



St Vincent's Special National School  
**Code of Behaviour Policy / Behaviour Management Protocol**

### **Introduction**

St. Vincent's Special School is a designated co-educational, Catholic School catering for pupils aged 5-18 years of age, who on psychological testing are diagnosed as having a Moderate Intellectual Disability (ID).

### **Schedule**

A Roman Catholic school which aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person/pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. The school also embraces pupils of other Faiths or those of no Faith; and promotes mutual respect for all Faiths and none.

### **Mission Statement**

We, the staff of St. Vincent's school continuously strive to provide a quality education in a happy, safe learning environment so that all pupils will reach their full potential. We aspire to do the above in partnership with parents/guardians, Board of Management and through involvement with the wider community.

### **Rationale**

Essential to effective teaching and learning is a safe, supportive, and well-managed environment that respects the following rights:

- The rights of all pupils to learn
- The rights of all teachers to teach
- The rights of all to be safe.

### **Aims:**

- In devising the code, consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development
- Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school

### **Principles:**

- The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to tolerate these differences
- It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils
- Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of discipline is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner



St Vincent's Special National School  
**Guidelines for behaviour in St. Vincent's Special School**



**Our School Rules – Our School Agreement- The Keys to Our Success**

1. **We play and work safely.**
2. **We have kind hands and feet.**
3. **We are nice to everybody (pupils and adults) in school**
4. **We speak nicely to each other.**
5. **We walk nicely in the school.**
6. **We work together.**
7. **We try our best.**
8. **We always tell the truth.**
9. **We have quiet inside voices.**

- Rules are expressed in positive terms and are explicitly taught.
- Parental involvement is encouraged in dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- Should inappropriate behaviours continue, intervention/advice/support from the resource teacher, the Deputy Principal, the Principal and if necessary, from members of the multidisciplinary team is sought. External agencies may also be approached for advice/support. A support plan will be drawn up as appropriate should behaviours of concern continue or re occur.
- Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area except on the grounds of health and safety.

**Procedures for managing and modifying inappropriate/ challenging behaviours**

- **Identify if there are any health or medical issues distressing the pupil,**
- **Carry out an Environmental assessment and implement changes**
- **Supervise, distract and redirect**
- **Respond quickly and consistently to incidents of behaviour**

**Respond using a low arousal approach**

The use individual strategies to help pupils self-manage and regulate their behaviour

- **Seek Assistance if necessary**
- **Follow schools behaviour management protocol**
- **Report the incident to management and parents**
- **Fill out an incident report**

**Studio III techniques are employed ;** to deal with challenging behaviours that require physical interventions and will only be used if there is imminent and **immediate danger of serious injury** to pupils or staff. Any such interventions are prescriptive, put in writing as part of reactive strategies and are in consultation with parents and the Multi-Disciplinary team.

**The Resource Teacher- Behavioural Support Lessons**



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If a child is deemed to present with on-going and serious manifestation of behaviour problems he/she may benefit from a more intensive individual intervention plan and behaviour programme.

The focus of this time will be on:

- Helping the pupil to establish positive relations with one adult
- Discovering the functions of the child's inappropriate, challenging behaviour and finding a means of serving that function through more appropriate methods
- The introduction of planned activities matched to pupil's strength and needs
- A focus on teaching language and communication as a means of reducing or preventing inappropriate behaviour
- Providing pupils with opportunities to control parts of their environment within set boundaries
- Establishing positive behavioural interventions and supports based on assessment of the child's needs.

**Where behaviours persist or pose a persistent challenge to other pupils or staff, the school uses the following processes**

- Implementation of Behaviour Management Protocol, use of standard protocols and templates for recording and documenting.
- Establish proactive and reactive protocols
- Use of risk assessments where necessary
- Referral to school MDT
- Establishment of a Behaviour Support Plan in consultation with MDT and with parents/guardians
- Frequent meetings/phone calls to parents/guardians as part of the process
- Keeping incident reports where applicable, copies of which are sent to parents/guardians
- Sourcing extra training for staff
- Pupils attend school on reduced hours, with the approval of the Board of Management, in line with the amount of time they can manage in school. All such pupils will have on-going reviews with the intention of extending the school day as appropriate.

