RESPECT
FOR
ALL

FRAMEWORK

MANAGING
BEHAVIOUR
IN SCHOOLS

POLICY

JUNE 2015

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

POLICY

CONTENT

TERMINOLOGY

Commitment
refers to the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause or activity.

Consequence
refers to a result or effect, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant.

Discipline
refers to giving instruction or teaching to correct, strengthen, or perfect. It is a process of learning by the student that requires understanding, time, and patience, teaches problem solving and builds a positive self-image and develops long-term self-control and cooperation.

Duty
refers to what an individual ought to do and is derived from certain rights.

Educators
refers to the Senior Management Team, teachers, LSAs, Peripatetic Teachers, and all those who are developing and/or providing instruction in the school.

Entitlement
refers to a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.

Parents
refers to the biological or legal guardians of the students attending the school.

Positive Behaviour Management
refers to a set of respectful strategies which aim to increase and maintain appropriate behaviour while decreasing inappropriate behaviour. It is proactive and places an emphasis on teaching and reinforcing of appropriate behaviour.

Responsibility
refers to any commitment towards anything where an individual is free to obey or not to obey.

School
means an institution, the resources of which, both of persons and of things, are ordained towards the promotion of the education and training of other persons through the dissemination of knowledge, competences and skills.

School Community
refers to the Senior Management Team, teachers, practioners (Interdisciplinary team members) Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and staff members who work in a school, the students who attend the school and their parents and families, and local residents and organisations that have a stake in the school's success in helping all students, regardless of background or ability, to achieve high standards of scholarship and citizenship.

School Support Staff
refers to all members of staff working in the school including teachers, LSAs, clerical staff, technicians, ancillary staff (caretakers, cleaners, general hands and watchmen) College Interdisciplinary Team and other visiting staff.

Student
refers to anyone attending an education institution and, or registered with an education body.

ABBREVIATIONS

SMT
refers to the Senior Management Team which is composed of Head of School, Assistant Head/s, Inclusion Coordinators and Heads of Department.

INCO
refers to the Inclusion Coordinators.

LSZ
refers to Learning Support Zones in Middle and Secondary schools.

NG
refers to Nurture Group in primary schools.

LSC
refers to the Learning Support Centres.

For ease of reference the use of "he, him and his" shall be used for all genders.

01

PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS OF THE POLICY

The Managing Behaviour in Schools Policy is grounded in the Framework for the Education Strategy 2014-2024 (MEDE 2012a,) and the Respect for All Framework (MEDE, 2014b).

It considers behaviour management to be an opportunity for social and values-based learning as well as a means of maximising the success of academic education programmes. It is also grounded in the belief that being firm and consistent in managing disruptive behaviour does not necessarily require interventions that include threats, ambiguous statements or punishments directed at the person. The focus of intervention has to be directed on the action at all times. Through a democratic process students are to be involved in the formulation of a school philosophy outlining rights and responsibilities. It is not about forcing students to "...comply with teacher demands..." but allowing them to assume ownership and success in all aspects of their schooling (Charles, 2002). Students will become the main decision-makers in their lives and accept the responsibility that this entails.

The Policy adopts a whole school approach philosophy. This approach is defined as a unified, collective and collaborative action by educators, administrators, parents and students that has been strategically constituted to improve student learning behaviour and well-being and the conditions that support these (Charles, 2002).

In order to promote high standards of positive behaviour, the policy is based on the principles of respect, safety and responsibility.

This policy aims to:

–   Promote human dignity through the provision of a safe, secure, positive and caring school community that encourages learning, positive peer and teacher relationships, self-motivation, self-esteem and self-discipline.

–   Encourage and develop in students a strong sense of personal responsibility and responsibility towards others and a clear understanding of the consequences of their decisions and actions.

–   Help parents understand the link between good behaviour in schools and student attainment.

–   Encourage parents to help their children support and show respect towards the school's authority and others.

02

BACKGROUND

This policy provides direction for the effective management of behaviour within a whole school approach that ensures the smooth running of the school and the creation of an environment where everyone's responsibilities and rights are addressed and where learning can take place (Education Act, Cap. 327 of the Laws of Malta). Furthermore, this policy, in line with national policies, views discipline as school-based and one that is based on mutual and reciprocal respect.

Good behaviour results in students' better achievements (Maguire et al., 2010). In order for this to happen, students should be provided with an appropriate entitlement of learning that enables them to accomplish their full potential as individual persons and as citizens of a small State within the European Union (MEDE, 2012). Furthermore, students are also to be helped to enhance their personal growth, the values of social justice and responsible citizenship as an integral part of their education (MEDE, 2012; MEDE, 2014a).

The quality of learning, teaching and behaviour in schools are inseparable issues. Learning takes place best when students feel safe, are engaged in activities which challenge but do not generate anxiety, receive regular feedback which is positive and detailed and believe they can be successful. The great majority of students work hard and behave well and most schools successfully manage behaviour in which students feel safe, cared for and valued. This may not be the case in every school. Most frequently where unsatisfactory behaviour does occur it involves low level disruption that frustrates educators and interrupts learning. Incidents of serious misbehaviour and especially acts of violence are infrequent and are carried out by a small proportion of students. In the minority of schools where poor behaviour is more widespread, there are usually other failures in other areas (Ofsted, 2005).

03

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

3.1

The European Convention on Human Rights (1950) outlines the right to education and the right to fair procedures as provided for in the European Convention on Human Rights which was transposed into Maltese law.

3.2

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (ratified by Malta in 1990) provides that the State shall ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the dignity of the child. The Convention requires that the voice of the child must be heard on matters that affect him, having regard to the age and maturity of the child.

