

Raheen College &  
Gaelcholáiste Chéitinn

# CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

HANDBOOK

VERSION 2 FEBRUARY  
2026

# INTRODUCTION

## RATIONALE FOR CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

As part of our ongoing and long standing commitment to improving our school, and in compliance with the requirements of the National Education Welfare Board, we have embarked on reviewing our Code of Positive Behaviour (COPB) to renew its spirit and to emphasise its positive nature.

The rationale behind our school's Code of Positive Behaviour is to support each member of our school community to take responsibility for his/her own behaviour, so that all members of the community can flourish and grow, learn and teach in an environment and atmosphere that is characterised and infused by a spirit of caring, inclusion and friendliness. The emphasis is on positivity since human beings respond best to positive affirmation and are more inclined to be the best they can be as a response to such affirmation. Misbehaviour, then, to a huge extent, is a response to unmet needs and has to be understood in this context. Accordingly, any form of consequences imposed must take this into account.

This COPB is specific to our school. It distils our mission statement, capturing and retaining its essence, to make it accessible to the entire school community. The emphasis of our COPB is on fostering positive student teacher relationships since learning can only take place where such relationships, based on mutual trust and respect, exist. Embracing student voice and promoting student well-being, by determining what students expect from us and what we as school staff expect from students, is key to the implementation of our COPB and positive classroom behaviour.

To ensure a shared vision of our COPB, this handbook for staff, drafted after discussion, consultation and reflection with staff, has been compiled to:

- **Emphasise the importance and centrality of good, trusting student teacher relationships.**
- **Explore positive classroom management strategies**
- **Set out positive classrooms rules and expectations**
- **Raise awareness of maladaptive behaviours**
- **Highlight positive recognition that students will receive for following the rules**
- **Outline a COPB action plan that students must follow at all times**
- **Stress the importance of implementing logical consequences when rules are breached**

As a school, we believe that logical consequences are based on the assumption that students learn best by experiencing the results of their behaviour. The object of the COPB is to:

- guide students towards self-control and self-discipline,
- help them see what should be done and what should not be done,
- accept responsibility for whatever choice they make.

All logical consequences, accordingly, must be related logically to the misbehaviour, must be respectful of both self and the student while at the same time being both firm and kind. A logical consequence must be reasonable such that it is as logically understandable to the student as it is to the adult.

# RAHEEN COLLEGE & GAELCHOLÁISTE CHÉITINN

## Code of Positive Behaviour – Mission Statement

The role of our school is to facilitate the students and people of Clonmel and its environs in the acquisition of general and specialised education.

We seek;

- To encourage the development of the full person through imparting knowledge and skills, and through inculcating values.
- To develop critical thinking and to promote informed decision-making skills in students.
- To bring students to an awareness of their identity in a multi-denominational, multi-cultural context.
- To enable the transition to further education.
- To encourage the participation of parents in the education of their children.
- To respond to the educational needs of the local community.

In consultation with the students, parents, staff, Principal, Deputy-Principal and Board of Management, this mission statement has been distilled so as to be readily understood and embraced by the entire school community.

# Code of Positive Behaviour

Our Code of Positive Behaviour draws its inspiration and theme from the Irish name Cluain Meala which means the Vale of Honey.

The mission statement of the school sums up the essence of our Code of Positive Behaviour.



# UNDERSTANDING MALADAPTIVE & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

## Maladaptive Behaviours - A Constructive Approach

Maladaptive behaviours are always right. They are always right because they are symptoms or signs of underlying conflict within the student: they are not the problem but revelations or manifestations of it.

Because these behavioural manifestations disrupt learning and teaching they become problems to teachers and other students.

The reaction is to punish them, but in spite of punishment the behaviours will persist, because the core problem has not been identified and punishing responses only aggravate that unidentified problem.

Behaviours are maladaptive because they never resolve the student's underlying conflict and more often than not only exacerbate them.