### ***Disciplinary Procedure- Suspension & Expulsion***

The Board of Management is required by law to maintain a level of safety throughout the school and on all school activities consistent with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 and discharges this duty through its employees, the Principal and staff. Pupils enrolled here in St. Vincent's School are obliged to co-operate with and support the school's Code of Behaviour. In accordance with the Department of Education & Skills 'Rules for National Schools' (130), the obligations on St. Vincent's School Board of Management under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act (2005) and the guidelines as laid down by the National Welfare Board, it may be necessary to exclude a pupil from the school. The procedure necessary for suspension or for expulsion is set out in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

In extreme cases, where all internal processes have been exhausted and the Board of Management is of the opinion that the school does not have the resources to meet the challenge posed to the welfare of the pupil, other pupils or staff, the board will follow the procedures and guidelines as stipulated in the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 24 with regard to suspension and expulsion.



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Before serious sanctions of suspension/expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians and where necessary, the National Educational Welfare Board will be utilised in as far as possible.

If a pupil misbehaves on a continuous basis, or if there is a serious incident of misbehaviour, it may be necessary to suspend/exclude a pupil. The Health and Safety of staff as well as the Health and Safety of pupils will be taken into consideration when deciding on a particular course of action. The Board of management has sole responsibility for suspension and expulsion. The Board of Management authorises the Chairperson/Principal to exclude/suspend such a pupil where necessary.

The Board will place a ceiling of 10 days on any one period of suspension imposed by it. Pupils may be suspended for an indefinite period, where violence or physical assault has taken place, in preference to an immediate decision of expulsion.

In the event, that a pupil has injured a staff member resulting in assault leave, the pupil may be asked to remain at home until the staff member returns to work. This is to ensure adequate supervision and safety for all concerned.

### **Suspension**

#### **Procedures to be followed in the event of a Suspension:**

1. Parent/guardian is invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher and Principal.
2. If suspension is being invoked, the Principal informs the parents/ guardians and states clearly the reasons for the suspension.
3. Confirmation of the duration of the suspension is provided in writing. The maximum period of an initial suspension is three school days. The letter should confirm the beginning and ending dates of the suspension; the reasons for the suspension and the cancellation of the School Transport Services.
4. The driver and escort should be informed that transport will not be required during the period of suspension.
5. The letter should contain appointment for a meeting, giving exact date and time for parents / guardians to accompany the pupil to the school prior to his/her return. The letter should contain expectations to be accepted and agreed by the pupil / parents / guardians for the return to school.
6. Parents/Guardians/Pupil should be informed of their rights and how to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education (Section 29, Education Act 1998).
7. A special decision of the Board of management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to maximum of ten school days to allow for consultation with the pupil's parents/guardians. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be reviewed, and following a Case Conference involving the interested parties, a pupil may be allowed to attend school for only part of the day,
8. The pupil may be referred with parental permission to the MDT for the deemed necessary interventions.

Suspension will be implemented where the pupil's

- Behaviour has had a detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- Continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to safety.
- Is responsible for injury to pupils or staff or others, including oneself.



- Is responsible for serious damage to property.

Suspension allows pupils time with their parents/guardians to reflect on/talk about the behaviour (if appropriate) acknowledge the behaviours and seek support to manage and deal with/change these behaviours. It allows staff the time to plan and seek appropriate support for the pupil.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend a meeting with the Principal and Chairperson. Suspension/ further suspension will be considered where all interventions have failed and have been reviewed.

Depending on the nature and extent of the misbehaviour, support will be sought from the MDT, and other agencies such as the National Council for Special Education (NCSE--SENO) and the National Educational Welfare Board.

Under the provisions of Section 24 (4)(a) of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 where a pupil is suspended for a period of six or more days, the Principal shall inform the Educational Welfare Officer immediately by notice in writing.

If a period of suspension in excess of three days is intended, a special decision of the Board of Management is required. (Rule 130; Section 5, Rules for National Schools) Parents may be given the opportunity to be heard by the Board before a decision is reached.

