

Phoenix Park School



Code of Behaviour

June 2011

Our School's Aims

At the Phoenix Park Special School, we aim to:

- Establish standards of behaviour in a caring, productive and safe learning environment where all students are valued and respected
- Promote a supportive environment so that all members of the school community may work together in developing acceptable standards of behaviour from our pupils
- Encourage all students to take increasing responsibility for their own behaviour, and the consequences of their behaviour choices, through the implementation of whole school proactive programs and additional targeted support for those who may need it
- Instil within our pupils the values of caring for themselves, others, their school and their learning

Developing Our Code

Our Code of Behaviour was developed in consultation with the principal, teachers, special needs assistants, care workers, parents, students and other members of the school community. An audit of the existing code was the starting point, with input sought from all the listed parties. An action plan was developed to address the areas that needed to be reviewed and addressed.

Our vision for Relationships and Behaviour in the School

At the Phoenix Park School, we are committed to providing a supportive school environment that maximises the educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

We believe that all members of our school community have the right to:

- Feel safe and valued
- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Learn and teach in a supportive environment
- Understand expectations and consequences of behaviours

We are committed to ensuring that:

- Students are guided toward caring for themselves by our promotion of self-discipline, self-control and self-responsibility
- We nourish self-esteem and self-respect and we distinguish between a person and that person's behaviour
- We value dignity, worth, fairness and justice in every child
- Students are guided toward caring for others by the promotion of respect, courtesy, tolerance, teamwork, trust and honesty among all members of the school community.
- School staff are the first and foremost models for these values and will behave in a manner from which children can learn at all times, both from their interactions with other adults and with the children themselves

Our beliefs are based on the four values of:

- Caring for yourself
- Caring for others
- Caring for your school
- Caring for your learning

Promoting our Standard of Behaviour

Universal Behaviour Support

At our school, we believe that the first step in facilitating standards of behaviour is communicating these standards to **all** students. We believe that teaching students the behaviours we want them to demonstrate at school is very important. Communicating behavioural expectations is a form of universal behaviour support and helps us to prevent problem behaviour and provides a framework for responding to problem behaviour.

We promote the following “**Golden Rules**” that underpin all behaviour in our school:

- We are gentle
- We are kind and helpful
- We are honest
- We listen
- We work hard
- We look after property

Our four **values** are:

- Caring for yourself
- Caring for others
- Caring for your school
- Caring for your learning

We have worked together to develop a set of behavioural expectations in specific setting for each of our Caring Values. Our School ***Behaviour Expectations and Values Matrix*** (Appendix 1) outlines our agreed rules, routines and behavioural expectations in all school settings. Our rules, routines and expectations are promoted throughout the whole school through the use of visual prompts, direct teaching, pictures, stickers and reward cards for our pupils.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

At our school, we believe that students are more likely to behave when:

- There is good school management and classroom teaching
- They understand the code of behaviour and their part in making it work
- They see that the code works in a fair way
- The standards for behaviour are clear and consistent
- There are good relationships between teachers, parents, staff and students and a happy school atmosphere
- Adults model the behaviour that is expected from students

Rewards

We believe that the use of rewards can help to affirm children’s efforts to abide by the code of behaviour and can also motivate more reluctant children to engage with the code. Rewards systems are in place at a whole school level and at individual classroom levels. Examples of both are provided below. We believe in the following in terms of good practice in using rewards:

- They are meaningful to the individual student or group
- They acknowledge behaviour that is valued and wanted
- They are closely linked in time to that specific behaviour
- They are given for effort as well as achievement
- They are used consistently and by all staff

Whole School Rewards	Class Rewards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive, descriptive praise • Student of the Week Assembly • Stickers • Certificates • Golden Time (Options/Sanctions) • House system of rewards • Visits to the principal's office for reward • Good News Letter home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music while doing school work • Chat break at the end of class • Extra computer time • Free time at the end of class • Day for watching a movie • Group activity • Games • Homework coupon • Coupon for prizes and privileges • Certificate/trophy/ribbon/plaque • Gift certificates • Free pass to sporting event or play • Fun walk with the principal or teacher • Guest presenter in class • Field trip

Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour

The Phoenix Park School makes systematic efforts to prevent problem student behaviour by teaching and noticing expected behaviours on an ongoing basis. When unacceptable behaviour occurs, students experience predictable consequences. Our school seeks to ensure that responses to unacceptable behaviour are consistent and proportionate to the nature of the behaviour.

Our whole school approach to responding to inappropriate behaviour includes:

- A ladder of Intervention
- Agreed ways of describing the nature, intensity and persistence of behaviour
- Arrangements for recording behaviour

Mild, Moderate and Serious Behaviours

When responding to problem behaviour the staff member first determines if the problem behaviour is mild, moderate or serious, with the following agreed understanding:

- **Mild** problem behaviour is handled by staff members at the time that it happens and may be recorded on each individual's behaviour sheet or reward chart
- **Moderate** behaviour is referred to the class teacher and is recorded, with logical consequence enforced and a system put in place to prevent reoccurrence
- **Serious** behaviour is referred to the principal and the warning letter system is started. Disciplinary absences are considered, which balance the interests of the individual student with the educative and safety needs of others in the school

Staff and students developed a summary of mild, moderate and serious behaviour and possible consequences. (Appendix 2)