# INAPPROPRIATE INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURS

- Behaviour too young for age, avoids eye contact
- Hyperactivity
- Irresponsible activity, pushing and shoving others
- Impulsiveness
- Little academic effort/opting out/refusing to engage in class work/refusal to look at textbook
- Mischievousness, tries to be funny, makes irrelevant comments
- Inability to work alone
- Over excitable
- Uncontrolled laughing or giggling
- High distractibility
- Extravagant emotional expression
- Speaking too fast, shouting
- Destructiveness of school property, posters etc
- Defacing books, breaking pens, pencils etc
- Abusive or obscene language
- Writing obscenities on walls
- Lying and cheating
- Thieving
- Hatred of schoolwork
- Does not learn from previous experience
- Favours out of class activities
- Blaming of others for mistakes and failures
- Highly critical of others
- Showing off/acting the class clown
- Truancing from school
- Attention seeking, making distracting, verbal, physical noises
- Frequent requests for help
- Frequently disruptive in class, rocking in chair, turning around, throwing things
- Acting tough in class, bragging
- Inability to take criticism
- Making false accusations against teachers
- Constant complaints of unfair treatment
- Complaints that teachers have it in for them
- Insolence, ignores teacher's request
- Temper or aggressive outbursts when corrected or requested to do something
- Resentment of authority
- Unwilling to obey rules and regulations/follow classroom rules/follow corridor rules
- Hostile reaction to discipline, consequences, sanctions
- Poor punctuality – mornings, afternoons
- Refusing to go to classes
- Refusal to sit in assigned seat
- Refusing to bring home school bag
- Not doing homework
- Not prepared for classes, not bringing schoolbag into class – constantly waiting to go to locker room
- Constantly asking to go to toilet
- Refusing to comply with wearing school uniform or part of same
- Disobeying rules regarding use of phones/cameras etc
- Physical assault on other students/staff
- Passive behaviour
- Talking out of turn
- Talking loudly over teacher as if teacher is not there

# INAPPROPRIATE GROUP BEHAVIOURS

- Inappropriate use of phones, camera phones in class, on corridor, at school events
- Not wearing school uniform, as prescribed
- Not using school lockers, going to lockers between classes, congregating in locker room, after bell
- Not going to class on time, refusing to go to class when instructed by staff
- Walking out of classroom before bell rings
- Use of toilets at times other than lunchtimes
- Returning late to school after lunch
- Leaving school bags on corridor, at end of school day, leaving school bags outside door when entering classroom
- Not taking responsibility for books, copybooks, classroom equipment etc
- Not turning up for detention
- Liquids and drinks being consumed in classrooms
- Insubordination, disobedience, bad language

## Note:

Behaviour reveals its meaning only when seen in context.

An organism and its actions are not independent of its environment

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Minimise the attention given to misbehaviour – you don't have to notice every slight transgression. Remember - children repeat behaviours that get the desired response. Children who are driven by desire for attention would rather be reprimanded than ignored.

Notice the behaviours you want to encourage – focus on the students contribution, working well with others, cooperation and other constructive behaviours.

Act before there is a problem – give children attention when they are not demanding it.

Act - don't talk. If a child is beginning to disrupt a class, instead of reprimanding and drawing more attention to him/her, you can move to his/her vicinity, use your presence to connect with them.

Give jobs that get positive attention by being helpful to others – giving out books, collecting copies, doing a maths problem on the board.

Think about what you can do, rather than what the student can do.

When correcting a misbehaving student, focus on the behaviour not the student - while a student's actions may be unacceptable, the student never is.

Don't escalate – refuse to be drawn into a struggle for power.

Give students real responsibilities to let him/her know that you think he/she is capable.

Whenever possible, decide on rules and consequences as a class.

Make a list of positives about this student and refer to it often, especially if you're feeling defeated.

Refuse to retaliate, escalate, or humiliate – maintain a respectful relationship. Act before you get angry.

**Positive Classroom Management Strategies which can be used by teachers to promote positive behaviour and minimise disruption to learning and teaching.**

Before trying to resolve conflicts, allow for a cooling off period – remember this student who is hurting you is actually feeling hurt him/herself.

Offer lots of chances to help others and let the student know his/her contributions are necessary.