Where the total number of days for which a pupil has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty day, the parents/guardians or the pupil, if over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

### **Immediate Suspension**

Suspension will be sanctioned where the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school; to allow for additional or alternative interventions to be made. The Board of Management empowers the Principal to impose such a suspension. This period will not exceed three days, except in exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider a longer period of suspension is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. In this case the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and expected outcomes.

However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board of Management cannot be convened sooner. If appropriate, the Parent/Guardian must accompany the pupil to school for a meeting with the relevant staff prior to his/her return to school.

### **Removal of a Suspension (Reinstatement)**

The Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. A Behaviour Support Plan will be prepared by staff if required. The Principal will re-admit the pupil formally back to school and when necessary to the class.

### **Expulsion (Permanent Exclusion)**



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Expulsion of a pupil will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme circumstances.

Under the Education Welfare Act 2000, "A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an Education Welfare Officer" (Section 24; 4) "It is the right of a Board of management to take... such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured." (Section 24; 5)

Before expulsion is considered significant steps will be undertaken to address the misbehaviour as outlined below:

- Meeting with parents/guardians.
- Trying to communicate to the pupil, if appropriate, about the consequence of his/her behaviour to the best of their ability.
- Ensuring all other interventions have been tried, consultation and collaboration with MDT and outside agencies if applicable.

Factors to be considered before suspension/expulsion are as follows:

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
- The context of the behaviour.
- The impact of the behaviour.
- The interventions to date.
- Whether suspension/expulsion is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of suspension/expulsion.

### **Appeals Procedures**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) Parents/Guardians (or pupils who have reached this age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of Department of Education and Skills (DES) against some decisions of the Board of Management including: 1) Permanent exclusion from a school and 2) cumulative suspension amounting to 20 days or more in any one school year (Curricular 22/02).

Parents will be informed in writing by the Chairperson of the Board of Management on the implementation of the suspension/expulsion of their entitlement to appeal. Parents will be given a copy of Circular 22/02 and related forms by the Principal. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parents/guardians. The Board of Management will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated.

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The Board of Management has final responsibility for this policy following consultation with all stakeholders involved.

### **Timetable for Review: 2021**

### **Ratification & Communication**

**Reviewed by the Board of Management on: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019**

**Signed: Mary Keane, Chairperson**



## Appendix 1

### PROTOCOL FOR LOW LEVEL CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. Define the behaviour/s
2. Count the behaviour/s
3. Assess the Environment
4. Make Environmental changes
5. Employ classroom plan: Reinforcement Interventions- Reactive strategies
6. Scatter Plot
7. Functional Analysis ( FA)
8. ABC Recording of behaviour: In School Support, School Management
9. Plan – Pro Active Strategies: Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviours ( FERB'S)
10. External School Support. Referral to Multi-Disciplinary Team ( MDT)

### PROTOCOL FOR HIGH LEVEL CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. Risk Assessment
2. Techniques employed Studio 3 training. 1 and 2 are interchangeable.
3. Steps 1 to 10 as above.

Where an intrusive technique is employed on the pupil - i.e. walk around restraint the protocol is as follows:

1. Principal is notified immediately post event.
2. De Briefing
3. Parents contacted.
4. Outcome recorded
5. Incident report completed.

## Appendix 2: Breakaway Techniques and the Walk-Around Technique

### Physical Skills—notes taken by Principal at Studio 3 training

- Communication with pupil first always
- Ask pupil if they are okay
- Ask them to let go
- Give distractors- (also use of distractor at the heat of the moment should be used to prevent harm, offset a crisis)
- If you are not in any threat there is no need to pull away
- Always appear calm and use the low arousal techniques.

When necessary to break contact-

- To attend to other pupil(s), or
- If being hurt by the grab, have the right to break away or
- If the pupil starts hitting you with the other hand

May need to walk around to distract pupil to break grab.

#### 1) Wrist grab- Thumbs underneath (fingers on top):

- Relax hand
- Step in



- Hand on tummy
- Twist palm **up** and step back at the same time

2) **Wrist grab- Thumb on top grab:**

- Relax hand
- Step in
- Hand on tummy
- Twist palm **down** and step back at the same time

3) **Two hand grab-Both hands on one arm grab:**

- Elbow to my hip
- Shaking hands with myself
- And bring hands up to the **same** shoulder, stepping back

(this action just spreads the pupils' thumbs)—must avoid hands over head, just to the same shoulder.

