

# MILLBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

## POLICY ON GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN MILLBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

### FOREWORD

Within the school a set of basic, simple rules is in operation. These rules are based on positive behaviour and where possible an autonomous approach which is in line with the ethos of Millburn Primary. A copy of our school rules is attached at the end of this policy document and it is noticeable that they are based on mutual respect. There is also a set of basic virtues and these are fundamental to school life. We ask that you read these carefully and agree to abide by them. They are taught, one at a time, to all of our children throughout the school year over two week periods. Fundamentally, we would assert that when our children, and human beings in life in general, are treated with dignity and respect then the number of problem situations occurring is greatly reduced. We therefore expect the highest levels of respect and dignity from everyone who uses our school.

Essentially Millburn operates Effective Teaching and Learning approaches which have, as a major part of their foundation, personal accountability, democracy, autonomy, and an invitational school ethos where all are valued equally. Bearing this in mind, the staff agrees that good behaviour is strongly associated with the following:

- Harmonious relationships and mutual respect existing between teachers and pupils within which there are high levels of respect and the dignity of each individual pupil is highly valued.
- Teachers' high expectations of their pupils' academic, social and moral potential.
- Teachers' understandings of the need children have for security, happiness in their classrooms and high levels of trust before deep learning can occur. We therefore concentrate on the building of a trusting, respectful and loving school environment.
- Provision of a well-balanced, carefully formulated curriculum, aligned to effective teaching methods, which are sensitive to the needs of all children.
- The nurturing of the growth of confidence, linked to the level of maturity of the child.
- Clear, sensible policies and procedures designed to promote good behaviour and positive discipline throughout the school.
- The non-acceptance of negativity or cynicism by anyone who uses our school within which we exhibit these high levels of respect for our pupils.
- The absolute need to confront poor teaching, negativity, cynicism, lack of respect and discuss the "non-discussable", which many schools ignore.
- Meeting the learning needs of all children both with regard to their individual preferred style and preferred intelligence.

These rules are in place to ensure the safety, happiness and personal well being of every child who attends Millburn Primary School. They are designed to compliment the Basic Virtues (see Appendix 2), which form the cornerstone of the ethos of our school.

## **VISION**

In Millburn Primary School our goal is excellence across all areas of school life. We expect the best for and from every child, every member of staff and all who visit or use our school from an academic, social and personal standpoint. We also expect and accept without question that everyone who uses our school treats every child, every teacher and every stakeholder in the school equally and fairly at all times.

Furthermore, we will never accept less than what is possible from our children or from ourselves and we will regularly celebrate the successes of our school. We will consistently evaluate our performance and seek to improve. In so doing, every individual within the school will personally accept the responsibility they have in the achievement of the school's vision and of their own personal vision. This achievement will take place in a happy atmosphere where everyone is enthusiastic and committed to the improvement of the learning opportunities and of the real, deep and we hope profound, learning, which takes place within our school by all who are privileged to use the school.

Finally, we will all accept the responsibilities, which we so clearly have - to lead our school clearly, precisely and consistently in line with the values, principles and basic virtues agreed by all staff.

## AIMS OF MILLBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. To provide a secure, warm, happy and fun atmosphere in which children feel secure, confident and relaxed and can learn effectively.
2. To ensure that every child who attends the school has the opportunity to participate in the full breadth of educational experiences as laid down in The Education Reform Order and the subsequent updates to that order.
3. To ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve the highest level of success appropriate to his/her ability (potential).
4. To encourage autonomy and, in so doing, produce responsible, caring, confident and independent children who will benefit society through becoming respected citizens.
5. To develop an awareness of moral and social values: -
  - a) To develop self-awareness and sensitivity.
  - b) To develop confidence in themselves and with others.
  - c) To develop the ability to make reasoned value judgements.
  - d) To develop an awareness of the needs of others, of society in general and of themselves in particular.
  - e) To develop an awareness of the interdependence of people throughout our world.
6. To provide our children with a wide range of physical activities both individually and at group or team level.
7. To encourage an awareness of and respect for different cultures.
8. To develop the capacity to become contributing and caring members of society.

