



Code of Behaviour 2015

HOLY CHILD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mission Statement

The Holy Child Community School welcomes students with diverse abilities and talents. In keeping with our Christian ethos, we seek to recognise and develop these varied gifts and to promote in our students a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others. We foster learning within a secure and happy environment, so that our pupils may mature to their fullest potential in personal, social, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and academic skills. We see parents as being essential partners in this process and look to them for support and reinforcement. Our school structures, curriculum and special events are all designed to reinforce these values and this vision.

Definitions

The term "parents" is also intended to apply to legal guardians.

The Code of Behaviour

In promoting this Code of Behaviour the school is:

- Creating an environment where each student feels secure and is able to work in an environment which is conducive to learning and where he/she can achieve to the best of his/her ability.
- Promoting relationships amongst staff, students and parents which are based on mutual respect, fairness, consideration, courtesy and good manners.
- Fostering personal responsibility and self-discipline in each student in a way that promotes the school's values as enshrined in our Mission statement.
- Complying with the requirements of "Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools 2008"¹.

While good standards of conduct are the expected norm at the Holy Child Community School, excellent standards are recognised and rewarded within the school. We believe that everyone in school has the right to be treated with respect. Good relationships are vital to the successful working of our school. We value achievements of every kind and we believe that all students should have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential. We also believe that students respond well to high expectations. In our school we expect everyone to work hard and give their best at all times. The effective operation of the Code of Behaviour is only possible by setting out clearly the school rules and regulations for the benefit of each family. Such rules provide guidance for the student and facilitate the daily operation of school life.

¹ Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools (May 2008) TUSLA
HCCS



Our Code of Behaviour expresses the kinds of behaviour and relationships that create a positive environment for teaching and learning and in helping to create a happy environment for the school community. It is expected that students, parents/guardians will uphold standards outlined in this Code and create and maintain a pleasant environment by committing themselves to the following:

- At the beginning of every school year the students will be reminded of the school's expectations in terms of behaviour, rules, academic standards, student awards, rewards and sanctions.
- Students and parents will be expected to read and sign the Code of Behaviour.
- As part of the Holy Child Community School efforts to communicate and set out its expectations in terms of manners, courtesy and general acceptable behaviour to students, it will hold periodic formal "classes" for all year groups. When new first years join the school time will be given to inform and communicate very clearly the school's expectations of them.

The effective operation of the **Code of Behaviour** is only possible by setting out clearly the school rules and regulations for the benefit of each family. Such rules provide guidance for the student and facilitate the daily operation of school life. Underpinning all aspects of the schools **Code of Behaviour** and the policy on suspension and expulsion is the protection of these rights:

- All students have the right to work in a secure environment that is conducive to learning.
- All students and staff members have the right to be treated with courtesy
- All students and staff members have the right to be treated in an honest, courteous, respectful and co-operative manner.

In protection of these rights:

- Staff members *expect students to follow their instructions* when implementing school and class rules and policy
- Staff members *expect students to follow their instructions* when issuing instructions relating to health and safety.

The Code of Behaviour:

Each new entrant will receive a copy of the Code of Behaviour upon enrolment along with the **Form of Agreement**. The student in signing the Form of Agreement undertakes to observe the rules of the school in every detail. The parents in signing the Form of Agreement undertake to support the school, in every way possible, in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.

A Positive focus in the Holy Child Community School:

We always aim to be positive in our approach and to notice and reward good behaviour rather than take it for granted. Staff members believe that everyone should have equal access to rewards and all student endeavour is acknowledged in our school, not just academic ability. Everyone responds to the right kind of reward. Teachers use a range of rewards and a merit system to promote good behaviour where appropriate.



At the end of each half –term the schools presents students with Awards in the following categories:

- Academic Awards
- Endeavour Awards
- Best Effort at Homework Award
- Most Improved Student
- Merit system

In our ongoing efforts to promote excellence and high standards among our students we have a positive referral system in place in HCCS. The purpose of this is to acknowledge the efforts of students and reward them for treating learning in a serious and mature way.

Merits are awarded to students who display academic excellence or endeavour, good behaviour or courtesy, positive participation or helpfulness or very good organisation. All students, regardless of ability, are able to earn merits. As a general rule this is based on a “brilliant” piece(s) of work, homework(s) classwork, project work, practical piece(s), etc. Merits are entered into journals by staff members who are committed to actively supporting the promotion of good behaviour. The teacher uses his/her judgement/discretion on entering merits into the students’ journals.