4) **Two hand grab, one on each wrist:**

- Tuck in arms to the body
- Drop the wrists
- Open the book
- And pray that it works

5) **Grab inside of the wrist (crab grab):**

- Tuck in elbow
- Turn palm up and step to the side (analogy- carrying a tray of drinks to someone)

**Hair pulling** (n.b to avoid neck injury)

If you know a pupil tends to pull hair, then keep pupils a safe distance apart, have to protect the vulnerable person.

Regarding staff's hair being pulled: keep a safe distance from pupil, put hair in a bun or ponytail, if necessary wear a bandana or cap; be mindful if tying shoe laces or putting on a seatbelt

**Neck brace on- 2 arms folded behind the neck (don't interlock fingers, hand over hand) and go with it, don't resist it**

*Head, neck, shoulders, hips are moving with it*

*Go with it*

*Step forward, back if need to*

*Have a good base*

If necessary the **breakaway technique from a hair pull:**

Quick, decisive move and done with conviction

There is no physical contact to pupil

- Turn to side (parallel with pupil), swing hand up and over and step away (analogy- painting a rainbow- horizon to horizon movement)

Don't break contact immediately, get yourself safe, foreign toilet stance to move with pupil, finding core/stability, breathe and think and make a decision.



### **Biting:**

Pupils are only able to bite if they have stability, something is stable, not moving.

e.g. apple on string at Halloween is difficult to bite

if both are pulling the target area stabilizes

loosen the grip and **circle your arm**, don't stop

tuck in the fingers, palm up and step to the side (analogies: wiping the countertop, Thomas the tank engine, rock the baby, row the boat).

### **Airway prevention:**

Strangle hold-

- Stance important
- Then place your arm in at the joint and your arm at the wrist, pull elbows down and keep there.
- Call for help

### **If clothes are grabbed:**

You pull your clothes against the grab- up/down or diagonal

Pull clothes apart and step back

Try and prevent grab if you can anticipate it- can prevent clothing grabbing by wearing a long sleeve t-shirt, no open collar, no hoodies

**Hand filter-** one hand behind the other, filter

Out in front of you (takes most of the force out of it)

Stance- one leg forward

Don't lock elbows, triangular shape

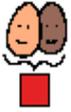
Look at where hit is coming from, stepping away (backing is dangerous, can trip over)

**Walk-around Restraint (only to be done if there is imminent and serious danger)- must be reported and examined- parents notified etc., need 2 staff members to do this technique**

- Hand filter
- ¼ steps to the left
- Hands on the shoulder, then move one hand down to wrist and palm open under the arm pit (palm facing down)
- 2 people to do this for walkaround restraint – one person who calls for assistance takes the lead and gives the instructions- forward, backward, left 'to me' or 'to you', right 'to me/to you'
- If person sits down,
- Take arm out from under the arm and lower pupil to the ground, bend knees if necessary. Take steps back and kneel down yourself if appropriate indicating okay to pupil.

Restraint is not immobilizing, there's a lot of movement allowed but some degree of control on it.

If a pupil drops and is in no danger, then do not put hands on pupil to move. Open hand and invite pupils to take your hand if appropriate.



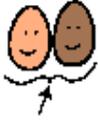
our



school



agreement



we



walk

nicely



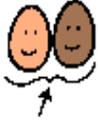
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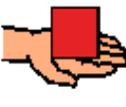
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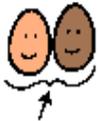
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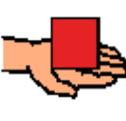
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feet



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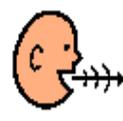
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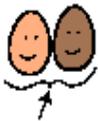
quiet



inside



voices



we



play

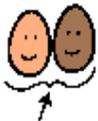


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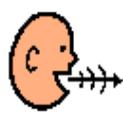


work

safely



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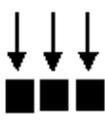


speak

nicely



to



each

other