

September 2011

Code of Behaviour (shortened version)

1. Our Standards of Behaviour

The Standards

- Awareness of others in the school and their many different situations
- Consideration and understanding of everyone we meet in school each day
- The inclusion of everyone
- A caring school climate demonstrating equality and social justice
- Respect for everyone including ourselves
- The importance of integrity and honesty
- The development of a responsible attitude to life
- Communication with others and the importance of talking
- The development of interpersonal skills to gain confidence and competence
- The teaching of resistance skills
- A team approach within the school with the involvement of all our partners in education, particularly our parents
- An appreciation of the strengths and talents of all of us
- An understanding of the very valuable contribution our children make to our society
- Care for our environment and an appreciation of our local area
- An appreciation of all the people who love us and all the comforts we have
- Concern for those less well off than ourselves
- An enthusiasm, ambition and optimism for our future
- A willingness to take part as best we can in all school activities
- The ability to always try our best
- The encouragement of our friends and our ability to see the best in others
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- The development of a love of learning
- Keeping a good work ethic and having high expectations
- The development of self- esteem and self-confidence
- The encouragement of a healthy attitude to exercise and diet
- Dealing with conflict resolution in an open and positive manner
- The spiritual development of each member of the school community inspired by the belief in God
- The development of a positive peer influence amongst children and adults
- The enabling of collaborative planning and decision-making
- An enjoyment of life and a celebration of our achievements

2. Our School Rules

School Rules

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Bring a note to explain your absence from school on your return
(There is no need for a note if a phone call has been made) Parents should update the school every 5 days if their child is missing for a longer period of time
- If you must stay in at break times for a medical reason, please take a note to school from your parents. If you become ill in school and must stay in, please bring a “tinn” ticket from your teacher to the First Aid area
- Always do your best in class
- Be responsible for your work
- Keep the classroom rules
- To create a safe and positive environment:*
- Wear your full uniform to school apart from P.E. gear on P.E. day and unless instructed otherwise. Our full school uniform includes:
 - A navy skirt or pinafore
 - A royal blue crested jumper or cardigan
 - A light blue shirt
 - A blue pin-striped tie
 - Black or navy flat shoes
 - Black or navy socks or tights
 - High heels are not permitted
 - Converse are not permitted
 - Boots are not permitted (In severe weather conditions, the girls may wear boots to school and change into their shoes on arrival)
- Pay attention to your personal hygiene
- Make sure you are neat and tidy in your appearance
- Make up, fake tan and false nails are strictly forbidden
- Only small earring studs, watches and simple rings are permitted
- Long earrings, chains and bracelets are not allowed
- Body piercing (apart from earrings) is strictly forbidden
- Tattoos are also strictly forbidden
- Hair colouring is not permitted (except for ethnic reasons)
- Always be respectful to each other, all staff members and all school visitors
 - Do not shout
 - Respond in a quiet and respectful manner with courtesy
 - Stand back or stop in your queue to allow adults to pass by or use a door-way

- Do not whisper or try to communicate in secret
- Do not write notes to other members of your class without your teacher's permission
- Always be helpful and mannerly towards new members of staff, new pupils or visitors to the school
- Respect other students and their learning
 - Do not interrupt while another student is speaking
 - Do not try to distract others from their work
 - Party invitations are not to be distributed in school
 - Encourage your classmates in their learning
 - Help them when you can
 - Participate in group work in a fair and co-operative manner
 - Bad language is strictly forbidden
 - Name calling is strictly forbidden
 - Racism of any kind will not be tolerated
 - Bullying of any kind is strictly forbidden (See our Anti- Bullying Policy)
- Leaving the school
 - Students are not allowed to go outside the school grounds without permission
 - If it necessary for them to go home during school hours a parent must phone the school or write a letter to explain the circumstances
 - Parents are expected to pick up their child from their classroom if they have to go home during the school day
 - Students are not permitted to meet their parents at the front of the school or in any area outside of the school during school hours
 - Students are not permitted to walk through the Infant School grounds at any time
 - Students must be careful of other people using the public footpath outside of our building, and to be polite and courteous at all times
 - Having left the school, students are not allowed to congregate in groups on the footpaths
- Participating in all school activities is actively encouraged
 - P.E. is part of the curriculum. Always wear your tracksuit and runners on your P.E. day and participate in all P.E. lessons to include games, athletics, swimming, gymnastics, dance and outdoor pursuits
 - Be ready and willing to take part in every school activity
- Homework
 - Students should enter homework accurately in their homework diaries
 - They should make sure they take home the relevant books and copies
 - They should complete their homework assignments to the best of their ability
 - They should present their written work neatly