Share responsibility for solving the problem – ask the students what do they think about the situation?

Make mistakes a learning experience – one must risk failure in order to develop new skills. What will you do differently next time?

Create situations where success is probable - divide large tasks into smaller more manageable steps with targets that are achievable.

Recognize any effort or small improvement.

Teach positive self-talk – instead of focussing on “I Can’t” - encourage them to change it to: “I haven’t learned how to do this yet”. If they say “I’m stupid”, explain that making mistakes doesn’t mean someone is stupid – making mistakes means you are learning.

Don’t give up!

Commenting on improvement and effort is more encouraging than only noticing when a job is successfully completed. Praise frequently has the opposite effect.

Provide many opportunities for cooperative learning and interactions between students.

Show an interest in each student.

Give positive attention.

Find and recognise strengths and talents.

Show acceptance – separate the deed from the doer.

Redirect non-disruptive off task behaviour - don’t ignore it.

Stand by an ‘off task’ student’s side as you teach.

Use proximity/praise to re-direct an ‘off task’ student.

# THE TEACHER / STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

## Interaction

Determining exactly what students expect from us and what we expect from students is the key to creating positive classroom behaviour.

Teacher/Student interaction is a two-way street: the students relate to us, and we relate to the students.

When students choose to relate to us through misbehaviour, we have to be able to recognise the purpose or the goal of the misbehaviour and know how to respond to it both immediately and in long term.

## COPB Action Plan

1. Pinpoint and describe the student's behaviour
2. Identify the goal of the misbehaviour
3. Choose intervention strategies/interventions for the moment of misbehaviour
4. Select encouragement techniques to build self-esteem
5. Involve parents

# IN THE CLASSROOM...

## Classroom Management

- Classroom Management is about educating children to take responsibility for themselves.
- It is a recipe for disaster to get one person to control another. Aggression breeds aggression
- Classroom control is the responsibility of the students.
- A teacher has the responsibility to retain control of themselves, losing this control – gives students control over them.
- Giving responsibility to students and believing in their ability to meet it are powerful boosts to self-esteem.
- Knowing that a student who is problematic has a difficult home situation does not justify saying “nothing can be done”.
- Consequences must educate for responsibility. Predictability and consistency are hallmarks of effective system of responsibility.

## Management Strategies

- Know what is happening in your classroom and set behaviour boundaries.
- Make it your territory, move smoothly around the classroom, respect personal space.
- Maintain the momentum of the lesson, reshape the lesson if it is not going well.
- Have a sense of lesson timing, break up the style of work.
- Show them you are worthy.
- Consider classroom layout and environment.
- Give some thought to student grouping.
- Develop some supportive routines.
- Consider the impact of the curriculum.
- Consider the provision for students with AEN.
- Get the year off to a good start.

## Good Organisation in...

- Getting students into the room.
- Getting them started on an activity.
- Keeping them moving through an activity.
- Managing transitions between activities.
- Getting them out of the room.

# LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Schools, as well as families, have an obligation to educate children to become responsible citizens.

Children need to learn that true freedom can only exist within a social order. Freedom is part of democracy, we cannot have freedom unless we respect the freedom of others. In order for everyone to have freedom we must have order and order brings with it certain restrictions and obligations. Freedom also implies responsibilities.

We must give students the opportunity to experience the consequences of their actions and to learn from their mistakes. Lecturing, warning and punishment can backfire and interfere with the learning process.

Students may be so angered, hurt or distracted by our reactions to their misbehaviour that they miss the real lesson – that their behaviour is inappropriate, dangerous or ineffective.

The lesson students learn should always underscore the connection between their behaviour and its results.

**A distinction, therefore, must be made between punishment and logical consequences.**

# Punishment

Punishment is an arbitrary consequence designed to teach through discomfort or pain, either physical or psychological and is roughly based on the assumption that students learn best by suffering the consequences of their behaviour.

