

Holy Family Junior School



Code of Behaviour

Revised Policy

November 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION:

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School has prepared and made available a Code of Behaviour for its Pupils, Staff and Parents.

The Code of Behaviour details:

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach in promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe those standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

The Code of Behaviour of Holy Family Junior School has been developed in accordance with *'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools'*, National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

Positive behaviour is based on good relations between parents/guardians, child and school. In Holy Family Junior School, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with all members of our school community. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in Holy Family Junior School. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of positive behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for positive behaviour within the school premises. Special Needs Assistants and other members of Holy Family Junior School staff also play a very important role in promoting positive behaviour in our school.

Holy Family Junior School Code of Behaviour is the set of practices and procedures that together form our school's plan for helping students to engage in positive behaviour and learn well. The code of behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and

minimise unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school.

2. POLICY FORMULATION

In formulating this policy, the Board of Management completed the following steps;

- i. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of 'rules' with their classes and submit a list of pupils' suggestions to the Principal.
- ii. Parents and Staff were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
- iii. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed by the Board of Management and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.
- iv. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

3. AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The Code of Behaviour strives to ensure that the individuality of each child is respected and that individual differences are celebrated, acknowledging the right of each child to an environment in which they can safely learn and grow. The entire school community has a part to play in contributing to this environment. In Holy Family Junior School, we recognise that each member of the school community, staff, parents/guardians and children has the right to be treated with respect, therefore every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Positive techniques of motivation and encouragement will be utilised by staff, placing greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. School rules are kept to a minimum and are there to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all members of Holy Family Junior School.

In revising this policy, consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of Holy Family Junior School.

The aims are:

- Through the implementation of the Incredible Years Programme as a whole school approach to the management of behaviour issues, we seek to promote positive behaviours, emotional awareness and self-discipline in an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To 'catch the pupils being good' (Incredible Years)
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- To assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to ensure their co-operation in the application of these procedures
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school
- To assist newly qualified staff members in understanding our code of behaviour
- To support all teachers in the implementation of behavioural plans for children with additional needs

4. WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Education Welfare Act, Section 23, states that the code of behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school".

In Holy Family Junior School our aim is to promote positive behaviour, which will allow the school to function in an orderly and harmonious way. We aim to enhance the learning environment where every child can have the opportunity to make progress in all aspects of his/her development.

We recognise that a positive school ethos is based on the quality of relationships between staff and the ways in which pupils, staff and parents/guardians treat each other. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

Due regard will be given to the age and range of abilities in implementing the Code of Behaviour, with particular reference to the fact that Holy Family Junior School is a Junior School.

Using the Continuum of Support to address behaviour across the school

The following stages will be followed to ensure a whole school approach and response to the needs of the pupil, teacher and parents. This is also in line with NEPS and NCSE guidelines.

Stage 1 Whole class/General Classroom Structures and Supports

Personnel involved: Class Teacher (may involve SNA)

1. Foster Positive Relationships
 - Good Communication
 - Demonstrating to a student that they matter
2. Fostering a positive and safe classroom environment
3. Providing a supportive and differentiated learning environment
4. Good classroom organisation
5. Teaching Social and Emotional Skills and Strategies which promote the personal, emotional and behavioural competencies of the child (SPHE)
6. A systematic, consistent approach to responding to behaviour throughout the school, especially on the yard
7. Teacher attitudes and expectations

Stage 1 Additional Classroom Support that may be used and may involve the pupil, class teacher and parent

1. Observations of students' behaviour and attempting to identify triggers and needs i.e. is he looking for attention/ are there social skills needs/ have they a poor understanding of emotions
2. Look at patterns, time of day, environmental factors etc.

3. Communication with parent
4. Plan strategies e.g. what behaviours can be pre-empted and prevented; teach rule and check understanding, proximal praise, give lots of attention, star chart, visual cues etc.
6. Implement and review

Stage 2 School Support

Personnel involved: Pupil, Class Teacher, Parent, SNA, and Special Education Teacher

May include:

1. Identifying concerns e.g. shouting out in class, walking around classroom etc.
2. Continued communication with parents/guardians
3. Additional support from SNA/SET
4. Further information gathering e.g. ascertaining pupil's interests and strengths, frequency chart, etc.
5. Social skills group where targets are prioritised, incentives/ motivations are planned as part of a School Support Plan.
6. A variety of strategies/interventions e.g. reminder of rule/agreement, choice, distract, visual support, regulation breaks, preferred activities,
7. Implement and review

Stage 3 School Support Plus

Personnel involved: Pupil, Class Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Parent, Principal, Deputy Principal and other relevant professional e.g. NEPS, CAMHS etc.

