

PARENT'S HANDBOOK

# St. Patrick's School



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## **History of St. Patrick's Special School**

St. Patrick's School was established in the Boy's Club, Island Road, Enniscorthy in 1967. The present school in Bohreen Hill was built in 1969. The Junior School was established in 2006. St. Patrick's Special School caters for children from 4 – 18 years from County Wexford and South County Wicklow. The school is currently at the planning and design stage of a new purpose built school on a new site in Drumgoold, Enniscorthy.

## **Mission Statement**

St. Patrick's School provides an educational service for students with moderate, severe and profound general learning difficulties and students within the autistic spectrum.

Our aim is to foster the intellectual, spiritual, physical, cultural, moral and social development of each student in an environment that is based on Christian values and attitudes whilst respecting all religious beliefs and none.

The ethos of St. Patrick's is that each student has the fundamental right

- To be valued as an individual
- To be treated with dignity and respect
- To be loved and cared for
- To be safe and protected from all abuse
- To promote these values within the school community and in the local communities.

## **Management Structure of St. Patrick's School**

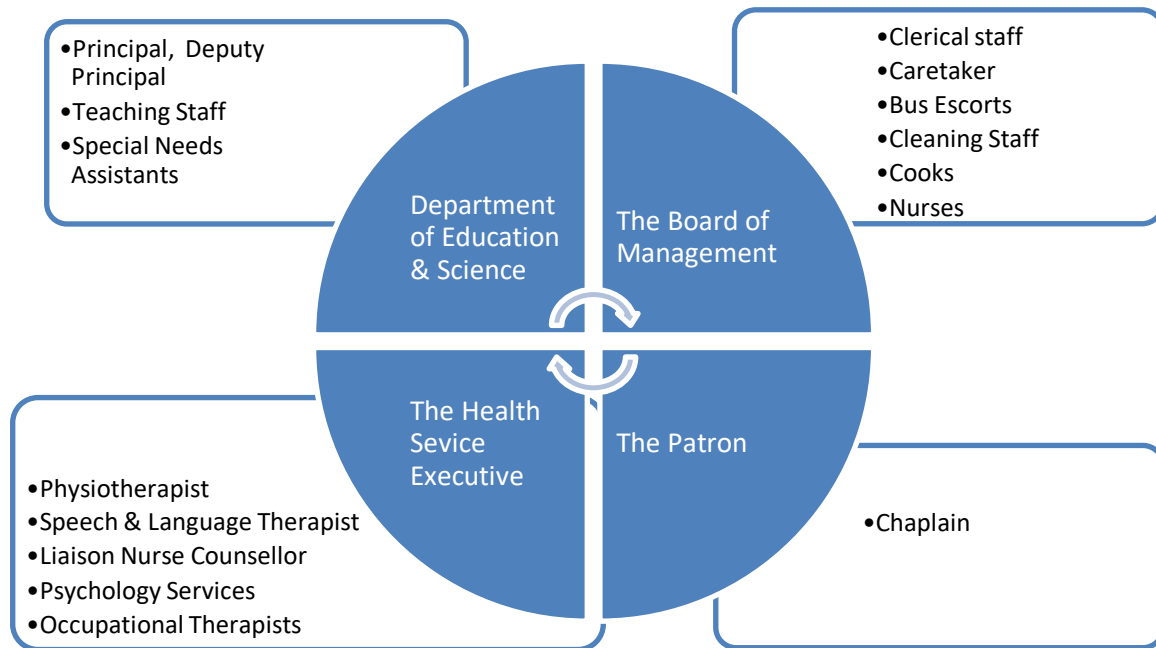
St. Patrick's operates under the Education Act 1998 and the rules for National Schools that are made by the Minister of Education and Skills with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance. The Patron of St. Patrick's Special School is the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Ferns.