# Logical Consequences

Logical consequences, on the other hand, are based on the assumption that students learn best by experiencing the results of their behaviour. The object of the COPB is to guide the student towards self-control, self-discipline, to help the student see what should be done and what should not be done: and to take responsibility for whatever choice he/she makes

## Punishment

May be perceived as arbitrary

May tell a student he/she is bad

Focuses on what is past

Expresses anger

Demands obedience

Is associated with a threat open or concealed

Is negative and short term

## V

## Logical Consequences

Are related to misbehaviour

Express the reality of the social order without necessarily conveying a value or judgement

Are concerned with past and present behaviours

Are based on logic, not retaliation

Lead to an active teaching process

Ensure responsibility is assumed by the individual

Teach way to act that will lead to more successful behaviour

# 3 R'S

Logical Consequences must pass the test of the 3 R's.

## They should be;

1. Related

Related to the misbehaviour

2. Respectful

Respectful to avoid any humiliation and be both firm and kind thereby showing respect for self and for the student

3. Reasonable

Reasonable so that it is logically understandable to the student as to the adult. A harsh or angry consequence is always perceived as a punishment



## REMEMBER - WELLBEING

Any form of punishment imposed as a consequence seriously undermines a student's self esteem and confidence. Imposing punishment as a sanction counteracts our school's philosophy of promoting Wellbeing.

# 4 C'S



Students who succeed have close relationships to others, feel valued in their communities, and have a sense of control over some aspects of their lives.

Students who are in trouble feel isolated, useless to society and powerless.

Children who find themselves in trouble are missing four vital necessities in order to successfully meet life's challenges.

# 4 C'S

are the foundation for teaching students to meet life's challenges and become:

Responsible  
Happy Resilient  
Self-Reliant Productive  
Contributing Resourceful  
Cooperative

The misbehaviour you see is not the problem,  
it is a solution to a problem the child feels he or she has.  
We have to help children find alternative solutions.

# POSITIVE CLASSROOM GOALS & BEHAVIOUR

1. **Connect** – I need to feel I have a place I belong
2. **Capable** – I need to believe I can do it
3. **Count** – I need to believe I can make a difference
4. **Courage** – I need to believe I can handle what comes

## When we feel connection we

Feel: Secure  
Do: Reach out  
Make friends  
Co-operate

## When we don't feel connection we

Feel: Insecure, isolated  
Are: Susceptible to peer pressure  
And: Try to get attention in negative ways

## Need communication skills

## When we feel capable we

Feel: Competent  
Do: Exhibit self-control  
Develop self-reliance

## When we don't feel capable we

Feel: Inadequate  
Do: Try to control others and/or become defiant.  
May become dependant  
Seek power, exhibit aggression

## Need to assume responsibility

## When we believe we count we

Feel: Valuable  
Do: Contribute

## When we don't believe we count we

Feel: Insignificant, hurt, angry, isolated  
Do: May try to hurt back or show own pain.  
Seek revenge

## Need to develop self-reliance

## When we have courage we

Feel: Equal, confident, hopeful  
Do: Face challenge, willing to try, develop resilience

## When we don't have courage we feel

Feel: Doubtful, fear, worry  
Do: Unable to face challenges, we are not willing to try,

## Need good judgement

# IMPLEMENTING LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

A logical consequence helps remove the teacher from the equation

- Be consistent, consequences must be provided each time a student chooses to disrupt
- Consistency and certainty are better shapers of behaviours than severity
- Consistency usually links with fairness
- Consistency gives the class a sense of safety and security which come from predictability
- Make sure that the focus remains on the student's behaviour, not the teacher's; do not shout or lose temper – don't make the offender the victim.
- Make the consequence fit the "crime"
- Use consequence that helps put matters right, positive restitution
- Remember timing makes a big difference – the timing between "crime & punishment" reduces the likelihood of a student taking ownership of misbehaviour. Note – next day detention is a waste of time as a modifier of behaviour
- Strike a balance between consistency and flexibility when using consequences to shape behaviour
- Re-focus students who attempt to argue with you
- After a consequence, take the first opportunity to recognise something positive the student is doing
- Persistent or serious problems/mistakes need a more consistent and predictable response
- Provide an escape mechanism for students who are upset and want to talk about what happened
- Stay calm if a student challenges your authority

**Note:** There are going to be times when, in your professional judgement, it will not be in a student's best interest to provide a consequence.