In addition to the above this may also involve:

1. School Support Plus process. This usually involves more intensive and individualised supports to meet the identified needs of the individual student. This process builds on school support as outlined above and can include (when available) additional input from outside professionals (e.g. Primary Care, SCP, Assessment, NSCE support, NEPS etc.). This process usually involves:
 - a Identifying concerns e.g. shouting out in class, walking around classroom etc.
 - b Continued communication with parents/guardians
 - c Additional support from SNA/SET
 - d Further information gathering e.g. ascertaining pupil's interests and strengths, frequency chart, etc.
 - e Targets are prioritised, interventions planned and incentives/motivations are selected as part of a School Support Plan.
 - f A variety of strategies e.g. reminder of rule/agreement, choice, distract, visual support, regulation breaks, preferred activities,
 - g Implementation and review

Finally, the school's Social Personal and Health Education curriculum and the Incredible Years Programme are used to support the code of behaviour. These curricular areas aim to help our children develop communication skills, appropriate ways of interacting and behaving, encourage forgiveness, develop resilience, and promote conflict resolution skills. They also aim to foster children's self-esteem and to help children accommodate differences and develop citizenship. Parents/Guardians of newly enrolled children are informed about the curriculum and their part in supporting it at the induction meetings before their child starts school and also throughout the school year.

5. STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

5.1 PUPILS

At the beginning of each school year, the pupils are involved in drafting the classroom rules, keeping the key principles of the Incredible Years Programme in mind. As we are a Junior School, we strive to keep the school rules as clear and as meaningful as possible for our young pupils. Visual cues are used and referred to regularly.

Instructions for and expectations of pupils (generally and in classrooms):

- Show 5 (feet on the ground, hands on laps, eyes on teacher, mouth closed and ears listening) – this is reiterated at each assembly and on a daily basis in the classroom. This helps to maintain discipline and ensure uniformity of approach to positive behaviour management in the classroom
- A quiet hand is used when children want to make a request, ask/answer a question they put their hand up
- Be a good listener
- Concentrate
- Follow direction
- A strong ignore means not giving attention to the negative behaviour (when safe to do so) and instead trying to give positive attention to an alternative, desirable behaviour
- Use indoor voice
- Walk indoors
- Sharing is Caring
- Be kind

Instructions for and expectations of pupils (on the playground):

- Helpful hands
- Feet on the ground
- Use kind words
- Walk to your line
- Sharing is caring

Pupils are expected to behave in a safe way at all times. These expectations are further detailed below:

General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- behave in a safe manner at all times
- be well behaved and to show consideration for other children and adults
- show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings
- attend school on a regular basis and to be punctual
- do his/her best both in school and for homework.

Classroom Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- listen – to the teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- work – do their best
- value – school property and the belongings of fellow pupils.
- follow – the direction of his/her teacher
- obtain – his/her teacher's permission to leave the classroom
- respect – the teacher, other pupils and visitors to the classroom.

Playground Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

- play – safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous
- follow – the directions of the playground supervisor(s)
- remain – on school grounds at all times
- obtain – permission before re-entering the school building during break periods
- respect – the yard supervisor and fellow pupils
- avoid – swearing, fighting or name calling

Behaviour during School Outings/Activities/Transition times

Each pupil is expected to:

- follow – his/her teacher's directions at all times
- remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- behave – politely towards those they meet on such trips
- observe – the rules of general good behaviour
- walk – in the school corridors

5.2 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Holy Family Junior School recognises that, in line with our school ethos, parents/guardians work in partnership with staff to meet legitimate expectations with regard to positive behaviour and discipline. We recognise the importance of the support of parents/guardians in order to meet legitimate expectations with regard to good behaviour and discipline.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Ensure that the proper school uniform (labelled with the child's name) is worn.
- Ensure that their child/children are in school by 9.00 a.m. Children should also be collected from school on time.
- Complete the collection form and return to the school. Parents must inform the school when the child is being picked up by someone not included on this form.
- Always sign out/in (reception) a child when leaving/returning to the school outside normal school times
- Promote the healthy eating policy at the school by ensuring that their child brings a healthy lunch to school each day
- Send a note explaining the absence of a child
- Help children with homework and ensure it is completed
- Instil in their child/children at home the message that learning and good behaviour are conducive to a happy school life
- Ensure that your child/children have the necessary books and materials for school
- If a parent signs up for the school payment scheme for books/art and crafts etc., that the agreement will be honoured, and regular payments made
- Make teacher/principal aware of any changes in family circumstances if relevant to the child's well-being at school

