

GATEHOUSE SCHOOL

Policy and Procedures for

MANAGEMENT of PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

including

FRAMEWORK for GOOD BEHAVIOUR and DISCIPLINE

(as included in the School Handbook)

Rationale

It is widely accepted that children learn best in a safe, secure environment. Our Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Child Protection Policies are in place to address safety issues. However, if we are also concerned with children's emotional and social development, and wish to encourage positive attitudes to self and others, it is necessary to have rules for acceptable behaviour.

This policy has been written for staff and parents in order that they may have a shared understanding of expectations and responsibilities with regard to acceptable standards of behaviour. It is also hoped that it will encourage consistency of approach in dealing with the behaviour demonstrated by children, so that they will experience the security which results from knowing that there are boundaries which are the **same for everyone**.

Aims of the policy:

The policy aims to ensure that through the establishment of reasonable rules for behaviour, acknowledging and praising good behaviour, and consistent, fair and acceptable methods of dealing with problems, that children will benefit from learning in an atmosphere of tolerance of and respect for all.

Objectives:

- To establish clear rules which do not impose unreasonable demands on children.
- To ensure that staff and parents have a common understanding of expectations regarding acceptable behaviour.
- To give guidance to staff on the implementation of the rules.
- To ensure that parents have a clear understanding of how we implement the rules.
- To give clear guidance to staff with regard to discipline.
- To ensure that parents are aware of the disciplinary measures employed in the nursery and the reason for these.

Rules

The rules throughout the school are positive and few in number, setting an expectation that children will be well behaved rather than that we expect to have to deal with people who are not. Every opportunity is taken to praise good behaviour and, on the rare occasions that children have to be reprimanded, there is an understanding that everyone gets the chance to start afresh.

We believe that keeping a catalogue of bad behaviour is counter-productive, in that it implies an expectation of failure on behalf of the child. The two rules in the school are:

Be Careful.

Be Considerate

We encourage care of self, and respect for others and their property. Pupils:

- are encouraged to use equipment carefully and to learn to share with others and take turns;
- are asked to help with tidying up, and making sure that all the parts of materials, equipment, games and toys have been put away after use;
- are expected to learn to listen to others and to allow everyone to express their wishes;
- are expected to learn that they are allowed to express their wishes in a reasonable manner;
- are expected to keep noise to an acceptable level where appropriate;
- are expected to move around the school / classroom in a manner which does not endanger their own safety or the safety of others

Learning to Obey the Rules

Children learn to obey the rules by:

- having good staff role models who show courtesy, consideration and respect in dealing with the children;
- being treated sensitively by staff who are trained to understand the problems children experience;
- being helped to develop a good self image;
- being helped to acquire self discipline appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- having good behaviour acknowledged and praised.

Dealing With Problems

There is always a reason for young children displaying behaviour which is considered unacceptable, and the first duty of staff in dealing with such behaviour is to establish the cause. For example, a pupil may:

- feel unwell,
- be tired,
- be afraid of something,
- have had an upsetting experience prior to coming to school,
- be worried about something,
- be bored due to inappropriate provision.

Responsibilities

Parents have a responsibility to:

- inform the staff of anything which they know that children are frightened of or about anything which might have upset the child or be causing him/her to be worried,
- ensure that children do not attend school if they are unduly tired for any (genuine) reason,
- ensure that children do not attend school if they are known to be unwell,
- ensure that staff have a contact number for the parent, or another appropriate adult in the event that the parent can not be contacted,
- work with staff to resolve behaviour problems.

Staff have a responsibility to:

- ensure that they are available at reasonable times to discuss problems with parents,
- keep parents informed of any behaviour displayed by their child which is considered inappropriate or unacceptable,
- report to parents any problem, and give them information on how the matter was dealt with,
- work with parents to resolve behaviour problems,
- ensure that the provision is appropriate to the needs of the child,
- treat children displaying inappropriate behaviour fairly and sensitively, having taken account of all the reasons which may be causing it,
- respect the parents' right to privacy when discussing their child/ren.

