



HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL
CODE OF BEHAVIOUR & DISCIPLINE

This section together with the section General Information and Routines covers the full details of School Rules and Routines. Additions/Revisions are issued from time to time.

1. In devising the code, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption free environment.
2. Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. The code offers a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by teachers. The encouragement of high standards of behaviour and discipline is a shared responsibility between parents and teachers.
3. Any form of discrimination/victimization/harassment/racism will not be tolerated. Ref: Equal Status Act 2000-2004
4. The school, since its establishment in 1982, has striven to develop a high level of professionalism among its staff and to encourage the development of self-esteem on the part of the pupils with the emphasis being on motivation to maintain appropriate behaviour.
5. There is a consensus among the staff on the value of positive reinforcement both in the area of academic achievement and good behaviour, while at the same time pupils are helped to realise that undesirable behaviour merits appropriate sanctions. The greater emphasis is placed on the value of praise and encouragement with the aim of developing in the pupil an internalised self-discipline.
6. Parents are encouraged to liaise with the class teacher (see No.29, General Information and Routines). Department of Education & Science Policy documents outlining the content of the Revised Curriculum will be issued from time to time or will be displayed on school noticeboards.
7. It is the firmly held belief of the school Principal and Teachers that a well-planned and pleasant school environment has a beneficial effect on all areas of pupil behaviour, social training, and achievement. Towards this end a high degree of careful planning has been utilised in the creation of the school environment. Pupils are expected to show respect for the environment and parents are expected to encourage by example the development of this respect (e.g. use of footpaths, use of specified crossing points, responsible parking, use of designated entrances and exits).

8. It is to be noted that if it is necessary to take pre-school children onto the school environs, such children must be kept under parental control at all times, as should the school-going child when released to parents by the class teacher. (See also 8 (j) under Specifics of Behaviour).

The Board of Management cannot accept any responsibility for pre-school children at any time. School-going children are also the responsibility of parents/guardians before the designated arrival times: 8.50 am and after the designated dismissal times: 1.30 pm and 2.30 pm respectively.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management has a role to play in maintaining a good standard of behaviour. It will act to support the principal and staff in the application of a fair *Code of Behaviour and Discipline* in the school. The Board of Management authorizes the principal to suspend a pupil from school for a maximum of 3 school days, for gross misbehaviour. A special decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorize a further period of exclusion (*Rule 130 for National Schools*)

ROLE OF PRINCIPAL

The Principal has a responsibility to ensure that all children are provided with an environment and atmosphere within the school environs conducive to intellectual, social, emotional, moral and spiritual development. To this end the Principal will encourage an atmosphere where staff members can educate the children without disruption and interference that hinder and mitigate against the common good. In the exercising of this duty of care the Principal will recognize the value of, and will promote, a high standard of behaviour that is conducive to a positive working environment.

ROLE OF STAFF

All staff consider themselves responsible for the children in their care during school hours and will respond promptly, firmly and fairly to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The staff totally respect and value each individual child. All of their interactions with the children are based on respect and their desire that the children in their day to day care have every opportunity to benefit to their maximum from the education offered in the school. Within his/her own classroom the individual teacher retains the flexibility to manage the organization, learning environment and discipline of his/her classroom, while being conscious of the overall framework provided in the *School Policy on Behaviour & Discipline Document*.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians of children enrolled in school are equally concerned that the best educational opportunity is available to their children. Parents/Guardians are asked and expected to be supportive of the school staff/personnel so as to ensure the effective implementation of *Our Code of School Behaviour* in the best interest of each pupil in the school.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR IMPLEMENTED BY TEACHERS VIA:

1. Pupils' efforts and good behaviour are acknowledged and praise is given where deserved.
2. Work is praised.
3. Some teachers operate a Rewards/Star System/Pupil of the Week etc.
4. Pupils may be sent next door/office to show their efforts.
5. Verbal commendation in the classroom in front of fellow students.
6. Parents may be informed of the effort through the child's homework notebook or a note home.

The following programmes "Walk Tall", Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE), "Stay Safe", Relationship & Sexuality Education (RSE), "Rainbows" are implemented and are resources for the provision of positive self-esteem, good behaviour and coping skills.

SPECIFICS OF BEHAVIOUR

In addition to the social training involved, school rules are designed for the safety of the children.

- (a) Pupils are taught respect for self and the rights of others, (a key element of our Anti-Bullying Code) respect for property, good manners, respect for authority. Pupils are expected to use respectful ways of resolving difficulties and conflict. They are also encouraged to be tolerant and forgiving.
- (b) Pupils are expected at all times to show respect, courtesy, obedience and truthfulness to school Principal, Teachers, School Secretary, Special Needs Assistants and all Ancillary Staff.
- (c) Pupils are expected to assemble and exit from the school in an orderly manner and to use **only the entry and exit points as designated by the school Principal and Teachers** (See Notices at relevant entry/exit points). With regard to above, parents are requested not to seek exceptions in respect of individual children.
- (d) **At 8.50 am children should assemble at designated area and remain there until** instructed to proceed to classroom by the Class Teacher/Teacher-in-Charge.
- (e) **Pupils must not enter classrooms before the attendance of the Teacher-in-Charge** or until instructed to do so by the Principal or by a member of the teaching staff.
- (f) Pupils should attend school punctually at 8.50 am. An explanatory note should be provided to explain late arrival. All absences should be explained by a **note** to the class teacher. (For brief absences, pupils bring a note on return. For anticipated longer absences, by sending a note to the school on the first day of absence). **Please do not telephone the school in this regard, as such calls are very wasteful of administrative time.**
- (g) If, during bad weather, for compassionate reasons, the pupils are allowed indoors on arrival, it is on the strict understanding that, when instructed to enter the classroom, they remain seated at all times.
- (h) The same rule applies when the pupils are allowed to remain indoors at lunchtime during bad weather.
- (i) Pupils must use footpaths at all times and are not allowed to take shortcuts through car-park, shrubbed or grassed areas. Parents should ensure that good example is given in this regard.
- (j) The steps leading to the smaller playground are out of bounds to **all** pupils except when accompanied by an adult. **Parents should ensure that pre-school children are kept away from this area.**

- (k) Parents using the Forest Dale entrance are particularly requested to exercise control specifically in not allowing their children to interfere with the Senior School Commemorative Garden or to become a source of distraction to Senior School classes in operation.
- (l) Pupils are not permitted to run in classrooms or on corridors.
- (m) Pupils' behaviour must be such as not to interfere with or distract the work of others.
- (n) **All forms of aggressive behaviour and/or bullying are unacceptable.** Because of its effect on the atmosphere of the school and with regard to the rights of all pupils to come to school without fear of intimidation. Parents should ensure children are not involved in **gangs** or in bullying other children. This is further explored in the section Anti Bullying Code & Support Programmes.
- (o) Playground games which are likely to present a danger to others are not allowed.
- (p) Wilful damage to school property or property of others will be treated as serious misbehaviour.
- (q) **Pupils are not permitted in the school grounds after school hours** except for the purposes of attending extra curricular activities. **Please emphasise this rule to your children.** It will be normal policy to notify parents with regard to children found in breach of this rule.
- (r) **During school hours, pupils are never allowed leave school grounds without the permission of the principal and must be accompanied by parent/guardian or teacher.**

SANCTIONS

The general standard of behaviour/discipline of the vast majority of pupils is very high and reflects great credit on parents. However, as with most large groups, there will be some who, for a variety of reasons, will disrupt the atmosphere of the school, impede their own progress or that of others and, consequently, sanctions must form a necessary part of school procedures.

There are also isolated incidents of apparent encouragement on the part of a small number of parents to have their child disregard normal rules and routines. The Board of Management would emphasise that all pupils attending the school must abide by the Code of Discipline of the school (Section 20 Education Welfare Act 2000).

The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. This list may be revised from time to time at the professional discretion of the school Principal and Staff. The list is not necessarily arranged in order of severity.

Outlined below is a list of sanctions that have been agreed by Parents/Teachers/Board of Management to help students:

- To learn,
- To recognize the affect of their actions and behaviour on others,
- To help students understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and all choices have consequences,
- To help students to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- To reinforce boundaries set out by the Code of Behaviour,
- To signal to other students and school personnel that their wellbeing is being protected,
- To prevent serious interruption to teaching and learning,
- To keep the student or other students/school personnel safe.

AGREED SANCTIONS

All sanctions will be administered proportionate to severity of behaviour.

- (i) Reasoning with Pupil
- (ii) Voicing of teacher disappointment with regard to unacceptable behaviour, including advice on how to improve.
- (iii) Recording of incident of misbehaviour with loss of credits or addition of 'misbehaviour mark' by class teacher.
- (iv) Informal advising of parent verbally or through a note in the pupil's homework journal (to be signed by parent).
- (v) Temporary removal from current work group.
- (vi) Temporary removal from current class (as arranged by class teacher with colleagues).
- (vii) Sending home of careless work (i.e. as a means of informing parent of non-attentive behaviour).
- (viii) Withdrawal of privileges.
- (ix) Removal from playground.
- (x) Recording of incidents of assembly, break-time and dismissal misbehaviour.
- (xi) Recording at Principal's office of ongoing incidents or single serious incident of misbehaviour.
- (xii) Formal request from class teacher to parent to arrange appointment to discuss difficulty.
- (xiii) Referral to Principal.
- (xiv) Request parent to supervise pupil off school premises during lunch-time.
- (xv) Formal request from Principal to parent to arrange appointment to discuss difficulty. This may involve Principal and/or class teacher.
- (xvi) When there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour or single incidents of gross misbehaviour, the parents/guardians may be formally requested to meet the Principal, Chairperson of the Board of Management and the class teacher. At this meeting parents/guardians will be expected to give an undertaking that behaviour will improve.
- (xvii) The parents/guardians of children who: regularly disobey school rules: disrupt the work of the class, display on-going anti-social behaviour, may be asked to collect their child/children from school. They may not be allowed to participate in school outings for their own safety and that of the class. In such instances, the pupil may be placed in another class for the duration of that school day/period.
- (xviii) For single gross acts of intentional misbehaviour e.g.:
 - biting another child
 - biting a staff member
 - spitting at other children
 - spitting at a staff member
 - striking of another child
 - striking of a staff member

parents of these children may be summoned to see the Principal and asked to remove their child from the school until such time as they can give an undertaking that this type of behaviour will not be repeated.