- Familiarise themselves with and embrace the principles of the Incredible Years Programme
- Attend meetings if requested by the teacher or principal in relation to their child
- Strive to be courteous and calm in all dealings with school staff

Under no circumstances should a parent approach another child to talk about their behaviour whilst they are in the care of the school. If there is a problem, parents should always approach the class teacher or principal.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour he/she are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns.

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour parents will be consulted as part of the intervention process.

5.3 STAFF

In our school, our aim is to treat all children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation among staff, pupils, and parents and all are agreed that the focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour. The staff recognises that teachers are bound by the Code of Professional Conduct which may be accessed on www.teachingcouncil.ie. Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and Ancillary Staff will endeavour to treat pupils, parents and other members of staff with respect and courtesy.

As a whole school staff, we have implemented the Incredible Years Behaviour Management Programme in Holy Family Junior School.

The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other. The ways in which parents/guardians and teachers interact will provide students with a model of good working relationships.

Staff will endeavour to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and differentiated to meet the needs of all the pupils in his/her class.

Routines/Strategies used by school staff include:

- Catching the children being good
- Praise and Encouragement
- Incentives
- Celebrations
- Clear limits
- Classroom structure
- Non-verbal cues
- Positive verbal redirect
- Re-engagement strategies
- Empathy
- Attention and involvement
- Warning of consequences and reminders of expected behaviours
- Consequences (e.g. call parents)
- Reflection after an incident

5.4 BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School has a role to play in the maintenance of acceptable standards of behaviour in a school. The Board is consulted in the drafting/reviewing of the code of behaviour and is responsible for providing a safe and orderly environment for staff and pupils to work in.

The Board of Management, through on-going consultation, supports the staff in devising and upholding the behaviour code.

6. 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'.

The following positive strategies will be used throughout the school to promote good behaviour and to prevent misbehaviour

- Development of positive relationships
- Emotional Awareness and Emotional Literacy activities
- Sensory regulation breaks (whole class, small group or individual)
- Modelling of good behaviour
- Differentiation of curriculum
- Golden Time
- Proximity Praise
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A whole class reward system using /stars/stamps/tokens
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- In a structured way, children should be taught how to praise/complement each other
- Strong ignore
- Reward system in class for immediate response to positive behaviour
- PE equipment will be available during playtime in the yard

In line with the principles of the IY programme, rewards, once given, are not taken away as punishment.

7. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Despite the best efforts of schools, inappropriate behaviour happens. Even minor breaches of the code of behaviour can be disruptive, particularly if they are persistent. Serious misbehaviour can have damaging and long-lasting effects including disruption of the student's own learning and the learning of others. It can cause distress and anxiety or even pose a threat to the safety of students and teachers. Our policy is to intervene early and positively when student behaviour does not meet the standards expected in the school.

Early intervention can bring about a change in behaviour by:

- Connecting with the child
- Encouraging regular sensory regulation breaks or engaging in these breaks with the child
- helping students to learn that they are in control and have choices.
- giving them space and opportunities to self-regulate and learn how to calm down and reflect on bad choices
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others, and supports them in finding solutions
- helping students to develop a positive self-perception by understanding that everybody forgets the rules sometimes but that our behaviour can hurt others (creating a safe environment and separating the child from the behaviour)
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed. Such courses of action should always contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances.

Level 1:Behaviours

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and general school environment. Some examples are listed below. Please note this list is not exhaustive

- Running in/around the classroom, corridors
- Shouting out in the classroom
- Using inappropriate language
- Not doing what the school staff ask

Level 1 interventions:

Supportive interventions used in response to incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the classroom include:

- Connection with child and reminding them that they may have forgotten a rule, but they can make a good choice
- reminding the pupil of expected behaviours(reflection)
- redirecting
- re-engagement strategies
- verbal and non-verbal cues
- discussion and explanation of consequences
- giving pupils the opportunity to make the right choice
- distraction/redirection e.g. carrying out a useful task in the school
- referral to Principal
- communication with parents/guardians, either oral or written

Note: Denying a student access to a particular part of the curriculum as a general sanction would not be appropriate.

