



# **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY**



## **Code of Behaviour Policy Jonah Special School**

### **Introduction**

Jonah Special School is required under the Education Act (1998) and the Education Welfare Act (2000) to develop a policy on behaviour and discipline. Jonah Special School is a special co-educational school which caters for students with autism and complex needs. A number of our students may exhibit challenging behaviour from time to time. Each student; where necessary; will have a Behaviour Support Plan which directly links to the school's code of behaviour policy.

In devising this approach to behavioural support, consideration has been given to the challenges experienced by the students, keeping in mind individual circumstance and needs. However, it is acknowledged that each student has the right to an education in a relatively disruptive free environment. The code allows for implementation of individual behaviour support plans, but in the case of gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour when the safety and duty of care to others is at issue, the code takes precedence.

This policy is implemented in conjunction with other relevant school policies and procedures.

### **Aim**

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Jonah Special School are:

- To create a safe, harmonious, secure and orderly environment; which will facilitate the educational, moral, emotional, behavioural and social development of all student's.
- To provide guidance for Students, Teachers, SNA's and all staff of behavioural expectations.
- To modify behaviour through developing a positive structured approach to discipline. We will endeavour to do this by providing clear and secure boundaries within which the students school day is structured, and by encouraging students successes, building their self-esteem and modifying inappropriate behaviour.
- To foster an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To identify the individual difficulties of each student as he/she presents these difficulties within the school.
- To assist the student to overcome these problems and to facilitate them to receive an appropriate education.
- To work with relevant professionals in fields related to the identified needs of our students, i.e. Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Autism Team, Behavioural Specialists, Social Workers, Care Workers, Doctors appropriate to school, Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapist etc.
- To offer a framework, within which the techniques of positive motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers and staff.
- To ensure consistency in the applications of rules and sanctions.
- To enhance the learning environment of the school by promoting a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community.
- To increase the co-operation between home and school.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.



## **Implementation**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Emphasis on positive behaviour will be applied in a fair and consistent manner with due regard to the age of the students and to individual differences. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be supported at an early stage.

## **Responsibilities**

The adults encountered by the students at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the students and with each other, as their example has an important influence on students. As adults, we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote, through example, honesty and courtesy, encouraging relationships based on kindness, respect, and understanding of the needs of others.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability or disability.
- Show appreciation for the efforts and contributions of all.

## **Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- To provide a comfortable and safe environment.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all in Jonah Special School in accordance with their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act.
- To support the Principal, Director of Education and staff in implementing the code.
- To fulfil responsibilities in terms of applying the sanctions of suspension and expulsion.
- To ratify and review the code as appropriate.

## **School Principal Responsibilities**

- To promote a positive atmosphere in the school; based on a climate of empathy and respect for others.
- To ensure that the behavioural support procedures are implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Communicate with parents where necessary, and provide reports on matters of concern.
- Arrange for a review of the Code, as required.

## **Teacher Responsibilities**

- To support and implement the school's code of behaviour policy.
- Create a safe working environment for each student.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by students.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among students.
- Be courteous consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with negative behaviour in accordance with individualised behaviour support plans.
- Keep a record of instances of serious challenging behaviour or repeated instances same.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.



## **Clinical Director/Behaviour Analyst Responsibilities**

- As above.
- To communicate contents of Behaviour Support Plans to auxiliary staff, and to train them in the implementation of same as agreed with class teacher.
- To keep staff informed of updates to Behaviour Support Plans.
- To provide training and support to parents where possible and after consultation with the Principal.
- Undertake training of staff in appropriate crisis intervention procedures.

## **SNA Responsibilities**

- To support and implement the school's code of behaviour policy.
- Create a safe working environment for each student.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work under the guidance of the class teacher.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among students.
- Be courteous consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with negative behaviour in accordance with individualised behaviour support plans.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

## **Students Responsibilities**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teacher.
- Show respect to all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other students.
- Avoid behaviour in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name calling.
- Include other students in games and activities.
- Follow school and class rules.

## **Parents/Guardian's Responsibilities**

- To encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and the property.
- To ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually. The school will comply with the statutory requirements regarding the notification of student absences.
- To be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- To be familiar with the code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
- To co-operate with teachers in instances where the child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect the child's progress/behaviour.
- Become familiar with the support strategies and learning goals necessary to support their child and ensure success and generalisation outside the environment of the school.



## **Discipline For Learning (D.F.L)**

D.F.L is based on teachers approaching discipline by zoning in on good behaviour rather than always responding to negative behaviour. Teachers and SNA's will be taught how to focus attention on the positive behaviour not the negative.

A set of generic and individualised school rules are drawn up. Wording of these rules is very important as they must be sufficiently broad to encompass the behaviour expectations of all the staff and yet be precise enough to be meaningful to students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The students also learn the implications of the rules and what exactly each rule means. Individualisation is key and rules are adopted into each student's Behaviour Support Plan.

