibility for your actions - aim to be positive and try to follow Restorative Practice values
- Think before you speak. Is it helpful, is it kind, is it necessary?
- Move safely within the school building
- For safety reasons, always ask permission to leave your classroom or the playground. Play within

the correct playground boundaries.

## **2.6 Promoting positive behaviour - the use of rewards**

We recognise that judicious use of rewards may play a beneficial role in supporting and reinforcing positive behaviour. Rewards need to be meaningful, inclusive, appropriate to a child's personal needs, and closely linked in time to the behaviour that is being rewarded.

In order to prevent demotivation rewards should not:

- *seem unattainable;*
- *become the goal of learning;*
- *result in unhelpful competition;*
- *nor be given repeatedly to the same children to the exclusion of others*

*NEWB Guidelines 2008*

Rewards in the school are given for effort, not just for achievement. Rewards may be given to individual children, small groups, classes, or indeed to all children in the school.

The nature of rewards is dependent on both the age and interests of children. As children mature, there is less focus on extrinsic motivation (rewards) with greater emphasis being placed on intrinsic motivation and restorative practices.

Positive behaviour is reinforced using the following approaches (this list is not exhaustive):

- verbal praise
- written feedback /stamps
- positive notes sent home to parents/guardians
- being given responsibility to undertake certain tasks
- Golden Time (half hour on Fridays undertaking activity of class' choice)
- Whole- class choice activity
- inclusion in the Achievements Book for social, personal or academic achievements which is celebrated at the monthly Achievements Assembly
- reward charts
- token prizes (not sweets)
- certificates/trophies
- homework passes (full or partial)

## **2.7 Restorative Practice**

*Restorative Practice is a way of building bridges and fostering positive relationships within schools.*

(Professional Development Service for Teachers)

Our school's Code of Behaviour is built on the concept of Restorative Practice (RP). RP is proactive in nature, by establishing a core set of values and explicitly teaching skills that foster and sustain positive relationships. These values accord with both the core principles of Educate Together and the core values of the Learn Together Programme.

This approach enables children to reflect on their behaviour, with the aim of finding solutions to restore relationships if things go wrong. Conflict is dealt with in a healthy way, by bringing together those affected in a dialogue to address concerns, come to an understanding of all the perspectives involved, and come

to an agreement about how to move forward. Everyone in the process has a voice, and everyone is involved in finding a solution. The focus is on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than apportioning blame and adopting a punitive approach.

As a staff we endeavour to build and restore relationships and model positive interactions throughout the day.

Restorative practice includes a set of proactive approaches to build community and connections and a set of responses to behaviour where harm has been caused. These approaches range from the informal and proactive to more formal responses as outlined below:

- Regular check-ins/outs
- **Circle Time** To build empathy, understanding, speaking/listening skills and positive social relationships. Used for relationship building, problem-solving and discussion of academic content, feedback, assessment and planning. Circle Time is an intrinsic part of the Learn Together programme.
- **Restorative Conversations:** When minor conflict or challenging behaviour has occurred; conversations take place with one or more children to examine who has been affected and how to address the harm that has been caused.
- **Restorative Meetings:** A more formal circle that takes place with two or more people to respond to situations of more significant conflict/harm. This could involve staff, parents / guardians and / or children.

Through using the RP questions (See appendix 1), children are encouraged to:

1. Examine who has been affected (Past)
2. Address the harm that has been caused (Present)
3. Agree on solutions to make amends. (Future)

### ***3 Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour***

#### **3.1 Adopting a Whole School Approach**

Despite best efforts to counter it, we acknowledge that inappropriate behaviour happens from time to time, whether intentionally or unintentionally. We know that even minor breaches of agreed procedures and practices can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and possibly long-lasting effects that include the disruption of the child's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause anxiety and distress and potentially compromise safety.

