



Code of Behaviour Policy

Holy Cross Mercy School

INTRODUCTION



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

Policy Formulation

We revised our Code of Behaviour in January 18, following in-service for staff and pupils on the Abi Programme in November 2017 and in-service provided by St. Senan's Education Office on Anti-Bullying procedures, that Ursula Coffey (Principal) and Judy O'Mahony (Teacher) attended in December 17. We had previously revised our Anti-Bullying Policy, Complaints Procedure and Adult Anti Bullying Policy. We have started working on the framework for the introduction of a Wellbeing policy.

We have created a specific policy on Cyber bullying.

Our School aims to provide a happy and secure learning environment. Children, parents, teachers, special needs' assistants, ancillary staff and Board of Management work collaboratively to achieve this. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and is given the opportunity to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

The Board of Management and staff are committed to the realisation of these objectives. Our aim is to create a happy and secure environment for our pupils where there is a sense of orderliness and a reasonable approach to discipline. In this way, classes and our school as a whole can be organised so that they can operate smoothly for the benefit of all.

This revised Code of Behaviour comes into effect in March 2022. The code has been considered by the Parents' Association, Staff, and Education Welfare Officer and approved by the Board of Management. The code is mindful of the Child Protection Policy, Curaclam na Bunscoile, the school's Health & Safety Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Admission and Participation Policy

DISCIPLINE FOR LEARNING (DFL)

In our school, we have a positive approach to teaching and learning. Positive rules for behaviour in the classroom and in the school environment are devised in consultation with pupils at the beginning of their school year. Pupils are motivated to keep these rules as they adopt ownership of same.

We implement many ways of recognizing good behaviour including awards, stamps, words of affirmation in context, green cards, comments in homework diaries and homework passes. All members of staff will highlight good behaviour and achievement at every available opportunity. Consistent positive affirmation is key to the success of Discipline for Learning in our school.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice in our school provides a focus on developing positive relationships between all members of the school community. It gives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Restorative Practice is a process whereby children are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and how they and others have been affected by it so as to help heal broken relationships and prevent reoccurrence. Where suspension occurs, the school will use restorative practice involving all parties affected to help lessen the challenges faced by all parties involved.

Restorative Questions to respond to Challenging Behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been about it?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

To help those harmed by other actions

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

General Guidelines for Behaviour

All pupils are expected to behave in a reasonable manner both to themselves and to others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times. Respect must be shown at all times. Respect must be shown for the property of the individual and of the school at all times.

The Code of Behaviour details:

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

The Code of Behaviour of Holy Cross Mercy P.S. has been developed in accordance with 'Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools', National Educational Welfare Board, 2008.

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

- The original draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed by staff and where appropriate was amended as a result of consultation with the wider school community, including members of the Parents' Association.
- The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's Approval.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The aims and objectives of the code are:

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where the holistic development of the child is of paramount importance.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for the individual needs of all.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community.

- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the Code.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Pupils' General Behaviour

Each pupil is expected to:

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

School begins at 8.45am and ends at 2.25pm. All pupils are expected to be present between these times. The school is not responsible for the safety of children on the premises outside of these hours.

School ends for Junior and Senior Infants classes at 1.25pm. All children must be collected by the designated person, as per the enrolment form, outside the school at 1.25pm.

Uniform

All children are obliged to wear the appropriate school uniform and the school tracksuit for P.E. and on School Tours, if specified. (School tracksuit and trainers must be worn only on the days when the class has P. E.)

The school uniform consists of:

Girls: grey pinafore, red v-neck jumper with crest, red shirt and red and grey tie. Black tights. Plain black shoes that can be tied securely. (No Ugg Boots or slip on pumps/shoes are allowed.) Only one pair of stud earrings allowed.

Boys: grey trousers, grey jumper, red shirt and grey and red tie and black shoes

School Tracksuit: all children wear a plain black track suit legs (without logos) and a white polo t-shirt which can be purchased anywhere you wish.

The red tracksuit top with school logo is available from Lyne's Shop High St. Killarney

Please label relevant items of clothing with your child's name and call to the school if an item of clothing is missing.

Behaviour Motto

KIND HANDS

KIND FEET

KIND WORDS

KIND HEARTS

This motto underpins all our school rules.

Our positive behaviour motto encompasses all aspects of school life, underpinning all of our school rules.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR

Each pupil is expected to:

- Work quietly and enable others to do the same.
- Finish their work in the given time.
- Raise their hand and wait quietly for the teacher's attention
- Call everyone by their given name.
- Stay in their place and sit quietly.
- Stop, Look and Listen when their teacher is speaking.

POSSIBLE SANCTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM.

