

**Holy Family Junior School
Aughnaharna, Portlaoise.**

Code of Behaviour

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

The Holy Family Junior School promotes the development of an inclusive community inspired by Gospel values. The School community works in a holistic manner to promote independence and responsibility for self, society and the world. We recognise and affirm the interdependence of home and school.

The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school Mission Statement, our values, policies and structures. Through the Mission Statement and school values we provide a harmonious environment and aim to nurture everyone in the school.

Holy Family Junior School's 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 an ordered and safe environment.

Aims

- To set out in a clear and positive manner the standards of behaviour expected from pupils in the classroom, yard and school environment.
- To allow the school community to function in an orderly and harmonious way.
- To enable teachers to teach with a minimum of disruption.
- To provide a positive and safe learning environment for our pupils.
- To help the children to develop respect, tolerance and consideration for themselves and others and to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.
- To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
- To ensure that a system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To outline the strategies used to reward good behaviour.
- To outline the procedures and sanctions used to deal with mis-behaviour.
- To inform and to promote an understanding of and support for the Code of Behaviour among members of the school community - Board of Management, Staff, Pupils and Parents.

Content of policy:

The Code is addressed under the following headings:

1. Guidelines for behavior in the school.
2. Whole school approach to promote positive behavior: Staff, Board of Management Pupils and Parents.
3. Positive Strategies for promoting good behavior: A. Classroom, B. Playground, C. Other areas of the school
4. Rewards and Sanctions:
 - Rewards and acknowledgements to acknowledge positive behaviour.
 - Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behavior.
 - Involving parents in managing problem behavior.
 - Managing inappropriate behavior.
5. Suspension/Expulsion: A. Suspension, B. Expulsion, C. Appeals
6. Keeping records: A. Class, B. Playground, C. School Records
7. Procedures for notification of Pupil Absences
8. Reference to other Policies

1. **Guidelines for Behaviour in School:** Section 23 Education Act states that the Code of Behaviour shall specify '*the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school*'

The following are seen as the basic standards of & rules for behaviour and learning in Holy Family Junior School. The consequences of inappropriate and irresponsible behavior are also outlined.

The standards of behavior Holy Family Junior School wishes to promote are:

- Respect for ourselves and others defined by good manners & courtesy, listening, politeness, respect for difference, conversational skills.

Pupils are expected to:

- to attend school regularly and punctually
- be well behaved at all times and be considerate of other children & adults.
- follow staff instructions.
- follow school rules.
- respect other's property.
- be kind and willing to assist others.
- accept respectful ways of resolving conflict and difficulties.
- ask permission to leave the classroom.
- take responsibility for his/her own work and do his/her best in class.
- wear the school uniform.
- safely store school bags and materials.

2. Whole school approach to promote positive behavior

Adults in the school community have a responsibility in supporting and promoting the Code and they (Staff, Parents, BoM etc) will endeavour to:

- Create positive Climate & Atmosphere.
 - Model Honesty, Courtesy, Kindness and Respect
 - Show appreciation and understanding of the needs of others
 - Do not discriminate under any of the 9 Grounds
 - Promote fair treatment of others
 - Encourage '*Kind hands, kind words & kind feet*'
- Parents specifically will endeavour to:
- respect and be mindful of School Policy re making appointments, where appropriate, to meet teachers.
 - Assist children with homework & ensure they have necessary school materials.

On enrolment parents are advised of The Code of Behaviour & Bí Cineálta Policies.

Pupils (with adult guidance)

- Pupils are involved in ongoing implementation of rules and are made aware of the rules.

3.Strategies for promoting positive Behaviour:

(...'the most effective methodology that teachers develop in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place' (Managing Challenging Behaviour, Guidelines for Teachers INTO 2004:5)

Incentives and Rewards:

A system of incentives and rewards is used to promote a positive classroom atmosphere and reward positive & appropriate behaviour we want repeated.

At the beginning of each year class teachers will discuss and teach the rules to the class. A rule a week may be taught from time to time on a whole school basis to promote certain behaviours. This enables staff and children to become familiar with and to understand the Code and so promote consistency of approach throughout the school. These rules will also be revised and re-taught regularly throughout the year by the class teacher.

An important part of successfully managing children's behaviour is to anticipate circumstances when problem behaviours could arise.

Consequences of Mis-behaviour

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 23, states that a school must outline 'The measures that may be taken if a student fails to observe the standards of behavior that the school has outlined'

In Holy Family Junior School we categorise mis-behaviour as follows: Minor, Serious, Major

- All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class Teacher/supervising teacher.

Examples of Serious misbehaviour:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Threats or physical hurt to another person and verbally abusive behaviour.
- Damage to property
- Theft

Examples of Major misbehaviour:

- Assault on a staff member or pupil
- Serious theft
- Serious damage to property
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member or pupil will be regarded as serious or major misbehaviour.

