Holy Child Community School

Code of Behaviour

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Our Mission Statement

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

Our Vision

Beart agus Briathar– Actions and words

"Lead the pupils by love rather than fear and all must show respect for one another" - Cornelia Connolly Founder of the SHC

Introduction

Rationale

The Code of Behaviour was formulated by all staff, in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and Section 23 of Education Welfare Act 2000. This policy is supported by the schools Behaviour of Concern Policy, Studio 3 policy Health and Safety policy and the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) "Developing a Code of Behaviour – Guidelines for Schools".

Scope

This policy applies to:

1. all pupils in HCCS,
2. all staff with responsibility for the promotion of positive behaviour during the school day
3. all pupils and staff while on school related activities,
4. all pupils on HCCS transport.

In promoting this Code of Behaviour the school is:

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

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

While good standards of behaviour are the expected norm at the Holy Child Community School, excellent standards are recognised and rewarded within the school. We believe that everyone in school has the right to be treated with respect. Good relationships are vital to the successful working of our school. We value achievements of every kind and we believe that all students should have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential. We also believe that students respond well to high expectations. In our school we expect everyone to work hard and give their best at all times.

The effective operation of the Code of Behaviour is only possible by setting out clearly the school rules and regulations for the benefit of each family. These provide guidance for the student and facilitate the daily operation of school life.

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

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

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

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

In protection of these rights:

- Staff members ***expect students to follow their instructions*** when implementing school and class rules and policies

- Staff members ***expect students to follow their instructions*** when issuing instructions relating to health and safety.

Expectations, Rules and Routines

Location	Actions	Words
In our school	I will…… • Arrive to school before 8.42 • Access the lockers before registration. • Get my books and materials for class. • Be in full and correct uniform. • Go to my reg room • Remember to turn off my phone, and it leave it in my locker/bag • Remember 'friends over phones' • sit down and take out my journal and prepare for the day • Be aware of inappropriate physical touch, (fist bumps etc) • Follow the instructions of staff supervising locker rooms	I will …… • Ask for Merits • Praise other people's good work • Use respectful language at all times • Speak politely to all staff and students • Communicate any issues with materials to your tutor or SNA • Greet others • Say please and thank you when appropriate • Be aware of overfamiliar language • Respond to greetings when students come and leave school

Location	Actions	Words
Classroom	**I will…..** ● **Follow STAR Behaviour**: -**S**tay calm and quiet -**T**ake out all equipment -**A**llow others to learn -**R**eady for class ● Be on time ● Be ready to learn ● Try my very best ● Listen attentively and respect others voices - one voice at a time ● Follow classroom rules ● Fill in my journal for all classes ● Leave the classroom as I would like to find it	**I will……** ● Speak respectfully to everyone in HCCS ● Use polite, appropriate language to all and in all interactions ● Use my voice proactively to reach my learning goals - ask questions to teachers, volunteer answers, check your understanding ● Use one voice at a time ● Follow reasonable requests
Location	**Actions**	**Words**
Break times	I will…. ● Go to assigned area ● Use my mobile phone appropriately ● Clear up after myself	I will……. ● Follow the cleaning rota in my break room ● Speak respectfully to everyone

Location	Actions	Words
	• Use my locker - get correct books • Enjoy a brain and screen break • Follow healthy eating policy • Check in on my classmates • Get involved in games and clubs • Be mindful to include others when socialising • Use bathrooms • Walk calmly on laps	• Enjoy talking to my classmates • Use my indoor voice
Location	**Actions**	**Words**
Corridor	I will…… • Follow one the way system throughout the school • Walk, do not run • Use bins provided • Be respectful of others • Make sure to get to class on time • Keep my phone turned off, In my bag/locker, at all times on the corridor • Respect all school notice boards, art work, notices, etc	I will….. • Use respectful language at all times • Speak politely to all staff and students

