



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

Abacas Special School Kilnamanagh

Code of Behaviour

1. Introduction

Our school plays a crucial role in children's social and moral development, just as it does in their academic development. In seeking to define acceptable standards of behaviour, it is acknowledged that these are goals to be worked towards rather than expectations that are either fulfilled or not.

The Board of Management acknowledges that students with autism and complex needs regularly exhibit behaviours that are often extremely challenging for the student themselves, their families and the school community. As a school community, we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. Acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

All children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and to develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore, any rules must be appropriate, with clear and agreed consequences. Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules.

Parents/guardians are furnished with this policy prior to the enrolment of their child in the school. In accordance with our Admission Policy, all parents/guardians wishing to enrol their child at Abacas must sign this policy to confirm that they have read, understood and consented to the implementation of this Code of Behaviour.

2. Rationale

The rationale behind this policy can be explained as follows:

- A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while also acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption-free environment.
- Abacas Special School is required under DES Circular 20/90, the Education Act (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000) to develop a code of behaviour for the school.
- Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Abacas is obliged to provide a safe place of work for our staff. Our Code of Behaviour forms an integral part of our Health and Safety Policy.



- A code of behaviour is part of our developing School Plan.

3. Relationship to school ethos

Abacas Special School is dedicated to providing the highest quality of learning, teaching, and care of students under our instruction. In partnership with the parents/guardians and families of our students, we seek to provide individual, intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development. The dignity of every child is maintained, and we believe that each child is entitled to an education provision, regardless of individual levels of attainment and functioning. While enabling each student to develop his/her potential to the full, we also want our students to be happy in school and to enjoy the time they spend there.

In accordance with the statutory provisions of the Safety, Welfare and Health Act 2005, Abacas is committed to providing a safe place of work for all our staff. This Code of Behaviour forms an integral part of our school's Health and Safety Policy and plays a key role in ensuring that the school as a workplace is as safe as reasonably practicable.

Our Code of Behaviour reinforces our school ethos by helping students, staff and parents/guardians to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

4. Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy can be summarised as follows:

- a) To promote self-esteem and positive relationships.
- b) To encourage consistency of response to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- c) To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in students and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others.
- d) To facilitate the education and development of every child.
- e) To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment.
- f) To facilitate teachers in teaching with the minimum disruption.
- g) To ensure that the school's expectations and strategies are widely known and understood through the availability of policies and an ethos of open communication.
- h) To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy.
- i) To provide guidance for students, teachers and parents/guardians on behavioural expectations.
- j) To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- k) To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

- l) To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- m) To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- n) To assist parents/guardians and students 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.

5. Implementation

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 and will emphasise positive behaviour. They will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the abilities of the students and to their individual differences. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible should any difficulties arise in relation to their child's behaviour. The systems and procedures used at Abacas to reinforce our Code of Behaviour are outlined as follows.

5.1 The Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)

Students with autism and complex needs often have difficulties with social communication and emotional and sensory regulation. These difficulties may manifest as repetitive patterns of behaviour, restricted interests, social withdrawal and sometimes aggression to self or others.

As a school, ABACAS uses Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) as a framework to interpret behaviour. From this standpoint, behaviours of concern exhibited by a student are viewed as that student's way of communicating to us what they need, want or feel, often in the only way they know how. This is commonly known as the function of behaviour.

To support a student engaging in behaviours of concern, the first step is therefore to assess and identify the function/s of the student's behaviour. Subsequently, using antecedent-based approaches, reinforcement-based approaches or a combination of these approaches, a behaviour support plan (BSP) is drawn up and tailored to meet the needs of the student.

Antecedent-based interventions are intended to:

- a) support positive behaviour
- b) support all appropriate forms of communication
- c) remove triggers to behaviours of concern
- d) de-escalate potential or actual behaviours of concern



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

Reinforcement-based interventions are used to:

- a) determine function (functional behaviour assessment)
- b) teach functionally equivalent replacement behaviours
- c) teach communication, life skills and social skills during discreet lessons and in the natural environment.