It is important therefore, to adopt a systematic and consistent approach informed by restorative practice. This includes: teaching the skills needed for a restorative approach; intervening early; keeping the response as local as possible; adopting a problem-solving approach; and involving both the child, and if necessary, their parents/guardians, in seeking solutions. Staff will always endeavour to have a collaborative response to behaviour issues.



The majority of incidences of misbehaviour will be occasional and minor and will therefore be quickly and effectively dealt with by the class teacher. A restorative approach will be taken to build positive relationships and resolve conflict. Some children may need additional help to manage their behaviour, such as discrete teaching of social and personal skills or drawing up a behaviour contract.

A minority of children may show very challenging behaviour that will need a sustained response involving all the important adults in their lives, both at school and at home, and may also require the support of external professionals. In a case where possible criminal behaviour is suspected, the school may seek advice from the Gardaí.

### **3.2 Dealing with inappropriate behaviour and moving on**

Over time, children learn what behaviour is and is not acceptable in school, and why. They come to understand that the choices they make have consequences and may impact both themselves and others. They learn to accept responsibility for their own choices and learn how to put things right with those who are impacted by negative choices. We adopt a restorative approach which provides opportunities for reflection and rebuilding damaged relationships and signals to all involved that positive behaviour is expected.

The key to a successful outcome is if it is arrived at by those people actually involved in the conflict.

A restorative approach assumes that everyone has a unique and equally valued perspective on an issue and should have an opportunity to express this in order to feel respected, valued and listened to. The restorative process is a structured one and use is made of the questions below. The first four questions could be grouped together and addressed first by all parties followed by numbers 5 & 6.

#### **Restorative Questions (See Appendix A for modified questions for Junior Classes)**

- **What happened?**
- **What were you thinking of at the time?**
- **What have you thought about it since?**
- **Who has been affected and in what way?**
- **How could things have been done differently?**
- **What do you think needs to happen next?**

Those involved identify what everyone needs in the situation, followed by the necessary steps, so that the needs of all are met. This could include meeting the needs, not just of those directly involved in the situation, but the needs of the other children in the class, and of the staff.

Identifying and following through on steps to address harm will be achieved with a high level of support and guidance from adults, and will involve assuming ownership of the problem so that it can be put right. The adults involved will continue to check-in with those involved to ensure the follow-up plan is working.

The steps begin with **stopping the behaviour that is causing harm** but, depending on the situation, could also include:

- Carrying out a useful task in school
- Producing a verbal or written summary of the incident either done in class or at home including an undertaking to improve - Restorative Reflection Sheet (see Appendix Two)

- A verbal or written apology to child or adult – sample templates in appendices
- Behaviour contract or restorative agreement – sample templates in appendices

Any steps identified will be:

- Clear
- Timely
- Defuse and not escalate a situation
- Applied in a fair and consistent manner
- Proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the inappropriate behaviour
- Appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child(ren) concerned, taking into account any specific vulnerabilities they might have.

Parents and guardians may be informed when their child is involved in a restorative conversation. This could be by a note in the Homework Journal with the intention to encourage discussion at home - see template in Appendix 3.

If a child is involved in a restorative meeting, the parents / guardians will be informed by phone.

If the situation remains unresolved, the teacher will arrange to meet the parent / guardian. Where possible, parents/guardians will be given at least 24 hours' notice of a meeting.

For a restorative process to take place, all involved must be willing participants. If during a restorative process any of those taking part are unwilling or unable to proceed, on that occasion, the process will be temporarily paused and returned to as soon as possible.

In parallel to the use of a restorative approach, which might take some time, the staff member might use a range of strategies when an immediate response is required. These could include:

- Giving a reminder of expected behaviour
- Temporarily confiscating items not allowed in school or used without permission
- Using a 'Time out': temporary removal from lesson, yard or peer group

In a crisis situation, in order to stop a child from injuring themselves or others, staff may be obliged to use reasonable force to restrain the child.

