

# Holy Spirit Junior Primary School

## Policy on Behaviour & Code of Behaviour

### Introduction:

Holy Spirit Junior School is a Catholic Primary School where we, the partners in education, aspire, in a spirit of openness and co-operation, to educate the whole child as a unique individual.

We endeavour to foster their moral, social, emotional, spiritual, academic, physical and aesthetic development in a happy, caring and inclusive environment, while respecting the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.

We take pride in the high standards of behaviour and in the good manners, which are to be found in our school, and we know that this depends on the example set by us all. We treat everyone as an individual. Each member of our school family can expect to give and receive respect.

All pupils have a right to be valued and respected, to be educated in a secure and caring environment, and to have their abilities and talents nurtured and developed to their full potential.

### Aims:

In order to function effectively and to serve the particular needs of our pupils, our overall aim is to create a safe, secure and orderly environment, so that all pupils are given the opportunity to learn, achieve and be successful in our school. We also emphasize the need for pupils to respect each other and those who work with them. We believe that pupils have a responsibility to respect the wider community and promote a positive image of the school.

The code of behaviour aims to:

- Provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- Create the conditions for an orderly school, in which effective learning and development can take place and in which there is a mutual respect for the needs and aspirations of pupils and staff.
- Ensure that teachers can deliver the educational programme and that staff members can work effectively in the interests of all pupils.
- Foster caring attitudes to one another and towards the environment.
- Promote high standards of order and behaviour, thereby;
  - Assisting the full development of the potential of all pupils
  - Ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
  - Developing personalities and inculcating attitudes, which enable pupils to live satisfying, lives.
- Encourage the pupils to develop independence by accepting the need for self-discipline and self-control and taking responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Develop the pupils' interpersonal skills and their ability to work co-operatively with others to resolve problems and address actual conflict as the need arises.

### Objectives:

Our school's objectives are to:

- Encourage an environment in which good staff/pupil and pupil/pupil relationships can develop
- Develop in pupils a sense of responsibility to themselves, to the staff and to the school.
- Recognise, reward and publicise the positive behaviour and achievements of pupils.
- Create an atmosphere of courtesy and tolerance.
- Recognise the importance of attendance, punctuality and appearance.
- Prevent pupils being disadvantaged by the behaviour of others.
- Promote the care of, and respect for:
  - Pupils, Staff and School Community
  - The property of pupils, staff and visitors to the school
  - The premises/resources of the school and environment.
- Encourage acceptable behaviour:
  - On school and public transport
  - On the roads to and from school
  - In the environment of the school
  - While on school approved outings and when representing the school at out-of-school activities.

### Underpinning Principles:

We recognise the variety of differences that exist between pupils and the need to respect these differences. As a school we are conscious of the on-going need to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

### **General Guidelines:**

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal Teacher. All staff assist the Principal in implementing school discipline, and maintain, as far as possible, a supervisory presence on the school campus. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasising positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

The staff deals with breaches of discipline in a caring, supportive and fair manner. A pupil will be referred to the Principal Teacher for serious breaches of discipline and for repeated incidents of minor misbehaviour.

### **School Environment:**

1. In the interest of safety, pupils are asked to use the allocated entrances and exits at all times.
2. Pupils must not climb up or over any of the boundary fences, walls or barriers.
3. Pupils are expected to remain within the playground boundaries during breaks.
4. Pupils are expected to **walk** on the corridors showing respect and consideration for staff and other pupils at all times.

### **Attendance at School**

Punctuality and regular attendance by the pupils is expected.

- Parents/Guardians of pupils must submit a written note to the class teacher when early departure from school is requested.
- Pupils must be signed out in the office by parent/guardian on early departure from school.
- Pupils arriving late to school must be signed in by a parent/guardian at the office.
- The Parent/Guardian of a pupil who is absent from school shall notify the class teacher with the reasons for the pupil's absence. There is a statutory obligation as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to report pupils' absences to the National Educational Welfare Board. This will happen if a pupil has missed a total of 20 days or over in the school year.

### **Parental Involvement:**

To help in maintaining good standards of behaviour, the Staff in Holy Spirit Junior Primary School relies on the good will, support and co-operation of Parents/Guardians. We ask Parents/Guardians to:

- Communicate regularly with the school about any factors likely to affect the behaviour of their son/daughter in school
- Ensure that their son/daughter attends school regularly and arrives in good time, with homework completed, is suitably dressed and well equipped for the lessons of the day ahead
- Be aware of school rules and procedures, and encourage their son/daughter to abide by them
- Act as positive role models for their son/daughter in their relationship with the school
- Attend planned meetings with teachers and support school functions
- Provide the school with all the necessary background information about their son/daughter e.g. medical, psychological reports.