At the end of the academic year the school hosts an annual prize-giving day

Other Forms of Reward used at Holy Child Community School

Where a student has displayed ongoing and consistent improvement, the positive referral system may be used.

- Praising students for good behaviour / work / effort
- Writing a positive note home in the students’ journal.
- Sending a post card home
- One to one meetings with Support teachers/Househead.
- Displaying students’ work in the school.
- Broadcasting successes at Assemblies, on the Website
- Attendance / Punctuality Awards
- Students’ positive achievements are entered in eportal
- Academic Achievement Awards
- Endeavour Awards
- Mention in Yearbook and Newsletters
- Involvement in outings and tours.
- Acknowledgement at Prize giving Ceremony.



School Work

- Students are expected to be attentive, to behave in a positive manner and to participate in class-work: this includes the responsibility to have class materials as requested.

Classroom Code

Arrive to class on time

Have books and equipment for class

Do not eat or chew in class unless your teacher has given permission

Have homework done/have your best effort to show to your teacher

Sit quietly in your allocated seat

Remain seated unless given permission by your teacher

Take out your journal, books and homework promptly

Listen attentively during class

If you want to speak or to ask a question, please raise your hand

Be respectful when addressing your teacher or fellow students

Participate in all class work

Make sure you note all homework carefully in your journal

Pick up any paper/rubbish on or under your desk.

Tuck your chair/stool neatly under your desk

Wait at your desk until given permission to leave

Put any rubbish into the bin as you leave

- The school has an Attainment Team in place to track and monitor student progress to ensure that students are reaching their potential. Students are expected to set their own targets with the guidance of the Attainment teacher and follow-up meetings are held with students after Christmas, Mock, Spring Assessments and Summer exams.
- Homework must be satisfactorily completed. The school has a Referral ladder for the purposes of homework. There are various supports in place for students to assist them in completing homework such as the Homework Club.
- See School **Policy on Homework and Study**. (Appendix 2.)

Students on Daily Report:

Daily Report is administered and managed by the House Head. The principal aim of the Daily Report is to signal to the student and his or her parents that the breach of good behavioural is being treated very seriously and that it will not be allowed to continue. Reports are signed daily by Househeads/DP/Principal and parents.

Permission to Leave Class

Students involved in school activities during class time must produce a note from the teacher organising the activity when seeking permission to leave class.

Students wishing to leave class can only do so with the teacher's permission and with a note from that teacher expressing the reason for leaving the class.



Uniform

- Students are expected to be clean and neat in dress and appearance.
- Complete school uniform, as set out in the uniform memorandum, is to be worn in school, on the way to and from school, on school business or when representing the school.
- Inappropriate hairstyles and jewellery, denims, leather or army jackets are not to be worn or brought to school.

Property

- All property should be stored in rented lockers.
- The school cannot accept responsibility for lost or stolen property or for property confiscated due to a breach of the school rules.
- All property should carry the student's name. (e.g. coats)
- Malicious or intentional damage to property e.g. graffiti will have to be made good by the student responsible. In order to prevent damage being done to school property, the use of ink in the school is forbidden

Mobile Phones and MP3 players

There are very strict rules in force regarding mobile phones. See the **School's Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy**. I Pods or any MP3 players (or similar) may not be used by students inside the school building. They must be kept switched off and put safely away otherwise they will be confiscated in *accordance with our Mobile & Electronic Devices Policy*.

Jewellery

- One piece of jewellery may be worn and a watch. Facial piercings are not permitted. One sleeper worn in the ear lobe or a discreet nose piercing is acceptable. Additional jewellery will be confiscated and kept in the school until the end of term unless collected by a parent/guardian at the front office during office hours.
- Items not collected by parents, guardians will be returned to students at the end of term only.

Student Journal

- Must be kept by student at all times.
- Replacement of the Student Journal costs €10
- The Student Journal must not be defaced.
- Must be signed by parents/guardians every week.
- Whereas every attempt will be made by subject teachers to ensure that students record all homework and study assignments in their journals it is the responsibility of students to ensure that this is done properly. Parents are expected to check and sign student journals every Friday and to report any concerns to the school regarding the level of homework being given to students.
- Parents are asked to ensure that all students devote adequate time to homework. Homework includes written work and study. There is never a day when a student has no homework. It may happen from time to time that a student



will have no written work, but there is always study to be done. The following guide shows minimum weekly levels of homework for each year group.