### **3.3 Involvement of the Deputy Principal or Principal**

If the behaviour issues are not resolved in a meeting with the teacher and parents/guardians, a meeting with the Deputy Principal or Principal will be arranged - see Appendix 3

### **3.4 Responding to Serious Behaviours of Concern**

The school will be consistent in how it responds to behaviours of concern. While honouring relationships, it will invite the child(ren) concerned to be part of the solution, to take responsibility by acknowledging harm and making amends for the harm caused. However, if these efforts are met with persistent resistance or refusal to engage, the school may need to avail of suspension or expulsion.

Suspension and /or expulsion are appropriate responses to serious misbehaviour. Normally, other interventions will have been tried, although a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension and /or expulsion.

Suspension and /or expulsion can be recommended in the following circumstances:

- Where there is ongoing refusal to meet the agreements and regulations of the school and where the Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management, has, in their considered judgement, exhausted all reasonable options
- In the event of physical or verbal assault on any member of the school community
- In the event of serious damage to the school property
- Where there is endangerment to the health and safety of others
- Where alcohol, drugs, illegal substances or dangerous items/ weapons are brought into school
- Where there is engagement, at school, in anything that is considered a criminal offence

*The school will follow the procedures set out in Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008) before a child may be suspended or expelled.*

### **3.4.1 Suspension**

Suspension is defined as requiring a child to absent themselves from the school for a specified and limited number of school days. Normally, other interventions will have been tried, although a single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Whilst suspension can offer respite at a critical time and can provide an opportunity for reflection and planning, it must be used with extreme caution.

The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a child, but the Principal is delegated to order immediate suspension where there is a serious threat to the safety of others (in which case the parents/guardians should be telephoned to immediately collect the child). If the latter situation arises, the formal investigation begins as soon as the suspension is imposed.

If suspension is being considered as a response to serious misbehaviour, there must be a preliminary assessment of facts. The Principal must then inform the child and her/his parents/guardians of the nature of the complaint, explain that it is being investigated and clarify that it could result in suspension. This will be done verbally in the first instance and then confirmed in writing. Both the child and their parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to respond during a meeting with the Principal and one other person (normally the Deputy Principal). If they fail to attend such a meeting, a letter will be sent outlining the gravity of the situation and inviting them to another meeting. An investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal, with a final decision being made by the Board of Management. The Principal will inform the parents/guardians in writing of the decision to suspend. They will be informed of the period of suspension, the reasons for the suspension, the study programme to be followed at home, the arrangements for returning to school and the procedure for appeals to the Patron.

A suspension will usually last for no more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.

The Principal is required to inform Tusla - Child and Family Agency of any suspensions of six days and over.

Children returning to school will be supported to reintegrate as quickly as possible using a behaviour contract. The focus will be on restoring relationships and acknowledging responsibilities.

### **3.4.2 Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as the decision to permanently exclude a child from school. Only the Board of Management can expel a child. As with suspension, expulsion must be an appropriate response to extreme misbehaviour, having either exhausted all other avenues or in cases so serious that alternatives are impossible.

If expulsion is being considered as a response to extreme misbehaviour, there must be a preliminary assessment of facts. The Board of Management must then decide how the following actions will take place:

- The carrying out of a detailed investigation under the direction of the Principal
- A recommendation by the Principal to the BOM
- Consideration by the BOM of the recommendation and the holding of a hearing
- Deliberations and actions by the BOM
- If expulsion is proposed, the Educational Welfare Officer must be informed, who must then arrange further consultations
- If the BOM remains of view that the child should be expelled, the parents/guardians should be informed in writing.

Appeals may be made to the Secretary-General of the Department of Education.

#### **4 Record Keeping**

Staff members will keep thorough records of behaviour of concern; this ensures clarity and accuracy. Written records may also help to identify patterns of behaviour. Records may include:

- Incident forms
- The child's written reflections on incidents
- Correspondence with parents/guardians and external bodies
- Other information deemed relevant by the school.

Records may be stored in the pupil's file. Additionally, inappropriate yard behaviour is noted in the yard book.