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's Special School consists of the following:

- Two direct nominees of the Patron
- Two parents of children enrolled in the school (one being a mother, one being a father)
- The Principal Teacher
- One Teacher's Representative
- Two additional members from the wider community, elected by the above

## Staffing

The school staff comprises of the Principal, the Deputy Principal 19 class teachers and 3 specialist teachers for Woodwork, Horticulture and Home Economics. There are 42 special needs assistants, 4 nurses, a secretary, a caretaker, 2 cooks and 2 cleaners. There are 24 Bus Escorts who are also employed by the school.



The Board of Management recognises the valued contribution made to the educational process by the staff members of the school.

### Professional Services provided and funded by the H.S.E.

In conjunction with the Department of Education & Skills, the Health Service Executive provides an input to the wellbeing of the students in St. Patrick's School with a Section 39 grant. This grant enables the B.O.M. to employ the nursing staff and purchase medical supplies. The H.S.E. employs the following professionals: 2 Speech & Language Therapists (1 fulltime & 1 part-time); 1 Physiotherapist (full-time); occupational therapists (sessional); a psychologist, a child psychiatrist, and a paediatrician (through the referral process); and a nurse liaison counsellor.

## **General Information**

### **School Admissions**

The school aims to make the transition from home to school as easy as possible for the new student and his/her parents. We hold the view that the child should start school as early as possible – the official age for admission to school is 4 years. The advantage of an early entrance into the education system is that the child adjusts quickly and benefits from a well-planned programme specific to his/her needs. The parents and the new student are invited to visit the school, meet with the principal, the class teacher and the school nurse prior to the child attending school.

At this meeting, all aspects of the school curriculum, rules and requirements are explained to the parents. The procedures for the provision of school transport are also explained. Parents will be given the opportunity to talk about their child, their concerns and expectations for the child.

### **Enrolment Procedures** *(A copy of the School Enrolment Policy is available on Request)*

The criteria for enrolment are:

- The student should have been psychologically assessed.
- The student should be at least 4 years old.
- The student should have a moderate or severe and profound general learning disability.
- The student may have an additional autistic spectrum disorder.
- The parents should complete the Application Form and the Medical Information Form and return it to the school principal along with a copy of all relevant assessments.

### **School Time**

- School begins at 9.15a.m.
- Morning break takes place at approximately 10.30a.m. (this may vary from class to class)
- Lunch break is from 12.15p.m. - 12.45p.m. and 1.00p.m. - 1.30p.m.
- The students are called to load the buses at 2.30p.m.

### **School Transport**

- School transport is provided for each student directly from his/her home to school.
- Following the decision to enrol the child in the school, the parents sign a transport application form which is then forwarded to the S.E.N.O. along with the child's psychological assessment.

- The S.E.N.O. forwards her decision to the Department of Education & Skills who arranges transport.
- The local C.I.E. transport officer contacts the parents with the name of the bus contractor who will bring the student to school.
- Each bus has a bus escort who is employed by the school. All bus escorts are trained by the BOM in the administration of Buccal midazolam.

### **Morning Snack/Dinners**

An important part of Social, Personal and Health Education is 'Food and Nutrition'. Morning snack and a cooked dinner provide opportunities for students to experience

- Different foods / drinks
- Healthy eating
- Making choices
- Setting/ clearing tables
- Eating out
- Using the dishwasher
- Social interaction
- Communication / language
- Reading lists / menus
- Handling money
- Cookery
- Good manners
- Exercising muscles used for speech.

### **Parental Contributions**

Parents are asked to contribute a nominal sum of money for school meals. School also asks parents to contribute towards swimming, Playzone and materials such as books, pencils, art and craft materials etc.

Children should have their names on their coats and other personal property such as swim bags.