Supportive Strategies/Interventions to address misbehaviour on the yard

- Monitoring of target children
- Distraction –IY strategy
- Verbal reminder of making the right choice
- Walk with adult for two minutes
- Send to the Principal’s office
- The adults on yard duty will deal with issues arising in the yard and will inform the class teacher
- Communicate with parents

Level 2: Behaviours

Incidents of Serious Inappropriate Misbehaviour

When behaviours seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of students and staff further supportive/disciplinary actions may be necessary.

Some examples of such serious misbehaviour are listed below. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- hitting another pupil
- hitting a staff member
- throwing objects/missiles
- leaving the school yard
- blatant verbal abuse
- persistent shouting/screaming
- biting
- punching
- persistent defiance.

- Repeated incidents of Level 1 behaviours.

Level 2 Interventions

Level 2 Disciplinary action in the above cases may include:

- temporarily remove a student from peers/the classroom to an alternative supervised location
- Parental contact/discussion which may result in child going home with parent to emotionally regulate
- Suspension from 1-5 days depending on severity/frequency of behaviour.

Level 2 Supportive interventions used in response to incidents of serious inappropriate behaviour may include:

- No talking (quiet environment)
- Engagement with preferred activity to promote regulation
- Sensory regulation activities
- Filling out of serious incident form by staff who were present, including reflection re identification of triggers and planning interventions that may address same
- Team meeting to discuss and devise appropriate follow up actions designed to reduce incidents of serious behaviours going forward.
- An individual tailored schedule may be drawn up in an effort to reduce incidences of behaviours of concern. This may involve additional targeted adult support.
- A care plan (behaviour) may be drawn up to endeavour to have a consistent approach to the management of incidents of behaviours of concern.
- Team meeting to review and amend existing care plan (behaviour)/individual plans if serious behaviour is ongoing.
- Communication/Collaboration with parents re the above
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as NEPS, HSE Community Services, CAMHS and NCSE

Level 3 Behaviours

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal wellbeing of the pupils and staff in the school.

They present a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. See below for more. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of level 2 behaviours which have not been modified by interventions,
- When the students' behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- When the students continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- When the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

Behaviours at this level may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend on the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific information about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document. Level 3 responses:

- Suspension from school for one to five days
This response may occur with the first instance of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension, where the authority to do so has been delegated by the Board of Management in writing.
- Suspension 5-10 days
This response will occur with repeated incidents of level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management
- Expulsion
Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled

8. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

8.1 SUSPENSION

- **Definition of Suspension:**

'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures when proposing to suspend or exclude students. **All sanctions should contain a degree of flexibility to take account of individual circumstances.** Before any decision is made to suspend a student there are many considerations that the school must take into account.

- The nature and seriousness of the behaviour
- The context of the behaviour
- The impact of the behaviour
- The interventions tried to date
- Whether suspension is a proportionate response.
- The possible impact of suspension.

Section 11: Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of *Holy Family Junior School* has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an 'Immediate Suspension' to the Principal Teacher. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

Procedures in Respect of Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply;

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

The Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed
- the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension which can be imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours may/can incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- When the student's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other students
- When the student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- When the student is responsible for serious damage to property

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for an automatic suspension; For example: A serious physical/verbal assault on a member of staff/pupil/visitor, Serious and deliberate damage to property and/or theft of items of value.

This is not an exhaustive list. These are only some examples.

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific Behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- the reasons for the suspension
- any study programme to be followed

- details of a meeting where the arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be discussed.

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- the circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

8.2 EXPULSION

- ***Definition of Expulsion:***
- *'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.'*

Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and one that should only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable misbehaviour. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards any person will be regarded as extreme or unacceptable misbehaviour, depending on the circumstances.

The strategies adopted by the school for Suspension (see above) may also be used when considering expulsion. If the school are satisfied that they have exhausted all these strategies, and that the pupil's behaviour is still deemed to be unacceptable, then that pupil shall be expelled.

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

The grounds for expulsion are similar to those for suspension except in their degree of seriousness and persistence. The school must also have tried a number of other interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

Expulsion for a First offence.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a pupil should be expelled for a first offence. These may include:

- A serious physical/verbal assault on a member of staff/pupil/visitor,
- Serious and deliberate damage to property and/or theft of items of value

In the instances of an expulsion for a first offence, the procedures for expulsion will be applied – see below for details

Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond
- The Principal (or BOM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ensure that parent(s)/guardians 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) recommendations and the holding of a hearing

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing

- as to the date, location and time of the hearing
- of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- that they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- the meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- the principal (or BOM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- the parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose

Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer

- Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

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.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision-making process.