# A DISCIPLINE PLAN ...

- ...makes managing student behaviour easier
- ...protects students' rights
- ...helps ensure parental support
- ...helps ensure management support

## A Classroom Code of Positive Behaviour Plan consists of three parts

- 1) Rules/Expectations** that students must follow at all times
- 2) Positive recognition** that students will receive for following the rules
- 3) Consequences** that result when students choose not to follow the rules

- 1) Rules/Expectations** Be clear what your expectations are, and how you will communicate these expectations. Keep rules to a minimum. Ensure they are observable

### Example:

- Follow directions
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
- No profanity or teasing
- No eating or drinking
- Walk in the classroom
- Do not leave classroom without permission
- No yelling or screaming

Choose rules that apply to behaviour only (must not address homework or academic issues)

Choose rules that will let students know what behaviours are expected at all times

Choose a limited number of rules

Choose rules that are observable - (Not vague and which can't be enforced)

Students involved in choosing rules

## 2) Positive Recognition - what to do

- Encourage students to continue appropriate behaviour
- Increase students' self-esteem
- Dramatically reduce problem behaviours
- Create a positive classroom environment for all
- Help teach appropriate behaviour and establish positive relationship with students
- Use positive recognition to encourage students to behave appropriately and to continue appropriate behaviour
- Increase a student's self-esteem through consistent meaningful positive recognition
- Create a positive classroom environment for you and your students through consistent positive recognition
- Consistent positive recognition will help you teach appropriate behaviour and establish positive relationships with students
- Praise students often. It is the most powerful positive recognition you can give
- Set a goal to send a specific number of positive notes to parents each week
- Likewise with phone calls
- Recognise students' responsible behaviours with rewards
- Motivate students through special privileges
- Use a class wide positive recognition system as a means to motivate all students to learn a new behaviour or to work on a problem behaviour that the class is having.

## 3) Consequences

Students deserve structure – students deserve limits

It is your responsibility to let your students know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in your classroom. Students need to learn that inappropriate behaviour carries with it very real consequences. It is true in the real world and they must learn this in the classroom.

- Consequences must be something that students do not like, but they must never be physically or psychologically harmful or consequence should not embarrass or humiliate a student
- Consequences are a choice. When you give students a choice they learn that they are in control of what happens to them
- Consequences do not have to be severe to be effective. The key to effectiveness is that they are used consistently

*Example: Being last in line, stay one minute after class, missing free time, having parents called in, repositioning student in class etc*

# HOW TO USE CONSEQUENCES –

## ESTABLISHING A DISCIPLINE HIERARCHY

### Hierarchy is progressive

**1<sup>st</sup> time** A warning

**2nd/3rd time** Time out, one minute wait with advice to student, written assignment in journal by student.

1. Why choose to break rule or not follow directions
2. What alternative they could have taken that would be more appropriate.
3. Student removed from classroom and placed under the supervision of another teacher with that teacher's consent.

**4th time** Contact parents (call or note), make student call parent from office  
Account written into class behaviour book

**5th time** Sending a student to Principal should be the last consequence in the hierarchy happening only after meeting with the principal and discussing actions already taken

**Severe clause** Fighting, vandalism, total defiance, stopping entire class from functioning, anger  
Act quickly and decisively to stop this student's disruptive behaviour. Remove the student from the classroom  
When disruptive behaviour occurs, you must be prepared to deal with it quickly  
You must be prepared by having in place consequences that students receive should they choose to disregard the rules in your classroom

## Consequences

- Are a choice
- Do not work in isolation. They must be balanced with positive support
- Do not have to be severe to be effective
- Must be appropriate for your students and you must be comfortable using them
- Must be ones that students do not like, but they must never be physically or psychologically harmful
- Should be organised into a hierarchy that clearly spells out what will happen from the first time a student breaks a rule to the fifth time
- The first consequence should be a warning
- Parents and Principal contact should appear near the end of the hierarchy
- The hierarchy should include a Severe Clause for dealing immediately with severe misbehaviour

