



**Holy Family Senior School,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.**

Code of Behaviour

Mission Statement of Holy Family Senior School

Holy Family Senior School aims to educate children for life. In preparing our children to cope with an ever-changing world, the school has devised a code of behaviour that underpins the task achieving the highest possible level of academic excellence. Holy Family Senior School places great emphasis on the fact that school should be a pleasant environment in which learning can take place. Education in the Holy Family Senior School is seen as the development of the whole person. The school sees education as providing for the emotional, social, sexual, physical and spiritual development of the children. When a child finishes in the Holy Family Senior School he/she will know *“What s/he is good at”* and where his/her talents lie. The emphasis will be on the positive rather than the negative. The school will pursue excellence in all its forms.

A high standard of behaviour is expected from the children in order to maintain a Christian ethos where everyone is respected regardless of background, creed or race. The children will be reminded of the school motto **“ Fáilte, Fo gh lai m, Fás ”** The ethos of The Holy Family Senior School can be summed up in two simple rules

- ***I will try my best.***
- ***I will always have good manners.***

Ethos

The Holy Family School is a Catholic School. We welcome all faiths and all beliefs. No pupil should feel under any pressure to follow any set of beliefs. The school resulted from the amalgamation of St. Paul’s School, The Sacred Heart School and Scoil Mhuire. We wish to follow the Spirit of Edmund Rice and Nano Nagle.

Each day will begin and end with a prayer. Prayers will be part of the ethos of The Holy Family S.S. Religious education is an integral part of the life of the school. Parents have a key role to play in the religious formation of their children. They are asked to follow the Religion programme from the child’s book, and to help with the Religion workbook when it is sent home.

The pupils receive Confirmation when they are in Sixth Class. The preparation of the children for sacraments is a shared responsibility for pupils, teachers, parents and the parish.

On certain occasions throughout the school year, the children may participate in prayer services or a class mass.

A Positive Approach

- Every effort is made by all staff at Holy Family Senior School to adopt a positive approach to behaviour and discipline within the school. Teachers use positive techniques of motivation and encouragement
- The rules of the school are kept to a minimum and are positively stated

Responsibility of Adults

The adults encountered by the pupils at Holy Family Senior 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 pupils. In our school we treat all our children with respect and dignity. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation among staff, pupils and parents and all are agreed that the focus is primarily on the promotion and recognition of positive behaviour.

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
- Discourage physical aggression and encourage never say anything, never do anything to hurt others policy

The role of the parents is paramount. Their support is crucial in enabling the staff of Holy Family to implement the code of behaviour successfully

Rights

- Teachers have the right to be allowed teach, and to receive respect and good behaviour from their pupils
- Pupils have the right to be involved in the learning process in an environment that is free from disruption

Aims of the code

- To create a positive learning environment that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- To teach each child about how precious they are
- To teach the children to value their health; physical, mental, emotional and spiritual
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and love for others

- To foster respect for authority
- To develop a sense of self-discipline and the ability to make reasoned judgements and choices

School Life

Respect and Courtesy

- All pupils are expected to treat staff, their fellow pupils and visitors with respect and courtesy at all times. The use of bad language and any form of bullying or racial abuse are unacceptable.

Punctuality

- The official opening time is 9.00 a.m. School closes at 2.40 p.m.

Attendance

- Each child, to whom the School Attendance Act applies (that is, those between the ages of 6 and 16) is obliged by law to attend school every day on which the school is in operation unless there is a reasonable excuse for not attending. Under [The Education \(Welfare\) Act 2000](#) the school is obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board when a child has been absent for 20 days or more
- Every absence of a child must be accounted for. This should be done through Aladdin Connect or by writing a note in the homework journal. If a child wishes to leave school early a note must be given to the class teacher

School Property and the School Environment

- Pupils must respect all school property and keep the school environment litter free

School Traffic Warden

- The children should respect and follow the directions of the school warden at all time

Behaviour in the Classroom/School Building

We expect the children to show respect for themselves, for others and for the school building.

- Any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others is unacceptable.
- Children should be litter conscious. They should leave their desks and surrounds in a tidy condition at the end of the day
- Children should never run inside the building
- Children should walk on the left hand side of the corridors

Behaviour Outside the Classroom

- Pupils must not behave in any way which endangers themselves or others
- Any instructions or directions given by the supervisory adults must be complied with
- Children must remain in their designated areas
- At the end of the break the teacher will blow the whistle – all pupils will freeze in their places until the teacher blows the whistle for the second time – all pupils will then line up in an orderly manner and make their way to their classrooms.

Break Times

- Pupils are not allowed to remain indoors during play times.
- Pupils are forbidden to re-enter the building during a break without the permission of a teacher.
- No child may leave the school premises during the breaks unless the parent has signed a special indemnity form to this effect
- Lunches are eaten in the class before the children go to the yard. In the interest of safety, glass bottles are forbidden. When the weather is unsuitable, the children will remain indoors and the children must stay in their seats during the break
- Healthy eating is encouraged in Holy Family Senior School - please refer to our Healthy Eating Policy
- Holy Family Senior School is a strictly no “Energy Drinks” or Highly Caffeinated Drinks area.

Staff, parents and students are not permitted to possess or consume these drinks on the premises during school activities or on school tours. These drinks include, but are not limited to: Red Bull, Prime, Monster and other drinks that are extremely high in caffeine content.

Homework

Please refer to our Homework Policy

Dress Code

- The school crested tracksuit is mandatory, formal uniform is optional
- Branded tracksuits are not allowed
- The wearing of jewellery is permitted and not confined to gender. Nose studs, large earrings and exposed chains are not permitted for obvious safety reasons.

School Books

- Holy Family Senior School operates a book rental scheme
- Books purchased under the rental scheme must be returned at the end of each school year.

Technology/Devices

- Pupils are not permitted to use or display their phones and/or devices during school time
- For additional information please refer to our Acceptable Usage Policy

Attendance

Procedures for notification of pupil absences from school:

[The Education Welfare Act, 2000](#) stipulates that parents must notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for this absence. This can be done via our Aladdin Connect system or by writing a note in the child's homework journal.

Each child, to whom the School Attendance Act applies (that is, those between the ages of 6 and 16) is obliged by law to attend school every day on which the school is in operation unless there is a reasonable excuse for not attending. Under The Education Welfare Act 2000 the school is obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board when a child has been absent for 20 days or more.

School Trips

Pupils may leave the school at different times during the year e.g. trips to the church, town park, library. These trips may happen spontaneously during the school day without any notice. Parents who wish that their children should not attend these outings must inform the school in writing.

Consent

The school records different school events that take place during the year. Photos, videos etc may be used on the school website, social media, local media etc. Consent for this is sought annually through our Aladdin Connect System or in writing if a parent is not registered on Aladdin Connect.

School Related Activities

There are many activities that take place in the Holy Family Senior School. These activities enhance the spirit of the school. Cumann na mBunscol games, interclass leagues, soccer leagues, school choir, school panto, basketball club, tin whistle club, homework club, rugby, summer camps, rounders, table tennis, chess, spikeball, athletics and many more all play a very important part in the school's life. These activities help to develop each pupil's potential and help them to find what they are good at.

Committees

Holy Family Senior School has a *Green School* committee that aims to educate the children about environmental issues. We have an *Amber Flag* Committee that promotes mental health and an *Active Schools* committee for the promotion of good physical health. There is a *Students' Council* that meets regularly to discuss matters that are important to the pupils in the school.

Rewarding Good Behaviour

Reward systems are more likely to motivate students when:

- they are meaningful to the individual student or group
- the student understands what the reward is given for
- they acknowledge behaviour that is valued and wanted
- they are closely linked in time to that specific behaviour
- they are based on a knowledge of the individual and are sensitive to personal, developmental and cultural factors
- they are given for effort and not only for achievement
- they are used consistently and by all staff
- they are used in an inclusive way

Good behaviour is rewarded in Holy Family Senior School through:

- Communication with parents
- Oral and written praise
- Work displayed
- Special mention at assemblies/over intercom
- Homework pass
- Visit to the Principal for commendation
- Golden Time

Unacceptable Behaviour

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: Minor, Serious and Gross. All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child's behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour could include*:

- Not following instructions
- Disrespectful language towards school staff or other children

Examples of serious misbehaviour could include*:

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment and discrimination)

- Fighting
 - Including the organizing of fights, either verbally, written or through social media.
- Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning
- Damaging school property
- Theft
- Leaving school/school activities without permission
- Mobile phone turned on
- Breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy
- Not wearing school uniform
- Possession of "High-Caffeine" or "Energy" drinks.

Examples of gross misbehaviour could include*:

- Assault on a teacher or pupil
- Serious Theft
- Serious bullying
- Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or Vapes.
- Breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy

*These lists are not exhaustive

Sanctions

The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

- helping students to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
- helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction may also:

- reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

- prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
- keep the student, or other students or adults, safe

The following steps will be taken when a child behaves inappropriately. The list is by no means exhaustive. Teachers may put in place alternative measures bearing in mind the circumstances involved. The aim of any sanction is to prevent the behaviour occurring again and if necessary to help the pupil devise strategies for this.

- Reasoning with pupil
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class
- Prescribing extra work/ writing out the story of what happened
- Loss of privileges
- Detention during break or after school
- In School Suspension
- Communication with parents
- Referral to Principal
- Principal communicating with parents Holy Family Senior School – 20480F
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)

Usually sanctions will relate as closely as possible to the behaviour.

Suspension

Suspension shall be defined as: “requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days”

The board of management has the authority to suspend a student. In this school, the authority has been formally delegated to the Principal.

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension. Generally, however other interventions, as outlined above will have been tried.

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 or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may 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 misbehavior.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehavior, 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. 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. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with the pupil, 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. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools, the [Education Welfare Act 2000](#) and the [NEWB guidelines 2008](#). Suspension must also be notified to parents in writing.

Where the parents decline the offer of meeting the school authorities, the written notification is to be regarded as the notification of suspension.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, 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.

Grounds for suspension continued:

The decision to suspend a student will be taken on such grounds as the following:

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

The school management is aware of the risks associated with suspension, such as an increased sense of alienation from school which could lead to a cycle of behavioural and academic problems. School management has been, and will continue to be proactive in avoidance of suspension of any student.

Whilst suspended, the student shall continue to retain a place in the school.

Suspension Procedures:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that warrants a suspension, the school shall:

Inform the student and their Parent(s) about the complaint. Parents may be informed by phone or in written format. The obvious advantage of the written format is that it presents a formal and permanent record. Written notification will include:

- ❖ The period of suspension and the beginning and end date of suspension.
- ❖ The reasons for the suspension.
- ❖ Arrangements for return to the school (parents will be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
- ❖ The provision of an appeal to the Board of Management.

- ❖ The right to appeal to the secretary general of the Department of Education and Science.
Allow Parents and child the opportunity to respond. A meeting shall be arranged with the Parents. Should the Parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal shall write, advising of the gravity of the matter and the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the negative behaviour. These invitations shall be recorded. In case of immediate suspension, parents will be immediately notified, and arrangement will be made with them regarding collection of the child. The school will always have a regard to its duty of the care for the child.

The period of suspension

A suspension will last one, two or three days. A student will not be suspended in excess of three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a longer suspension is needed, in order to achieve a particular objective. This will require Board of Management approval.

The Board of Management will place a ceiling of ten days on any once suspension, in these exceptional circumstances.

Section 29 appeal.

Where the total number of days, for which the student is suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days, the parents may appeal the decision under section 29 their right to appeal, and will be given information about how to appeal.

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan

It is envisaged that suspension be part of an agreed plan to address the students' behaviour. Suspension shall allow:

- The school to set behavioural goals for the students.
- The school staff to plan for interventions.
- The school to impress upon parents and student the seriousness of their behaviour.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason, or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 20 of the Education Act 1998.

Reintegrating the student

A member of staff will be appointed to provide support to the student during the reintegration process.

The Holy Family Senior School will follow fair procedures in the event that it is proposing to suspend or expel a student. These procedures have two essential components

- The right to be heard
- The right to impartiality

These fair procedures apply to:

- The investigation of alleged misbehaviour
- The process of decision making

In exceptional circumstances, the principal and chairperson of the B.O.M. may extend a 3 day suspension to a 5 day period without full B.O.M. sanction (e.g. if the B.O.M. is unable to convene at short notice).

The B.O.M. will normally place a ceiling of 10 days on a single suspension. Any extension of this will be considered as another suspension and due procedures should be followed. Where a period of suspension exceeds 20 days, the parents of the child have the right to appeal this under section 29 of the Education Act. A section 29 appeal can be made by contacting the Secretary General of DES. An application form for this procedure can be downloaded from the DES website.

Removal of Suspension

Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/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 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 for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class. The school will make every effort to help the student reintegrate into school life – academically and socially. The student will be given every opportunity and support for a fresh start.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools, the [Education \(Welfare\) Act 2000](#) and the [NEWB \(Tusla\) Guidelines 2008](#). The grounds for expulsion will be similar to the grounds for suspension. However, it will only be considered when all other interventions have been exhausted.

Grounds for Expulsion may include:

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

Before expulsion is considered Holy Family Senior School will have tried other interventions and will have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour.

Procedures in respect of expulsion

Expulsion

The Board of Management reserves the authority to expel a student.

Expulsion will be a proportionate response to a student's behaviour and will be only taken in response to extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of the student including as appropriate

- Meeting the parents and the student to try to find ways to help the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the student understands the consequences of their behaviour if it should persist.
- Ensuring that all other options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies e.g. N.E.P.S., N.C.S.E., H.S.E. community services N.B.S.S.

Grounds for expulsion

A proposal to expel a student will involve 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 presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property

Expulsion for a first offence

In extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Management may form the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The following such behaviour may warrant this sanction:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supply of illegal drugs to another student or students
- Sexual assault

Procedure in respect of expulsion

The following steps will preface any expulsion.

1. Preliminary assessment of the facts.

2. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.

In investigating an incident, the Principal shall

- Inform the Parents and student about the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion. This shall be in written format.
- Give parents and the student the opportunity to respond to the complaint.

Where expulsion may result from the investigation a meeting with the student and parents is essential. If they refuse to attend a meeting, the principal shall write to them advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a rescheduled meeting and failing that, the duty of school authorities to make a decision to respond to this inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation to parents and their response.

3. A recommendation by the Principal to the Board of Management.

Where the Principal forms a view, based on investigation of the alleged misbehaviour that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal, shall make a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion. The Principal shall:

- Inform the Parents that the Board of Management has been asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that the Parents have records of the allegations against the student, the investigation, and written notice of the grounds on which the Board is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the records as listed above.
- Notify the Parents of the date of the hearing and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the Parents that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- Ensure that the Parents have sufficient notice of the hearing.

4. Consideration by the Board of Management of Principals recommendation and holding of a hearing.

The board shall review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board shall undertake its own review of all documentation and circumstances of the case. No party with direct involvement in the circumstances of the case shall be part of the Board's deliberations.

The Board, if satisfied as outlined above, shall hold a hearing. At the hearing, both Principal and parents shall put their case in each other's presence. The board shall be and shall be seen to be impartial. Parents may wish to be accompanied to this meeting. The Board shall facilitate this.

5. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.

Having heard from both parties, the Board shall decide whether expulsion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board decides that expulsion is the appropriate sanction, the Board shall notify the Education welfare officer in writing, giving reasons for its opinion. The student shall not be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this notification, in line with the Education Welfare Act 2000, s24 (1)

6. Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.

The Education officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend.

The purpose of these consultations is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. Pending these consultations, the board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured, in accordance with Educational Welfare Act 2000, s24 (5). The board may consider it appropriate to suspend the student during this time. Suspension shall be considered where there is a likelihood 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 students or staff.

7. 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 these student be expelled, the Board of Management shall formally confirm the decision to expel. Parents shall be notified immediately. Parents shall be informed of the right to an appeal and be supplied with a standard form on which to lodge this appeal. A formal record shall be kept of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

The Board of Management recognises that a Parent may appeal a decision to expel the student to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. (Education Act 1998, section 290). An appeal may also be brought on behalf of the student by the Education Welfare Officer.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year. Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student. (See Circular 22/02)

Ratification of Policy

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on: _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