- The First Time - a verbal warning will be given and a yellow card is given.
- The Second Time – “time out” in another part of their own classroom.
- The Third Time – “time out” in another classroom for a specified period of time.
- The Fourth Time –sent to the Principal.
- The Fifth Time – parents will be notified and a meeting to discuss the matter will be arranged.

POSSIBLE REWARDS IN THE CLASSROOM.

- Teacher will let them know when they are doing well.
- Teacher will give them a green card/good mark/star etc.
- They will get a reward – treat.
- The Principal will praise the child.
- The child's family will be informed of special achievements.

YELLOW CARD

- The Yellow Card is the Warning Card.
- This card may be placed quietly in front of a child who is misbehaving.
- This enables the teacher to continue teaching without disruption.

- The child should automatically know that he/she has been given a warning.

Two points to remember about the YELLOW CARD.

- “I will get a warning” (Sanction 1 of Classroom Sanctions) means that the child who is misbehaving is given a Verbal warning.
- It can also mean that a YELLOW CARD can be placed quietly in front of the child enabling the teacher to continue teaching without disruption.

The child will automatically know that the YELLOW CARD is a warning card.

RED CARD

- The Red Card is the “Unacceptable Behaviour” Card.
- This card can be issued by any teacher to a child who engages in “very serious misbehaviour” The child must automatically be sent to the Principal’s office where the incident is recorded.

GREEN CARD

- Green Cards are given to children who are seen to be doing their very best to abide by the School Rules and work to the best of their ability.
- These cards can be issued at any time during school hours.

PLAYGROUND BEHAVIOUR

- Each pupil is expected to:
- Play safely avoiding any games or play that are rough or dangerous.
- Follow the directions of the playground supervisor(s).
- Remain on school grounds at all times.
- Obtain permission before re-entering the school building during break periods.
- Respect the yard supervisor and fellow pupils.
- Refrain from using offensive language, fighting or name calling.
- Children are not permitted to pick up stones or use them as part of their play.
- During break times children are expected to play in the tarmaced areas and keep off the lawns. When appropriate children may be allowed play on the field.
- When the bell rings at the end of break, all pupils go to their designated line on the playground.

- As per school rules all forms of bullying, either verbal or physical are strictly forbidden..
- Teachers are on supervision duty each day and are assigned to each play area. SNAs are on duty in the area in which the child to whom they are assigned is playing.
- The SNA draws the attention of the teacher to any misbehaviour he/she observes on the yard. The teacher will then deal with the incident.
- All children are visible at all times if they comply with playground rules as outlined in the policy.
- On wet days the children remain in their classrooms. In each classroom, for health and safety reasons, children are asked to remain in their own places. There is a teacher on supervision duty on each corridor.
- When a child has to remain indoors at the request of their parents or if the child has detention the child goes to the hall adjacent to the office.

BEHAVIOUR IN OTHER SCHOOL AREAS

Each pupil is expected to:

- Enter/exit the school in an orderly fashion.
- In the interests of safety and courtesy teachers will encourage pupils to walk quietly along the right hand side of the corridor.

BEHAVIOUR DURING SCHOOL OUTINGS/ACTIVITIES

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow – his/her teacher’s directions at all times.
- Remain – with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times.
- Behave – politely towards those they meet on such excursions.
- Observe – the rules of general good behaviour.

Staff

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within the classroom and common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are specifically responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class. They will:

- Discuss and devise the Code of Behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will inform the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when instances of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report instances of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour, so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

A scheme for promoting positive behaviour will be used by:

- Inviting the Principal to the classroom to commend the behaviour.
- All teachers will praise the positive behaviour of students.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive Behaviour in school. Parents/guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to oversee homework. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign the homework diary when they deem it to be successfully completed. In Junior Infants' classes, parents sign homework when requested to do so by the teacher. Comments on positive behaviour may be entered in the child's homework journal.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour, they are welcome to make an appointment through the school office, to discuss their concerns.

In cases of identified pattern of misbehaviour, parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

Level 1 Behaviours:

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom, and common areas. Students learn through their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school, will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers
- Running in the hallways
- Disturbing the work or play of others
- Disrespectful language, tone, or manner
- Ignoring staff requests

Level 1 Disciplinary Action:

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s) (including advice on how to improve).
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour.
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Loss of privileges.
- Parent contact.
- Behaviour contract.

Level 1 Supportive Intervention:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as Open Circle or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation, (e.g. with parent(s)/guardian(s) or staff members).
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

Level 2 Behaviours:

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and well being of the students and staff. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note the list is not exhaustive.

Repeated instances of Level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention

- Behaviour which is dangerous to self or others (e.g. shoving, pushing, hitting).
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing.
- Cheating.
- Use of profanity.
- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult.
- Possession or use of dangerous toys or sporting equipment (e.g. bow and arrows, any kind of knives, etc.).

