



Killester Raheny Clontarf  
Educate Together  
National School

## Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice

October 2020

Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS offers the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of mutual respect for difference and, justice and equality for all. In our school, every pupil will be invited to learn in an inclusive, equality-based, democratic, co-educational and child-centred setting which is fully committed to enabling and supporting each pupil to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them with the life skills to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

**Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement**

### Building Positive Relationships in Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS

The *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice* in Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS is a statement of good practice that reflects the restorative ethos of our school. The policy promotes whole-school preferred practices and the explicit building of positive and healthy relationships, recognising the centrality of such relationships to wellbeing and learning for all.

It is a requirement under section 23 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 that the Board of Management of a school must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools” (NEWB 2008).

This policy is underpinned by the philosophy of Restorative Practice (RP) which focuses on building, maintaining and repairing relationships.

*Restorative Practice is a values-based way of being; it aims to consciously build relationships, respond to conflict in a healthy way, and connect us to our best selves and to one another.*

*'A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focusing on the building, nurturing and repairing of relationships' (Hopkins, 2006:7).*

Our ethos seeks to be supportive of building relationships by recognising the voice of every child and member of our whole school community. We aim to develop self-awareness, self-esteem, resilience and an awareness of others.

Our child-centred curriculum allows each individual child to be guided along a pathway of learning that builds on their own specific interests and strengths and supports their personal and academic aspirations.

Our approach to learning supports recognition and inclusion for all within the local, national and international community.

Our involvement with the community builds sustainability in relationships and connects our pupils with relevant learning opportunities.

## **Adopting a whole school approach to positive behaviour and healthy relationships**

Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS will promote a whole school approach to the Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice that will complement the implementation of Restorative Practice as an embedded practice in the school. A whole school approach will be embedded to ensure that all policies and practices, the school climate and relationships will support the principle of positive behaviour. This means that all members of the school community have responsibilities at different levels for behaviour in the school. It is our belief at Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS that embedding the principles of Restorative Practice will support and promote good behaviour and contribute to an ethos that supports positive behaviour.

The whole-school approach will involve:

- Developing a consistent ethos and ensuring that policies and practices are in harmony.
- As the school grows, adopting and implementing a teamwork approach to behaviour and relationships.
- Adopting a whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management.
- Creating the conditions for an inclusive and involved school community.
- Developing and adhering to a systematic process for planning and reviewing behaviour policy.

In adopting and reviewing a whole-school approach to positive behaviour we will regularly:

- Examine the aspects of school life that are most likely to affect behaviour in the school and, examine the steps that we can take to ensure that those aspects are working to promote good behaviour.
- Identify the range of opportunities that are available for staff to work as a team on whole-school approaches to behaviour.
  - *Regular opportunities to develop Restorative Practice skills and techniques*
  - *Regular reflection on the value base and core values of the school*
  - *Regular reflection on values within the process of developing Restorative Practice*
- Seek to promote a shared understanding amongst staff members in how to respond to the promotion of positive behaviour and the development of healthy relationships and limits of unacceptable behaviour.
- Identify ways to review the involvement of pupils and parents in the life of the school and ensure that they have opportunities to contribute to policy and practice.

## **A - The Standards of Behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school**

### **Our Core Values – FRIENDS**

In collaborating together, we can all achieve our full potential in learning and in life. It is crucial that we have a shared literacy and understanding around our core values so that we can model best practice, cultivate a positive school culture and promote them in our daily interactions with each other. It is about breathing life into the restorative values.

**Fair** – working on explicit skills to practice being fair; to ourselves and to each other

**Respect** – to appreciate that respect is a given; it's because you're human. It's the inherent worthiness of everybody, enacted through relationships while separating the person from the behaviour.

**Inclusive** – to work together in community, striving to address the individual needs of every child. We aim to balance these needs with the general interests of all of the children.

**Empathy** – the capacity to foster, create and cultivate an environment which is conducive to empathy; being curious about the thoughts, feelings and actions of others; listening to understand; being compassionate and kind; perspective sharing.

**Nurture** – A focus on what we need to flourish. We will practice turning towards each other more and actively engage in listening, speaking and turn-taking.

**Did you?** – A focus on the giraffe language; working from the heart.

**Safe** - we aim to establish a safe environment as we know that this is key to all personal growth and development. We aim to embed the feeling of safety and move away from blame and attack and to empower each other to be part of a/the solution rather than endure/promote conflict.