Consistency is absolutely necessary. A student arriving in school in the morning must know with absolute certainty that if they behave well their good behaviour will be recognised.

Most psychologists agree that children thrive and develop best in a secure and stable environment. Behaviour Support Plans are individualised based on each student's needs. This positive approach to Discipline puts an emphasis on respecting others (children peers and adults). One must always acknowledge the level of developmental disorder and/or intellectual disability a student presents with. Children with ASD have varying communication deficits and what works for one child may not necessarily work for another. Individualising behaviour support is therefore imperative.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is repeated verbal psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact name-calling, intimidation isolation and taunting. Bullying will not be tolerated and parents will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **Before/After School**

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for students before official opening time of 9.30 am or after the official closing time of 3.00 pm except where students are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Students involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

## **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. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

The rules are:

- Respect for self and others.
- Respect for others' property.
- Respect other students and their learning.
- Kindness and willingness to help others.
- Follow instructions from staff immediately.



- Walk quietly in the school building.
- Courtesy and good manners.
- Readiness to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict.
- Ask permission to leave the classroom.
- Do your best in class.
- Take responsibility for your own work.
- Take responsibility for your own behavior, as much as possible.

These can be summed up as 7 main rules:

- Show respect/be nice.
- Do your best.
- Be tidy.
- Be safe.
- Walk.
- Listen.
- Be calm.

### **Affirming Positive Behaviour**

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and places a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on negatives.

### **Challenging Behaviour**

The school ethos supports a functional approach to the management of challenging behaviour. Behaviours which may present a challenge to others are adaptive and functional for the student; i.e. that is to say that the behaviour exists in the students repertoire because it has been learned and serves a function for the student (e.g. a student may engage in assaultive or destructive behaviour as a means of escaping a task that he/she finds particularly demanding). The approach in Jonah Special School is to decrease challenging behaviour by teaching and reinforcing appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour).

Within Jonah Special School, the staff capitalise on learning opportunities throughout the day across all school settings. The aim is to teach appropriate functional communication using whatever supports necessary (e.g. gestural/visual prompts; schedules of reinforcement etc.) in order to reduce as much as possible instances of challenging behaviour for all students.

All members of the school community should adopt a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is 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.



## Behavior Support Policy

The Director of Education at Jonah Special School has produced a Behavior Support Policy which guides behavior support in the school and has been ratified by the Board of Management.

### Reducing Challenging Behaviour

Our approach in response to challenging behaviour is to affect a decrease in inappropriate behaviour by increasing appropriate behaviour. This should be achieved through the employment of reinforcement strategies. Only when data indicates that these positive measures have been tried and exhausted; or have been unsuccessful in eliminating or sufficiently reducing problem behaviour, should a reductive consequence be considered. Reductive consequences refer to specific consequences that are applied contingent upon the occurrence of an undesired behaviour with the purpose of decreasing the likelihood of it recurring in the future. Strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour will be applied on an individualised basis with due regard to age and emotional development. These consequences/sanctions may include:

- Reasoning with students.
- Verbal reminders.
- Loss of privileges.
- Reduction of access to an array of preferred items/activities.
- A report to a parent/school principal.
- The requirement of the completion of an additional task in order to regain access to reinforcement schedules.
- Restitution of the environment following disruptive behaviour.
- Removal of attention from the teacher/non-exclusionary time-out.
- Temporarily move to a quiet space/another room to practice pre – taught self – management skills. *NB* This is different to requesting a break or sensory breaks.
- Detention (where appropriate to the individual).
- Exclusion from school (In accordance with Rule 130 of Rules for National Schools as detailed in Curricular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

***NB: Students will not be deprived of engagement in a curricular area, except on the grounds of Health and safety.***

These measures would be detailed in the individual behaviour plan, and will have been discussed and agreed with parents in advance, and with students as appropriate.

Consultation with external professionals may be sought by the Principal and Board of Management in this regard if deemed necessary. The implementation of any Behaviour Support Plan should be in compliance with the ethical guidelines for best practice specified by the Behaviour Analyst. Due regard should be given to the age and needs of the individual child, the Health and Safety of all students and staff, and the resources available to the school, in developing an appropriate behaviour plan that is feasible to implement with a view to a successful outcome for the student.

### Crisis Management

The focus of all Behaviour Support at Jonah Special School is on positive programming, affirming appropriate behaviour, enabling students to self-regulate their behaviour and the anticipation and prevention of behavioural crisis. The code of crisis management at Jonah Special School is that of the



**'Management of Actual or Potential Aggression Programme' (MAPA®)**, approved for use under the regulation of the British Institute for Disabilities and the Irish Department of Education and Skills.