These aims demand a positive commitment from the entire school personnel towards good, positive behaviour, setting good examples and striving for excellence in all aspects of school life.

They also demand that we remain constantly aware that, as teachers and mentors to our children, we can change behaviour patterns and in so doing hope that such change will, in the longer term, change attitude which is then likely to change the individual child's values. We cannot ever change attitude by itself. Behaviour change always comes first.

## **THE TEACHER'S ROLE**

In high performing schools, teachers are constantly aware of the needs of all of their children, not only from an academic standpoint, but also with respect to their self-esteem, discipline, dignity, confidence and general happiness when in school. Furthermore, in such schools, the moral, social and physical aspects of self-concept are catered for. We, in Millburn, aspire to these levels of excellence and as committed teachers will endeavour to do all in our power to ensure that all of the children who attend our school are catered for as fully as is possible. The example set by us in our dealings with each other and visitors, parents etc is of paramount importance. Where we are seen by our pupils to work hard, put ourselves out in their interest, co-operate successfully, have high expectations and treat each other courteously, and with respect, then these same behaviours will flourish more readily amongst our pupils. The expectations of all of us are equally important. As caring teachers, we will insist, firmly and fairly, on hard work, commitment from our pupils, and on high standards of behaviour. We are then much more likely to obtain the high standards contained in our school vision and in all of our school policies.

## **THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

Millburn Primary School is situated just off one of the main roads linking the towns of Portstewart, Portrush and Bushmills to Coleraine. It therefore serves both the large urban community surrounding the school, including a mature council estate, and a wider rural community. This combination has produced an excellent cultural mix within which warm, happy relationships have blossomed and community/school links are strong and positive.

A high level of self-discipline operates within the community, which displays strong Christian values; the school reflects this ethos. Respect is clearly shown for the ideas and views of others, whilst not losing sight of our own. The staff and pupils operate in a democratic environment where each individual is equally valued, all are encouraged to succeed, discipline is the responsibility of each and everyone and we listen with care and compassion. Where we are understanding and sensitive and where respect for the dignity of the individual is the norm. In return this approach has produced an atmosphere where mutual respect has blossomed and where all who use our school are encouraged to become autonomous learners. This ethos is reflected in our basic virtues and we again refer you to these important virtues at the end of our policy.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER

Harmonious relationships and good discipline are the responsibility of every member of staff, both individually and collectively. All pupils should therefore be made aware of:

- a) The rules which operate within the school and why they are in operation.
- b) The class rules which are in operation and why they are in operation.
- c) The basic rules which society has in operation and why.

Teachers must therefore:

- a) Treat discipline positively with a caring, compassionate approach adopted by all within the school.
- b) Encourage good behaviour, good work and reward and praise accordingly.
- c) Constantly monitor all aspects of each child's work/behaviour in school and remember that early intervention is essential in good discipline.
- d) Always find unobtrusive ways of informing children of your concerns or worries.
- e) Continually work at producing excellent staff/ pupil relationships, showing great sensitivity and tact when dealing with pupils.
- f) Continually strive to produce excellent parent/teacher relationships, again showing great sensitivity and tact in all dealings with parents.

## SANCTIONS

It must be stressed that when using any of the sanctions listed below all teachers must take account of the following:

1. Always try to concentrate on the positive.
2. Make a clear distinction between minor and serious offences.
3. Indicate to the children which sanctions are appropriate for particular offences.
4. Be flexible in the application of sanctions as circumstances dictate.
5. Discourage whole group punishments (except when absolutely necessary).
6. Apply sanctions without infringing the schools Guiding Principles and Values.
7. As far as is possible, avoid damaging relationships and pupils' self-esteem.
8. Indicate the balance between sanctions and rewards.
9. Provide guidelines on positive ways of achieving good behaviour.

When using any of the listed sanctions pupils, should be encouraged to understand why what they have done is unacceptable and how they can best avoid inappropriate behaviour in future.

