

Sonas

Special Junior Primary School
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Roll No. 201620

Code of Behaviour of Sonas Special Primary School

A Behaviour Policy was formulated and ratified by the Board of Management of Sonas Junior Special Primary School in June 2007. This was revised in February 2010 and this Code of behaviour was produced as a result.

Rationale

Section 32(2) of the Education Welfare Act 2000 states that a code of behaviour shall specify:

- a) the standards of behaviour that will be observed by each student attending the school.
- b) The measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards
- c) the procedures to be followed a student may be suspended or expelled from the school
- d) the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student and in order to comply with these requirements the NEWB (2008) developing a code of behaviour: guidelines advocates that in its code of behaviour schools should address:

- The standards of behaviour expected in the school
- The plan for promoting good behaviour
- The ways in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviour
- The plan for implementing the code of behaviour
- School procedures for the use of suspension and expulsion

The code of behaviour has been formulated in accordance with these guidelines.

Aims

The aims of the code of behaviour are as follows:

- Pupils will acquire the skills, to the best of their ability, to function securely, completely and safely within the parameters of the code of behaviour.
- Staff will feel secure and have a clear understanding of the types of behaviours, which are acceptable, and those which are unacceptable in our school.
- Staff will interact and deal with students, student behaviour in a fair and unified manner.
- Parents and other professional visiting our school will have a clear understanding of our "modus operandii" with regard to the school Code of Behaviour.
- Code of behaviour will provide a good baseline for new staff joining our school.

Ethos

Sonas Special Junior Primary School caters for pupils aged 3-6 years with a diagnosis of autism and who have a mild, moderate or above level of intellectual disability. The Board of Management and staff and staff, with the co-operation of the parents, endeavour to provide a secure, nurturing, positive teaching and learning environment for each child. Sonas Special Junior Primary School recognises the need to work collaboratively with parents and carers when dealing with challenging behaviour. We respect the view that parents know their children better than anyone else and for this reason parents provide staff with invaluable information, advice, support and reinforcement and school staff should always seek to work with parents as partners in the process of developing behaviours that are appropriate and acceptable.

Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Autism

The social behaviour of pupils with Autism will show inflexibilities. They will have difficulty understanding and making sense of social rules, and therefore unable to use these as a guide to their own behaviour. The behaviour needs of each pupil will vary and requires an individual approach to address these needs. Sensory stimuli can impact on a child's behaviour. Each pupil's needs should be approached sensitively and in a non-threatening manner.

Preventative Strategies

In order for pupils to recognise achievement and appropriate behaviour, the emphasis is on a positive intervention. Desired behaviours will be rewarded and praised appropriately. Rewards should be specific to the interests, strengths and needs of each individual child. Anticipating difficulties and avoiding stressful situations is important but not always easy to do. However the behaviour should be viewed as a means of communication. Our first concern should be to help the child become calm to ensure that they can function and learn in a calm, alert state.

The Physical Environment

Behaviours are less likely to occur when the environment is quiet and free from distractions or clutter. Furniture should be arranged to best effect and correct size of chairs and tables for each child. Materials should be labelled and easily located. Noise levels should be low and mobile phones turned off. Check ventilation and lighting. Workstations should have minimum distraction and enough space.

Classroom Organisation

Each child's visual timetable should be planned in advance. The schedule should be varied and appropriate to their level of understanding. A variety of tasks for short periods of time, suitable to each child's attention span should be planned. Lists of behavioural strategies and motivators suitable for each child should be discussed by the staff. Regular review of behavioural difficulties/achievements should be discussed at weekly meetings and a record book kept of all strategies that work for each individual child.