A BSP is a clearly written, live document used by all staff working with the relevant student in the classroom. It operationalises carefully selected evidence strategies, some of which are listed in sections 5.3 and 5.4 below. The BSP is informed by the student's class team, which typically comprises the Class Teacher, the student's parents/guardians, the Behaviour Analyst, SNAs, escorts (for students who avail of transport to and from school) and other members of the student's multi-disciplinary clinical team where possible.

The BSP is where possible led by the Class Teacher. However, depending on the intensity, complexity and severity of the behaviour, the BSP may be supervised and monitored by the school's Behaviour Analyst and must be supported in full by the Principal. The Principal may ask the Behaviour Analyst to furnish the Board of Management with a report detailing the content of any aspect of a BSP at any time.

Various methods of data collection will be used to monitor the efficacy of the student's BSP, and data-driven decisions will be employed on an ongoing basis. These methods may be both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

5.2 Affirming appropriate behaviour

Within Abacas, all staff capitalise on learning opportunities throughout the day across all school settings to teach appropriate functional communication using whatever supports necessary (e.g. gestural or visual prompts, schedules of reinforcement etc.) in order to reduce as much as possible behaviours of concern for all students.

The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort is made to ensure that the classroom and school environment are enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

Planned or unplanned verbal reprimands are not used by any member of staff at any time or under any circumstances to sanction a behaviour or to discipline a student. This means that ‘giving out’ to students is not a behavioural approach that is used at Abacas. In the instance of inappropriate behaviour, staff are trained to maintain an appropriate tone of voice and body posture, while employing redirection techniques, and using positive and affirmative statements for appropriate behaviour.

5.3 Proactive interventions

Abacas uses a wide variety of evidence-based proactive interventions to support positive behaviour in the classroom. These interventions include visual schedules, visual supports, First – Next boards, social narratives / stories™, PECS, Lámh, modelling & video modelling, exercise, functional behaviour assessment, token economies, TEACCH stations, and more. Each classroom implements an array of interventions to promote student well-being by

- a) creating a safe, calm and predictable environment.
- b) fostering positive relationships with students
- c) teaching skills that support autonomy and independence.

5.4 Reinforcement strategies / Incentives

Reinforcement strategies may be developed by staff to increase appropriate behaviour and/or reinforce the teaching of new skills. These may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Social praise and acknowledgement
- b) Merit awards for achievements
- c) Token/points economies for work completed throughout the day
- d) Access to preferred items/activities intermittently throughout the day
- e) Access to break times following an appropriate request or the completion of a particular task
- f) Group-based reinforcement contingencies for rule-following and/or appropriate behaviour.
- g) Differential reinforcement procedures such as DRA and DRO.

Assistance may be recruited from the school’s on-site Behaviour Analyst to develop additional, individualised reinforcement strategies as required.

5.5 The behaviour support plan and reductive procedures

From time to time, where reinforcement strategies used alone have proven ineffective, and/or where a behaviour is of such a high magnitude that a student may cause harm to themselves/others/property,



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

reductive procedures (also based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis) may also be included in a student's BSP. Reductive procedures are chosen in conjunction with and to complement/support the use of the evidence-based interventions as listed in sections 5.3 and 5.4 above.

The following reductive procedures are the *only* reductive procedures used at Abacas Special School and will be used only as directed by the Behaviour Analyst in a BSP, *in a planned manner*. Their progress will be closely monitored, and they will be faded out of a BSP as soon as possible/when appropriate.