### **Home /School Links**

Frequent communication is of vital importance in developing and nurturing cooperation between home and school. In St. Patrick's School, communication between parents and teachers may take one of the following forms:

1. Notes in the pupil's home/school diaries
2. Details of school holidays or early school closures are always communicated in writing.
3. Parent/ teacher meetings (generally held during term 1)

4. Appointment with the Principal. (Parents should contact the school at 053 9233657 if they wish to meet the Principal.)
5. A parent may contact the school at any time to request a meeting with his/her child's class teacher. An appointment is necessary to ensure adequate supervision of the class.
6. Meetings are held throughout the year in connection with preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.
7. As the need arises, parents will receive notices with regard to school matters and/or events.
8. Parents must send a note or contact the teacher by phone if a student has to leave school early. Parents/ guardians are asked to call personally to reception to collect the student.
9. Any person collecting a student on behalf of the parent/guardian should present written authorisation to the class teacher.

### **Administration of Medication**

When the administration of medicine is necessary for a student during the school day, the following procedure will be used:

Parents/Guardians are requested to make the school nurse aware of any medical condition suffered by their child

The parents will provide a Kardex written and signed by the student's G.P. stating clearly the name of the medicine and the dosage.

Parents must notify the school nurse of any changes in medication pertaining to his/her child.

A teacher or an S.N.A. should not administer medication without the specific written authorisation of the B.O.M. and/or the parent.