Health and Safety

Every member of our school community has a responsibility to take the greatest care in upholding the Health and Safety of everyone in the school. As a reflection of the School's role *in loco parentis*, the School authorities have absolute discretion as to whether to seek urgent, professional help (such as calling an ambulance or a doctor) when it is apparent that anyone on the school premises may need such help. In this context, "school authorities" will be interpreted to mean any member of staff.

Movement around School/ Safety

- Students must walk **NOT** run, and keep to the left of the corridor.
- Students should keep to the one-way system of movement in operation.
- Cycling is forbidden within the school grounds.
- To minimise class disruption students are expected to use the toilets during breaks if possible. Only in exceptional circumstances will students be allowed out of class.
- Toilets are not to be used during changeover of classes.
- Any student leaving school outside of the normal times must sign out at the office and must have prior permission from the Househead.
- **FIRE DRILL REGULATIONS MUST BE STRICTLY OBEYED.**

Emergency Regulations

Emergency Drill Practice takes place in HCCS from time to time. When this occurs, staff and students are asked to evacuate the building in an orderly fashion in case of fire or other emergency. Students are reminded that interference with the Fire Alarm or Equipment is a very serious offence. On hearing the fire alarm students should:

- Stand up in silence under the teacher's request, leaving all property in the classroom (locked by teacher on exit).
- Follow all instructions given by the teacher.
- Walk quickly and quietly in single file (as per one way system in the school) from the classroom to the Assembly Point in the ***Overflow Carpark at the back of Cornelian Centre.***
- At the Assembly Point, line up in alphabetical order in their class group.
- If alarm goes off between classes or when there is no teacher present the class should proceed to the Assembly Point as outlined and join their Tutor or Househead.
- If a student is not in class when alarm sounds they should proceed immediately to the Assembly Point and join their class group.



Games, Sports and Extra- Curricular Activities

- All students **must** participate fully in Physical Education classes unless exempted by a **Doctor's Certificate**. Full P.E. gear must be worn.
- Those honoured by being chosen to represent the school must make themselves available to participate.
- Only in exceptional circumstances, or as a disciplinary measure, will students be excused from outings, field trips or excursions.

Inappropriate, Unacceptable Behaviour and Sanctions:

Equally, unacceptable standards and inappropriate behaviour which is non-compliance with school rules and regulations have to be recognised. Violence, physical or verbal, is not accepted within the school, when students are coming to or going from school or on a school outing. The following are expressly forbidden:

- The possession or use of tobacco, alcohol or other intoxicants/ dangerous substances is
- Persistent disruptive or negative behaviour and a persistent negative attitude towards studies
- Vandalism
- Substance misuse
- The possession of dangerous objects, weapons, lighters, fireworks or harmful substances Smoking or the consumption of alcohol.
- The possession or use of bangers.
- Abuse of Teachers, other Members of Staff or other Students
- Threatening or violent behaviour, bullying, the deliberate use of foul language or gestures, intimidation, sexual harassment directed at teachers or fellow students, will not be tolerated. The matter will be investigated, parents will be contacted and appropriate action will be taken.
- Should the nature of any serious incident be such that it is considered a health and safety issue the student will be suspended from school and parents will be contacted and asked to remove the student immediately. The matter will be investigated, parents will be contacted and appropriate action will be taken.

Bullying

- The school's Policy Statement on Bullying in accordance with the Department of Education Guidelines is set out clearly in the Policy Booklet. Students must sign their acceptance of this Policy at the beginning of each school year. This Acceptance must also be countersigned by parents. (See Appendix on Bullying Policy)

Sanctions

- Sanctions may be imposed on any students who offend against the Code of Behaviour of the school. Sanctions, details of which are contained in the Code of Conduct, include:
 - Parental Involvement
 - Fines



- Behaviour Contracts
- Confiscations
- Chores, Community Service
- Detention
- Referral and Involvement of External Agencies
- Suspension or Expulsion
 - Suspension will be considered as a response to a student's behaviour if;
 - The student's behaviour has had a serious and detrimental effect on the education of other students.
 - The student's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety.
 - The student is responsible for serious damage to property.
 - If the student has engaged in an incident of serious misconduct.
 - If the student is a threat to good order in the conduct of teaching and learning.
 - If the student is a threat to the safety of other students and staff.
 - If the student is a threat to the right of other students to learn in a calm atmosphere.