Furthermore, teachers must always be clear in their minds that one of the most powerful sanctions is the disapproval of those whose views are considered important or valuable – the class teacher, peers, the principal and/or parents. Consequently, every effort should be made to create an atmosphere/climate within the school /class where this sanction can be brought into play and have the greatest effect.

Apart from this, the following list of sanctions in order is to be used when necessary:

- a) Disapproval shown by the class teacher/ senior management.
- b) Withholding of praise.
- c) Repetition/additional work to be completed at home (and parents advised why).
- d) Isolation of the pupil within the classroom.
- e) Detention (Years 4-7) with prior notice to parents on set date.
- f) Referral to
  - 1) Head of Key Stage.
  - 2) Vice-Principal and/or pupil welfare teacher.
  - 3) Principal (in the above order).

With respect to a referral to the Principal the following guidelines should be followed: -

Although this is primarily a discipline policy, and has to be viewed accordingly, as teachers we must always remember that excellent work/behaviour/manners etc should be equally recognised and rewarded. This noted, each teacher is expected to refer a child to the principal for any, or a combination, of the following: stealing, persistent disobedience, fighting, lack of effort, constant disruption of the class, use of foul or abusive language, unacceptable behaviour or any other reason deemed important by the teacher.

It must be stressed that it is in the interests of all staff to build a class ethos, which as far as is humanly possible, ensures that excellent behaviour, language and attitude are the accepted norm throughout, not only the class, but the entire school.

When referral to the Principal is unavoidable and for that matter necessary, then the following is the agreed procedure that we follow:

- a) Send for the Principal to come to the classroom. Advise the Principal of the problem and the action taken to date. Record the incident accurately and fully in the school discipline/incident book. Your records must be accurate, valid and up to date.
- b) Should any child be referred to the Principal on three occasions within any six-month period, then contact with the parent(s)/guardian will be made. The relevant problem/concerns will be discussed and every effort made to reach a satisfactory resolution. (Note that where an incident is considered to be serious/really serious, then the parent/guardian must be contacted at once and informed accordingly. Should such an incident occur, then all relevant persons would be invited to the school to consider the incident and apply the school's Discipline Policy as appropriate. Outside advice via Education Authority (EA) etc. may be sought if deemed necessary/ desirable by either party.)
- c) Should it be deemed necessary to contact the parent(s)/guardian on three occasions about their child, with respect to this policy, then the consent of the parent will be sought for outside assistance eg Educational Psychologist etc.
- d) Whilst waiting for outside assistance, should the problem recur, the precise details of concern would be placed before the Board of Governors (or depending on the seriousness of the incident, the Chairman of the Governors) and consent sought to remove the child from the school premises for a specified period of time not to exceed five school days. It is also school policy to seek EA consent and advice

before implementation of a suspension. (Note must be made of the fact that a child can only be suspended for a maximum of 45 days in any one school year and always with the prior consent of the Area Board.) Should a suspension be implemented, the Principal must immediately give written notification to the parent of the pupil, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Education Authority (Standard agreed form to be used.)

Any other action, as deemed necessary to solve the problem(s) being faced, would then be taken. Such action would of course be in line with the schools stated policies. In the instance where it is absolutely necessary to expel the child, this will only be done with the consent of the Area Board and Chairman of the school Governors.

**Finally, where an incident is considered to be a health and safety issue, then the school reserves the right to follow any reasonable course of action to ensure that no child is placed in a position of danger to themselves or others.**

To help maintain and encourage good relationships between all staff and parents, we will set aside at least two occasions per school year to talk to all parents, discuss progress and advise on matters relating to individual progress and/or problems.

Of course, there may well be, in the normal course of school life, an incident, which necessitates action to be taken immediately with respect to our discipline policy. The seriousness of such an incident may make it absolutely necessary for the school to respond in a manner, which ensures that normal school life is not disrupted and that the health and safety of all who use the school is not compromised.

Should such an incident occur then the Principal would have the responsibility to put in place such actions/sanctions as she/he sees fit. In such an instance the advice of EA or a similar body may be sought but ultimately the quality of school life must be maintained. The Principal of our school will act in a manner, which ensures our school aims, virtues and ethos are maintained and that disruption in school life, for all, is kept to an absolute minimum. In so doing she/he has the right to use any, or a combination of, the full range of available sanctions.