- a) **Contingent work** – This involves bringing work to the student in cases where the student is trying to escape or avoid work. This is used where the student's programme has been evaluated and it has been established that the student is not avoiding work because s/he needs and deserves a break or relief from the environment.
- b) **Overcorrection** – This involves delivering a correction to a pupil a number of times so that they engage in a desired behaviour repeatedly.
- c) **Response blocking** – This involves physically intervening to block behaviour to prevent the completion of the behaviour of concern (often employed with self-injurious or aggressive behaviours)
- d) **Response cost** – This involves the loss of opportunity to earn a reinforcer such as a token or a preferred item or activity.
- e) **Inclusionary time-out** – This involves removing all reinforcers from a student such as attention, tokens, preferred items and activities by placing the student in a location in the room for a predetermined amount of time.
- f) **Planned ignoring** – This involves removing all attention from a student, including eye contact and even physical proximity of staff, in cases where the student is using the behaviour to try to gain attention. This may include leaving the classroom for a pre-determined period of time, a strategy referred to as Planned Ignoring Level 2 (see below).

Staff will adhere to all government guidelines that pertain to safely managing staff and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

5.6 Planned Ignoring Level 2

Similar to the Planned Ignoring strategy outlined above, this strategy also involves removing all attention from a student, including eye contact and the physical proximity of staff, in cases where the student is using the behaviour to try to gain attention. However, in the case of Planned Ignoring Level 2, staff leave the classroom for a pre-determined period of time. The student's reinforcers will remain available to them at all times, unless these objects may be used to cause harm or injury to him/herself or others, or to property. In the event of this strategy being used, staff will remain within sight of the student at all times.

5.6.1 Procedures for use of Planned Ignoring Level 2

The Board of Management has defined the following strict protocol relating to the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 at Abacas:

- a) Planned Ignoring Level 2 may be used on rare occasions in the event of an emergency where an exceptional response¹ is deemed necessary to ensure that the school fulfils its duty of care in maintaining the safety of staff and students.
- b) Should Planned Ignoring Level 2 be used in the event of an emergency, its use will be recorded on a Planned Ignoring Level 2 Report Form, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred and how the strategy was implemented. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the child involved will be notified of the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 for their child as soon as possible on the day of the incident and given a copy of the Planned Ignoring Level 2 Report Form.
- c) The school's Behaviour Analyst may recommend that Planned Ignoring Level 2 be incorporated into a student's BSP once all other intervention strategies have been considered. In this case, consent for its implementation will first be sought from the Board of Management. Following this, written consent will be sought from the child's

¹ **Exceptional Response:** Due to the nature of the students' behavioural excesses and deficits, situations may arise where a parent cannot be contacted prior to a crisis situation. In this event, the staff will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the student, staff and the other students in the school. An exceptional response may be required in situations where there is a clear and immediate risk to the health and safety of the child/ young person or that of others. In such circumstances, immediate intervention may be considered necessary in order to manage the risk to the student and staff. This is referred to as an exceptional response.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

parents/guardians following a meeting in the school at which it will be explained to the parents/guardians how the strategy will be used for their child.

- d) Planned Ignoring Level 2 will be incorporated into a child's BSP only under the strict guidance of the school's Behaviour Analyst. Regular reviews will be conducted with the Behaviour Analyst, Principal, staff and parents/guardians.
- e) Should the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 be incorporated into a student's BSP, a Planned Ignoring Level 2 Report Form will be completed each time it is used, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred and the procedure that was used. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the student involved will be notified of the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 for their child as soon as possible on the same day and given a copy of the Planned Ignoring Level 2 Report Form.
- f) The school's Behaviour Analyst is required to prepare a report for each meeting of the Board of Management, detailing the use of any Planned Ignoring Level 2 in the previous period.
- g) The school will adopt a human-rights-based approach to the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 and will apply pre-determined and appropriate exit criteria at all times. A baseline will be taken to ascertain the average length of time it takes for an individual student to regulate themselves emotionally to a level where they are calm and no longer aggressing. This baseline will be used to pre-determine the maximum length of time a student may be left on his/her own in the classroom. This must never exceed a period of 15 minutes of continuous duration, regardless of whether or not the student continues to display aggressive behaviour.
- h) Any abuse of Planned Ignoring Level 2 will be regarded as gross misconduct.
- i) Renewed written consent for the continued use of Planned Ignoring Level 2 in subsequent school years (if required) will be sought from parents/guardians at their child's IEP meeting at the start of each school year. Until that point, consent from the previous school year will apply.
- j) Planned ignoring level 2 will be carried out in accordance with government guidelines for safely managing staff and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.7 Professional Crisis Management (PCM)