### **Standards of desirable behaviour expected from pupils should involve:**

- Arriving on time for school
- Using 'indoor' voices
- Using kind actions, words, hands and feet
- Sitting properly on chair
- Doing what teacher says
- Tidying up when asked
- Remaining within the assigned areas set in the yard
- Playing gently and including others
- Asking permission of the teacher on duty to re enter the school building at yard time.
- 'Freezing' when the first bell rings
- Walking to their lines when the second bell rings
- Lining up properly with quiet hands and feet
- Remaining seated during break on wet days
- Recognising that all pupils have a right to share in and contribute during classes
- Applying themselves to the task, and working to the best of their ability
- Having their own books/equipment for class
- Co-operating with the staff and peers on shared activities
- Listening, without interrupting
- Showing respect for the views, ideas and property of others
- Tolerating differences and accepting difficulties of others
- Adhering to the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners
- Responding positively to opportunities provided to act independently of the teacher/special needs assistant

### **Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour:**

Fostering of good behaviour and acknowledgement of good work plays an important role in overall discipline. Positive behaviour is acknowledged at appropriate times.

We promote good behaviour by:

- Developing a pleasant, safe and stimulating learning environment
- Developing co-operative learning
- Giving constructive feedback to pupils about their work and progress
- Communicating with Parents/Guardians
- Encouraging good relationships and affirming good behaviour
- Striving for high standards and having high expectations
- Stating clear and consistent expectations
- Exploring with pupils how people should treat each other
- Directing pupils to understand why the Code of Behaviour is important and that it is carried out in a fair way
- Granting appropriate recognition and rewards. These include stars, stickers, golden time, and Principal's awards.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour:**

Unacceptable behaviour is categorised under Minor Breaches of Discipline and Serious Breaches of Discipline. Judgement on the part of staff is based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity and frequency of breaches of discipline.

#### **Examples of Minor Breaches of Discipline**

- Interrupting class work
- Leaving seat without permission
- Being discourteous / unmannerly / disrespectful
- Name calling / bad language
- Running in the school building;
- Littering around the school
- Use of mobile phones in school hours
- Minor infringement of the school rules.

These are examples of minor breaches of discipline and this list is not exhaustive.

#### **Examples of Serious Breaches of Discipline**

- Persistent disruption of teaching and learning
- Refusing to carry out instruction on a regular basis
- Bullying/Harassment in any form
- Physical or Verbal Aggression towards others
- Deliberate violent behaviour towards another pupil or staff causing harm or putting him/her at risk of a serious injury
- Using unacceptable language/offensive language towards another.
- Participating in games considered to be dangerous to oneself or others
- Throwing objects in yard/classroom
- Damaging or attempting to damage other pupils' property/school property
- Using graffiti or marking school property or school furniture
- Possession of dangerous objects
- Deliberate misuse of equipment
- Possession or display of unsuitable materials
- Telling lies
- Stealing
- Leaving the classroom without permission
- Leaving or attempting to leave school premises or going beyond school boundaries within Holy Spirit Junior Primary School environment
- Persistent misbehaviour in school causing concern for safety of others

These are examples of serious breaches of discipline and this list is not exhaustive.

### **Strategies for Addressing Unacceptable Behaviour:**

The school's Code of Behaviour is signed by all parents/guardians at the time of their accepting a place in Holy Spirit Junior Primary School. New rules may be introduced as and when circumstances arise. Rules are enforced consistently and fairly. All members of Staff are committed to addressing unacceptable behaviour.

- Rules in each class are consistent with the Ethos of the school in terms of safety, learning, communication and respect
- Staff and pupils together devise the rules
- Rules are expressed where possible in positive terms
- Rules are discussed and displayed in classrooms, school corridors and addressed at Assembly
- Rules and routines are explicitly taught
- Some skills are specifically taught in the S.P.H.E. or RE Curriculum and are used to support positive behaviour.
- Parental involvement is expected in addressing unacceptable behaviour

### School's response to Misbehaviour requiring Internal Exclusion/Time Out:

The primary reason for internal exclusion/time out is to protect pupils' and staffs' rights (including the right to feel safe and the right to learn). It gives the pupil and the others in the classroom/group time to cool down and regain composure. The pupil learns to make the connection between behaviour and outcome.