In extreme cases, where all internal processes have been exhausted, and external professionals have been involved, where necessary, and the Board of Management is of the opinion that the school does not have the resources to meet the challenges posed by the welfare of the student, other students or staff, the Board will follow the procedures and guidelines as stipulated in the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 24 with regard to suspension and expulsion of students. This action will be taken only when there is no alternative and with due consultation with the parents, the National Educational Welfare Board and staff.

It should be noted that in Jonah Special School, suspension will be part of an agreed plan to address the behaviour of the student. It is not intended to be punitive, but should –

- Provide the staff with an opportunity to liaise with the parents in devising an action plan.
- Provide the staff with an opportunity to plan other interventions and to organise physical space to minimise the risks to others.
- Enable the school team to identify behavioural goals with the parents and student.
- Allow time for adaptations to any risk assessments in place for that student.
- Allow time to share pertinent information on behavioural strategies which have been amended with relevant personnel.
- Allow staff to seek further support from external professionals where appropriate.

### **Strategies/Incentives (Individual Where Necessary)**

Jonah Special School utilises a number of strategies and organisational procedures in order to make provision for the needs of the individual and reduce the occurrences of inappropriate or challenging behaviour. The school aims to implement a blend of the following systems and strategies –

- Structured teaching environment.
- Development of Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans for each student.
- Individual assessments to identify which areas may be problematic for students, especially in the areas of sensory and behavioural needs.
- Positive behaviour management strategies and crisis prevention methods utilised throughout school.
- Data collection on individual educational and behavioural targets to monitor progress and allow for adaptation of approach.
- Advice sought from visiting professionals regarding individual students as necessary.
- Development of close relationships with parents to ensure consistency of approach and generalization of skills.
- Individual sensory regulation programmes to enable the student to regulate and be available for learning.
- Structured teaching environment.
- Use of visual supports throughout the school, with individual visuals specific to cognitive ability and learning style (i.e. Icon, photo, object schedule).
- Individualised modes of communication, communication books, PECS, Lámh, Speech, ACC devices.
- Emphasis placed on social and life skills education (e.g. Social stories, SPHE programmes, etc.).
- Pre-teaching requisite self-management and relaxation skills.
- Natural social rewards, such as praise, smiles, positive attention and encouragement.
- Visual representations and reminders of consequences.
- Personalised reward systems.
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a student's exercise book.





- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards or award stamps.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent – Home/school liaison sheets/ behaviour sheets.
- Incident and Assault reports.
- On – going upskilling of staff – specific and up to date staff training in managing very challenging behaviour.

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour with due regard to age and the emotional development of the student.

## **Suspension**

Suspension is defined as '*requiring a student to absent himself or herself from the school for a specific number of school days*'. The Board of Management has the authority to suspend a student. This authority to suspend for a period of up to and including three days is formally delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management. The Board of Management and Principal have a duty to ensure that there are no undue delays in an investigation in making decisions about the imposition of suspension. Great care will be taken to ensure that all matters to do with an investigation of alleged misbehaviour will be dealt with in confidence.

Suspension will always be exercised in a fair and non-discriminatory manner having regard to the good of the whole school community and the principles of natural justice which are the right to be heard and the right to impartiality.

Suspension will be an appropriate response to the behaviour that is causing concern such as –

- The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
- The student's behaviour has a serious detrimental effect on the education of other students.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
- The student is involved in a serious incident of challenging behaviour.
- The student is involved in a single incident of serious misconduct.

Suspension should be part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour.

- It should impress on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.
- It should give school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- It should enable the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents.

## **Automatic Suspension**

The Board of Management can impose automatic suspension for certain prescribed behaviours or in exceptional cases for a first offence. These include –

- Possession of a weapon.
- Sexual assault.
- Possession of illegal drugs.
- Actual violence or serious physical assault.
- Serious threat of violence against another student or staff member.



Fair procedures will be followed at all times.

For extreme challenging behaviour or repeated instances of serious challenging behaviour which poses a safety risk to students and staff, suspension may be considered. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. Parents are required to give an undertaking to co-operate with the school in developing strategies to address the problem behaviour. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with members of the staff involved, with due regard to records of previous challenging behaviour, their pattern and context, reductive consequences and other interventions used and their outcomes, and any relevant medical information.

Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

### **Immediate Suspension**

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students, staff, themselves or any other person at the school.

In cases where suspension is to take effect immediately and in the interest of health and safety –

- Parents/guardians will be informed by phone and asked to collect the student.
- Where possible, the following day, parents will be invited to meet with Principal, Behaviour Analyst and class teacher to receive the explanation for suspension.
- Student (where appropriate) and parents will be given the opportunity to respond.
- Fair procedures will be followed at all times.