#### **5 Responsibilities**

##### **5.1 Board of Management**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to ensure that this document is drawn up with the appropriate involvement of all stakeholders, that it is reviewed regularly and that the policy is upheld. The Board of Management facilitates staff members to avail of high quality training and development opportunities for dealing effectively with behavioural issues. The Board of Management may be involved in instances where behaviour is particularly problematic.

##### **5.2 Staff**

The staff of RETNS will care for the safety and wellbeing of the children in our school by endeavouring to:

- build positive learning relationships with each other and with the children of RETNS

- support children in building positive relationships and behaving well towards others
- model our values and ensure that this code is consistently promoted
- be clear about our expectations and boundaries
- listen to concerns and respond to them sensitively.

### **5.2.1 Principal**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the procedures outlined in this policy are implemented, and that they are communicated on an ongoing basis to all members of the school community. These duties will be assumed by the Deputy Principal in their absence. The Principal plays a particular role in the induction of new staff through the Droichead process and by ensuring a mentoring system is in place.

When necessary, the Principal or Deputy Principal will facilitate restorative conversations and meetings.

### **5.2.2 Teaching staff**

For most children, their teachers are significant figures in their life, providing them with adult support and care during the school day. Class teachers (and their substitutes, in cases of absence) provide help to individual children at the same time as ensuring effective management of the whole classroom. In doing so, they show empathy while maintaining professional objectivity.

Teachers are expected to deepen their understanding on an ongoing basis of the factors that affect children's behaviour and that help them to engage in positive behaviour. As part of the Learn Together programme, there will be explicit teaching of the values underpinning positive relationships.

Teachers will design seating plans and groupings as appropriate, changing them regularly to promote relationship building and inclusion.

Furthermore, they are expected to work as a team and support each other in terms of managing challenging behaviour. Teachers on the support team have a particular role in working with children with AEN, if they display behaviours of concern.

### **5.2.3 Additional Needs Assistants and classroom assistants**

Additional Needs Assistants (ANAs) and classroom assistants support the children in their care regulate their behaviour, under the day-to-day guidance of class teachers and Support Team teacher(s).

### **5.2.4 Staff CPD**

- Staff has access to a range of reference books and resource materials
- The Principal and In-school Leadership team arrange for the purchase and storage of new materials and inform the staff about events/materials /courses which may be of interest to the staff
- Speakers may be invited to attend staff meetings or PDST seminars may be arranged
- There are opportunities for team teaching with the class and support teacher
- Staff participate in continuing professional development through attendance at courses and webinars.
- Information and methodologies are shared via planning sessions and staff meetings and on the server.

### **5.2.5 Others**

Student teachers, visiting teachers, coaches, and volunteers are expected to oversee the behaviour of

the children in accordance with this policy under the guidance of the class teacher. Supervisors of the Half One and Half Two Clubs and E.C.A. staff are also expected to oversee children's behaviour in the spirit of this policy which will be provided.

### **5.3 Parents and guardians**

It is essential that a collaborative partnership is fostered between home and school. In supporting behaviour for learning, parents and guardians are expected to cooperate with the school. Parents and guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to accept the need for school expectations, by attending school meetings and events and by collaborating with staff. Our expectation of parents and guardians is to reinforce our messages about learning and behaviour that are conducive to a happy and safe school environment.

It is our policy to be proactive about children's behaviour. Therefore, we will inform parents and guardians in a timely fashion if there are any issues of concern so that home and school can work together in supporting children. We know that parents and guardians can offer valuable experience of, and insight into, their children's behaviour and urge them to share relevant information with the school on a continual basis. We also request that they cooperate fully with the school in instances where their child(ren) may be displaying behaviours of concern.

It is a condition of enrolment in RETNS that parents and guardians accept the Code of Behaviour and are committed to a restorative approach.

The school will support the Parents' Association to organise general talks on supporting positive behaviour and keep parents informed via the Weekly Update of upcoming events in relation to same

### **5.4 Children**

Children are expected to take personal responsibility for their own behaviour and appreciate how that influences the wellbeing of those around them (in an age appropriate way). Older children have a particular role in modelling positive behaviour and all children will have a role in framing class charters.