- (xix) When parents fail to give an undertaking as at above or when misbehaviour continues, the procedures for the suspension of the pupil may be implemented. Parents will be requested to meet with the principal where the procedures for suspension will be explained and suitable day/days for suspension will be agreed. Parents will receive written confirmation of these arrangements.
- (xx) In a case where an immediate suspension is necessary, to ensure order/discipline/health and safety of children and school personnel the parent/guardian of the child will be contacted and asked to make arrangements for the immediate collection of that child and to meet with the principal. At this meeting the procedure for an immediate suspension will be explained to the parent. The Board of Management authorises the principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period of not exceeding 3 days. Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- (xxi) Expulsion may have to be considered in very extreme cases in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000 and according to the National Education Welfare Board “Developing a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools”. Before expelling or suspending a pupil for a cumulative period of 20 school days or more, the Board shall notify the local Education Welfare Officer in writing in accordance with *Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act 2000*.

REMOVAL OF SUSPENSION

- Following or during a period of suspension, the parents/guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school
- The parents/guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school *Code of Behaviour*. The principal must be satisfied that the reinstatement of the pupil will not constitute a risk to the pupils own safety or to that of the other pupils or staff.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All children are required to comply with the Code of Behaviour. However, this school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents, the class teacher and learning support/resource teacher. Psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The Principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Behaviour issues and their consequences will be viewed in the wider context of how school supports children. Cognitive and emotional development will be taken into account at all times and sanctions will be applied with due discretion, and with regard for the health and safety of all children.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

Methods of Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents should be encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

Following methods are used:

- **Formal parent/teacher meeting**
- **Note in journal/general note home**
- **School noticeboard/newsletter**
- **Impromptu meeting in the morning/afternoon**
- **Written request for formal meeting by parents/teacher/principal**

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF EXPULSION

Where an assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following steps apply:

- **A detailed investigation carried out by the principal.**
- **A recommendation to expel to the Board of Management by the principal.**
- **Consideration by the Board of Management of the principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.**
- **Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.**
- **Consultations arranged by the Education Welfare Officer.**
- **Confirmation of the decision to expel.**

APPEALS

Under Section 29 of the Education Welfare Act 1998, "parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education & Science against some decisions of the Board of Management, including

- **Permanent exclusion from a school and**
- **Suspension for a period which will 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.

Parents/guardians are informed of their entitlement to appeal a decision of the Board of Management in relation to suspension or expulsion included in the written notification.

APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

Sanctions will be used in a respectful way that helps students understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour.

Sanctions should:

- **Defuse and not escalate a situation**
- **Preserve the dignity of all the parties**
- **Be applied in a fair and consistent way**
- **Be timely**
- **A student should be able to relate the sanctions to the behaviour that prompts the offence.**

INAPPROPRIATE SANCTIONS

- **Ridicule/sarcasm or remarks likely to undermine self-confidence**
- **Public/private humiliation**
- **Applying sanctions to whole groups in cases of individual misbehaviour**
- **Leaving a student in an unsupervised situation e.g. corridor**
- **Persistent isolation of/or ignoring a student in class**
- **Depriving a student of access to any part of the curriculum.**
- **Physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment**

Although incidents of misbehaviour are recorded, parents should feel assured that the emphasis will be on continuing encouragement to improve, with praise being given for commendable behaviour. Please note also that correction may cause temporary negative feelings towards school as indeed correction by parents at home may cause similar feelings towards them. With a balanced approach and co-operation between home and school, such negative feelings can normally be easily overcome.

The establishment and maintenance of acceptable standards of behaviour is a joint responsibility, shared between the teaching staff, the Board of Management, and the parent body. Each teacher shares a common responsibility for the maintenance of good order within the school environment, and consequently, it is expected that each staff member would respond promptly and firmly to any incident of unacceptable behaviour within sight or sound of him/her.

SCHOOL DUTY OF CARE

The school and every teacher should ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. The teacher's duty of care is a professional duty of care, reflecting the teacher's training, skill and knowledge. This duty requires, for example, that a student is appropriately supervised at all times while at school. Appropriate arrangements must also be made to ensure that Child Protection Guidelines are observed.

This school policy was formulated by the Principal and Staff and ratified by the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior National School.

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.