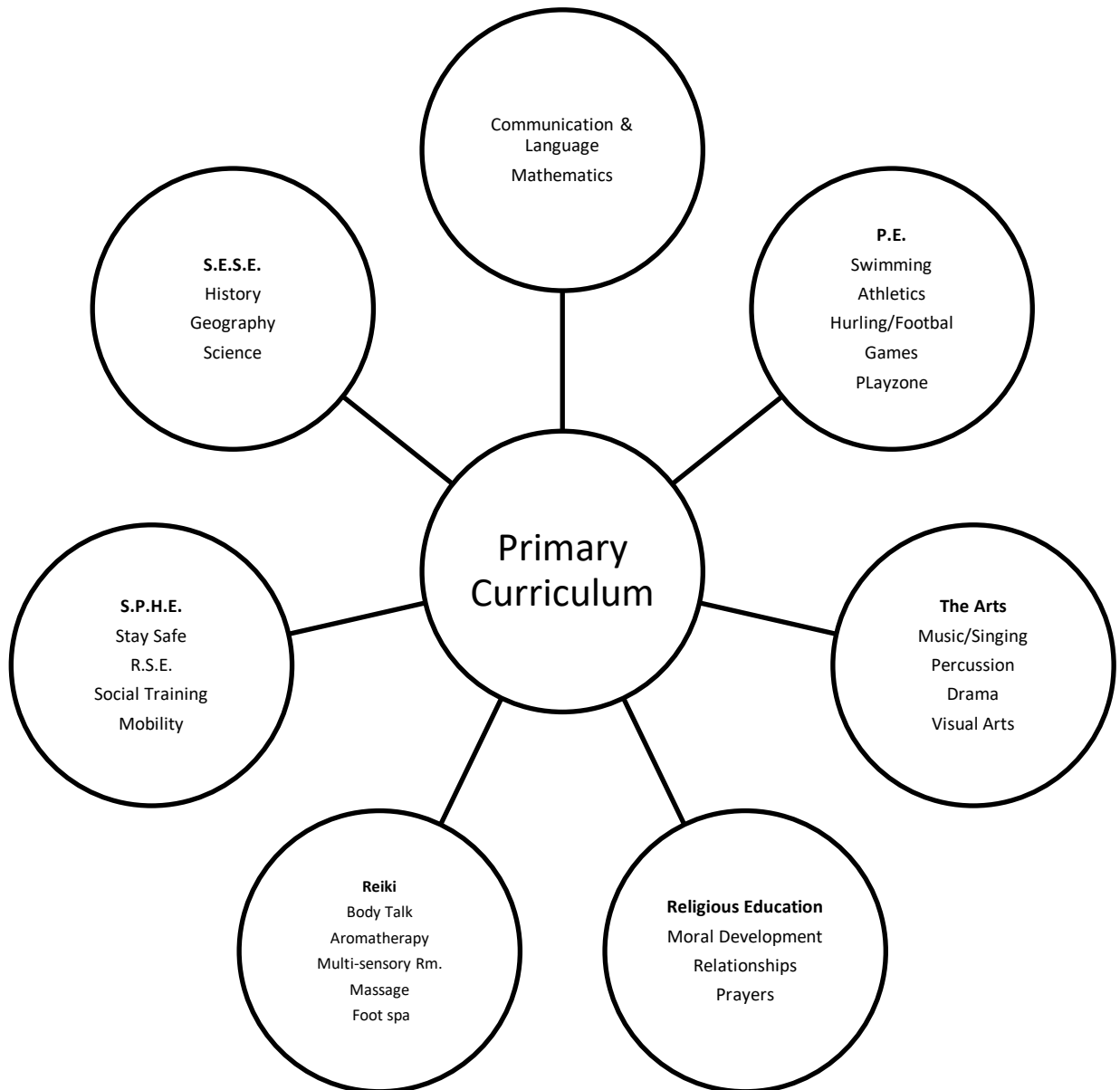
### **Illness/ Accidents**

Accidents occur despite supervision. The school nurse treats minor accidents at school and the parent is informed either by phone or through the child's notebook.

Should a student become ill in school, the parent may be requested to collect him/her from school as a precaution and to prevent the spread of infection in the classroom.