## Expectations

Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS believes in agreeing and setting high expectations with our pupils, parents and teachers in order to be our best selves in everything we do as we grow and learn together. This ensures clarity of expectation for everybody; believing in, seeking and finding our best selves. Healthy boundaries allow for individuals and the community as a whole to grow and flourish. Our expectations are rooted in our values and we support each other to meet these expectations and to take responsibility when we do not. In particular, this supports our pupils to develop their life skills in taking responsibility for themselves and caring for others, which is essential for a happy life.

Our classrooms are places of learning and we expect our pupils to live our values in class, ensuring that the needs of all are met in order to get the best out of their learning opportunities. We all have a responsibility to ensure our learning environment is clean and tidy.

Pupils are expected firstly to respect themselves and then to treat each other and staff members with respect. Teachers and staff members are expected to treat children with respect. We take the view that pupils can potentially choose their own behaviour. The school will work hard to provide pupils with the skills to develop positive behaviour. Therefore, pupils will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour. If they treat others poorly, they may be acting out their own anger and frustrations. However, with the support of the school, they can also learn to choose different ways of acting positively. We ask children to treat others as they want to be treated themselves.

Relationships are at the heart of everything we do in our school. We are committed to the building of positive and healthy relationships that support our wellbeing. Our hope is that we all feel valued and connected. When things go wrong, as sometimes they do, by developing compassion and accountability we will seek to find a way forward together. Acknowledging the harm to relationships that has been caused, deciding on action(s) in the community that will try to make amends for what has happened will support everyone involved. Preferred whole-school practices are outlined below.

‘Good relationships need to be at the heart of everything if effective teaching and learning are to take place’ (Hopkins, B. 2004).

## Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests, in varying ways with all members of the school community.

## **Board of Management**

- Treat all pupils, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Support the Principal and staff of the school in implementing the policy and the implementation of Restorative Practice.
- Review the policy on a regular basis and support other reviews of the policy as necessary.

## **Principal**

- Treat all pupils, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Provide support for the whole school community.
- Provide opportunities for all staff to up-skill where necessary in Restorative Practice and whole school approaches to positive behaviour and healthy relationships.
- Promote a positive culture/climate in the school.
- Model best practice and a good example to all members of the school community.
- Ensure that Restorative Practice and positive behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner and arrange for review of the policy, as required.

## **All staff**

- Treat all pupils, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Support and implement Restorative Practice and promote positive behaviour and healthy relationships.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair and model the same to pupils.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour and engage in a restorative approach.
- Provide support for colleagues.

## **Pupils**

- Treat each other, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity
- Participate in class check-in and check-out circles.
- Adopt a restorative approach when dealing with conflict.
- Use restorative dialogue.
- Listen to staff and act on instructions / advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Be courteous and mannerly.

## **Parents and Guardians**

- Treat all pupils, parents, guardians and staff in our school community with respect and dignity.
- Be familiar with Restorative Practices and support its implementation.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children,

- Cooperate with teachers if their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school regarding any problems that may affect their child's progress or behaviour

### **Recognising Achievement**

Each class teacher will acknowledge, record and celebrate pupils' achievements in school and out of school, and any community participation that they are involved in. The School's Assemblies are held to recognise and acknowledge the successes of our pupils, both at school and in the wider community.

### **A Note on Rewards Systems**

As a school community, we believe that our pupils have the ability to do the right thing even when no one is watching as we support them to live their values and be their best selves. We aim to 'catch our children being good'. In line with the NEWB guidelines (2008), we are conscious that great care is needed to ensure that rewards do not 'become the goal of learning, result in unhelpful competition, repeatedly reward the same pupils or seem unattainable to some pupils and, as a result, de-motivate them.' As such, systems for rewarding positive behaviour have not been established. Our children are caught being good when living the FRIENDS Values. Each Value is unpacked each week through our lessons and two children are chosen and named in our Golden books and announced at assembly on a Friday. These children are then given a range of 'Free Choices' for a set period of time as a reward for adhering to the restorative value of the week.

### **B - When Things Go Wrong**

#### **The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards**

Virtually many 'discipline issues' tend to stem from, or result in, interpersonal conflicts, which leave two or more people feeling angry, hurt, resentful, anxious or even afraid. In Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS, we will adopt a Restorative Practice approach.

This means that when harm in relationships occur pupils need:

- A chance to tell their story
- Express their feelings
- Understand how the situation happened
- Understand how it can be avoided another time
- To feel understood by the others involved
- An acknowledgement of the harmed caused to the relationship, if not an apology
- To find a way to move on

This is our preferred approach as punitive responses can:

- Cause resentment rather than reflection
- Are rarely considered fair
- Do not repair relationships
- Leave wrongdoers feeling bad about them-selves leading to further alienation
- Can often leave the adults expected to act punitively feeling uncomfortable and frustrated.