The Curriculum

The curriculum refers to the activities the pupil will participate in during their time in Sonas. It is essential that activities planned match the ability of the pupil. It is also important that they match the interest level of the child. Children will be better motivated to attend and learn where preferred activities are taught in alternation with non-preferred activities. Activities should be meaningful to the individual child, relevant and functional. Skills often need to be taught across different contexts and curricular areas. Time parameters for

tasks clearly stated and understood with beginnings and endings of tasks clearly identified. Transitional aids such as photographs and props will be helpful. Routine and practicability should be in place. Tasks should be broken down into achievable steps. Skills need to be taught in context as far as possible.

Communication

Sonas Special Junior Primary School recognises that challenging behaviour may be the result of a pupil's inability to communicate his/her needs. We need to take time for each child to process/respond to requests from an adult. P.E.C.S (Picture Exchange Communication System) should be used throughout the day. Give time for the child to initiate. In Sonas, we encourage a positive approach by repeating what you want the child to do rather than focusing on what you do not want the child to do.

All staff should be aware of non-verbal communication and if possible to be responsive to all attempts to communicate. Remember to use reduced language and use consistent phrases eg. "help", "I want break", and "food" and "toilet" are very important for the child. Hand gestures are thought to some children. Consistently praise spontaneous communication. Children with autism can be easily distracted and confused. Therefore, unnecessary chatting between adults during school time is discouraged.

At weekly class team meetings, the behavioural issues of each child should be discussed. Such discussions should be heighten awareness of the difficulties and as a result, agreed actions and strategies should be planned by the team.

Each class has a Mult-Disciplinary meeting every month. In this forum, any behavioural issues can be highlighted and addressed by the team as a whole.

General Class Rules

Rules should be few, flexible, relevant, realistic, child-centred, positively articulated, clear, consistent and understood by the child. The following class rules were agreed by the staff in Sonas. All children are encouraged to work towards keeping these rules where appropriate:

- Be kind to each other.
- We share out toys.
- We keep our class room and school tidy.
- We wait our turn.
- We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
- We listen.

Playground Rules

- We are kind to each other.
- We wait our turn.
- We share the equipment.
- Running, pushing and pulling on the playground equipment is not allowed.

Transport Rules

- We wear our safety belts
- We stay in our seats until it is time to get off the bus.
- We say "thank you" to the bus driver and escort.

Relaxation Techniques

In Sonas School we recognise the important of incorporating relaxation techniques, where required, into the daily schedule for pupils. This can include aromatherapy, sand/water play, foot spa and shaving foam, music therapy-singing and playing instruments and time outside. Access to the Sensory room, Play room, Red room, Sand Shed and Soft room are timetabled for each class.

Behavioural management

If a child displays challenging behaviour, a "Behaviour Support Plan" will be devised with the support of the child's parents, the whole class team and the multi-disciplinary team.

Dress code

In the interest of health and safety of each member of staff in Sonas, the following dress code was suggested by staff:

- All clothes and jewellery should be of a modest nature.

- Wear trousers or skirts that would not restrict the wearer if they had to run after a child.
- Hair should be tied up and shoes/boots should be flat.
- Avoid wearing drop pr hoop earrings and necklaces as some children may be prone to pulling them.

Episodes of Challenging Behaviour

General guiding principles: Always refer to the child's individual plan.

Possible Strategies:

- Give a high level of consistency and predictability, with a set, recorded timetable which the child understands.
- Prepare the child carefully for any change in routine.
- Warn the child about changes in activity using simple language, signs, photographs, pictures and social stories.
- Speak to the child calmly and clearly.
- Introduce choice and cancellation symbols to the children.
- Teach the children to be as independent as possible.
- Have a procedure in school and the classroom for dealing with episodes of challenging behaviour. Design a communication system for the child to use (in conjunction with speech therapy).
- Use home/school diary.

Ritualistic and Obsessive Behaviours

Possible Strategies

- Reward the child when they manage to "ignore" their obsession.
- Use the child's interests or obsession as a reward as a reward: "when you've done....you can....for five minutes". Introduce the term "I'm working for..." method.
- If necessary, use the child's interests to get them engaged in learning, but gradually widen the topic and introduce new areas.