Parents have a right to appeal a decision to expel under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be informed accordingly of this option

9. NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23(2)(e) states that the code of behaviour must specify "the procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school". Section 18 stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. Significant absences caused by ill health should be certified.

Holy Family Junior School policy in relation to explanation of pupil absences is that parents/guardians will send in a note, enter the note on Aladdin or ring the office informing teachers of their child's absence from school and the reason for this absence.

The school will inform the Educational Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more or when the child (aged 6 or more) has missed 20 or more days in a school year.

Holy Family Junior School strives at all times to encourage maximum school attendance in all pupils by:

- Creating a stimulating and attractive school environment
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance
- Planning for improved Attendance and Retention via the DEIS plan
- Regular communication between HSCL and class teachers whenever there are concerns re attendance/absences
- There are regular attendance meetings, HSCL teachers, principal/deputy principal.
- Adapting curriculum content and methodologies to maximise relevance to pupils
- Making parents aware of the terms of the Education Welfare Act and its implications.
- Implementing support for all/some/few in the area of attendance (DEIS plan)
- Running attendance initiatives during the school year.

10. RECORDS OF INDIVIDUAL PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

Records may include

- Teachers' records : daily records containing observations to identify behaviours, triggers, evidence of improved behaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parents/guardians or referral to other agencies
- Frequency recording e.g. time of day when interruptions took place, numbers of interruptions etc.
- Serious Incident Forms. Staff may collaborate with the support team to fill out a serious incident form when appropriate. This will involve writing an account of the incident, identifying triggers and follow up actions/interventions that aim to reduce the frequency of the behaviour. Serious incident forms are password protected and stored in the Health and Safety Folder on the server

Playground Records

- Minor accidents are logged in the folders located at all first aid stations
- Serious accident/incident reports will be password protected and stored in the Health and Safety folder on the server.

Records stored in the Principal Office

- A copy of all care plans (behaviour) will be kept in the students file in a locked cabinet in the Principal's Office
- A record of serious incidents will be password protected and stored on the server in the Serious Incident Forms folder in the Health and Safety file.
- Any sanctions imposed and the reasons they were imposed.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988, the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003, and the schools Data Protection Policy.

11. REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

Other school policies that have a bearing on the code of behaviour are:

- SPHE Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Data Protection and Record Keeping Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Special Educational Needs Policy

- Homework Policy
- Parental Involvement Policy

12. SUCCESS CRITERIA

Practical indicators of the success of this policy we aspire to are:

- A happy, safe and productive school environment
- A palpable sense of order and calmness
- Consistent implementation of the policy and acceptance of the principles of the Incredible Years by all members of the school community
- Positive feedback from pupils, parents and staff

13. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School **has its own Anti-Bullying Policy – in full compliance with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***, which were published by the Department of Education & Skills in September 2013. The Code of Conduct Policy works in tandem with this.

14. POLICY ADOPTION

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

15. COMMUNICATION

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and

provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

15. IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

16. POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School at its meeting held on

Signed: *Allen Flynn*

Date: **9th January 2025**

Chairperson, Board of Management

REFERENCES

Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 Section 23(1 -5), 24 (1-5)

Education Act, 1998 Section 15 (2(d))

Guidelines for Developing School Codes of Behaviour (National Education Welfare Board)

The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013

Template provided by Dioceses of Kerry, Killaloe and Limerick (November 2022)

Circular 22/02 Appeals Procedures under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998. (DES website)
Deals with appeals under the following headings:

(1) Permanent exclusion from a school

(2) Suspension

(3) Refusal to enrol

Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes

INTO (2004) Managing Challenging Behaviour: Guidelines for Teachers

INTO (2006) Towards Positive Behaviour in Primary Schools

The Principal's Legal Handbook Oliver Mahon B.L. IVEA 2002 Ch. 2 School

Discipline

How to promote Social and Emotional Competence, A Teacher's Guide Carolyn Webster Stratton 1999

Working towards a Whole School Policy on Self-Esteem and Positive Behaviour. Jenny Mosley. Positive Press 2001

Dignity in the Workplace. HFJS Policy Document 2013