The key to a successful outcome is if it is arrived at by those people who are actually involved. This includes using the following strategies led by members of staff;

**Restorative Conversations** – informal chat using restorative questions, allowing for feelings to be expressed and the promotion of empathy. A member of staff takes initiative and models the process, seeking to share and invite responses in a reciprocal process.

**Restorative Circles** – build relationships and/or solve problems.

**Restorative Meetings** – group facilitated to resolve conflict and repair damaged relationships.

**Restorative Conference** – group facilitated to address wrongdoing and repair harm. These require a great deal of preparation and planning.

In time and with training, pupils will be involved in the facilitation of these practices as appropriate.

## **C, D, E - Suspensions and Expulsions**

In exceptional circumstances and to ensure the health and safety of all pupils it may be necessary to temporarily exclude (suspend) or permanently exclude (expel) a pupil. Schools are required under Section 23(2) and Section 24 of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, to include their procedures for suspension and expulsion in their code of behaviour. By law, we are required to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil, and the procedure employed by Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS will be guided by recommended practice as documented in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (NEWB, 2008)<sup>1</sup>.

A number of procedures will be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled. Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS will offer consistency in how it meets these challenging circumstances. We will seek to invite pupils to be part of the solution, aim to honour relationships above all else and endeavor to promote accountability by cultivating whole

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines\\_school\\_codes\\_eng.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/guidelines_school_codes_eng.pdf)

school practices that seek to acknowledge harm and invite actions that make amends for such harm. However, if this is met with persistent resistance and lack of engagement then our school may need to avail of other unpreferred practices to maintain the values in our school, such as safety. Such practices include:

- Temporary exclusion from school (suspension), please see below\*
- Referral to Board of Management
- Permanent exclusion from school, please see below\*\*

#### **\*Procedures in respect of temporary exclusion**

A preliminary assessment of the facts may confirm serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension (lasting from two to five days at any one time, and up to twenty days in any school year). In considering suspending a pupil the following factors will be taken into consideration by the Principal (or Deputy Principal in the Principal's absence) or Board of Management:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions tried to date.
- The possible impact of suspension as a means to offer safety, make amends and/or move the situation in a better direction.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. In such events, Killester Raheny Clontarf ETNS will observe the following procedures:

- Inform the pupil and their parents/guardians about the complaint, about how it will be investigated and that it may warrant suspension. Parents/Guardians will be informed by phone or in writing, depending on the seriousness of the matter.
- Give the pupil and their parents/guardians an opportunity to respond before a decision is made and before any disciplinary action is imposed. A meeting will be held with the pupil and their parent/guardian and the principal to discuss the matter, where each will be given an opportunity to respond. This meeting also allows the school to collaborate with the pupil and their family on how best to address the misbehaviour. All invitations made to parents/guardians to attend such meetings will be recorded, as well as parent/guardian responses.
- In the case where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others; a preliminary investigation should be conducted immediately following the imposition of the suspension. In this instance, parents/guardians will be notified and arrangements made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstances will

a pupil be sent home from school without first notifying parents. The Principal will notify the parents/guardians and the pupil in writing of the decision to suspend, the period of suspension, the reasons for the suspension, any study programme to be followed, arrangements for returning to school, and information on the right to appeal.

#### **\*\*Procedures in respect of permanent exclusion from the school**

Permanent exclusion from school (expulsion) is the most serious action. Where the Principal considers a pupil should be excluded from school, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for decision. In the case of expulsion, parents have the right of appeal. This action is viewed by the Board of Management as a very serious step, and will only be taken in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. A proposal to expel a pupil requires serious grounds such as:

- The pupil's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The pupil's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property.

The school and the Board of Management commit to undertake a number of significant steps and interventions to address and minimise the potential for serious misbehaviour among pupils and to avoid expulsion of a pupil. Only when all possibilities have been exhausted will a proposal to expel a pupil be reached. Such possibilities include:

- Meeting with parents and the pupil to try to find new ways to promote positive behaviour and move away from unacceptable behaviour.
- Supporting the pupil to reach an understanding of the possible consequences of unacceptable behaviour, should it continue.
- Ensure that all other options have been tried.
- Seek the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

In such instances, the Board of Management will be guided by a duty to follow due process and fair procedures. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.

3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

## **F - Monitoring and Evaluating**

The school will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice. This will inform the School Development Plan and lead to identification of targeted training for staff implementing the policy.