- **They should ensure there is enough time given to their learning homework and reading and that this part of their homework is done as well as their written homework**
- Respecting and caring for property
 - Look after your school books and copies
 - Never write on borrowed books with pen/marker
 - Never take something belonging to someone else or the school without permission
 - Ensure all your belongings are labelled
 - When you borrow property from others or the school, make sure you return it in the same condition as you got it
 - Be careful with library books, computers, furniture, and all items belonging to the school
 - Keep our school litter free
 - Follow our Green School guidelines
 - Graffiti is strictly forbidden
 - Always be careful not to damage anything in our school gardens or grounds
- Mobiles phones must be handed to your teacher in the morning
 - Never use your mobile phone during the school day without permission from a teacher
 - Never use a mobile phone camera or recorder without similar permission
 - Never switch on your phone before leaving the school grounds in the evening or during morning supervision
- Chewing gum, fizzy drinks, crisps and nuts are not permitted
 - Follow our Healthy Eating Policy
 - Drinks in glass bottles are also forbidden
- Any item considered by a teacher to be a source of distraction in class will be confiscated e.g. stickers or magazines
- Never take a dangerous implement of any kind to school
- Never take medicine of any kind without the permission of a teacher
- Cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs are strictly forbidden
- Dangerous behaviour in the school building or playground will not be tolerated
 - When walking in and out:*
 - Leave your classroom quietly and do not rush
 - Walk in single file and in a straight line
 - Stay close to the wall as you walk along the corridor
 - Do not talk
 - Be very careful on steps and stairs, take them slowly
 - Remain in your own yard until the bell rings
 - When you come in from the yard, sit down very quietly
 - Never leave the yard without permission from the supervising teacher
 - If you need to go to the toilet, ask the
 - Do not bounce a ball if you have one
 - If you have a skipping rope, make sure it is rolled up when going in and out

- Look all around you when playing with your skipping rope to make sure you do not hit anybody. Never swing it loosely without someone holding onto the two ends
- Watch where you are running to make sure you do not bump or bang into other people
- Stay away from the hedges, the front wall, staff cars, grass, the new building in the back yard, the Infant School area and the area at the back of the Language Rooms
- In the queue for the toilets, stand quietly and do not mess or play games

Please try to:

- Enjoy your time in the playground
- Make sure you care for your friends and that nobody is left out
- Invite girls who seem to be left out to play in your game
- Make a special effort with girls who are new to the school
- Never become involved in a situation which makes somebody else feel bad
- Stand up for somebody who is being bullied or annoyed in any way
- Tell the teacher on duty or your class teacher about any situation that worries or annoys you

The Code of Behaviour will be enforced in the yard in the same way as within the school building.

The Board of management of St. Louis GNS would like to point out that it is impossible to include all possible rules and inappropriate behaviour in our code. The Board reserves the right to deal with any inappropriate behaviour which may arise with the sanction they deem most suitable, ensuring fair procedures are observed in all our dealings with our students.

3. How we Respond to Inappropriate Behaviour

(a) Rewards and Sanctions

In Louis GNS, good behaviour is always recognised and acknowledged. This happens privately between students, teachers and support staff, on a classroom level and publicly at school community level. Students with special good behaviour and achievement are acknowledged at assemblies, special occasions and end of year awards. Parents are informed by newsletter and by means of our school website. The methods of acknowledgement and recognition used by the staff at St. Louis GNS are outlined in the full version of this code.

In accordance with the Education (Welfare)

At 2000, Section 23, our school must outline “A measure that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behaviour that the school has outline”.

They are as follows:

1. Verbal Reprimand
2. Verbal Warning

3. Removal from the group (in class)
4. Punishment Sheet
5. Entry into Black Book if used
6. Withdrawal of privileges (at the teacher's discretion)
7. Communication with parents (through a note in the child's notebook)
8. Meeting with the principal
9. Detention with a further note home to parents
10. Meeting with parent(s)
11. Further meeting(s) with parents and / or principal
12. Report to the Board of Management

Sanctions 1-4 will be applied by the class teacher or support teacher.