Substance Abuse

The Board of Management wishes to stress to parents, guardians and students that the possession of illegal substances while in school or on school related activities is totally banned and that students who knowingly have illegal substances in their possession face **expulsion** from the school. This includes:

- The possession, use or supply of illegal drugs or substances.

Students involved in any of the above or who in any way facilitate or support the above shall also be held responsible and sanctioned accordingly. The matter will be investigated, parents will be contacted and appropriate action will be taken.

The school will provide whatever support or advice it can to parents who may have to deal with a problem of substance abuse in the home. (See Appendix on Substance Abuse)

Student Support

In general the school will seek to modify unsatisfactory behaviour using positive supports such as the Pastoral work done by the Househeads, the Care Team Group (which consists of the Househead, the Chaplain, the Resource Teacher, the School Completion Teacher, the Guidance Counsellor, the School Completion Coordinator, the Deputy Principal), SPHE class and less serious sanctions whenever possible.

The services of Chaplain, Home School Liaison Coordinator (who is in contact with families), Guidance Counsellor, professional psychologist and other relevant external agencies may be utilised to the greatest extent possible in seeking to improve behaviour and rehabilitate students to help them to readjust to school life.



As part of the whole school approach, the school has an agreed ladder of staff intervention in response to inappropriate behaviour. At each level parental and family support are sought.

The school endeavours to use a restorative approach to deal with behavioural and disciplinary issues with students.

Levels of Intervention:

Support for all: Teachers are responsible for the management of the students in their classroom. Minor misdemeanours and inappropriate misbehaviour (e.g. no books, incomplete homework, etc) are dealt with by the class teacher.

Additional Support: If students require more active intervention to help them manage their behaviour additional supports are put in place for them including the following:

- Referral to another adult or teacher who can work with the student
- Referral to a member of the Student Support team(which includes the Chaplain & Guidance Counsellor & DP)
- Setting targets for behaviour and monitoring them with the student in a supportive way.
- Behaviour contracts
- Involvement of parents/ Guardians
- Referral to an external agency if necessary
- Using Restorative Practice
- Daily Report
- In- house Suspension

Specialised support for a small minority of students:

Many students who display challenging behaviour and may-have great difficulty learning new behaviour may find it difficult to respond to some interventions. These students are referred to the various teachers; Househeads; Chaplaincy and Guidance services where appropriate.

The school also endeavours to contact the relevant external agencies including MYP (Mountown Youth Project), Teen Counselling, Dún Laoghaire and HSE services.

Attendance and Punctuality

- Students should be in the school building by 8.30 a.m. for registration at **8.40 a.m.** Parents will be informed when there is a consistent pattern of late coming. Students will be detained at lunchtime each day they arrive late to school after 8.40 am unless they have a note from their parents/guardians explaining their lateness. If students do not attend lunchtime detention parents/ guardians will be contacted and students will be detained for **up to two hours** after school. Students who arrive late are required to sign in at the main Office. In the event of a student being absent a text message will be sent home by the Office staff.



- Junior students must remain in the school grounds from 8.40 a.m. to 3.40 p.m. (except Wednesday 8:40 -1:05pm). Senior students may leave the school at lunchtime on the understanding that they will observe the highest standards of behaviour while out. All students must remain on the school grounds during the morning break.
- All absences, including half days, must be explained by letter from parents to the Tutor/ Househead. If a student is absent for more than three school days or it is anticipated that he/she will be absent for more than three school days, parents are requested to inform the school immediately.
When possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours. On return to school a student should give a note to his/her Househead or Tutor explaining his/her absence. It should be noted that the school is obliged, under the Education & Welfare Act, to report those students who are absent from school for more than 20 days in the school year to the Educational Welfare Board.
- Requests for permission to leave school during school hours must be in writing from the parents to the House Head. All students must 'sign out' at the office before leaving the school.
- All notes are verified by House Head/Deputy Principal or Principal before student leaves school.
- Students must not leave the school without permission from their Househead, Deputy Principal or Principal and signing out at the front office.
- If a student leaves school without permission it is a Health & Safety matter, parents / guardians will be contacted and the student will receive up to 2 hours detention.