Discipline

Staff will use their experience and expertise to avoid situations where children require to be disciplined. In the event that such a situation does arise, however, disciplinary measures will take the form of:

- giving the child a firm warning about his/her behaviour,
- telling the child firmly to stop such inappropriate / unacceptable behaviour,
- removing the child from the situation if necessary.

No form of corporal punishment will be used in the school, nor will any actions or language likely to humiliate or embarrass the child be used.

FRAMEWORK for GOOD BEHAVIOUR and DISCIPLINE

Advice for Parents.

INTRODUCTION:

Gatehouse school has long maintained high expectations of pupil behaviour among its children and sought to implement them by example. Times change, however, and so do the out-of-school experiences which children receive. In particular, these out-of-school experiences can affect how the children behave within school. School therefore needs to adapt to meet these changed circumstances.

Pupils, teachers and parents need to *be aware of* the school's expectations and procedures. The documentation of them will hopefully ensure that everyone is aware of them.

However:

- we need to be positive – the school doesn't want merely to produce a list of 'don't do this and don't do that',
- a document which is too 'wordy' will probably look uninviting and therefore serve little purpose, and,
- guidance for each of the 3 sectors – pupils, staff and parents – needs to be appropriate to each of them. That is to say that it would serve little purpose to supply *all* those involved in the wider aspect of behaviour and discipline with the same volume of information – particularly if, as mentioned above, we are attempting to be concise. In particular, the document for staff outlines more specific detail, but is, nevertheless, available for a wider audience and you may care to consult it.

ROLE OF THE PARENT:

Your importance as a parent cannot be over emphasised. It is with you that your son/daughter will receive the majority of his/her experiences throughout the schooling years. In an ideal situation, your expectations would be in harmony with those of the school. Children would have a clear understanding of what was right and what was wrong. Clearly, this is not always the case and some

children are genuinely perplexed at what they perceive as differing standards. Explanation of the school's standards will, hopefully, go some way towards addressing this.

Most of all, you are of prime importance in offering the school support at those times it is required when a pupil is in breach of our behaviour standards. The school needs your support in the same way you can expect the school to support you when it is appropriate. There may be home or family circumstances, which may explain a pupil's out-of-character behaviour. It helps greatly if the school is aware of this and, clearly, we depend to a great extent upon you to keep us informed of such circumstances.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL:

We regard the school's role as being one, which sets expectations of the pupils, but which also at all times treats the pupils fairly and with respect. Only if a pupil sees that the school is trying to be both fair and respectful will he/she understand that any adverse behaviour on his/her part is putting the wider school community at risk.

EXPECTATIONS:

What are our expectations then, in a way, which is neither too 'wordy' nor prescriptive, but at the same time, as *comprehensive* as can be?

When your child comes to school, you – and the school – expect that he/she:

- **will behave** at all times in a courteous manner to other children and adults,
- **will co-operate** with staff in achieving an environment where learning can be effective,
- **will treat** all property – be it another pupil's or school – with respect and care,
- **will act** sensibly and responsibly at all times.
- **will be treated** fairly and consistently.
- **will have problems resolved** hopefully as quickly as possible through dialogue between home and school where appropriate.

An important aspect to which we would draw your attention, is the 'Ethos' section of our School Aims, which are themselves contained in the school handbook introduction. There you will find the beliefs we have established with regard to the environment we wish school to be.

PROCEDURES

This, perhaps, most of all, is where we need a clear strategy with which all concerned are familiar. There is a need for *consistency of approach* so that everyone will realise that fairness is being applied to each individual case. The school has consulted with parents on the aspect as a whole and – at some length – with the pupils themselves. Out of these consultations we have arranged the following procedure for when there are breaches to our accepted standards:

In ascending order –

- *level 1: pupil(s) will be given a verbal warning/appropriate sanction.
- *level 2: pupil(s) will be given second verbal warning/appropriate sanction AND we shall make informal (usually telephone) contact with you to notify you of any problem.
- *level 3: Initial letter home to you (Appendix A attached).
- *level 4: Second letter home to you (Appendix B attached).
- *level 5: Third letter home to you (Appendix C attached) outlining further procedures which would lead to exclusion from school in accordance with the Authority's guidance.