Sanctions 5-8 will include the class teacher/ support teacher, the parents and the principal.

Sanction 9 will include all the latter and the Board of Management.

Parents will be informed of misbehaviour at level 4, which is a short note in the student's homework notebook, to be signed by a parent/ guardian. The student's teacher/ support teacher or the principal will make the contact at levels 6 and 7 with the principal making the contact at levels 8 and 9. At St. Louis G.N.S. parents are put at their ease when they are called to a meeting in the school. The meeting may take place in the principal's office or in a resource room. The class/ support teacher may be present with the principal, and the student, if appropriate. The student's presence at the meeting is always discussed in advance with the parents.

The parents of St. Louis GNS are always welcome to contact the school if they have a concern or a complaint of any kind. The procedure is to contact the school secretary to make an appointment to meet a class or support teacher and / or the principal. This procedures are laid out in our Home-School Links Policy and the Parental Complaints Policy (both available in the office) and parents are reminded of them annually in our first newsletter each September.

(b) Managing Aggressive or Violent Behaviour

- Children who are emotionally disturbed are immediately referred for psychological assessment.
- Through our Special Needs Organiser, Mrs. Carole Gilliland, support is sought from services available e.g. H.S.E, W.E.P.S, I.S.P.C.C. etc.
- Our School's Care Team is made up of our Learning Support and Resource Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and the relevant class teacher. This team share good practice and supports each other in the management of challenging behaviour, particularly with regard to our students with special needs. Newly Qualified Teachers are mentored by the Care Team in this area. Individual Education Plans are developed with input from the entire team; the student's parents and the professionals. Courses in this area are consistently shared with the staff and

they are always encouraged to attend. Our Board of Management have a policy of offering to pay half the cost of these short or incidental courses.

- Sometimes it is necessary to include physical restraint as a strategy for dealing with violent or threatening behaviour. However, as we don't have Junior Infants to First class, there is less necessity for physical intervention in our school. If this situation were to arise, immediate training would be sought for the members of staff concerned and the child's parents would be kept informed
- In the event of seriously violent or threatening behaviour, causing a threat to the safety of the student herself or the safety of other students, the teacher involved will seek the immediate help of another member(s) of staff and the principal will be informed. The incident will be recorded in detail and the student's parents informed depending on the circumstances, and if a pattern of behaviour is forming, the student may be suspended according to the regulations below. If there is an immediate threat to the safety of a child, a group of children or a member of staff, immediate suspension may be recommended (see below)

4. Suspension

An authority to suspend

Suspension is defined as: requiring the student to absent him/ her from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.

The Board of Management of our school has the authority to suspend a student.

At St. Louis GNS the following applies:

- The use of suspension is approved by the Board of Management and is in line with the NEWB Guidelines.
- Our policy on suspension is widely communicated.
- We have developed and documented good practice in relation to the use of suspension.
- We have fair procedures for investigation and decision- making.
- We have procedures for informing parents and students about their right to appeal.
- We have a system to have regular review by the Board of Management of the use of suspension in the school.

Grounds for Suspension

- When a student's behaviour has had or is having seriously detrimental effect on the education of the students.
- When a student's continued presence in the school is a threat to safety.
- When a student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The Factors We Will Consider before Suspension

- *Its Nature and Seriousness*
 - Detailed descriptions of the behaviour
 - The persistence of the unacceptable behaviour
 - Whether or not the problem has exalted, despite appropriate interventions
- *Its Content*
 - The circumstances of the serious behaviour- in class, yard, group
 - The factors which triggered the serious misbehaviour, bullying, cultural, family, academic
 - The student's age and cognitive ability
 - Other associated factors- home, special needs, trauma etc.
 - The impact
 - The way the behaviour affects other students and staff
 - The impact of the behaviour on the teaching and learning in the group/class
 - Whether or not there is a greater impact on some teachers and some students
 - Whether or not the student understands the impact of their behaviour on others
- *Interventions*

At St. Louis GNS, when a student is to be suspended, the following will be examined:

- The interventions that have been tried
 - The period of time these interventions have been in place
 - How these interviews have been monitored and recorded
 - The result of the interventions
 - The involvement of the student's parents
 - The involvement of outside professionals
 - The involvement of special programmes within the school/outside the school
- *Is Suspension appropriate?*

We ask the following questions:

 - Is suspension the appropriate response?
 - Are we using the same standards to judge this behaviour as we would to judge the behaviour of any other student?
 - *The impact of suspension*

We will ask the following questions:

- Will the suspension allow additional or alternative interventions?
- Will the suspension help the student to change?
- Will the suspension help teachers or other students affected by the behaviour?