Late Entry to Class

Students arriving late for class must produce a note of explanation from the teacher who detained them detailing the reason for their lateness.

Detention

Students may, at the discretion of their teachers, be detained after school up to 30 minutes.

Students may, at the discretion of their Househead, Deputy Principal or Principal, be detained for up to 2 hours.

Parents/ Guardians must be contacted to confirm same day after school detention. Otherwise at least 24 hours prior notice of any detention must be sent to parents, through the journal or phone call. This will be recorded in the student journal and eportal.

Suspension of Students

The authority to suspend students has been delegated by the Board of Management to the Principal in accordance with the EWB Guidelines. See **Suspension & Expulsion Policy**.

The Principal is authorised by the Board to suspend a student up to three days.

The Principal reports all suspensions to the Board of Management and to the NEWB in accordance with the NEWB guidelines (Education Welfare Act, 2000, section 21 (4), (a)).



Expulsion

The Board of Management reserves the right to expel a student who puts the health and welfare of other students or staff at risk, or any student who engages in persistent or serious misbehaviour which undermines the ethos of the school, undermines the education of other students or the work of the whole staff.

Acceptance

I accept the Holy Child Community School's Code of Behaviour

Signed: _____ [Parent/Guardian] Date:

Signed: _____ [Student] Date:

Holy Child Community School
Sallynoggin

Suspension Policy





Introduction

Policy Aim

This policy has been prepared for approval by the Board of Management following consultation and discussion with the representatives of parents, teachers and students. The aim of this policy is to put in place a mutually agreed and clearly understood set of procedures, in line with the National Educational Welfare Guidelines, for dealing with incidents of misbehaviour which have the effect of undermining good order and discipline in the school.

Implementation and Review

Following the implementation of this policy by the Board of Management copies will be distributed to parents with the next set of materials being sent from the school. Thereafter the policy will be included in the **School Policy Booklet** which is given to every student at the start of each year. The school will hold a number of assemblies at the beginning of each school year to remind students of their obligations under the terms of each policy. Students will be expected to sign a **Declaration of Compliance** with the policies and they will be advised to bring the policy booklet home for their parents to read. Students who for any reason are absent from any or all of these assemblies or who do not sign the policy declaration are nonetheless bound by **all** school policies. **Attendance at school is an implied acceptance of all of the rules and policies of the school.**

The Board of Management undertakes to review from time to time and if necessary amend this policy to ensure that the aims of the policy are being achieved.



Mission Statement

The Holy Child Community School welcomes students with diverse abilities and talents. In keeping with our Christian ethos, we seek to recognise and develop these varied gifts and to promote in our students a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others. We foster learning within a secure and happy environment, so that our students may mature to their fullest potential in personal, social, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and academic skills. We see parents as being essential partners in this process and look to them for support and reinforcement. Our school structures, curriculum and special events are all designed to reinforce these values and this vision.

I. Conduct in school

The Code of Conduct

While good standards of conduct are the expected norm at the Holy Child Community School, excellent standards are recognised and rewarded within the school. Equally, unacceptable standards have to be recognised and assistance provided by school-based support structures and home/school liaison. Where this support breaks down or is rejected, appropriate action may have to be taken in order to bring about a change in behaviour.

The effective operation of the Code of Conduct is only possible by setting out clearly the school rules and regulations for the benefit of each family. Such rules provide guidance for the student and facilitate the daily operation of school life. Underpinning all aspects of the school's Code of Conduct and the policy on suspension and expulsion is the protection of these rights:

- a. Staff members and students have the right to work in a secure environment that is conducive to learning and student welfare.
- b. Staff members have the right to be obeyed when implementing school and class rules and policy.
- c. Staff members have the right to be obeyed when issuing instructions relating to health and safety.
- d. Staff members and students have the right to be treated with courtesy

Rewards

The school will at all times seek to raise standards of behaviour by adopting a positive approach to school discipline. The work of students and their adherence to the school's **Code of Conduct** will be acknowledged, encouraged and rewarded in the following ways:



- Postcards home
- Attendance awards
- Academic achievement awards
- Endeavour awards
- Merits
- Citations at Assembly
- Involvement in outings and tours
- Newsletter and Year Book mention
- One to one meetings with support teachers

Sanctions

Sanctions may be imposed on any students who offend against the **Code of Conduct** of the school. Sanctions, details of which are contained in the Code of Conduct, include:

- Referral
- Fines
- Confiscations
- Chores
- Detention
- Parental Involvement
- Contracts
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Community Service

In general the school will seek to modify unsatisfactory behaviour using positive supports and less serious sanctions whenever possible. The services of Chaplain, Counsellor, Psychologist and other relevant outside agencies will be utilised to the greatest extent possible in seeking to improve behaviour. The HSCL will work with parents to assist with any difficulties the students may be experiencing in school. However, should it not prove possible to achieve realistic and sustainable improvements in behaviour within a reasonable period of time, suspension and if necessary expulsion will be used in accordance with this policy.

III. Contracts

In situations where other measures have proven ineffective and expulsion from the school is being considered for serious or consistent misbehaviour the school will, in certain situations, place the student(s) concerned on contract. The principal aim of the contract will be to signal to the student and his or her parents that the situation is very serious and that it will not be allowed to continue. The contract, which will involve a defined HCCS



number of stages, will allow for a set number of meetings to take place involving students, parents and teachers with the intention of improving behaviour. Where the action of a student is such as to warrant immediate removal from the school a contract will not be used. See Appendix 1 for further information on school contracts.

IV. Suspension

Authority to Suspend

The Board of Management of the Holy Child Community School has the authority to suspend a student. The Board delegates the authority to suspend to the Principal and this shall be done formally and in writing at its Board meeting in September of each academic year.

The authority delegated to the Principal in respect of suspension shall state limits on that authority, and specify how the Principal is accountable to the Board of Management for his or her use of that authority. The Principal usually reports all suspensions to the Board at its monthly meeting in accordance with the EWB Guidelines. The delegation of authority shall reflect the provisions of the Educational Welfare Guidelines, any relevant legal requirements and Articles of Management, where appropriate.

The grounds for suspension

Suspension shall be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern. Normally the school shall have tried other interventions before suspension, and school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked.

The decision to suspend a student requires serious grounds such as that:

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

A single incident of serious misconduct may be grounds for suspension.

Suspension as a sanction

Suspension is a serious sanction that will only be imposed where other efforts to resolve disciplinary situations have failed or where the nature of the incident dictates that the student be removed immediately from the school.



Circumstances in which suspension will be considered include:

- Repeated incidents of indiscipline in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.
- Failure to recognise and submit to the legitimate authority of the school.
- Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right to learn of other students.
- Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others or themselves

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan.

Suspension in the Holy Child is part of an agreed plan to address the student's behaviour. The suspension:

- Enables the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents.
- Gives school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- Impresses on a student and their parents the seriousness of the behaviour.
- Sets down certain conditions for the student before he/she returns to class.
- A suspended student and his/her parent/ guardian must meet the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the House-head and teacher(s) before returning to school/ relevant class.
- The school shall ask the parents' to offer every support to the school in helping the student to modify his/her behaviour on returning to school.
- When suspension has been for an offence in class, a returning student will be accompanied by the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the House-head before being accepted back to that class and if necessary a note, signed by student and parent, for relevant teacher.

V. Forms of Suspension

Immediate Suspension

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

The sanction shall be a proportionate response to the behaviour. The sanction should be treated like any other suspension, and the principles and fair procedures governing suspensions should be applied. Circumstances in which immediate suspension include:

- Verbally abusing a member of staff
- Physical threats or violence towards a member of staff.



- Harassment of a member of staff.
- Physical abuse to other students

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the student, other students, staff or others, a preliminary investigation shall be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. The formal investigation shall immediately follow the imposition of the suspension. All of the conditions for suspension apply to immediate suspension. No suspension, including an immediate suspension, shall be open-ended.

In the case of an immediate suspension, parents shall be notified, and arrangements made with them for the student to be collected. The school shall have regard to its duty of care for the student. In no circumstances shall a student be sent home from school without first notifying parents.

The period of suspension

The maximum period of suspension which may be imposed by the Principal without referring the case to the Board of Management is three days and in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period longer than three days is required, he/she may suspend a student for five with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management, where the Board of Management cannot convene in a timely fashion.

The Board of Management shall periodically review all suspensions and, especially, shall itself decide on any proposal to suspend a student where the suspension would bring the number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days or more. Any such suspension is subject to appeal under section 29 of the Education Act, 1998.

Suspension during a state examination

This sanction may be delegated to the Principal and should only be used where there is:

- A threat to good order in the conduct of the examination
- A threat to the safety of other students and personnel
- A threat to the right of other students to do their examination in a calm atmosphere.

VII Appeals

Local appeal

The Board of Management shall offer an opportunity to appeal a Principal's decision to suspend a student.

Section 29 appeal



Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.

At the time when parents are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student shall be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and shall be given information about how to appeal.

VIII. Implementing the suspension

Written notification

The Principal shall notify the parents and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter should confirm:

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management and the procedures for that appeal
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

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 Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

After the suspension ends

A period of suspension shall end on the date given in the letter of notification to the parents about the suspension.



Re-integrating the students

The school shall do all it can to help the students to take responsibility for catching up on work missed. When any sanction, including suspension, is completed, a student shall be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start. Although a record is kept of the behaviour and any sanction imposed, once the sanction has been completed, the school shall expect the same behaviour of this student as of all other students.

Records and Reports

Formal written records shall be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)
- The decision making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension

Report to the Board of Management

The Principal shall report all suspensions to the Board of Management, with the reason for and the duration of each suspension.

Report to National Education Welfare Board

The Principal is required to report suspension in accordance with the NEWB reporting guidelines (Education Welfare) Act, 2000, section 21 (4) (a).

Review of use of suspension

The Board of Management shall periodically review the use of suspension in the school to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school and to ensure that use of suspension is appropriate and effective.



Holy Child Community School

Sallynoggin

Expulsion Policy





Policy Aim

This policy has been prepared for approval by the Board of Management following consultation and discussion with the representatives of parents, teachers and students while complying with the provisions of Section of the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. This Policy is in line with the Educational Welfare Guidelines.

The aim of this policy is to put in place a mutually agreed and clearly understood set of procedures for dealing with serious incidents of misbehaviour and have the effect of undermining good order and discipline in the school.

A student is expelled from school when the Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him/her from the school.

Implementation and Review

Following the implementation of this policy by the Board of Management copies will be distributed to parents with the next set of materials being sent from the school. Thereafter the policy will be included in the **School Policy Booklet** which is given to every student at the start of each year. The school will hold a number of assemblies at the beginning of each school year to remind students of their obligations under the terms of each policy. Students will be expected to sign a **Declaration of Compliance** with the policies and they will be advised to bring the policy booklet home for their parents to read. Students who for any reason are not present at any or all of these assemblies or who do not sign the policy declaration are nonetheless bound by **all** school policies. **Attendance at school is an implied acceptance of all of the rules and policies of the school.**

Mission Statement

The Holy Child Community School welcomes students with diverse abilities and talents. In keeping with our Christian ethos, we seek to recognise and develop these varied gifts and to promote in our students a sense of self-confidence, tolerance and respect for others. We foster learning within a secure and happy environment, so that our students may mature to their fullest potential in personal, social, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and academic skills. We see parents as being essential partners in this process and look to them for support and reinforcement. Our school structures, curriculum and special events are all designed to reinforce these values and this vision.



Authority to expel

The Board of Management of the Holy Community School has the authority to expel a student. This authority is reserved to the Board of Management and is not delegated.

The grounds for Expulsion:

Expulsion is proportionate response to the student's behaviour. Expulsion of a student is a very serious step, and shall only be taken by taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school shall take significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour.
- Making sure that the students understand the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it shall persist.
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried.
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Service, the National Behaviour Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education).

Grounds for Expulsion include:

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 constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension. (Please refer to Suspension Policy).

In addition to factors such as the degree of seriousness and the persistence of the behaviour, a key difference is that, where expulsion is considered, the school authorities have tried a series of other interventions, and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.



Expulsion for a first offence

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student shall be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include:

- A serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- Actual violence or physical assault
- Supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school
- Sexual assault

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

Given the seriousness of expulsion as a sanction the Board of Management shall undertake a very detailed review of a range of factors in deciding whether to expel a student.