The code of crisis management researched and approved by our Board of Management is that of the Professional Crisis Management Association (PCMA). PCM is a complete and fully integrated system that allows trained staff to manage crisis situations effectively, safely and with dignity. It is approved by the British Institute for Disabilities. Three modes of response may be put into operation:



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

- a) **Transportation** – Physically moving a student from one area to another.
- b) **Vertical immobilisation** – Physically suspending the movement of a student in a standing position.
- c) **Horizontal immobilisation** – Physically suspending the movement of a student on an approved mat.

The school's Behaviour Analyst will be fully trained in PCM and will also be a fully qualified PCM Trainer. All staff implementing PCM will be fully trained and will be subject to annual recertification in order to continue practising PCM.

5.7.1 Procedures for use of PCM

Professional Crisis Management (PCM) procedures are reactive strategies and will be used only in specific and planned crisis situations. The Board of Management has defined the following strict protocol relating to their use at Abacas:

- a) PCM procedures may be used on rare occasions in the event of an emergency where an exceptional response is deemed necessary to ensure that the school fulfils its duty of care in maintaining the safety of staff and students.
- b) Should a PCM procedure be used in the event of an emergency, its use will be recorded on a PCM Incident Report Form, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred and the procedure that was used. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the child involved will be notified of the use of PCM for their child as soon as possible on the day of the incident and given a copy of the PCM Incident Report Form.
- c) The school's Behaviour Analyst may recommend that PCM procedures be incorporated into a student's BSP once all other intervention strategies have been considered. In this case, consent for its implementation will first be sought from the Board of Management. Following this, written consent will be sought from the child's parents/guardians following a meeting in the school at which it will be explained to the parents/guardians which specific PCM procedure and protocol are to be used for their child. The student's class team will identify the least restrictive procedure that will maintain the safety of the student and all those around the student at a given time.
- d) PCM procedures will be incorporated into a child's BSP only under the strict guidance of the school's Behaviour Analyst. Regular reviews will be conducted with the Behaviour Analyst, Principal, staff and parents/guardians.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

- e) Should the use of PCM procedures be incorporated into a student's BSP, a PCM Incident Report Form will be completed each time it is used, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred and the procedure that was used. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the student involved will be notified of the use of PCM for their child as soon as possible on the same day and given a copy of the PCM Incident Report Form.
- f) The school's Behaviour Analyst is required to prepare a report for each meeting of the Board of Management, detailing the use of any PCM procedures in the previous period.
- g) Any abuse of PCM procedures will be regarded as gross misconduct.
- h) Renewed written consent for the continued use of PCM in subsequent school years (if required) will be sought from parents/guardians at their child's IEP meeting at the start of each school year. Until that point, consent from the previous school year will apply.
- i) During the COVID-19 pandemic, all procedures will be carried by an individual staff member for no longer than fifteen minutes.
- j) Risk assessments will be conducted on those circumstances identified as having the potential to give rise to the need for PCM procedures and relevant measures will be put in place.

5.8 Calm room

Abacas has a calm room that is used only in extreme and very specific circumstances. It is properly equipped with specialised padded material and a mirror so that the student can be seen at all times and from all angles. It has a single door which has no lock and is fitted with a window. There is a large gap at the top of the door so that the student can be heard at all times.

