



Holy Well National School Code of Behaviour

Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour was developed by the Principal, in consultation with staff members, senior students, parents/guardians and the Interim Manager during the school year 2020/2021. This process recognises the importance of shared responsibility between home and school in issues of school discipline and was formulated in the spirit of partnership between parents/guardians and teachers.

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy a safe and secure environment. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions and behaviour of everyone in the school. The behaviour of adults in a child's life, including parents/guardians and school staff, is a significant influence on how a child acts. Parents/guardians are valued as partners in the school community and as such will be invited to participate in promoting positive behaviour in school, at home and in the wider community. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and so-operation between staff, parents/guardians and pupils. A clear understanding among all the partners of the standards of behaviour required and the procedures to be adopted where there are breaches of the code helps ensure a harmonious environment in which all can work effectively.

The aims of the Code of Behaviour of Holy Well N.S. are:

- To acknowledge the right of each child to an education in a safe environment.
- To create a safe, secure and nurturing environment for all, where effective teaching and learning can take place, without disruption.
- To help maintain good order and so aid the smooth running of school business.
- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents/guardians on the behavioural expectations and systems in place, and to seek their co-operation in the application of these.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others and the environment.
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To promote good relations and co-operation between all parties, i.e. staff, pupils, parents/guardians and management.

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour. Rules will be kept to a minimum, emphasise positive behaviour and will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents/guardians will be contacted at an early stage.

General Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, to wear correct uniform on designated days, to have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- Pupils are expected to obey a teacher's instructions, to work to the best of their ability and to present assignments neatly.
- Pupils are expected to attend every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence, in which case the school must be informed either in writing, via the school journal or school app stating the reason for absence. The Education Welfare Act requires schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child has been absent for 20 days or more in the course of the school year.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression by an individual or group against others. The most common forms of bullying are aggressive physical contact, name-calling, intimidation, extortion, isolation, taunting and cyber bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated, and parents/guardians will be expected to co-operate with the school at all times in dealing with instances of bullying in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Affirming Positive Behaviour

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions.

Strategies/Incentives for encouraging positive behaviour

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval.
- A comment on a child's exercise book.
- A visit to another class or Principal for commendation.
- Praise in front of class group.
- Individual class merit awards, points awarded or award stamps/stickers.
- Agreed class or individual rewards.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- Written or verbal communication with parent.

Overview of Sanctions for Misbehaviour

The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include:

- Reasoning with pupil.
- Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
- Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
- Prescribing extra work/behaviour reflection exercise.
- Privileges and school trips are forfeited.
- Communication with parents/guardians via note in journal or phone call.
- Meeting with student and parents/guardians.
- Referral to Principal.
- Principal communicating with parents/guardians.
- Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act .

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area, however they may be given a temporary time out to reflect or if deemed necessary removed on the grounds of health and safety.

Classification of Misbehaviours

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: Minor Breaches

- Failure to wear school uniform/tracksuit including appropriate footwear (except when excused for a good reason with a written note from parents/guardians, or on special occasions).
- Failure to get homework/Journal signed.
- Careless presentation of schoolwork.
- Failure to complete homework.
- Careless about not putting litter in bins provided.
- Damage to school property or property of others
- Failure to follow the instructions of the class teacher, ancillary staff or yard supervisor.
- Failure to line up, move safely around the school building or heed the bell/whistle on yard.
- Leaving the school yard without permission

Level 1: Sanctions

- Correction by class teacher, other teacher, ancillary staff, visiting teachers or coaches.
- An apology from pupil

Repeated Minor Breaches: Repeated instances of the above.

Further Sanctions:

- Further correction by class teacher, other teacher, ancillary staff, visiting teachers or coaches
- Note to parents/guardians
- Detention
- Written task / thinking worksheet to be signed by parent/guardian
- Referral to Principal.