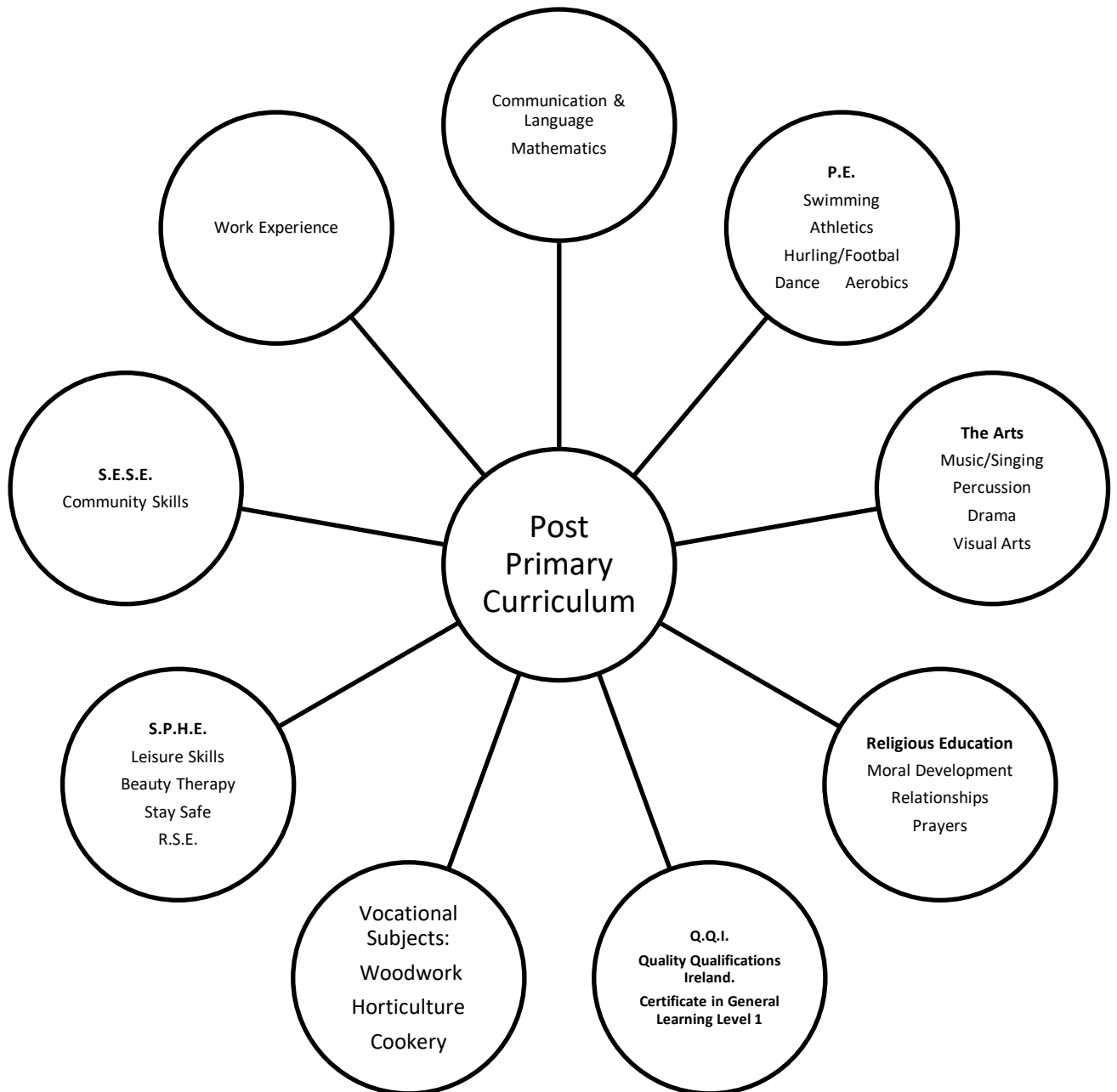
# Educational Programmes

## Primary Programme

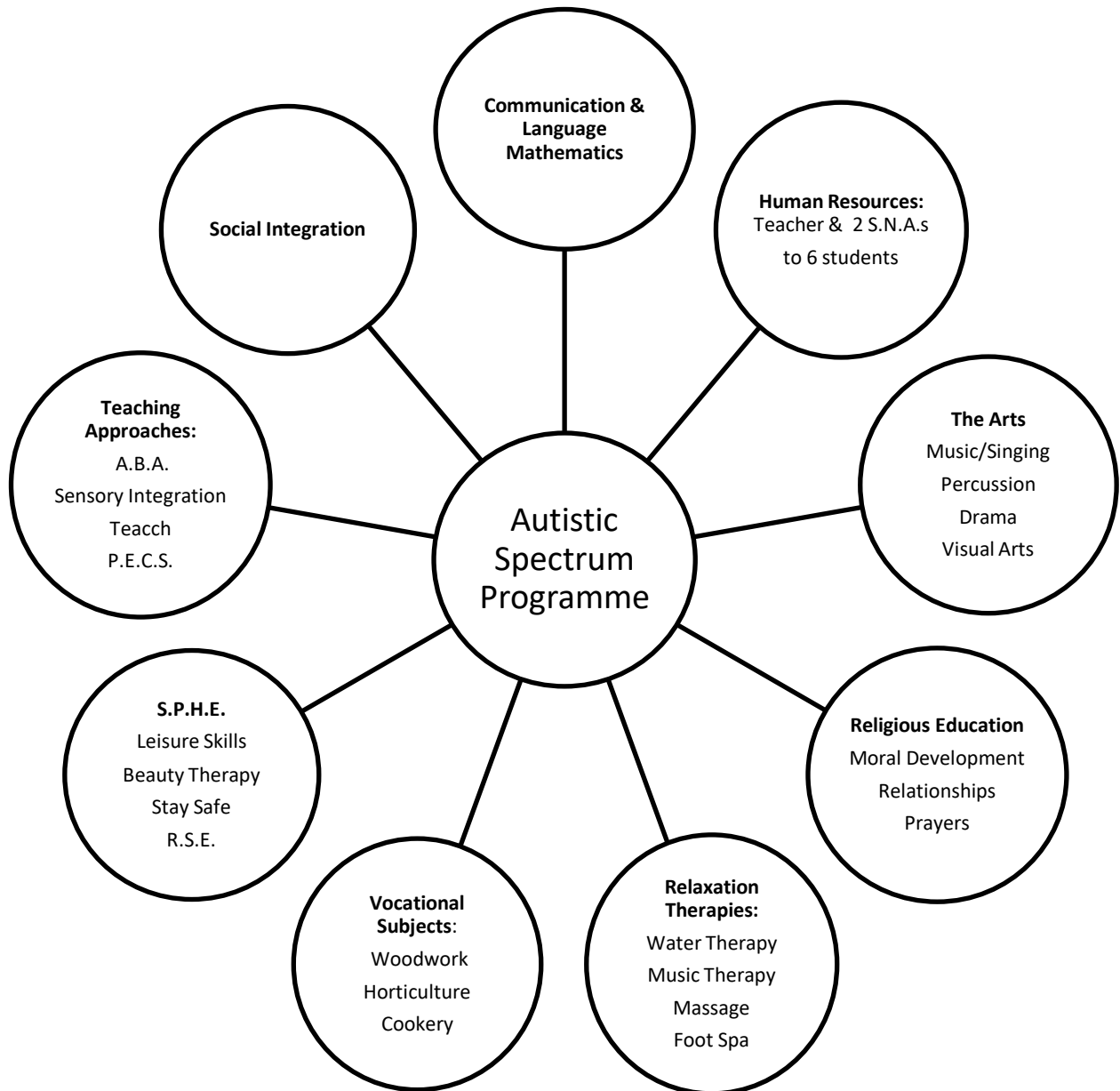




## Post Primary Curriculum



## ASD Curriculum



## **Policy on Tours/Outings**

The Staff and Board of Management of St. Patrick's School, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford in line with the New Primary School Curriculum endorse the relevance and educational importance of planned school outings.

### **Before the Visit**

- Permission will have been obtained from the Principal/Board of Management.
- Permission in writing will have been obtained from the Parent/Guardian or each child.
- A general permission will have been obtained in writing giving the teacher the right to authorize any medical procedure necessary in an emergency.
- The organising teacher will have informed the Parent/Guardian of the nature and purpose of the visit, the programme/itinerary, and the cost involved.

### **During the visit**

- A list of emergency numbers for each child.
- Written permission to authorize any medical procedure necessary in an emergency.
- A basic First Aid kit
- Any relevant medical details considered important or necessary.

### **Following the visit**

- Any accident or incident should be written up.
- Work completed by children should be displayed as appropriate.
- A short report on the value of the venue should be written up to facilitate other teachers.
- The outing could be used at assemblies for information, praise and thanks.

### **Student's**

- In general students will participate in outings.
- Where a student is considered to be unable to abide by the Code of Discipline while outside the school, inclusion in outings may be withdrawn for the student's safety and the safety of other students. This will be reviewed for each outing.
- Dress will be appropriate as decided by the teacher.
- The Code of Discipline applies to all outings.
- Students should have appropriate lunch as advised by the teacher.
- Money should be brought only as advised by the teacher.

## **Code of Discipline & Behaviour**

**Under section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of each school must prepare and make available a code of behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school code of behaviour is prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).**

**The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. This code should be formulated by the principal and the teaching staff in consultation with parents and be approved by the Board.**

Good behaviour makes it possible for teaching and learning to take place. Like all organisations a school needs rules and procedures so that pupils and staff can learn and work in a safe, caring and secure environment.

The code of discipline aims to achieve three things:

- a) The efficient operation of the school and the structuring of in-class discipline so that there exists an efficient and stimulating learning environment.
- b) The maintenance of good order throughout the school and respect for the school environment.
- c) The development of self-discipline in pupils based on consideration, respect and tolerance for others.