5.8.1 Procedures for use of calm room

The Board of Management is mindful of recent highlighted concerns regarding how calm rooms are used in schools and has defined the following strict protocol relating to its use at Abacas:

- a) The calm room may be used on rare occasions in the event of an emergency where an exceptional response is deemed necessary to ensure that the school fulfils its duty of care in maintaining the safety of staff and students.
- b) Should the calm room be used in the event of an emergency, its use will be recorded on a Calm Room Incident Report Form, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred, the length of time the student was in the room and their behavioural and emotional responses after being in the room. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the child involved will be notified of the use



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

- of the calm room for their child as soon as possible on the day of the incident and given a copy of the Calm Room Incident Report Form.
- c) In the unlikely event that the school's Behaviour Analyst considers it expedient to incorporate the use of the calm room into a student's BSP, consent for its implementation will first be sought from the Board of Management. Following this, written consent will be sought from the child's parents/guardians following a meeting in the school at which the parents/guardians will be shown the calm room and explained the very specific situations in which it will be used for their child.
 - d) The calm room will be incorporated into a child's BSP only under the strict guidance of the school's Behaviour Analyst. Regular reviews will be conducted with the Behaviour Analyst, Principal, staff and parents/guardians.
 - e) Should the use of the calm room be incorporated into a student's BSP, a Calm Room Incident Report Form will be completed each time it is used, detailing who was involved, what behaviour occurred, the length of time the student was in the room and their behavioural and emotional responses after being in the room. Data will be recorded that demonstrate the effect of this procedure on the student's behaviour. The parents/guardians of the student involved will be notified of the use of the calm room for their child as soon as possible on the same day and given a copy of the Calm Room Incident Report Form.
 - f) The school's Behaviour Analyst is required to prepare a report for each meeting of the Board of Management, detailing any use of the calm room in the previous period.
 - g) A student will never be left unsupervised in the calm room.
 - h) The school will adopt a human-rights-based approach to the use of the calm room and will apply pre-determined and appropriate exit criteria at all times. A baseline will be taken to ascertain the average length of time it takes for an individual student to regulate themselves emotionally to a level where they are calm and no longer aggressing. This baseline will be used to pre-determine the maximum length of time a student may spend in the calm room. This must never exceed a period of 15 minutes of continuous duration, regardless of whether or not the student continues to display aggressive behaviour.
 - i) Any abuse of the calm room will be regarded as gross misconduct.
 - j) Renewed written consent for the continued use of the calm room in subsequent school years (if required) will be sought from parents/guardians at their child's IEP meeting at the start of each school year. Until that point, consent from the previous school year will apply.
 - k) Should the student require being transported to the calm room then all COVID-19 related measures will be put in place as detailed above in section 5.7.1.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

5.9 Oversight by Board of Management

As outlined above, the use of the following strategies will be overseen by the Board of Management:

- Planned Ignoring Level 2
- PCM procedures
- Calm room

The Principal and the Behaviour Analyst are responsible for keeping the Board of Management informed of the use of these strategies by adhering to the following protocols:

- a) Following consultation with the Principal, the Behaviour Analyst must seek consent from the Board of Management for the inclusion of any of the above strategies in a student's BSP. This will involve the completion of a BOM Consent Request Form, which will be e-mailed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management who will in turn seek the consent of the Board's members for the use of the strategy in question. This child will not be named in this report, but will instead be referred to using a special code known only to the Principal and the Behaviour Analyst.
- b) The Behaviour Analyst will compile a detailed report on the use of each of the above strategies for submission to the Board immediately prior to each Board meeting. This report will include the following information:
 - PCM staff certification data
 - Number of BSPs that include the use of Planned Ignoring Level 2, PCM procedures and/or calm room.
 - Number of times Planned Ignoring Level 2, PCM procedures and/or calm room has been used as an emergency intervention since the last board meeting.
 - Number of times Planned Ignoring Level 2, PCM procedures and/or calm room has been used as part of a pupil's BSP since the last board meeting and non-identifying details of each instance for each pupil.