### **Procedures in Relation to Suspension**

In the event that the Principal exercises his/her authority to suspend a student for a fixed duration, the following procedure will be followed –

- The student will be informed, where applicable; and given the opportunity to respond.
- The parents/guardians will be informed and invited to come to the school for a meeting to receive an explanation for the suspension.
- Written notification will be sent to the parents.

A student should not be suspended again shortly after they return to school unless –

- They engage in serious misbehaviour that warrants suspension and fair procedures are observed in full.
- The standard applied to judging the behaviour must be the same as the standard applied to the behaviour of any other student.

### **Written Notification**

All suspension decisions will include a formal letter of notification with the following –

- Notice of suspension.
- Duration of the suspension.
- Dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- Reason for the suspension.



- Arrangements for returning to school including any commitment to be entered into by student and parents/guardians e.g. students may be asked to re-affirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour.
- Information of the appeal rights and procedures regarding suspension.

A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed if appropriate.

## **Removal of Suspension (Reinstatement)**

A student or his/her parents/guardians may appeal the Principal's decision to suspend to the Board of Management. Such an appeal must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. However, the school may insist that the student remain at home while the appeal proceeds. In the event that an appeal is successful, the suspension will be lifted and if the suspension has already been served, it will be expunged from the student's record.

An appeal of a suspension decision may also be made under Section 29 of the Education Act where a student has been suspended for 20 days or more. Information regarding this right of appeal will be provided with a formal notification of the suspension, if applicable.

Beyond success in such appeals, a suspension may be rescinded in the following circumstances:

- New circumstances come to light after the suspension has been applied that would have mitigated the sanction had they had known beforehand.
- Other mitigating factors consistent with the application of the Principles of Natural Justice.

## **Suspension Completion**

Upon completion of a suspension, the following procedures may apply for the formal reintroduction of the student into the school –

- Parents will be requested to attend with the student upon his/her return to school.
- A written or verbal apology may be required for the student for his misbehaviour.
- The student may be required to enter into a contract of good behaviour or other conditions that may be specified before returning to school.
- A meeting will be arranged between the Principal, Behaviour Analyst, class teacher, parents and student (where necessary) to support the student during the reintegration process.

## **Records and Reports**

Formal written records will be kept of –

- The investigation.
- The decision making process.
- The decision and the rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

The Principal will report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reasons for and the duration of each suspension. The Principal will report suspensions to N.E.W.B. when a student has been suspended for 6 days and for 20 days cumulatively.



## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student. As a matter of best practice, the authority will be reserved to the Board of Management and will not be delegated.

We recognise that 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 misbehaviour and to avoid the expulsion of a student.

Procedures for expulsion will proceed in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a student, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as –

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

## **Expulsion for a First Offence**

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code include –

- A serious threat of violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Actual violence or physical assault.
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.
- Sexual assault.

## **Determining the Appropriateness of Expelling a Student**

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management should undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

## **Procedures in Respect of Expulsion**

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education Welfare Act 2000, when proposing to expel a student (see 10.3 and 10.4 for information about fair procedures). Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the procedural steps will include –

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal and/or Chairperson.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.



In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal will –

- Inform the student, where necessary, and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion.
- Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents will be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This also ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.
- If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the principal will write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school should record the invitation issued to the parents and their response.

### **A Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal**

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. The Principal should –

- Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents have records of the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to the parents.
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they can make a written or oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that the parents have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

### **Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's Recommendation & Holding of a Hearing**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to review that the initial investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board will undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It will ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations.

If the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student, it will hold a hearing. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party will be allowed to question the evidence of the other party directly. The meeting will also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction.

In the conduct of the hearing, the Board will take care to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student.



Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board will ensure that the Principal and parents are not present for the Board's deliberations.

### **Board of Management Deliberations & Actions Following a Hearing**

Having heard from all parties, it is the responsibility of the board to decide whether or not the allegation is sustained and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all of the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. (Educational Welfare Act 2000, s24 (1)). The Board of Management will refer to the National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education Welfare Act 2000, S 4A).

The Board will inform parents in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents will be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Confirmation of the Decision to Expel**

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 of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal).

Parents will be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student, where necessary, will be told about the right to appeal and be supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record will be made of the decision to expel the student.

### **Limitations**

This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the students, the teacher, and the Principal to be used to solve individual problems.

### **Methods of Communicating with Parents**

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents 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 encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, students and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly. Parents 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. The following



methods are to be used at all levels within the school –

- IEP Meetings/IEP Review Meetings.
- Parent/teacher meetings throughout the year.
- Consultation throughout the year.
- Through children's home/school diary.
- Phone Call and/or text.
- Email.

## **Jonah Special School**

Code of Behaviour Policy.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

**Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

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

**Principal**

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

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

**Next Review Period: *September 2026***