- Will the suspension exacerbate any educational vulnerability e.g. poor attendance of the student?

- Forms of Suspension

Immediate

- The Board of Management of St. Louis reserves the right to suspend a student immediately if the continual presence of a student poses a serious threat to the safety of students or staff, or any other person.
Fair procedures will still be applied.

Inappropriate

At St. Louis G.N.S, students will not be suspended for the following:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of our Code of Behaviour

Rolling

At St. Louis G.N.S, a student will not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless:

- They engage in serious misbehaviour

In this situation fair procedures are observed and the standards applied to judging the behaviour are the same as those applied to the behaviour of any other student

In St. Louis G.N.S, excluding a student for part of a school day or asking parents to keep a student at home is an actual suspension and procedures will be adhered to.

We also acknowledge that no student will be suspended for an indefinite period.

Our Procedures for Suspension

1. Inform the student about the complaint
2. Inform the parents/guardians by phone and in writing
3. Explain how the complaint will be investigated
4. State that it could end up in suspension
5. Give both the student and her parents an opportunity to respond before any sanction is imposed
6. Suggest a meeting for this purpose
7. Allow the parents to give their side of the story
8. Allow them the opportunity to make their case for lessening the sanction
9. Explore with the parents how best to address the student's behaviour

10. If the parents fail to attend, write to them advising the seriousness of the situation
11. Offer a re-scheduled meeting
12. If this fails, it is the duty of the school authorities to respond to the serious misbehaviour
13. All invitations and responses will be recorded
14. A student will not be suspended for more than 3 days except in exceptional circumstances
15. If a suspension is longer than 3 days, the Principal will ask the Board of Management to consider the suspension and whether or not it is an appropriate response to the misbehaviour.
16. The Board of Management of St. Louis G.N.S reserves the right to authorise the principal to impose a suspension of up to 5 days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board of Management cannot be convened in a timely fashion
17. The Board of Management will place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension
18. If the suspension means that the student will be missing for 20 days or more in a current year, it should be formally reviewed by the Board of Management due to NEWB Guidelines.

At Louis G.N.S, it is our aim that the procedures for suspension as outlined above will give the student a reasonable time to reflect on their behaviour while avoiding undue loss of teaching time and loss of contact with the school. We will ensure that the seriousness of suspension as a sanction is reflected in our procedures. The Board of Management is ultimately responsible for sanctions of significant length.

Appeals

The Board of Management of St. Louis G.N.S. will always offer an opportunity to parents to appeal a principal's decision to suspend a student.

Section 29 Appeal

If the total number of days for which the student has been suspended reaches 20 days or more in the current school year, the student's parents may appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998. Parents will be furnished with information about how to appeal.

Implementing the Suspension

The principal of ST. Louis G.N.S. will notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to appeal. The letter will confirm:

- The period of suspension and the date on which the suspension will end
- The reason for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed

- The arrangements for returning to school (including any commitments to be entered into by the student and her parent e.g. reaffirming their commitment to our Code of Behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the B.O.M
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the DES.

The letter will be clear and easy to understand. Particular care will be taken with parents who may have reading difficulties and the letter will be translated for those whose first language is not English.

Before the student returns to school, the principal will organise a meeting with the student and her parents to emphasis their responsibility in helping the student to behave well on return to school.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

A suspension may be removed if the B.O.M. decides to remove it for any reason or if the Secretary General of the D.E.S. decides to remove it following a Section 29 Appeal.

After the Suspension Ends

The suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to parents. Our school will plan to re-integrate the suspended student by assisting her to:

- Catch up on work missed
- Accept support to deal with anger or resentment
- Be given in clear state of behaviour although the suspension will be recorded
- Expected to have the same behaviour as all other students

Records and Reports

Formal written reports will be kept of

- The Investigation
- The decision- making process
- The decision and rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension
- Any conditions attached
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Each suspension will be reported to the B.O.M

Each suspension will be reported in accordance with NEWB reporting guidelines.