Relating Challenging Behaviour to Expected School Behaviour

When responding to challenging behaviours, staff members ensure that students understand the relationship of the behaviour to expected school behaviour. An example of such support may be that staff members support students by doing the following:

- articulate the relevant expected school behaviour
- explain how their behaviour differs from expected school behaviours
- model the expected behaviour and support the child to practice it
- offer choices to the child that may be helpful to reach the desired behaviour goal
- remain calm when responding

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

The school recognises that occasionally students may not respond positively to the usual interventions and that they may require extra support in an effort to manage aggressive or violent behaviour. A small minority of students may show particular challenging behaviour. These students will need a sustained and systematic response involving the important adults in their lives, in school and at home. The Board of Management is satisfied that staff members are trained in, and use Non-Violent Crisis Intervention in dealing with disruptive and assaultive behaviour that students exhibit.

Ensuring Consistent Responses to Problem Behaviour

At the Phoenix Park School, staff members are provided with appropriate professional development to respectfully deal with inappropriate behaviours. Through this training, we work to ensure consistent responses to challenging behaviours across the school.

Ladder of Intervention

The following process outlines the PPSS ladder of intervention when dealing with inappropriate behaviour:

Step 1: School Support

- Teach school wide positive behaviour and procedures
- Positive reinforcement for all students
- Consistent consequences for all problem behaviours
- Effective procedures and supervision in non-classroom areas
- Effective classroom management and instruction
- Consistently challenging behaviour is brought to the attention of the parent. Discussion around behaviour, reasons, consequences and strategies discussed and a plan put in place.

Step 2: Targeted Support

- Teacher brings the student's case to the principal. Discussion around school-based support that may be implemented. Plan put in place.
- An Individual Behaviour Support Plan is required. Advice sought from team involved with child.
- Implementation and monitoring of the Behaviour Support Plan.

Step 3: Intensive Support

- Behaviour Support Plan will be reviewed and intensified.
- Support from CAMHS team and/or NEPS school psychologist will be sought.

Step 4: Suspensions

In cases of serious misbehaviour, a suspension may be issued. Notification will be made to student and parent in writing as soon as possible, giving full reasons for the decision relating to the selected school disciplinary absence.

Suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Other interventions may include:

- Parent Supervision
- Behaviour Monitoring
- Behavioural Contract
- In-school suspension
- Support from CAMHS team

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety for themselves, other students and staff members
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property or has engaged in assaultive behaviour

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

There may be instances where behaviour warrants immediate action and disciplinary absences are given in the interest of the safety of the student and other school community members. The Board of Management has given permission for the principal to authorise such absences without prior approval or written notification when this occurs.

Rationale for the use of Suspensions

The Phoenix Park Special School believe that using suspensions as a consequence for serious misconduct can have value if used with a specific purpose in mind. This includes giving staff time to plan ways of helping the student to change unacceptable behaviour and giving the school an opportunity to seek support from other agencies that may be able to help to support the child (e.g CAMHS, NEPS, Social Services). Suspensions can provide respite for staff and students, give the student time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences, and illustrate to other students that serious misbehaviour is not acceptable at the school.

Step 5: Re-entry

A planned re-entry to school is convened after enforcing a suspension to minimize recurrence of unacceptable behaviour and disruption to the student's education. Parties who may be involved in this process: Principal, Parent/Carer, Teacher, CAMHS Keyworker. Re-entry and interview and procedures are completed. Intensive Individual Behaviour Support Plan may be reviewed

Step 6: Exclusion

Grounds for exclusion include:

- Conduct that is prejudicial to the good order and management of the school
- The potential a behaviour has to impact on other students and teachers
- The potential a behaviour has to disrupt learning activity

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management Responsibilities

The Board of Management is expected to

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code
- Ratify the code
- Ensure the code is communicated to the whole school community

Principal's Responsibilities

The Principal is expected to

- Promote a positive climate in the school
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner
- Arrange for review of the Code, as outlined in the timetable for review.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Teachers are expected to:

- Teach the code
- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour having regard to decisions made on a whole school basis
- Be cognisant of their duty of care
- Create a safe and welcoming working environment for each pupil
- Develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- Praise desirable behaviour
- Facilitate pupils to reach their full academic potential
- Listen, at appropriate times, to pupils' explanations for behaviour
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Communicate with parents when necessary
- Provide reports on matters of mutual concern

All Staff Members Responsibilities

All staff members are expected to:

- Support and implement the school's code of behaviour having regard to decisions made on a whole school basis
- Be cognisant of their duty of care
- Contribute to a safe and welcoming working environment for each pupil

- Develop and nurture a sense of self-esteem in each pupil
- Praise desirable behaviour
- Be courteous, consistent and fair
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour
- Provide support for colleagues
- Help teachers to think about and analyse possible reasons for a student's poor behaviour
- Help to devise possible ways of changing the behaviour and support and implement behaviour plans for students

Pupils' Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Listen to their teachers and staff members and act on instructions/advice
- Show respect for all members of the school community
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling
- Include other pupils in games and activities
- Follow school and class rules

Parent's Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are expected to

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for their own and other people's property
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others and support
- Communicate to the school the reasons for children's absences
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour on a day to day basis

Ratification and Communication

A draft of this policy was circulated to all staff and parents. Comments and suggestions were invited. The Board of Management ratified the Code of Behaviour and it was circulated among school community members.