Finally, where an incident is of such severity, as to infringe upon the health and safety, the school's reason for functioning, or wellbeing of any school personnel, then an immediate suspension will be recommended to the EA. Should this lead to the need for an expulsion from the school, then a consultation meeting must be held and all the key players will be invited to attend: the Chairman of the Governors, the pupil (at the discretion of parents/guardian), his/her parents, representatives from EA, the Principal and any others who may be in a position to make a worthwhile contribution.

## THE BASIC VIRTUES

### 1. **Honesty**

Each person carries out his or her responsibilities carefully and with integrity, never claiming credit for someone else's work and being willing to acknowledge wrongdoing. Pupils and staff share their ideas openly, in a climate of trust, with a

confidence that what is written and spoken is honestly expressed and that all people are trustworthy.

**2. Respect**

Each person responds sensitively to the ideas and needs of others without dismissing or degrading them. Differences among people are celebrated, and all members of the community are able to accept both praise and constructive suggestions from others. While affirming individual rights, the rights of the group are also fully honoured.

**3. Responsibility**

Each person has a sense of duty to fulfil willingly the tasks he or she has accepted or has been assigned. All work is conscientiously performed. Members of the community feel comfortable asking for help and agree that they must be held accountable for their behaviour.

**4. Compassion**

Each person is considerate and caring. There is recognition that everyone, from time to time, feels hurt, confused, angry or sad. Instead of ignoring such conditions, people reach out to one another. In the case of conflict, members of the community seek reconciliation and try to understand each other, and even to forgive.

**5. Self-discipline**

Each person agrees to live within limits, not only the ones mutually agreed upon, but above all, those established personally. Self-discipline is exercised in relationships with others; especially in the way people speak to one another. Self-discipline applies to the use of time. At the simplest level, self-discipline reflects habits of good living.

**6. Perseverance**

Each person is diligent, with the inner strength and determination to pursue well defined goals. It does matter that a task is completed once begun, and everyone acknowledges that to persevere not only teaches discipline, but brings rewards as well. Each person pushes hard to complete assignments, and community members support each other in their work.

**7. Giving**

Each person discovers that one of life's greatest satisfactions comes from kindness to others, and recognises that talents should be shared, through service. Rather than waiting to be asked, members of the community look for the opportunities to contribute positively to others, without expectation of reward.

Ernest Boyer suggests these virtues in his book, The Basic School.

## MILLBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL RULES

- I must have manners and use good language at all times.
- I must treat everyone with consideration and respect at all times.
- I must treat everyone's property with care.
- I must wear my school uniform.
- If wearing earrings, they must be suitable for school, preferably studs.
- I must come to school clean and tidy.
  
- I must never leave the school premises during school time without the consent of a teacher.
- If I come to school on my bicycle, I must wheel the bicycle at all times when I am on the school premises.
- I must walk at all times inside the school building.
- I accept that I choose how to behave. I must always try to choose the best way.
- I must treat others in the manner that I like to be treated myself.
- I must play fairly with other children in school.
- I must never bully other children.

- I must never hit other children.
- I must always put things back where I found them.
- I must always clear up any mess I have made.
- I must never take things that do not belong to me.
- If I accidentally hurt someone I must apologise. We all make mistakes occasionally.
- When there is a need for a fire drill it is essential that we all behave sensibly and follow the instructions of the teacher.
- When in the school grounds we must never vandalise school property.
- It is our school and we must try to keep it tidy at all times therefore we must never drop litter in the school premises.

## **PARENTAL RULES**

- An explanatory letter, or alternative notification from the parent/guardian, must precede any necessary absence during the school day.
- Children returning to school after a period of absence must bring a letter of explanation from the parent/guardian. Alternatively, the parent/guardian may contact the teacher directly.
- Children must be in school by nine o'clock each school day.
- Children on pre-arranged trips out of school will be personally accountable for their behaviour. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the child's place being forfeited.
- Mutual respect forms the relationship that exists between children and their teachers and between teachers and the parents of the children.

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