- Try to reduce obsessional behaviours gradually rather than expecting to stop them totally or immediately: for example if a child wants to wash their hands every 15 minutes, increase the time gap to 20 minutes, then 25 and so on.
- Provide them with a sequence of activities within a day of structure.
- Use physical prompt to stop obsessive behaviour.
- Provide cues (visual or verbal) for a start and finish.

Non-compliance and Disregarding of Rules

Possible strategies:

- If you repeat a rule, try to use the same, agree a set wording, phrases, signs or symbols for all staff to use.
- Remind the pupil of the rules at various times and in different situations.
- Set up social skills training to help the pupil apply rules to different situations.
- Teach routines and behavioural boundaries.

Management of Aggression

When managing a crisis situation, the key principal at all times is to maintain the safety of all involved. Different situations require different management strategies. Some situations will require minimal intervention while others require more extensive interventions.

Observe the warning signs

The recognition of any change in a person's behaviour or disposition from the norm is very important. These changes may be:

- Physiological e.g., voice changes, sweating, starting, tremor or changes in a person's colour.
- Changes in body language e.g. facial expressions, body tension, invading on your personal space.
- Other changes may include crying, pacing, mumbling, muttering, shouting.

Identify any Dangers in the Environment

Remove or reduce items of furniture, sharp or dangerous equipment if possible. Refer to Health & Safety Policy statement.

Use of De-escalation Techniques

Different approaches are effective for different children. It is essential that all staff are aware of the right approach for managing each individual child. The following are some ways that may be useful in de-escalating a situation.

- Assess the situation as calmly as you can.
- Maintain a safe distance never approaching the pupil from behind.
- Devise activities that help to channel aggression.
- Discuss appropriate time and place for physical actions.
- Keep your tone of voice down: talk calmly, clearly and slowly.
- Do not use exaggerated body movements and be aware of your body language.
- Listen to and reassure the pupil as necessary.
- Evacuate other children and staff if their safety is at risk.

Directing a Pupil

Offering the pupil a favourite object, toy or preferred activity may encourage the pupil's attention and reduce the behaviour.

Keeping a Safe Distance

Safety of other pupils as well as staff is of paramount importance. Be conscious of your position in relation to the pupil. Facing the pupil directly may escalate the situation and increase risk of injury. Standing at the side of the pupil is less invasive and may support de-escalating the situation. By maintaining a safe distance, level of injury should be reduced.

Evacuation

Sometimes the safest option is to remove other children and staff from the situation. Where this happens, a staff member should continually observe the pupil with the challenging behaviour from a safe distance, calling for extra help if necessary.

Reporting and Recording the Incident

The incident should be recorded in the class/school incident book. Time, date, staff and pupils involved, injuries sustained and whether medical attention was needed should also be recorded. Incident should be reported to senior management of the school.

Staff Support

Following such an incident, it is important that staff involved debrief should they feel the need to do so. For example, take a break from the situation and / or take time to talk to a person you feel comfortable with. Debriefing should be non judgemental and confidential.. Medical treatment should be sought if necessary.

The Use of Physical Intervention

Our approach to the management of challenging behaviour is preventative, corrective, consequential and supportive. The emphasis is always on developing individual preventative strategies to avoid the use of physical intervention.

There are occasions when the use of physical intervention is necessary. In this instance, the staff should consider the following points:

- When physical intervention is necessary, an agreed "Behaviour Support Plan" should be approved by parents, class staff, multi-disciplinary team and principal as soon as possible.
- The amount of intervention should be used for the shortest possible time.
- The intervention should be used in ways that maintain the safety of others at risk.
- Situations where physical intervention may be necessary would be to prevent a pupil injuring him/herself or another student or when the behaviour of the pupil is putting his/her safety or the safety of others at risk.
- The circumstances of the intervention should be recorded.
- The Behaviour Plan should be reviewed regularly and an assessment made of the appropriateness of any measures adopted in the light of changes in the circumstances and the child's responses and reactions.
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Types of Behaviour Considered Unacceptable in the Context of Sonas

Special Junior Primary School:

- Persistent climbing, running.
- Persistent inappropriate social behaviours such as spitting, screaming, cursing, nose blowing, etc
- Constant interruption to activities/persistent attention seeking.
Behaviour that regularly disrupts the work of the classroom.
- Causing physical hurt to others such as kicking, pushing, biting, ect.
- Damaging school property.
- Persistent self injurious behaviour e.g. eye poking, head banging, biting him/ herself.