Level 2: More Serious Breaches

- Use of foul or offensive language/gestures
- Leaving yard and entering school building without permission
- damage of a more serious nature to school property or property of others
- Dangerous/rough play
- Acts of aggression
- Repeated failure to complete homework
- Disruption of class
- Disrespect towards staff
- Disrespect towards visitors to school or towards other children
- Bullying
- Derogatory reference towards another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, sexuality or ethnic origin.
- Use of a mobile phone by a pupil on school grounds during school hours
- Possession of any item likely to be injurious to the child or others or likely to damage school property e.g., knives, matches, blades, cigarette lighters
- Skipping school/school activities
- Spitting
- Covid 19- Ignoring coughing, sneezing and hygiene etiquette

Level 2: Sanctions

- Referral to Principal
- Detention
- Formal contact with parents/guardians if a child is in detention
- Withdrawal of privileges for example: withdrawal from yard under supervision, withdrawal from school teams, tours, trips, school clubs (choir, band, chess) and in group activities
- Confiscation of dangerous items
- Confiscation of mobile phone during school hours, with parents/guardians needing to collect the item from the office
- Written apology from pupil/behaviour reflection exercise signed by parents/guardians.
- Cleaning up so as to restore school building, grounds or furnishings to correct state

Level 2: Supportive Interventions

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team meeting to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Level 3: Gross Misbehaviour

Repeated instances of level 2 actions after warning regarding future conduct.

- Use of threatening language, threatening behaviour, abusive gestures or acts of aggression causing bodily harm towards staff members
- Repeated act of wilful/unprovoked violence towards other pupils, teachers, ancillary staff or visiting teachers/coaches
- Stealing from peers or staff
- Possession/supply or use of alcohol, cigarettes, illegal drugs and/or other harmful substances.
- Bullying
- Wilful damage or attempted wilful damage of school property; property of teachers, ancillary staff, other pupils or special visitors
- Leaving school grounds during school hours without permission of Principal and notification from parents/guardians
- Misuse of a Mobile Phone and IT devices by taking photographs or video footage of pupils or teachers or sharing inappropriate messages
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions towards another person or group involving gender, religion, disability sexuality or ethnic origin.

Level 3: Supportive Interventions

- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Education Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education.
- Referral for a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s) guardian(s) consent.

Level 3: Disciplinary Actions

- Immediate meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher and principal.
- Written assurance of proper behaviour from the pupil and parents/guardians.
- Contact with the Gardai if deemed relevant or if illegal activity is involved.
- The length of the suspension will depend upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour.

Level 3: Sanctions

- **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. The rules will also apply to all and any school-related activities either within or outside the school, during normal school hours or outside these hours if the school-related activities necessitate this e.g. sporting fixtures, educational trips, etc.

Breaches by pupils from Junior Classes/pupils with SEN will be treated on a level more appropriate to their age/needs but the general expectation of good behaviour will apply to all pupils.

Meas agus Moladh

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSIONS

Definition of Suspension:

“requiring the student to absent himself 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 Board of Management of Holy Well N.S. has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an “**Immediate Suspension**” to the Principal teacher. An “**Immediate 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. Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher 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/circumstance. Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension.

An “**Immediate 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 in the school. An “**Immediate 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 Well N.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:

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff or physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

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. Parents/Guardians will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstances 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 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 pupils and parents/guardians.

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate 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 Well N.S. recognises the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

1. No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.
2. Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate 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 Well N.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 the 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 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. The Board of Management of Holy Well N.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.

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 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 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 Skills under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided 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) 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).
 - (i) details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
 - (ii) 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.
- (b) 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:

- (i) inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- (ii) ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- (iii) Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardians(s).

(C) 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.

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents/guardians will be utilised. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents/guardians may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/guardians concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the principal. If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents/guardians.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

School Rules

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. If a school is to function efficiently, it is necessary that rules and regulations are clearly stated and enforced consistently and fairly.

Before/After School

Parents/guardians are reminded that the staff of the school does not accept responsibility for pupils before official opening time and closing times:

- Infant School 8.40 a.m. opening time and 1.30 p.m. closing time
- Senior School 8.30 a.m. opening time and 2.30 p.m. closing time
- The exception to this is where pupils are engaged in an extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with school behaviour policy during these times.

Board of Management's Responsibilities

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

Principal's Responsibilities

- Promote a positive climate in the school.
- Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Arrange for review of the Code, 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 and consistently with misbehaviour.
- Keep a record of instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour.
- Provide support for colleagues.
- Communicate with parents/guardians when necessary and provide reports on matters of mutual concern.
- Teachers should model best practice

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 and visitors.
- Respect all school property and the property of other pupils and staff.
- Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
- Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling, including text & on-line messages.
- 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 the Board of Management of Holy Well N.S. on the 14th November 2020

Signed: *Diarmuid Cogan*

Chairperson

Aidan Crowley

Principal

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