Please note:

We are acutely conscious of the need to take individual circumstances into account when dealing with each incident. In particular, age is an important consideration. Deterrents appropriate to older pupils may not necessarily be appropriate to younger ones. Older pupils, for example, see standing outside the Head Teacher's door in view of their friends as an effective sanction.

We are also aware of the need to distinguish between a 'misdemeanour' and 'silly behaviour'. For example, many children regard 'play fighting' as acceptable, and don't seem to understand that such often leads to real fighting!

BULLYING:

Mention must be made here of bullying. Our expectations above include the need for all pupils to treat others with courtesy and consideration AT ALL TIMES. This has to be part of the School's ethos. Care and Consideration must be integral to the school's way of life.

We need to make it clear that instances of bullying will not be tolerated. By bullying, we mean not only clear physical misbehaviour by one pupil towards another, but especially also that psychological 'mocking', 'taunts' or 'threats' are equally unacceptable. Where a pupil commits such behaviour, our procedures above will be invoked accordingly, and you will be made clear of our concerns.

CONCLUSION:

Good behaviour in school has to be intrinsic – not added on! Pupils need to understand that should they attempt unacceptable, bullying, aggressive behaviour towards another, then they will be called to account immediately. You, as parents, need to be assured that your child(ren) come to a school which offers a safe, secure and happy environment for them. In return, it is fair for the school to expect that should your son/daughter commit wilfully unacceptable behaviour, then you will assist in remedying that situation as soon as possible.

The outcome of this approach will be a positive one. Everyone should reap the rewards of a mutually supportive and caring environment.

Appendix A – First written contact with parents

Date

To the parents of

Dear

An incident occurred today/recently* at school which involved your son/daughter, as above. An outline of the incident is given below. We are conscious that an incident can happen at school, the cause of which is not always easily identified. I ask, please, that you discuss this particular incident fully with your son/daughter and, where appropriate, take steps to ensure this is not repeated. If another pupil is involved in this particular incident, a letter similar to this one is being sent to his/her parents.

This is now a standard procedure of our Behaviour and Discipline Guidelines.

Yours sincerely,

Howard T. McLean

Head Teacher.

* Please delete as appropriate

Note referred to:

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Appendix B – Second letter home to parents

Date

To the parents of

Dear

You will recall that I wrote to you onregarding an incident of

unacceptable behaviour involving you son/daughter I now, unfortunately, find I have to write to you again as there has been an incident again of similarly unacceptable behaviour and I feel you need to be aware of this. Please discuss this with you son/daughter so that hopefully we can resolve this situation. If another pupil has been involved in today's incident, the parents of that pupil are also being contacted as a routine matter. I would like to suggest that this may be an appropriate time to discuss this.

matter and that I further suggest we meet on If this is unacceptable, please contact the school so that we can arrange an alternative date and time.

This further problem involved:

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Yours sincerely,

Howard T. McLean

Head Teacher

Appendix C – Final letter to parents

Date

To the parents of

Dear

I regret having to write to you a third time about the behaviour of
However, despite our efforts to date, there has been a further incident involving you son/daughter, as above, and we now feel we need to begin exclusion procedures to enable us, in the interests of the school as a whole, to refuse to admit your son/daughter due to continued unacceptable behaviour.

The most recent incident involved:

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I enclose a copy of the Education Authority’s procedures for exclusion of pupils. Please note this document carefully. Please note that a pupil can be excluded with immediate effect where the circumstances justify it. A copy of this letter has been placed in the record file of your son/daughter where it will remain for a period of twelve months.

Yours sincerely,

Howard T. McLean

Head Teacher