Level 2: Disciplinary Actions

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the Principal, and include the formal notification of parents, with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In-school supervised detention.
- Report submitted to the Board of Management.
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the Behaviour.
- Implementation of extensive Behaviour management plan.

Level 2 Supportive Interventions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Principal or other designated senior member of staff.
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

Level 3 Behaviours:

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention.
- Setting fires.
- Intentional possession or use of weapons.
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others. Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff.
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap, or ethnic origin.

Level 3 Disciplinary Actions:

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

Level 3 responses:

- Suspension from school for one to five days:
 - This response will occur with the first incidence of Level 3 behaviour or Level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The Principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension following consultation with Board of Management.
- Suspension from school for five to ten days:
 - This response will occur with the repeated incidence of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this Behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.
- Expulsion

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

Definition of Suspension: 'requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'. Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Suspend:

The Principal in consultation with the Board of Management of Holy Cross Mercy P.S. has the authority to impose a Suspension. A Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Board of Management, the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

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

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

Suspension and Automatic Suspension

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

An Automatic Suspension is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Holy Cross P.S., having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

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

In cases of an identified pattern of misbehaviour, parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

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

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of a Suspension or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her

parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

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

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

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

The Board of Management of Holy Cross Mercy P.S. acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

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

PROCEDURES IN RESPECT OF OTHER SUSPENSIONS:

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

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Holy Cross Mercy P.S. will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

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

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

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.

- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any programme of work that may have to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provide with information on the submission of such an appeal.

EXPULSION

Definition of Expulsion:

'A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.' Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board

Authority to Suspend:

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

Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

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

- A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required).
- As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than five school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond.

The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management.

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

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parent(s)/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s).

Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations and the Holding of a Hearing

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

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing as to;
- The date, location and time of the hearing.
- Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- That they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing.
- The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

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

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

Board of Management Deliberations and Actions following the Hearing

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

- Notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- Not expel the student before the passage of 20 school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.

- In writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted.
- Be represented at the consultation to be organized by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.

Confirmation of the Decision to Expel

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

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

The Board of Management of Holy Cross Mercy P. S. acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

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

NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence;

- The school should be notified of the absence on Seesaw, and the class teacher will keep an account on Aladdin.
- The reason for the absence should be clearly stated.
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and explanation, should be provided
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified by a medical professional.

The school will inform the Educational Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register

School Position on Bullying

The Holy Cross Mercy school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holy Cross Mercy School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior:
 - A positive school culture and climate which –
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that –
 - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:
- Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.***

The following types of behavior are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behavior, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behavior.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behavior.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The "Relevant Teacher(s)" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school is/are as follows:
- All class teachers
 - The Principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.**
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,
 - Awareness-raising exercises every school year for each class group, with emphasis in 4th to 6th class during Friendship Week (e.g. from the "Awareness-Raising" strand of the *Anti-Bullying Campaign*, via its website), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher" (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell e.g.

-Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time

-Hand note up with homework

-Get parent/friend to tell on their behalf

-Ensure that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place

-Explicitly teach the difference **between “telling tales” and “reporting”** People tell tales to get someone into trouble while reporting gets help for someone.

Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school 'Anti-Bullying Team' and encouraged to support its work.

We hold an annual anti-bullying/friendship week each year.

- Abi programme is taught in each class, with a different theme for each month.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour, are as follows:

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

(ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way; 31

(x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

(xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3 (See attached)

(xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account: · Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased; · Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable; · Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and · Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

(xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template

at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

6. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Bullied pupils:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour,
 - Fostering a school culture of respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
 - Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
 - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
 - If necessary contacting NEPS for advice.
- Bullying pupils:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils can change their behavior pattern
 - If necessary contacting NEPS for advice
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
 - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,

7. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:

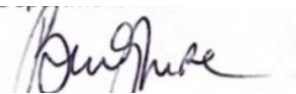
The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.


8. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

9. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on June 2014.

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

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

Signed: 

Signed: 

Date: 14th March 22

Date: 14th March 2022

This policy has been approved by St. Senan's Education Office, acting on behalf of the Patron
Bishop Ray Browne.



Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
Personal insults,
Verbal abuse,
Offensive language directed at an individual,
Continually shouting or dismissing others,
Public verbal attacks/criticism,
Domineering behaviour,
Open aggression,
Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
Treating in a dictatorial manner,
The "Look"
Invasion of personal space
Ridicule,
Persistent slugging,
Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.
- **Interference with property, for example:**
Stealing/damaging books or equipment
Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
Demanding money with menaces
Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
Condescending tone,
Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
Writing of anonymous notes,
Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,
Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,
Knowingly spreading rumours,
Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,
Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),
Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),
Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.