3.3

The Education Act (Cap. 327 of the Laws of Malta), binds the Directorate for Educational Services with the duty to provide adequate services that tackle bullying and other undesirable behaviours. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of cooperation amongst the main stakeholders in schools; it brings to the fore that promoting good behaviour is a responsibility that schools share with parents. Parents remain the major stakeholders in a child's life and they are legally obliged to discuss and cooperate with the Head of School, SMT, teachers and LSAs to tackle issues of behaviour. Parental involvement, in tandem with the school's staff in the formative education of the child, is clearly crucial.

3.4

Criminal Code of Malta, Article 82A (Cap. 9 of the Laws of Malta) identifies certain types of bullying behaviours as constituting a criminal offence.

3.5

The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012 - 2015) and the Council of Europe Programme 'Building a Europe for and with Children' (2006-2008; 2009-2011) recognise the need for support systems, including prevention programmes within school set up.

3.6

The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413 of the Laws of Malta) states that all environments are to work towards the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities, and that it is expected that schools make reasonable adjustments to accommodate such students, making sure they are not being discriminated against.

3.7

The International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 1, 21st December 1965 – entry into force 4th January, 1969) and the Equal Treatment of Persons Order – Subsidiary legislation 460.15 transposes the provisions of Council Directive 200/43/EC of 29th June, 2000 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. This order protects from discrimination/harassment on the basis of racial or ethnic origin. The Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta) prevents harassment and discrimination not only in the workplace but also in education.

04

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour, classroom management and student control have for a long time been an area of concern and activity for policy makers, schools administration and teachers (Powell & Tod, 2004). What often happens in practice is a focus on the control of the student rather than an attempt at a broader educational approach that addresses how to act as autonomous and responsible members of a group (self-discipline) (Maguire et. al, 2010). Classroom management and behaviour management therefore become the formal systems through which the school imposes and maintains order.

4.1

Understanding behaviour
Behaviour refers to the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. Student misbehaviour is defined as any behaviour that undermines the teacher's ability to establish and maintain effective learning experience in class (Kyriacou, 1997).

There is a range of student misbehaviour: from non-compliance to outright disruptive behaviour. Non-compliant behaviour such as talking out of turn, idleness or work avoidance, hindering other students and non-punctuality are more frequent than serious misbehaviour (namely verbal abuse of teachers, physical destructiveness and physical aggression towards teacher and fellow students) (Fontana, 1994). Any changes in the behaviour of students can be indicative of underlying problems that the students may have at the time and therefore is to be noticed and appropriately managed. Minor disruptions in classroom need to be addressed and managed otherwise the misbehaviour will escalate (Ofsted, 2013).

Acting Out behaviour refers to problem behaviour that is physically aggressive, destructive to property, verbally aggressive, or otherwise more severe than simple misbehaviour. Acting out behaviour is disruptive in any setting and often requires formal behaviour intervention to manage it.

Acting In behaviour refers to behaviour manifestations that are more self-destructive than outwardly-destructive. It can be manifested in a number of ways (Out of the Fog, 2012), including:

Avoidance	Depression	Escape to fantasy
Fear of abandonment	Identity disturbance	Low-functioning
Low self-esteem	Perfectionism	Selective competence
Self-harm	Self-loathing	Self-victimisation

Students' misbehaviour is considered to be problematic due to a number of reasons (Hollin, 1993) which include:

1. being detrimental to the educational progress of the misbehaving student.

2. hindering and disrupting the educational and social progress of behaving students who share a classroom with misbehaving students.

3. having untoward effects later on in the student's life.

4. provoking and offending members of the teaching profession.

4.2

Causes of student misbehaviour in class

The whole school community needs a shared understanding of the factors that influence student behaviour. A common understanding provides a sound foundation for a whole-school approach to promote good behaviour and for responding to inappropriate behaviour. Knowledge of what shapes the behaviour of students, both as individuals as well as groups, should enable schools to:

– plan and implement a team approach to helping students behave well.

– develop ways of responding to unacceptable behaviour that are more likely to work while at the same time avoid responding in ways that may worsen it.

– contain the subjectivity of how negative behaviour is interpreted and acted upon.

Misbehaviour cannot be seen as an isolated factor although it mainly happens in the classroom. It has to be understood within several spheres: individual, family, classroom, school, community and the whole society (McManus, 1995). Misbehaviour, therefore, has to be analysed according to the whole environment of the student's life.

The root of the causes of student misbehaviour can, therefore, be linked to one of three main sources: student, teacher and society (Yuan and Che, 2012). Attention seeking, learning difficulties and student's personality may be the root causes of student's misbehaviour (Winfield, 2012).

Other causes may be societal: family influence and family problems, deprived and/or unsettled home background (Elias et al., 2009) and, or linked to teacher's motivation during the lesson, teacher's authority and ability to exercise class management and control, teacher's personality (Kyriaciou, 1997).

Parents need insight into the factors that affect a student's behaviour in class and in school. They need to understand the way in which home values and parental attitudes help or hinder the student's behaviour and learning. This is particularly important where cultural norms and values in the home are different from those of the school. Once parents understand the rationale for the school behaviour policy they are more likely to support it.

Students also benefit from gaining insight into their own and others' behaviour. The school can help students build their capacity to take responsibility for their behaviour and to help other students to also behave well.

The appropriate steps for dealing with student misbehaviour are: understanding the behaviour completely, thinking about it carefully and dealing with it intelligently. The quality of teaching and learning progress can be guaranteed when student misbehaviour can be managed effectively.

05

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OWNERS

Director General, Directorate for Educational Services.
Director General, Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education.

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REVIEW DATE

This document will be reviewed during August 2016.
You are encouraged to submit your feedback by the 30th April 2016,
via email on **r4af.mede@gov.mt**

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