What happens when a child misbehaves?

In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of major misbehaviour, parents will be invited to meet the teacher and/or the Principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Should a major incident occur, or any incident which is so serious as to endanger the health or safety of another person, parents may be asked to remove their child from the school pending possible suspension.

Sanctions:

The use of sanctions or consequences should be characterised by certain features.

- It must be clear why the sanction is being applied.
- The consequence must relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.
- It must be made clear what changes in behaviour are required to avoid future sanctions.
- There should be a clear distinction between minor and major offences.
- It should be the behaviour rather than the person that is the focus.

Sanctions include the following:

- Reasoning with the pupil...discussion of choices
- Verbal reprimand, including advice/suggestion for improvement
- Temporary, supervised 'time out' (from peers)
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Referral to Senior Management or Principal
- Communication with parents
- Suspension (see below)
- Expulsion (see below)

Involving/ Communicating with Parents

'Parents should be kept fully informed from the outset of instances of serious mis-behaviour on the part of their children. It is better to involve parents at an early stage than as a last resort' (Circular 20/90)

Co-operation and open communication with parents is an important factor in encouraging positive behaviour in Holy Family Junior School.

Parents are encouraged to talk to the Class Teacher and/or Principal about any issue in a child's life, which may affect the child's behaviour, e.g. bereavement, illness, changes in the family unit etc.

When a pupil's behaviour is a cause of concern:

- Class Teacher, in the first instance, will inform parents. This is usually done verbally or a brief message on Class Dojo (for minor issues)
- Every effort must be made to resolve the issue/ mis-behaviour at Class level, with the class Teacher, or depending on the gravity of the issue, with the Principal. Should this fail and the mis-behaviour persist, the Principal, Class Teacher & Parent(s) arrange a further meeting(s) to resolve the issue.
- Depending on the issue, the child may be present for some or all of the meeting
- Individual Behaviour Plans/Contracts may be formulated and a teacher may act as mentor for individual pupils. The DE&S Guidelines on the Complaints procedure are available for parents.

Children with Special Needs:

- All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, in Holy Family Junior we also recognise that schools are required to take account of a pupil's age, developmental level, and any identified SEN or additional needs when applying sanctions.
- Where persistent emotional / behavioural difficulties present, initially the class teacher will evaluate the difficulties, supported by SET.
- The SET Team, Class Teacher, Principal will work closely with home, and strategies undertaken may be recorded and reviewed.
- Advice from the SENO and SESS may be sought where appropriate/ necessary.
- With parental consent, children who present with Cognitive/Emotional/Behavioural needs may be referred for further Assessment e.g Medical/ Psychological / Psychiatric etc,
 - Appropriate support and or Staff Training may be accessed through the SENO, SESS, HSE, NEPS etc.
 - SET personnel may facilitate & support class teachers in managing challenging behaviour.
 - Specialised behaviour plans may be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher, Learning Support/ Resource SET teacher and any other agencies involved.
 - NQT's may be mentored & supported by experienced Teachers.
 - Teachers are referred to 'Managing Challenging Behaviour- Guidelines for Teachers', INTO 2004 & other School Resources.
 - Pupils in the class/school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support in a supportive and safe way.
 - In the event of seriously violent or threatening behavior causing a risk to the safety of a pupil, other pupils, or staff, a temporary exclusion/suspension may be enforced while consultation with the SENO and/ or EWO takes place regarding appropriate resourcing and/or alternative placement.

5 A) Suspension and B) Expulsion Procedures.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000 stipulates that a 'Code of Behaviour shall specify.....the procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned' and the grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student' (Section 23 (2) c,d)

- Where necessary the BOM may consult competent Legal advice e.g. re seriously violent or threatening behavior, causing a risk to the safety of the pupil themselves, or other pupils or staff.

The Principal shall inform the Education Welfare Officer, by notice in writing, when a student is suspended from a recognised National School for a period of not less than 6 days (Sections 21(4) a)

DE&S Circular 20/90 states that '*a parent should be informed of their right to come to the school and be invited to do so in order to discuss the misbehaviour with the Principal Teacher/and/or the Class Teacher. This should always be done when the suspension of a pupil is being contemplated*' Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools Rule 130 Section 5 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

For repeated instances of Serious misbehaviour or a single incident of Major misbehaviour, where it is necessary to secure the safety of the pupils and/or staff and to ensure that order and discipline are maintained, a child may be suspended. Authority for suspension is delegated to the principal (normally three days but the Principal is authorised, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion), subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

In so far as is possible, before a suspension is considered other means of dealing with the behaviour would have been tried and parents made aware of the situation from previous meetings.

Where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information.

If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil *may* be suspended for a period.