Review of the Use of Suspension

The B.O.M will review the use of suspension at St. Louis G.N.S. every two years and each time a suspension is imposed.

5. Expulsion

At St. Louis GNS, we believe that the expulsion of a student is a very serious step. It is one which will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will always take the necessary steps to address the serious misbehaviour in an effort to avoid expulsion. The main strategies involved will be:

Meetings with the parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour

- Ensuring the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour
- Ensuring that all possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies

In St. Louis GNS, a proposal to expel a student will require very serious grounds such as:

- When the student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others
- When the student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- When the student is responsible for serious damage to property
- When the student is caught in the possession of any illegal substances

Where expulsion is considered, the school authorities will have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.

In exceptional circumstances, expulsion may be considered for a first offence:

- A serious threat against another student or a member of staff
- Actual violence or a physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students
- A sexual assault

Expulsion will not be used as a sanction for:

- Poor academic performance
- Poor attendance or lateness
- Minor breaches of our Code of Behaviour

Procedures for Expulsion

At St. Louis G.N.S., we will follow fair procedures as well as the procedures prescribed under the Education Welfare Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student. Here are the steps which will be used:

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the principal
- A recommendation will be made to the B.O.M .by the principal
- The B.O.M. will consider the recommendation and hold a hearing

- The B.O.M. will act following the hearing
- Consultations will be arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer
- Confirmation of the decision to expel will be announced

The above steps will be undertaken in the following manner:

Step 1: A detailed investigation

- The principal will inform the student and their parents about the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could end in expulsion
- The principal will give the student every opportunity to respond to the serious misbehaviour before a decision is made to impose a sanction
- The parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation so that a permanent record is maintained of the communication and so that the parents are very clear about what has occurred.

Step 2: A recommendation to the BOM

- The principal will inform the parents and the student that the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion
- The principal will ensure that the parents have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation and the grounds on which the B.O.M. is being asked to consider expulsion
- The principal will provide the B.O.M. with the same comprehensive records
- The principal will notify the parents of the date and time of the hearing by the B.O.M. and invite them to attend
- The principal will advise the parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the B.O.M.
- The principal will ensure that parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing

Step 3: Consideration by the B.O.M. of the principal's recommendation and the hearing

- The B.O.M. will review the initial investigation
- It will satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted and was in line with fair procedures
- The B.O.M. will review all documentation
- It will review the circumstances of the case
- No party involved in these circumstances will be part of the B.O.M.'s deliberations
- A hearing will be held
- The principal and the parents will put their case to the B.O.M.
- Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly
- Parents will be offered the opportunity to make their case for lessening the sanction
- If parents wish to be accompanied, the B.O.M. will facilitate this in line with good practice and B.O.M. procedures

Step 4: Deliberations and Actions by the B.O.M.

- Having heard from all parties, the B.O.M. will decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and if expulsion is the appropriate sanction
- If a decision is made to expel a student, the B.O.M. must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing
- The student will not be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date on which the E.W.O. receives the written notification
- The parents will be informed in writing of the BOM's decision to expel and be informed that the E.W.O. will be contacted

Step 5: Consultations by the EWO

Within 20 days of notification from the BOM that they are going to expel, the EWO will:

- Make all efforts to hold individual consultations with the principal, the parents and the student
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend

The main objective of the consultations will be to plan for the future education of the student. Occasionally, the consultations may result in an alternative intervention to avoid expulsion.

The B.O.M. will ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured. Sometimes it is necessary to suspend a student during this time in the interest of Health and Safety.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

When the 20 day period following notification to the E.W.O. has elapsed and the B.O.M. remains with the view that the student should be expelled, the B.O.M. will formally confirm the decision to expel and the student's parents will be notified immediately. The parents will be informed about the right to appeal and will be furnished with a standard right to appeal form. A formal record will be kept of the decision to expel.

Appeal

Parents may appeal a decision to expel to the secretary general of the D.E.S. or to the N.E.W.B. The appeals process will begin with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee of the D.E.S.

Review of Expulsion

At St. Louis G.N.S. the B.O.M. will review the use of expulsion every two years approximately. We will ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that the patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that expulsion as a sanction is used appropriately.

Signed : -----

Re-ratified at the BOM meeting on -----