

St. Oliver's Special School

Code of Behaviour



Our Mission

St. Oliver's Special School aims to be a caring community dedicated to enhancing individual development, founded on high professional standards, mutual trust and respect for the essential worth and human dignity of all its students and staff.

St. Oliver's Special School caters for pupils from 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 18 years of age who have a Moderate, Severe or Profound Learning Disability. St. Oliver's Special School also caters for pupils who have physical, sensory or behavioural difficulties. This policy is drawn up based on our understanding of the level of need and ability of the children in St. Oliver's Special School. The school adopts a proactive approach to dealing with behaviours, by placing emphasis on the use of preventative strategies, while recognising the pupil's personal integrity and rights. The policy shall serve to create a whole school approach that is consistent and cohesive.

There are a number of principles that underpin this Code of Behaviour:

- It is expected that adult members of the school community set high standards of behaviour and have high expectations for student behaviour. The behaviours of the adults in a child's life, including parents, teachers and special needs assistants, is a significant influence on how a child behaves. St. Oliver's Special School expect that the behaviour of all members of the school community should reflect the following values:
 - Respect for self and others
 - Kindness and willingness to help others
 - Courtesy and good manners
 - Fairness
 - Forgiveness
 - Readiness to use ways of resolving difficulties and conflict that are respectful of everybody involved.
 - Willingness to take responsibility for one's own behaviour
- The school promotes good behaviour by having a whole school approach to promote positive behaviours and agreed strategies for catering for pupils who present with behaviours that challenge. Appendix 1 contains details of strategies implemented in St. Oliver's Special School.
- The school recognises pupils in St. Oliver's Special School have communication difficulties and these pupil may have difficulty interpreting the world around them or difficulty in conveying information which may give rise to feelings of frustration. The school shall work closely with all health and social care professionals to help the child develop an appropriate means of communication.
- The school shall provide a positive learning environment with consistent boundaries for behaviour and clarity on expectation. Predictability and

consistency in the classroom through the use of class rules, routines, schedules and timetables are necessary for children to understand what is expected of them at school.

- The environment can contribute to the behaviour of a pupil in the school. All classroom environments shall be mindful of noise, light, heat or cold, space, seating etc. as it may impact on how a pupil copes with an intended learning environment.
- Due to the complexity of some disabilities presenting in St. Oliver's Special School, pupils may engage in behaviour that is hazardous to themselves, to other and may result in damage to property. In this instance staff must take steps to ensure that safety of all involved while attempting to support the pupil through the crisis. It is essential that all staff understand the phase of an incident as outlined in Appendix 2
- When a pupil displays difficult behaviour consistently on a number of occasions, the family and members of the multi-disciplinary team shall be informed and all relevant parties including those working in the school will be involved in the development of a support plan. Details of The Support Plan are outlined in Appendix 3

Monitoring and review

- The Board of Management has the responsibility of setting down these general guidelines on standards of discipline and behaviour. The principal monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis. The Principal reports to the Board of Management on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.
- The Board of Management has the authority to give fixed-term suspensions to individual children for serious acts of misbehaviour. For repeated or very serious acts of anti-social behaviour, which compromise the school operations and the safety of other pupils, staff or the pupil him/herself, the Board of Management may permanently exclude a child.
The Board of Management of St. Oliver's Special School does not envisage that this will be necessary but in the unlikely event, the Board will be guided by legislation including: *Improving Behaviour and Attendance: Guidance on Exclusion from School and Child Referral Units* (DES, January 2003)
- The Board of Management reviews this policy every two years. The Board of Management may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Signed: _____
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Strategies

Strategies used in St. Oliver's Special School to promote positive behaviours include:

- **Catch Them Being Good:** A strategy which promotes the acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour or on task focus as an incentive for the pupil to repeat the positive behaviour. This can be used in conjunction with planned ignoring where attention for inappropriate behaviour does not serve as a reinforcer for the pupil.
- **Social Stories:** A strategy for assisting pupils who have poor social skills to understand and develop a range of social skills by presenting appropriate social behaviours in the form of a story.
- **Behaviour Modification:** A strategy which specifies basic class rules and routines. The consequences that will accrue from abiding by these rules and routines, and the consequences for pupils on the occasions when these rules and routines are not followed. These strategies can be formulated on a class or individual basis as appropriate. Token Economy, Star Charts, and First and Then cards can be used as part of this approach.
- **Active listening:** A strategy designed to allow the pupil to have their point of view expressed and listened to in a non-confrontational manner.
- **Self-management:** A strategy which aims to equip the pupil with coping skills in dealing with feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety.
- **Replacement Skills:** Teach pupil to find a different way to responding/expressing need
- **Reward Systems:** Rewards can be individual, group and/or whole class. A combination of individual and whole class can work very effectively. This encourages both a positive group atmosphere and individual achievement. Rewards can include:

Tokens:

- ❖ Stickers
- ❖ Certificates
- ❖ Colouring Pictures
- ❖ Puzzles (collecting a piece to create a complete puzzle)
- ❖ Stamps
- ❖ Positive note home
- ❖ Positive note to the principal
- ❖ Vouchers to spend on favourite activity

Privileges:

- ❖ First in line
- ❖ Extra time on preferred activity
- ❖ Helping the teacher
- ❖ Sit in a special seat

- ❖ Choose a PE/song/activity
- ❖ Reading favourite book
- ❖ Extra computer/iPad time
- ❖ Choosing favourite DVD for the class
- ❖ Writing on the whiteboard
- ❖ A responsibility in the class

Social Rewards:

- ❖ Visit to the principal's classroom
- ❖ Earn a whole-class reward

Natural rewards:

- ❖ Praise
- ❖ Smile
- ❖ Positive attention
- ❖ Frequent marking and positive comments on work
- ❖ Encouragement
- ❖ Positive signal e.g. thumbs up

Appendix 2

Approaches

The approaches outlined are intended as a guideline for staff in dealing effectively with a serious incident. It may be necessary to vary the approaches for individual pupils based on prior knowledge of the pupil's pattern of behaviour

1. Trigger & Agitation: At this point the pupil displays anxiety. The staff approach should be supportive, empathetic and attempt to alleviate the anxiety. The trigger/source of agitation should be identified if possible and removed if this is feasible
2. Acceleration/Escalation: Here the anxiety levels are heightened affecting the pupil's self-control. The staff approach should now be directive - setting limits for the pupil and offering choices. Diversionary tactics can also be employed at this stage
3. Peak: At this stage the pupil has lost control and is exhibiting violent aggressive behaviour which is hazardous to themselves and others in the vicinity. The following steps should be taken, the child's safety is paramount at all times:
 - Stay calm - breathe slowly
 - Keep a safe distance from the pupil
 - Be aware of tone of voice and speak softly
 - Listen to the pupil
 - Empathise: Acknowledge feelings
 - Depending on the situation remove the pupil or if more appropriate the other pupils in the immediate area
 - It may be appropriate in some instances to leave the pupil alone and once safety is ensured monitor the situation from a distance.
 - Use distraction if appropriate
 - Doing something unexpected or funny may change the mood
 - In extreme circumstance it may be necessary to restrain or restrict the liberty of a pupil to prevent injury to him/herself or others. This should only be done as a last resort. Such measures should be discussed with relevant professionals and parents prior to implementation and outlined in individual support plans. Staff should be trained to correctly carry out these procedures.
 - If a behaviour incident persists over a long period it may be necessary to contact family and/or other appropriate support personnel.
4. De-escalation: In this phase the pupil displays a drop in physical and emotional energy and begins to regain rationality and focus. Staff should aim to re-build communication and provide therapeutic care.

Recovery: At this point the pupil has regained control of his/her behaviour, has been reassured and is return to return to his/her class activities. Staff should record any physical injuries sustained by anyone during the incident in the Incident Book located in the office and arrange for medical attention if required. Individual staff involved in the incident should record the details of the event. All body marks or injuries should be identified on a body chart. A debriefing meeting for staff involved should be organised as soon as possible. At this meeting staff should reflect on the incident, provide emotional support for each other and decide if procedures need to be adjusted

Appendix 3:

The Support Plan

The plan should include the following:

Gathering Information

- Assess the pupil's behavioural skills, deficits and excesses
- Consider both internal and external contributing factors
- List antecedents and consequences
- ABC charts and Behaviour charts can be used to record a child's behaviour over a period of time

Interpretation

- Be aware of multiple causes

Intervention

- Identify likely causes of the problem
- Specify the help the pupil needs
- Specify the help the staff need
- Exclude, if possible, contributory external causes
- Develop strategies for changing the environment, if appropriate
- Build on the pupil's strengths
- Use negotiation, if appropriate
- Agree on an individual support plan.