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, when proposing to expel a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion, the following procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to expel.

It is a matter for the Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meeting and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.



The Process:

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

In investigating an allegation, in line with fair procedures, the Principal shall :

- Inform the student and their parents about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in expulsion
- Give parents and the student every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed

Parents shall be informed in writing of the alleged misbehaviour and the proposed investigation in order to have a permanent record of having let them know. This ensures that parents are very clear about what their son or daughter is alleged to have done. It serves the important function of underlining to parents the seriousness with which the school views the alleged misbehaviour.

Parents and the student shall have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed. Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents shall be essential.

It shall provide the opportunity for them to give their side of the story and to ask questions about the evidence of serious misbehaviour, especially where there is a dispute about the facts.

It shall also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction, and for the school to explore with parents how best to address the student's behaviour.

If a student and their parents fail to attend a meeting, the Principal shall write advising of the gravity of the matter, the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the inappropriate behaviour. The school will record the invitation issued to parents and their response.

Step 2: A Recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

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

- Inform the parents and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.



- Ensure that parents have: all relevant records: the allegation(s) against the student; the matters investigated by the Principal; 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 parents.
- Notify the parents of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation: and the holding of a hearing

Consistent with its obligation to give parents sufficient notice of a hearing, the Board shall hold a meeting to consider the Principal's recommendation as soon as is feasible. Its first duty at this meeting is to review the Principal's investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted according to fair procedures. The Board shall also undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It shall ensure that no party who has any involvement with the circumstances of the case is party to the Board's deliberations.

Where the Board of Management decides that the initial investigation was conducted by fair and proper procedures it shall hold a hearing. In the normal event, this hearing will be held immediately after (that is, for instance, on the same evening as) the meeting referred to in the previous paragraph. The Board meeting for the purpose of the hearing shall be properly conducted in accordance with the Board procedures.

At the hearing, the Principal and the parents, or a student aged eighteen years or over, shall put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party shall be allowed to question the evidence of the other party. The meeting shall also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for imposing a sanction less onerous than expulsion. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board shall take special care to ensure that it is impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board shall facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures.

After both sides have been heard, the Principal and parents shall withdraw and not be present while the Board deliberates and makes its decision.



Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not expulsion is the appropriate sanction.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student shall be expelled, the Board shall notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reason for this opinion. (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (1)*). The Board of Management shall refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsion.

The student cannot be expelled before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the EWO receives this written notification (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (1)*).

An appeal against an expulsion under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* will automatically succeed if it is shown that the Education Welfare Officer was not notified in accordance with section 24(1) or that twenty days did not elapse from the time of notification to the Education Welfare Officer to the implementation of the expulsion (*Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, s4A*).

The Board shall inform the parents in writing about its conclusion and the next steps in the process. Where expulsion is proposed, the parents shall be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultation arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from a Board of Management of its opinion that a student shall be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultation 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 (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section24*).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation shall focus on alternative education possibilities.

In the interests of the educational welfare of the students, those concerned shall come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education.



Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (*Education(Welfare) Act 2000,s24(5)*) during this time.

Suspension shall only be considered where there is 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.

Step 6: 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 shall be expelled, the Board of Management shall formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). Parents shall be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. Parents and the student shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record shall be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (*Education Act 1998 section 29*). An appeal may also be brought by the National Education Welfare Board on behalf of a student.

The Appeals Process

The appeals process under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998* begins with the provision of mediation by a mediator nominated by the Appeals Committee (Department of Education and Science). For further details about the Appeals process, including requirement for documentation, and the steps in the process, refer to current DES guidance.

Review of use of Expulsion

The Board of Management shall review the use of expulsion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that expulsion is used appropriately.



KEY REQUIREMENTS: EXPULSION

Applying the Guidelines means:

Having a policy on, and procedures for, expulsion that are approved by the Board of Management, and in line with these Guidelines, and with any additional requirements set down by the Patron

Ensuring the policy is widely communicated

Developing and documenting good practice in the use of expulsion

Having fair procedures for investigation and decision making

Having procedures for informing parents and students about their right to appeal

Having a system for regular review by the Board of Management of the use of expulsion in the school.

Adopted by the Board of Management 24th February 2010