**Code of Behaviour Policy**

**Our Lady of Victories Girls’ School**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy followed from a review of the existing Code of Behaviour policy ratified in 2013. It is a collaborative exercise between teachers, parents, Board of Management and the pupils

**Rationale**

Our Lady of Victories Girls’ School decided to review its Code of Behaviour because

* It is a priority area identified by the staff
* There is a need for consistency across the OLV Campus
* The existing policy was due for review and amendment
* It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline

**Relationship to ethos of the school**

The school has a central role in the children’s social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. Our Lady of Victories Girls’ School aims to nurture each child to develop her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This can only be achieved when there is a high level of respect and cooperation between staff, parents and pupils.

**Aims**

Through the implementation of this policy Our Lady of Victories Girls’ School hopes

* To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way
* To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
* To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
* To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
* To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
* To facilitate the education and development of every child
* To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
* To enable teachers to teach without disruption
* To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures
* To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
* To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner

**Guidelines**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, will emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

**General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour**

* Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
* Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free
* Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time
* Pupils are expected to obey a teacher’s instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly
* Pupils are expected to attend school every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case parents must inform the school in person, by phone or in writing, stating the reason for absence

**Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying: deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

**Child Friendly Rules** (agreed on by pupils, parents, teachers, BOM)

**Classroom Rules**

* Be kind
* Be polite
* Say ‘Please’ and ‘Thank you
* Do not shout
* Do not swear
* Try your best
* Always tell the truth
* Say sorry when you need to
* Help others
* Have fun

**Yard Rules**

* Play safely
* Play with each other
* Talk to the teacher on ‘duty’ if you have a problem
* Take care of yard equipment
* Do not leave the yard without permission

**Strategies/Incentives**

* A quiet word or gesture to show approval
* A comment on a girls’ journal/copy book
* A visit to another class or to Principal for commendation
* Praise in front of class group
* Homework Pass
* Individual class merit awards, points, awards of award stamps, stickers
* Mention at School Assembly
* Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
* Written or verbal communication with parent

**Discouraging Misbehaviour**

The degree of misdemeanors i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or principal. A pupil’s individual needs will also be taken into account as will relevant family circumstances. A common-sense approach will be taken.

### **Examples of minor misdemeanours:**

### Interrupting class work

### Arriving late for school

### Running in school building

### Leaving seat without permission at lunch time

### Leaving litter around school

### Being discourteous/unmannerly

### Not completing homework without good reason

### Not working to full potential

### **Examples of serious misdemeanours:**

### Bullying (See policy)

### Physical Fighting in classroom or on school grounds (e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, biting and other similar physical behaviours)

### Endangering self, staff or fellow pupils in the school

### Spitting at peers or staff

### Consistent and persistent disruption of class

### Throwing objects that may cause harm to pupils or staff

### Telling lies or making wrongful accusations

### Stealing

### Damaging pupil’s or school property

### Being verbally disrespectful to a member of staff

### Behaving in a way that disrupts teaching and learning

### Refusing to follow instruction

### Using unacceptable, aggressive or offensive language

### Threatening harm or the use of physical aggression towards another child or staff member

### Using a mobile phone/iwatch etc- a mobile phone agreement must be signed by parents/guardians and pupils if a mobile phone is being brought into school

## **Examples of gross misdemeanours**

## Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission

## Acts of Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) to a staff member and/or pupil. It is important to note that the school will decide whether a behaviour will come under this definition.

## Destruction or wilful interference with school property

## Aggressive, threatening or verbally abusive behaviour towards a member of staff or another pupil.

## Any use of cigarettes, vapes, alcohol or other drug in school or school grounds.

## Hitting, spitting, biting or kicking a staff member.

## Being in possession of any weapon readily capable of causing bodily harm.

*This list is not exhaustive and other incidents may be considered as gross misdemeanours at the discretion of the principal and the Board of Management*

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive and discourage misbehaviour.

Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour. These may include:

* Reasoning with pupil
* Reminder of agreed school rules and classroom rules/behaviour contract
* Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
* Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
* Prescribing extra work
* Loss of privileges (Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricula Area, except on the grounds of health/safety.)
* Detention during break or after school
* Communication with parents by class teacher
* An investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour- a written record will be kept by the class teacher and kept in the Class Green Folder (GDPR Action 2018).
* Referral to Principal
* Communication with parents by Principal will be verbal or written, depending on the circumstances. The parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child’s case.

**Suspension**

* Before resorting to serious sanctions, e.g. suspension, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Parents will be involved at an early stage rather than a last resort.
* For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour a pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 of the *Rules for National Schools.*
* The BOM authorises the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.
* In the unlikely situation of a repeated need to exclude a student it will be done on a phased basis;

Stage 1- Excluded for a single day x 3 times;

Stage 2- Excluded for 3 days x 3 times- this will be done in consultation with the Chairperson and the Deputy Principal

Stage 3- Excluded for 5 days x 3 times- approval will be sought from the BOM (emergency meeting to be called if necessary)

The principal will notify the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm the following:

1. The period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
2. The reason(s) for the suspension.
3. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered by the student and/or parents.
4. The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
5. Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

**Expulsion**

* Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with Rule 130 (6).
* Every effort will be made to have an emotionally disturbed child referred for psychological assessment without delay. Help will be sought also from support services within the wider community e.g. Community Care Services provided by Health Services

**Procedures in respect of expulsion**

* A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal
* A recommendation to the BOM by the principal
* Consideration by the BOM of the principal’s recommendations and the holding of a hearing.
* BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing.
* If BOM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, they must notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB will be notified using a Notice of Intention to Expel form.
* Consultations arranged by EWO.
* Confirmation of the decision to expel.

**Appeals**

Parents may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 section 29).

***In the belief that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, every effort will be made by the principal teacher and staff to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and that parents are told not only when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well.***

**Monitoring & Evaluation of Code:**

**(**Success by which the policy will be judged)

* Atmosphere of discipline within the school
* Children learn and thrive in a safe environment
* Children are aware of school rules
* Staff apply school rules
* Growth in self- discipline
* Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code
* Comments or compliments on behaviour
* Regular feedback from teachers and awards presented by Principal at Assembly
* Children working to the best of their ability
* Class working to the best of their ability
* Improvements in behaviour
* Liaising with Parents’ Group (Principal, HSCL) in discussion and feedback regarding behaviour
* Annual review at staff meeting and BOM

**Monitoring and Review:**

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed yearly or more often if the need arises.

In registering children in Our Lady of Victories Girls’ School, parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_