The Behaviour Analyst's report will be an item on the agenda of each board meeting and is presented by the Principal to the Board at each meeting. The Board examines the data provided in detail, ascertains any trends and must satisfy itself that the abovementioned behaviour support strategies are being implemented proportionately, in compliance with the protocols outlined above and with clear and solid justification. No child will be identified to the Board by name but will instead be referred to using a special code known only to the Principal and the Behaviour Analyst.



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

6. Suspension

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

- a) The student's behaviour has a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- b) The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

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

6.1 Procedures in respect of suspension

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

- a) The Principal will review the case in consultation with members of the staff involved, with due regard to records of previous behaviours of concern, their pattern and context, reductive consequences and other interventions used and their outcomes, and any relevant medical information.
- b) The student's parents/guardians will be informed by phone or in writing and invited to a meeting at the school with the Principal and Behaviour Analyst to discuss their child's behaviour. All government guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 will be adhered to during this meeting.
- c) A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective.
- d) If a suspension longer than three days is proposed by the Principal, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes.
- e) The Board will formally review any proposal to suspend a student, where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more.
- f) The Principal will notify the parents/guardians in writing of a decision to suspend.
- g) Parents/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education A 1999, Section 29).
- h) The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension. The Principal is also required to report suspensions in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, section



21(4)(a)).

6.2 Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998

6.3 After the suspension ends

A period of suspension will end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents/guardians about the suspension. The Principal and the Behaviour Analyst will facilitate a review of the existing behaviour support plan for the student if required and will re-admit the student formally to the class.

7. Expulsion

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the behaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- a) Meeting with parents/guardians to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour. All government guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 will be adhered to during this meeting.
- b) Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- c) Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- a) The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- b) The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety.
- c) The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, *the school authorities have tried a series of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.*



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

7.1 Procedures in respect of expulsion

The following steps will be followed in respect of expulsion:

- a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal, who will inform the student's parents/guardians in writing of the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. The Principal will invite the student's parents/guardians to a meeting in the school at which parents/guardians will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- b) Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.
- c) The Board of Management considers the Principal's recommendation, and a hearing is held. All government guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 will be adhered to during a hearing.
- d) If the Board deems that expulsion is necessary, consultations will be arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of its opinion that a student should be expelled (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).
- e) Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board will formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately in writing that the expulsion will now proceed.
- f) A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 section 29).

8. School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. These can be summed up as follows:

- Show respect for yourself and others, school property and property of other people.
- Be kind and show good manners
- Always do your best
- Be tidy
- Be safe
- Walk



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

- Listen
- Be calm
- Be punctual

9. Communication with parents/guardians

Communication with parents/guardians is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with our students. Parents/guardians and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school. A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Parents/guardians should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, students and parents/guardians have been established and include:

- Informal and formal parent/teacher meetings
- Student's journal.
- Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
- School noticeboard
- E-mail
- Text messages
- Behaviour diary (where necessary)
- Phone call
- Behaviour incident reports

10. Notification regarding absences from school

Parents/guardians are requested to adhere to the following procedures when their child is absent from school:

- a) The school should be informed at the earliest convenience of foreseen absences for example OT appointments etc.
- b) In the case of unforeseen absences, owing to illness or other, the child's Class Teacher should be informed in writing in the homework journal on the first day of the child's return to school.
- c) Parents are reminded that schools are obliged to take note of all absences and report to the National Educational Welfare Board. Absences should be kept to a minimum wherever



Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs

possible. Unexplained absences are noted and the NEWB may investigate should a child miss more than 20 days in a school year.

11. Limitations of this policy

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address behaviours of concern, but to serve as a general guide to the students, parents/guardians and all staff members in attempting to solve individual problems.

12. Ratification by Board of Management

This policy document was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Date: 24th August 2020

Signed: _____

13. Declaration of consent by parents/guardians

I/We, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____ have read, understood and consent to the implementation of the Code of Behaviour of Abacas Special School.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian