



## Code of Behaviour Policy

The school has a central role in student'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 children bring to school a wide variety of behaviours. As a community environment, in school we must work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

Children need limits set for them in order to feel secure and develop the skills for co-operation. Therefore any rules will be age and ability appropriate, with clear agreed consequences.

Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, by visiting the school and by talking to the members of staff.

A code of behaviour is established to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.

This Code of Behaviour was drafted in March 2012 by the management of Ábalta Special School. After being reviewed by members of the Board of Management, the draft copy was reviewed in detail by the parent representatives on the BOM and the staff representative. Having regard to the opinion of all parties, the final completed copy was sanctioned by the BOM on:

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Copies were given to all parents/guardians, and also, copies are also held by parents' representatives. There is a copy of the policy in each classroom and on computer servers. The policy was viewed by all staff on:

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### **Rationale- Why devise it?**

- It is a requirement under DES Circular 20/90 on School Discipline.
- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000, Section 23.1
- It is part of our developing School Plan.

### **Relationship to the School Mission and spirit.**

Ábalta Special School is dedicated to providing the highest quality of learning, teaching, and care of pupils under our instruction. In partnership with the parents/guardians, families and/or residential personnel of our pupils, we seek to provide for individual, intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development.

The dignity of each 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 pupil to develop his/her potential to the full, we also want our pupils to be happy in school and to enjoy their time with us.

The Code of Behaviour Policy will help to foster harmonious relationships and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

### **Aims of the Code**

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To promote self-esteem and positive relationships
- To encourage consistency of response to both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- To foster a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils and to support good behaviour patterns based on consideration and respect for the rights of others
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach with minimal disruption
- 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
- To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioral expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

- To assist parents and pupils to understand the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behavior and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.

### **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, emphasize positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to their individual differences. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

### **Affirming appropriate behavior**

The school ethos supports a functional approach to the management of challenging behaviour. Behaviour that may present a challenge to others is adaptive and functional for the student; that is to say that the behaviour exists in the student's 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 of school staff in Ábalta 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).

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 should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise, reinforcement and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

### **Behavior Support Policy**

The behavior support and learning specialist at Ábalta Special School have produced a behavior support policy which guides behaviour support in the school and has been ratified by the board of management.

### **Crisis management**

Episodes of challenging behaviour may occur from time to time at varying levels of intensity. At all times the health and safety of all students and staff is our priority. In particular, when students are participating in activities outside school, a risk assessment is carried out and extra precautions are put in place. If a student presents with challenging behavior that poses a threat to him/herself or others while

on an outing then that student and his tutor will return to the school. Risk assessments have been produced and individualized for all students.

The school has adopted the MAPA former CPI ® Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training program. All staff and current substitute staff at Abalta Special School are required to be trained in MAPA procedures. Competency measures required by MAPA must be met in order to become and remain MAPA certified. Recertification is on a yearly basis through on-site training; and trainer recertification is also provided by MAPA through their Instructor Excellence Renewal Course. Certified on-site instructors are Patricia Valic and Maura Madden. Training in MAPA will also be offered to parents / guardians / other family members and board of management members.

MAPA provides school staff with a repertoire of crisis management techniques; it is not intended to be used as a behaviour intervention program. Crisis management techniques may be prescribed as part of a comprehensive behaviour support plan for a student with a history of intense levels of challenging behaviour/ behaviour that may pose a risk to self/ others. Parents will be informed of the use of any MAPA techniques that are included in the student's behaviour support plan.

Staff training in MAPA procedures also affords staff the skills to deal with unforeseen/ emergency levels of challenging behaviour in as safe a manner as possible for all involved. As a last resort, emergency safety procedures will be implemented by trained staff in the event of an incident where challenging behaviour occurs. The teaching staff and behaviour support team will take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the student, other students, and staff; as per the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (BACB) ethical guidelines for best practice:

1. Emergency procedures should only be used when there is a documented need to do so to protect the student, and/ or others in the environment as per Behaviour Support plans or when a new behaviour arises.
2. The protection of the health and safety of the person with whom intervention is taken should be paramount in the decision as to which emergency procedure is used.
3. The use of emergency procedures should result in the assessment of the factors leading up its use and consideration of measures, if any, that should be initiated to reduce or eliminate the need to use the procedure in the future.

Parents should be informed by phone following a crisis incident that warrants an incident report as per reporting procedure criteria. School copies of incident report forms are filed in the student's individual files in the Principal's office.

A case review meeting should be conducted following any intense/ crisis level episodes of challenging behaviour. These meetings should involve all relevant staff and use the standard debriefing format developed within the school as per the COPING model of MAPA.

## **Suspension/Expulsion**

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised. Communication with parents may be verbal and / or by letter depending on the circumstances.

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 steps involved in the management of challenging behaviour as per the student's behaviour support plan prior to suspension or expulsion will be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious challenging behaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. Parents are required to give an undertaking to cooperate with the School in developing strategies to address the problem behavior. 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.

In the case of extreme challenging behaviour, where it is necessary to secure the safety of the pupils and staff, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act. It is the decision of the Board of Management as to whether a student is suspended and / or expelled.

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

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The application will be considered with reference to any necessary support and resources required by the school (e.g. physical changes, consulting other experts where applicable etc). The Principal and the Behaviour Support and Learning Specialist will facilitate a review of the existing behaviour support plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

## **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. Rules for staff are as follows and have been drawn up in consultation with staff:

- Sign in and sign out each day, non-regular staff sign in and out of the visitor's book
- Be punctual going to and returning from breaks, be in attendance in the classroom at 9.15 each morning and do not leave until 3.45 Monday – Thursday, and 3.15 on Fridays.
- Adhere to classroom and school rosters re. clean up etc.
- Ensure confidentiality at all times
- Carry out duties as prescribed by Principal, DOE or teacher (as appropriate)

School rules for students will be set out class by class as deemed appropriate by the class teacher.

## **Before/After School**

Parents are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before the official opening time of 9.30a.m. or after the official closing time of 3.10p.m. except where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with the code of behavior policy during these times.

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

- Provide a comfortable, safe environment in the school.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

## **Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

## **Behaviour support and learning specialist responsibilities**

- Production of behaviour support plans
- Staff training in their implementation
- Data review and revision of plans where required

## **Classroom Staff Responsibilities**

Support and implement the school's code of behaviour.

- Create a safe working, learning and play environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare school work and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Speak to the students using an appropriate tone
- Deal appropriately with minor problem behaviour through the correct implementation of behaviour support plans.
- Keep a record of instances of serious challenging behaviour or repeated instances of problem behaviour
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.
- Undertake training in the implementation of student behaviour plans.
- Undertake annual training in MAPA Non-violent crisis intervention techniques.
- All staff will adhere to the positive Ethos of the school, in order to maintain a positive learning environment.
- Ensure consistency in implementing behaviour support plans
- Ensure parents are informed of behaviour support strategies and learning goals to support their child; and provide training and support to parents where possible.
- Keep records of challenging behaviour as specified in the relevant behaviour plans.
- Judgement and common sense should be exercised by all staff to maintain the Health and Safety of everyone as per health and safety policy.

## **Pupils' Responsibilities**

- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Follow class rules.
- Co-operate with school staff

## **Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's school work.
- Be familiar with the code of behavior and support its implementation.

- Co-operate with the class staff in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for themselves and others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems which may affect child's progress/behaviour.
- Become familiar with the behaviour support strategies and learning goals necessary to support their child and ensure success and generalisation outside of the school environment.
- Label pupil's property.

### **Code of conduct for parents / guardians**

- Courteous towards pupils and staff.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Behaviour support and learning specialist/Teacher/ Principal/ through the School office as per Home / school partnership policy
- Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same.

### **Responsibility of Adults**

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

As adults we should aim to:

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

### **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 teachers, SNAs, behaviour support and learning specialist 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, pupils and parents have been established and are contained in the school's home / school partnership policy.

**Reviewed by the Board of Management on** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review date:**\_\_\_\_\_

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

**(Chairperson, Board of Management)**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Reporting Procedures I**

**Ábalta Special School, Roll No: 20371A**

#### **Rationale:**

- a. To help the team review & update where necessary, the existing Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)
- b. To assist in developing a new Behaviour Support Plan as required
- c. At the request of parents & carers, to provide a detailed report of episodes of challenging behaviour so that home and school can continue to work together to provide the optimal supports for the child's learning
- d. To support best practice in the application of the Behaviour Support Plan & its attendant interventions amongst the staff at school
- e. To ensure the integrity of Behaviour Support Plans is maintained at all times at school

#### **Procedure:**

For reporting incidences of severe challenging behaviour (for a duration of 5+ minutes and / or resulting in injury caused to student and / or others)

#### **See Appendix II for Definitions**

1. Immediately communicate the incident to the Behaviour support and learning specialist and the School Principal.
2. An account of the incident should be typed following the headings in point 4 for incidents involving students and appendix III form to be completed for staff.
3. A copy should be emailed to the Behaviour support and learning specialist and the School Principal by the end of the work day in which the incident took place. A hard copy should be left in the principal's office for filing in the student files.
4. The incident report should include the following details:
  - Date & Time
  - Location of where the incident took place
  - Person(s) involved in the incident
  - Activity taking place at the time
  - Description of the behaviour of concern
  - Strategies used to deal with the incident
  - What happened after the incident?
5. In the closing section of the report the staff member will:

- identify and list possible behaviour triggers
- acknowledge points arising from the student's perspective
- provide an analysis arising from the incident
- signature of author / date of report

### **Procedure for reporting accidents in the workplace**

- Immediately communicate the accident to the School Principal.
- Before leaving work on the day of the accident, fill out a form (Appendix II) from the accident report form folder in the old school office.
- If you are unable to write the details of the accident in the report form book, then please ensure to dictate the nature of the accident to another person who should fill out this form on your behalf.
- Give the completed form to the principal

### **Procedure for reporting broken teaching resources, materials or furniture**

- Immediately ensure that your student is supervised by another team member while you clean up and make the environment safe again
- If needed, remove the students from the classroom until environment is restored
- If additional help is required, request same from Administrator
- Ensure that any broken objects are immediately removed from the environment and brought to the main office
- Communicate the nature of the incident with the School Administrator who will in turn discuss same with the Principal & the multidisciplinary team

The Behaviour support and learning specialist in consultation with staff, should review this procedure as necessary and decide whether it sufficiently supports the Behaviour Support Plan or not.

## **Appendix II- definitions:**

**Injury** is defined as damage caused to the body – a lesion to the skin or a bruise resulting in clotting of blood or reddening of the skin

**The level of injury** will be determined by the criteria set down in the student's Behaviour Support Plan. Copies of each child's Behaviour Support Plan can be found on the desk in their work area and also in the Director of Education's office, filed under the main Behaviour Support Files.

The injury may be to the student him/herself or to a member of staff. Injuries to staff are reported in the form in appendix III where the staff member requires medical attention. For further details refer to the Abalta Health and Safety policy.

**Appendix III**

**Report Form – for accidents in the workplace to staff / substitutes / volunteers**

• Name of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_.

• Class: \_\_\_\_\_.

Circumstances in which injury occurred:

• Location: \_\_\_\_\_.

• Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

• Description of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Names of Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_.

When did you report the incident? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you require medical assistance? \_\_\_\_\_

Actions Taken: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Signed (Employee): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