The Student Council, Green Schools Committee, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Committee, Active Schools Team and Break time Buddies play an active role in promoting positive behaviour.

Where necessary, and in line with the school's AEN policy, children with AEN will be helped to understand fully what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and will be supported towards achieving this behaviour.

## **6. Related documentation**

*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School (NEWB,2008) -*  
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

*Learn Together Curriculum -*  
[https://learning.educatetogether.ie/pluginfile.php/25339/mod\\_resource/content/1/Learn%20Together.pdf](https://learning.educatetogether.ie/pluginfile.php/25339/mod_resource/content/1/Learn%20Together.pdf)

*Restorative Classroom Practice by Belinda Hopkins* <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Restorative-Classroom-Practice-Belinda-Hopkins.pdf>

*Restorative Practice (PDST)* <https://pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/restorativepractice>

*Restorative Justice Pocketbook by Margaret Thorsborne and David Vinegrad*

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- *Anti-bullying Policy*
- *ICT Acceptable Use Policy*
- *Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*
- *RETNS Dress Code*
- *Homework Policy (Under review)*
- *SEN Policy*

## **7. Community Links**

Community personnel may be invited to the school to give talks on specific parts of the Code of Behaviour (e.g. Community Garda - Halloween Safety/Drug Awareness)

## **8. Contact Details**

Queries about this policy should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance:

The Principal

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School

Loreto Avenue

Rathfarnham

Dublin 14

Telephone: (01) 493 8677

E-mail: [info@retns.ie](mailto:info@retns.ie)

## 9. Review

This plan has been communicated to all present staff and will be communicated to all future staff. It was presented to the Board of Management and ratified on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021. It is available to view on the school website or a hard copy is available from the school office.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in 2021. This policy and its associated procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis but will undergo full review in 2023, or earlier if necessary.

## 10. Appendices

### Appendix One – Restorative Questions

#### Restorative Questions

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking of at the time?*
- *What have you thought about it since?*
- *Who has been affected and in what way?*
- *How could things have been done differently?*
- *What do you think needs to happen next?*

#### Restorative Questions adapted for junior classes:

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking at the time?*
- *What do you think now?*
- *Who was sad or upset by what happened?*
- *What could you have done differently?*
- *What needs to happen next?*



## **Appendix Two - RETNS Values**

The RETNS Values below are for the school year 2021 - 2022. Any changes to the Values list will be updated on the school website

### **Kindness throughout the year**

**September: Cooperation**

**October: Respect**

**November: Honesty**

**December: Justice and Equality**

**January: Happiness and Well Being**

**February: Love and Nurture**

**March: Peace**


**April: Responsibility**

**May: Empathy and Understanding**

**June: Community**

## **Appendix Three - Sample Restorative Practice Reflection Sheets**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_



1. What Happened?

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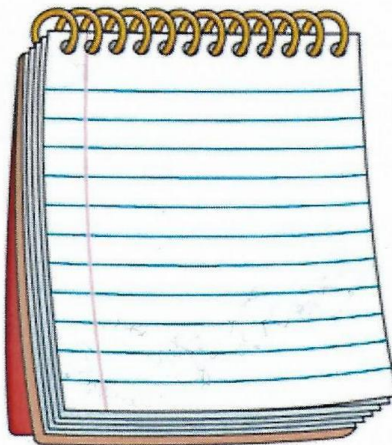
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2. What were you thinking at the time?



3. What have you thought about it since it happened?



4. Who has been affected by your actions? List all above



5. What needs to happen now to make things right?



1.

What happened? Write or draw what happened

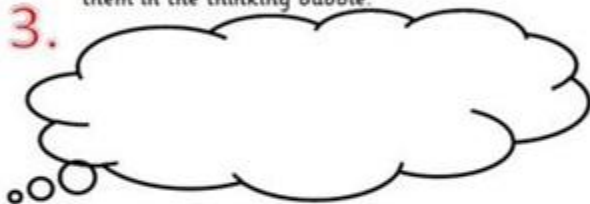


2.