### **Principles of Discipline Policy**

If the school is to achieve a happy, secure environment in which children can develop to their full potential, it is necessary to provide a framework that promotes constructive behaviour and discourages unacceptable behaviour. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption free environment. The school code places a greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions, and the ideal is that students will acquire self-discipline. There are times however when it may be necessary to impose sanctions in order to maintain good order and to discourage bad behaviour. We recognise the importance of a strong sense of community within the school and the existence of a high level of co-operation among teachers, ancillary staff, pupils, parents, the Board of Management and the Parents.

### **Respect and Courtesy**

1. All students are expected to treat staff and their fellow students with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of foul language and any form of bullying are unacceptable
2. Students must respect all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter free
3. Students are expected to work to the best of their ability

4. Any form of behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable

### **Rewards for Good Behaviour**

Most of the students are very well behaved and rewarding good behaviour is an important part of our Code of Discipline. The following strategies may be utilised to reward good behaviour.

1. Note in student's homework notebook / diary to convey messages of approval from teachers
2. Praise/prizes for student of the week/best behaved classes
3. Prizes or privileges at the end of term for students who have been helpful

### **Sanctions**

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

1. Reasoning with student
2. Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends and others
4. Note in homework journal to parents
5. Withdrawal of privileges

**Note:** The emphasis is on encouraging students to behave well and praise is given for commendable behaviour. Parents will be informed at an early stage if problems occur and not simply at the point where a crisis has arisen.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

#### **Stage 1**

- Students name and class recorded; nature of the incident is noted
- Report of incident is given to class teacher

#### **Stage 2**

- If misbehaviour continues, a note will be sent to parents requesting that they call to the school to address the student's behaviour.

#### **Stage 3**

- If a student misbehaves on a continuous basis, or if there is a serious incident of misbehaviour, it may be necessary to suspend a student. Procedures for the suspension of a student are as follows:
  1. Parent is invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher and the principal.
  2. If suspension is being invoked, the parent is informed, and then confirmation of the duration of the suspension is provided in writing.
  3. The maximum period of an initial suspension is three school days.
  4. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of exclusion up to a maximum of ten school days to allow for consultation

with the student's parents. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may authorise a further period of exclusion in order to enable the matter to be resolved.

## **Bullying**

**Bullying is repeated aggression, either verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or groups against others.** Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour that should not be condoned cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and on-going, it is bullying. It may manifest itself in many forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, isolation, name-calling and "slagging". At the centre of our school's response to bullying is the continued development of a positive school climate that focuses on respect for the individual. It is an important element of school policy to raise the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.

### **Procedure for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour**

1. All incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the teachers
2. Serious cases of bullying by students are referred immediately to the principal
3. Parents of victims and bullies will be informed
4. It is made clear to students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly. It is important to counteract a culture that may associate "telling" with "informing".

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

1. When investigating incidents of bullying behaviour, it is necessary to seek answers to questions of **what, where, who and why?**
2. If students are found to have been involved in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to them that they are in breach of the Code of Discipline, and sanctions will be applied.

## **School Attendance**

1. Since the commencement of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, schools are obliged by law to submit a report to the NEWB on the levels of school attendance. The Annual Attendance Report is submitted by each school when they close for the summer. Schools were asked for the total number of student days lost through absence, the number of students absent for 20 days or more and the number of students who were expelled. The school authorities are obliged to notify the Education Welfare Officer when a child is absent regularly or if a reasonable excuse has not been provided for an absence by the child's parents.
2. In the event of a student being absent through illness or for any other reason, the class teacher should be informed **by note** on the student's return to school. If it is anticipated that the absence will be of a lengthy duration, the class teacher should be informed by note as soon as possible.
3. Students who are ill should not be sent to school.

**ALL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO STUDENTS OF ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL IS STRICTLY  
CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT THE PRIOR  
CONSENT OF THE PARENTS AND PRINCIPAL.**