If a pupil continues to disrupt a lesson he/she may need to be withdrawn from the classroom. Reasons for internal exclusion may include:

- Persistent disruption to lessons involving shouting/screaming
- Foul and abusive language to other pupils or staff
- Misuse of equipment and furniture
- Bullying and unpleasantness to others
- Refusal to follow school procedures
- Threatening/aggressive behaviour towards others

The following procedures may be used to deal with misbehaviour:

1. Discussion with pupil
2. Initial warning given
3. Sanctions may include:
  - Temporary separation from other pupils
  - Time out within class at learning table
  - Time out in Partner Class/es
  - Detention during mid-morning break and/or lunchtime under supervision
  - Withdrawal of privileges
  - Performing a useful task in the school
  - Taking the teacher's hand at break time
  - Standing at wall in yard for a defined period of time
4. Notification given to parent of misbehaviour
5. Meeting with parents arranged by class teacher
6. Inform the Principal/Parent/Pupil
7. Meeting with Parents, Staff, Principal

If the problem persists, or in the case of serious misbehaviour, it may be necessary to have on-going discussions between the Parents/Guardians, Teachers and Principal to monitor the situation - always with the objective of helping the pupil.

### Suspension

The Board of Management of Holy Spirit Junior Primary School has the authority to suspend a pupil. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Suspension will be used as a sanction for gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, where all efforts of the school, in consultation with the parents / guardians of the pupil have failed to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.

### Categories of suspension

- Suspension
- Immediate Suspension
- **Suspension**

If the case arises of a pupil being **continuously disruptive** or there is a **serious breach of discipline** by a pupil, the Board of Management authorises the Chairperson / Principal to exclude/suspend such a pupil or pupils from school for a period of not more than three days.

Parents/Guardians are notified in writing and are expected to attend a meeting with the Principal and relevant staff. Following or during a period of suspension, the parents / guardians may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school.

A pupil will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where it is considered that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

The Board may authorize the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour 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/cannot give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended on a rolling basis of two days, then three days followed by a further period two days then three days.

The parents / guardians must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. 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.

In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000) Section 21(4)(a), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six days.

A suspension, which would bring the total number of days a pupil has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more, is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

- **Immediate suspension**

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour. 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 pupil/pupils, the Board authorises the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days. Parents will be notified and arrangements made for the pupil to be collected.

If the Principal proposes a suspension, longer than three days, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management. The Board may authorize the Principal with the approval of the Chairperson, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion.

The school will seek the assistance of support agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Services, Health Service Executive, Community Services and National Council for Special Education. A process of investigation into possible underlying difficulties for the child will continue

In cases of repeated instances of serious misbehaviour 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/cannot give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended on a rolling basis of two days, then three days followed by a further period two days then three days.

The process of investigation into possible underlying difficulties for the child will continue.

In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000) Section 21(4)(a), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six days.

A suspension, which would bring the total number of days a pupil has been suspended in the current year to twenty days or more, is subject to appeal under section 29 of the *Education Act 1998*.

## **Expulsion**

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student in an extreme case or where repeated incidents of gross misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students, or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000) section 24. Suspension / expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

### **Factors that will be considered in the case of Expulsion**

1. Persistence of unacceptable behaviour
2. Escalation of unacceptable behaviour in spite of intervention.  
Examples of intervention:
  - Involvement of parents
  - Behavioural programme /strategy
  - Learning intervention
  - Contact with NEPS HSE NCSE and other relevant agencies
3. The impact of the behaviour on other children and staff
4. The impact of the behaviour on teaching and learning
5. The Board's satisfaction that no other intervention can be tried or is likely to help

## **Appeals**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents / guardians (or pupils who have reached the age of 18) are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science 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.

**Board of Management's Responsibilities**

- Provide a comfortable and safe environment for pupils and staff.
- Support the Principal and staff in implementing the code.
- Ratify the code.

**Principal's Responsibilities**

- Promote a positive climate in the school for pupils and staff.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code of Behaviour, as required.

**Teachers' Responsibilities**

Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare schoolwork and correct work done by pupils.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
- Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.

**Pupils' Responsibilities**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
- Show respect for all members of the school community.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
- Avoid behaving in any way, which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
- Include other pupils in games and activities.
- Bring correct materials/books to school.
- Follow school and class rules.

**Parents/Guardians' Responsibilities**

- Encourage children to have a sense of respect for themselves and for property.
- Ensure that children attend regularly and punctually.
- Be interested in, support and encourage their children's schoolwork.
- Be familiar with the code of behaviour and support its implementation.
- Co-operate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for others.
- Communicate with the school in relation to any problems, which may affect child's progress/behaviour.

Ratified by Board of Management on .....  
Date

Signed.....  
Chairperson, Board of Management