What were you thinking about at the time? Write your thoughts in the thinking bubble.

What have your thoughts been since the incident? Write them in the thinking bubble.

3.



How did it make you feel? Draw your facial expression



Who do you think has been affected by your actions? In what way have they been affected? Write down who was affected in the body outline and label how they were affected. You can also draw their facial expression.

4.



What do you need to do now to make things right? Write in the speech bubble.

5.

## Appendix Four

Template for HOME SCHOOL Communication following a restorative conversation

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

Following an incident on the playground/in the classroom today, your child was involved in a restorative conversation about what happened, with the purpose of guiding all involved towards finding solutions to repair relationships. We encourage you to speak with your child, and appreciate your support in this matter.









Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Class Teacher)*

## Appendix Five

### Equal Status Acts [2000-2018]

- Prohibit discrimination on nine grounds in educational establishments

1. Gender		2. Civil status		3. Family Status	
4. Sexual Orientation		5. Religion		6. Age	
7. Disability		8. Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins		9. Membership of the Traveller Community	

## Amendments to RETNS Behaviour Policy During Covid-19 Epidemic

### Behaviour Principles

In light of the need for children to behave differently and to follow specific rules on their return to school during the Covid-19 epidemic, this amendment to the Behaviour Policy outlines specific changes to guidance for children. Our guiding principles when making any changes or adjustments to our policy is to keep all of our children, families and staff safe and to make every effort to ensure their well-being. These amendments will be communicated to children, parents and staff.

Children will be supported by staff in following new routines and rules, with levels of support depending on age and any additional needs.

### Behaviour Expectations:

- We have high expectations around our pupils taking personal responsibility for their behaviour in RETNS.
- Behaviour in all communal areas of the school should be calm and orderly at all times.
- Shouting or screaming in the yard must be avoided as a health and safety measure.

### School Routines and Procedures:

We expect children to:

- follow any altered routines for arrival or departure
- follow instructions on remaining in their own pod (in the classroom) and bubble (outside the classroom)
- move around the school as per specific instructions (for example, one-way systems, out of bounds areas, queuing, use of toilets)
- remain in their allocated zone in the yard
- follow procedures about sharing any equipment
- follow procedures about care of personal belongings including drinking bottles and books

### Hygiene and Health Expectations:

We expect children to:

- follow school instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
- follow guidelines on sneezing, coughing, tissues and disposal (re-enforce '**catch it, bin it, kill it**') and avoiding touching their mouth, nose and eyes with hands
- tell an adult if they are feeling unwell

## **Mental Health and Emotional Support:**

Children will be supported by:

- clear guidance and support, differentiated for age and need, in following routines and procedures
- using curriculum content/ methodologies to support children with changed procedures/routines or with specific anxieties, (e.g. social stories, circle time, SPHE, Learn Together).
- monitoring children to ascertain where additional support might be necessary (small group discussion, ANA/teacher check in)
- providing reassurance and support on a class and whole school basis (e.g. assembly)
- using a restorative approach when expectations are not met
- Where a child is struggling to co-operate, discussion, support and sanction if necessary, will be at class level in the first instance. Any sanction will be related to the age and level of understanding of the child
- If the behaviour is repeated or continues, the principal and parents will be informed. If the issue is serious or deliberate, the principal/parents/guardians may be involved from the outset
- Any intentional Covid-based poor behaviour( eg. coughing or spitting on anyone on purpose or any taunting or teasing about Covid, anxiety, mask-wearing etc.) will be considered serious misbehaviour

Related documentation: RETNS COVID Response Plan

Contact details: Queries about this policy should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance

The Principal

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School

Loreto Avenue

Rathfarnham

Dublin 14

Telephone: (01) 493 8677

E-mail: [info@retns.ie](mailto:info@retns.ie)

Approved by the Board of Management on 7 September 2020