School Processes for Dealing with Challenging Behaviours

Should a child present with behaviours that are challenging, the school employs the following procedures, depending on the context:

- Referral to the school psychologist.
- Establishment of a Behaviour Support Plan in consultation with parents and members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team. (The plan will attempt to identify the antecedents and triggers of the challenging behaviours and focus on prevention.)
- Frequent meetings/telephone calls with parents as part of the process to manage the behaviours and keep parents fully informed.
- Requesting support from Trasna Training Service to prepare a functional analysis of the behaviours.
- Recording episodes in an Incident Report which is filed in the office.
- Informing the Special Education Needs Organiser of the need for possible extra resources to support the pupil.

Suspension/Expulsion

Where there are instances or serious incidents of unacceptable or unmanageable challenging behaviours, which cannot be resolved within existing resources, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested to attend the school to meet with the Chairperson and the principal.

Where all the internal school processes listed above have been exhausted and the board is of the opinion that a pupil should be suspended or expelled for unacceptable or unmanageable challenging behaviours, the Board will follow the procedures and guidelines as stipulated in the Education of Welfare Act 2000, section 24 (copy attached)

Unacceptable or unmanageable challenging behaviours in the context of this school is understood to mean that the resources available to the school are not adequate to meet the challenges posed to the welfare of the pupil, other pupil's or staff having regard to the provisions of the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Children First Guidelines).

The pupils may be suspended for a temporary period initially to allow the school authorities to investigate whether or not additional support structures would alleviate the situation and to apply for same. The pupil may be integrated back into the classroom on a phased basis depending on the school's ability to provide the necessary resources to manage the behaviours.

The National Education Welfare Board will be informed using a Notice of Decision to Expel form. This information is required to allow the NEWB to intervene before the decision to expel takes effect. (A pupil may not be expelled before the passing of 20 days following the receipt of notification to expel by the Educational Welfare Officer.)

This action to expel will be taken when there is no alternative and with due consultation with parents, NEWB and Multi-Disciplinary Team.

Available Resources

- Other teaching and SNA colleagues
- Multi-Disciplinary Team
- Principal
- Agreed Behaviour Support Plan
- Parents
- Brothers of Charity Services
- Trasna Training Services
- Board of Management
- Special Educational Needs Organiser
- National Educational Welfare Board

The Board of Management strives to ensure that the school delivers the programmes in a secure and safe environment for all pupils. The Principal is required to inform the Board of Management of circumstances which adversely affect the capacity of the school to do this and the Board of Management will use its best endeavours with budgetary constraints to deliver the school programmes in such a manner. The Board of Management, where practicable, will apply for reasonable additional resources which may be identified by the school team and which in the opinion of the Board of Management are warranted and appropriate for the needs of all the children.

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The Board seeks to minimise the risk of injury to all those who participate in the school environment. However, in some cases the necessary structures and resources may not be available to minimise and/or eliminate the risk of injury to staff and pupils. Therefore, any pupils presenting with challenging behaviour, which in the opinion of the Board of Management cannot be managed by school, may in such circumstances have to be managed in an alternative environment other than Sonas Special Junior Primary School, having regard to the Board of Management's overall responsibility to all staff and pupils at Sonas. [This measure may have to be adopted by the Board of Management in order to reduce an unacceptable level of risk-optional.

Reviewed and Ratified by the BOM