The School will use fair procedures when suspending any pupil. Once the assessment of the facts confirm, that the misbehaviour warrants suspension, the school will observe the following procedures:

1. The school informs the parents of the complaint (by phone and/or writing) how it will be investigated and that it could result in suspension. Parents are invited to the school to meet with Principal and possibly the Chairperson, to discuss the intention to exclude.
2. Written records will be kept at all times
3. Parents & students may be given an opportunity to respond before a decision is made.
4. In the case of immediate suspension, an investigation occurs to establish the case.
5. The formal investigation should then immediately follow the imposition of the suspension.
6. All the conditions for the suspension apply to the immediate suspension. No suspension including an immediate suspension should be open-ended.
7. After a period of suspension the parents should bring the child back for re-admission
8. Parents will be notified and the arrangements made for the pupil to be collected in the case of an immediate suspension

Removal of Suspension (Re-instatement)

- Following or during a period of suspension, the child must express an intention to improve whilst the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the School Code of Behaviour, and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.
- The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a Behaviour Plan/ Contract for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Expulsion (Permanent exclusion)

Education Welfare Act 2000 '*...a student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty days following the receipt of notification under this section by an Educational Welfare Officer (Section 24 (4)). It is the right of the BOM to take.....'such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured'* (Section 24(5) in accordance with the Rule for National Schools Rule 130 Section 5

The Board of Management of a school has the authority to expel a student. Expulsion should be proportionate to the student's behaviour and will only be invoked in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take such significant steps as are open to it to address the misbehaviour, and will be satisfied that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour. There may be exceptional circumstances where a board forms the opinion that the student should be expelled for a first offence, e.g. actual violence or physical assault.

Decisions to expel will follow fair procedures including:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
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, including informing the Education Welfare Board of its opinion. (the student cannot be expelled before the passage of 20 days from the date that the NEWB receives this written notification)
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.

6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals:

Under Education Act 1998, Section 29, parents (or pupils who have reached 18 years) are entitled to appeal to the General Secretary of the DE&S against some decisions of the BOM including:

1. Permanent Exclusion from a school
2. Suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 days or longer in any one school year.

Accordingly, schools should advise parents of this right of appeal and associated time frame if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student (Circular 22/02)

- Parents/guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the BOM in relation to a suspension or expulsion by the Chairperson of BOM. Parents given a copy of Circular 22/02 and any related forms.
- The school will prepare a response if and when an appeal is being investigated by the DE&S (Section 12, Circular 22/02 Processing an Appeal)

6. Methods for recording of incidents of misbehavior

In class: Minor incidents: These are dealt with by class teacher who makes the decision re the need to record on a Class Incident Record, (Minor). These are kept on file in the classroom and discussed with the Principal.

If there are recurring/ongoing issues with an individual pupil, an individual pupil on-going record is kept by the Class Teacher, for discussion at PT meeting/SET meeting, and may be used to formulate Behaviour Plan which will be put on the pupil file.

In class: Serious/ Major Incidents: These are recorded (each one separately) in a more detailed Incident Record, outlining details of the date, those involved, nature of the incident recommendations and response taken. These are sent for the attention of the Principal and kept on file in the Office.

Yard Incidents:

Behaviour is recorded as above. Details are reported to class teacher and, if necessary, a more detailed report is written outlining details of the date, those involved, nature of the incident recommendations and response taken. These are reported for the attention of the Principal / Senior Management Team and kept on file in the Office.

7. Reference to other Policies

The following school policies have a bearing on the code of behaviour e.g.

- SPHE Plan
- Attendance Strategy
- Assessment Policy
- BÍCineálta
- Enrolment
- Record keeping
- Health & Safety
- Equality
- SET.

Towards successful implementation:

- Please refer to the Holy Family Junior School BÍ Cioneálta Polic.
- Positive Classroom management will create links between the SPHE programme and the Code of Behaviour.

- Successful implementation of this policy will require
 - Regular feedback from teachers at staff meetings.
 - Feedback from parents at Parent / Teacher meetings and at appointments with the school.
 - Observation of behaviour in the classroom, on corridors and on yard.
- There will be ongoing review of this policy and amendments will be included as necessary.
- This policy is available to all families Parents / Guardians
- A copy of the Policy will be given to the families of all children as they enrol in the school.

Success Criteria

The following are some practical indicators of the success of the policy

- Observation of positive behaviour in class rooms, playground and school environment
- Practices and procedures listed in this policy being consistently implemented by teachers and parents
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils

Roles and Responsibility

The following have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy.

- The BOM monitors success, feedback and implementation of the policy
- Teachers, parents, staff and pupils of Holy Family Junior School have responsibility for the implementation of this policy
- The BOM, Principal and teachers of Holy Family Junior School will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.

Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented from February, 12th 2026.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and amended at change of Board of Management and/or changes in Legislation.

Ratification & Communication

The policy was officially reviewed and ratified on 11.02.26.