## One to One – Problem Solving Meeting

- A one to one problem-solving meeting between teacher and student
- The goal of problem-solving meeting is for the student to gain insight into his/her behaviour and ultimately to choose more responsible behaviour
- A problem solving meeting should include the following -

Show empathy and concern

Question the student to find out why there is a problem

Determine what you can do to help

Determine how the student can improve his/her behaviour

Agree on a course of action

Summarise the meeting

## Teaching your Classroom Discipline Plan

- Create lessons to teach your students your Classroom Discipline Plan
- Explain to students why you need rules
- Teach the rules
- Explain how you will positively recognise students who follow the rules
- Explain why you have consequences
- Teach the consequences
- Begin immediately reinforcing students who follow the rules
- Review rules frequently
- Display rules in classroom

## Rules/Directions

- Rules are displayed in the classroom and are in effect at all times during the day.
- Directions are in effect from the duration of a specific activity.
- Directions may change based on the needs of the teacher and maturity level of students.

## Specific Directions

- Don't assume that students know how you want them to behave in all of the situations that occur during a normal school day. These expectations must be taught.
- Identify the classroom situations for which specific directions are needed
- Teach your specific directions immediately prior to the first time the activity takes place
- Explain the direction
- Check for understanding
- Display visual clues around the classroom to help remind students of appropriate behaviour during different activities and procedures

## Remember:

Operating your classroom Code of Positive Behaviour takes time, commitment and patience.

Students who misbehave are slow to trust.

Establishing a trusting relationship means that students will fail in their efforts to behave according to the classroom expectations many times while learning to adapt.

Persistence on your part will have a profound effect over time.

Your confidence and sense of empowerment in your classroom management skills will be greatly enhanced to the benefit of all.

## Experience:

It is the “thinking it over for twenty years or so” that makes experience so valuable; for mere experience counts but little, unless insight and observation have accompanied it.

A thoughtful teacher will always be striving to improve his/her methods and will obtain hints, and suggestions for improvement from many sources.

## SUMMARY

## CLASSROOM STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY STAFF TO MINIMISE BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

- Clear explanation of behavioural expectations
- Having classroom rules highly visible
- Structure lessons to have a beginning, middle and end
- Develop a predictable routine format
- Have spare pens, paper, books to ensure that all students remain engaged in the work
- Revise seating arrangements when necessary
- Know your class so that you can sub-group it, e.g., of the 20 students, there will be a top 3 or 4, a middle group of 8 or 9, a further group of 5 or 6 with behavioural difficulties and 1 or 2 uncontrollables. Lesson plan must accommodate all of the groups
- Deploy SNA strategically
- Teacher's task is not to control the class but to remain in control of oneself. Be calm, controlled, consistent, fair and flexible. Teacher is the presenter of choices regarding misbehaviour and misbehaviour always has consequences. Match the consequence to the behaviour
- Create a print rich environment
- Educator, know thyself. Be aware of your own emotions/feelings in response to misbehaviour as these very often provide the key to understanding the motive behind a student's misbehaviour
- Have an ability to see the child behind the misbehaviours. Retain your objectivity rather than rushing to judgement. Know your students, their backgrounds, special needs, requirements.
- Communicate and relate with students through maintaining eye contact, warm tone of voice, addressing students by name, particularly when s/he is drifting off task, praise student effort, stand beside student, greet students by name on arrival to class, verbally reward students for effort
- Do not shout at students or denigrate them in any way
- Put positive comments on student work as opposed to a mark
- Acknowledge positive behaviour
- Ignore non-serious behaviour

SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES/POLICIES WHICH ARE INTERCONNECTED AND WHICH SUPPORT THE CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR:

Services provided by the school:

- Well-being
- Extra-curricular activities
- Student Voice
- Home School Liaison
- NBSS
- School Completion Programme
- AEN
- SNA's
- Guidance Counsellor