Location	Actions	Words
Location	**Actions**	**Words**
Bathrooms	I will…….. ● Use the bathroom before morning reg, at breaktime and at lunch. ● In an emergency, I may ask permission from my teacher to use the bathroom during period 2, 5 and 8. ● Follow the bathroom procedures - ○ get written permission in my journal, ○ sign for key at front office, ○ leave my journal at the office ○ wait for key if needed, ○ return key to office ○ pick up my journal before I return to class. ● Leave the toilets how I would like to find them. ● Follow school policies regarding substance misuse in all areas, bathroom included. ● Use the bins provided ● Leave my school bag outside the toilets	I will…. ● Ask for permission politely from the teacher. ● Report any instances of anti-social behaviour (graffiti, loitering, smoking, vaping) in bathrooms to management. Remember 'we are a school that tells'! ● 'See something, say something'
Location	**Actions**	**Words**
Locker rooms	I will…… ● Use my locker in the morning, break time, lunchtime and after school	I will…. ● Be mindful of my words, volume of voice around others at all times

Location	Actions	Words
	• Check my timetable to ensure I have all the equipment needed. • Keep my locker neat and tidy • Be mindful of others' personal space. • Keep my locker locked at all times (using school lock only) • Use appropriate bins provided mixed and recycling. • Get organised for next 3 classes • Respect others and their belongings • Follow the instructions of the staff supervising locker rooms	• Use respectful language in the locker rooms • Use respectful and appropriate language at all times
Location	**Actions**	**Words**
School Grounds	I will…….. • Walk calmly to the school building. • Dismount from my bike/ scooter before entering school property. • Lock my bike, scooter etc, in the bike park provided. • Be mindful of cars entering the school • Use the pedestrian gate and path at all times	I will…… • Use respectful language • Look out for others • If something doesn't seem right, let someone know

Location	Actions	Words
	• Put rubbish in bins outside or inside or in my pocket	
Trips and Outings	I will…… • Follow the direction of all adults. • Look well. Represent the school in a positive light. • Follow all school rules • Be mindful of others • Stay with my group • Be curious, ask questions, be engaged • Bring a positive attitude • Be polite and courteous with members of the public • Wear the correct uniform • Be aware of personal safety	I will…. • Be polite to everyone • Meet new people, make new connections, be open to working with everyone • Welcome others into my team • Be respectful in my dealings with all staff • Say please and thank you

Responses to Behaviour

Examples of Low Level Behaviour	Possible Responses to Low Level Behaviour	Possible Sanctions
• Late to class • Incorrect uniform • Insufficient work • No Homework/equipment • Eating/drinking/chewing gum • Disruption by talking out of turn • Mobile phone (see Acceptable Use Policy) • Punishment sheet not done • Failure to attend teachers detention	• Have a conversation with the student • Negotiate with the student and discuss the impact of behaviour on other students and their learning. • Teacher outlines expectations and gets a firm commitment for improvement; ask the student what support they need. • Outline consequences/ rewards of making future choices. • Positive reinforcement if a student is making an effort and has improved. Use of Merit System to reinforce and record ***positive events*** in the journal and on VS Ware. • Follow the stages of the "Yellow Slip" for low level misbehaviour. • Negative behaviour from a student needs to be recorded in a note in the journal and on VS Ware in the format of ***"Issue , Action & Outcome".*** This should be done for each stage of the "Yellow Slip" • Completed "Yellow Slips" (stage 5) to be recorded on VS Ware and can be given to Year Heads or emailed.	Follow Stages of "Yellow Slip" in the following order: **1. Note in journal** If not signed, teacher should follow up **2. Punishment sheet:** This can be extra work or punishment sheet, does not need to be punitive. Should also include a note in the journal **3. Teacher detention:** Arranged by class teacher, should be recorded in the journal so parents/guardians are aware 4. **Contact parents/guardians-** Phone call /Email/Letter **5. Refer to Yearhead** Email Yearhead with details.

Examples of Medium Level Behaviour	Possible Responses to Medium Level Behaviour	Possible Sanctions
• Persistent minor misbehaviour • Serious defiance • Refusal to hand up Phone/Journal • Rudeness • Truancy • Vandalism • Punishment not done • Failure to attend detention	• Negotiate with the student and discuss the impact of behaviour on others/ teachers and their learning. • Year Head outlines expectations and gets a firm commitment for improvement- ask the student what support they need. • Outline consequences/ rewards of making future choices. • Positive reinforcement if a student is making an effort and has improved. • Year Head may refer student to pastoral care team. • Parents/guardians may be contacted by phone about the matter. • Year head may invite parents/guardians & student to attend meeting to discuss reports from relevant teacher and make a plan for improvement • Referral to BFL. • Year head may decide to put student on **"Report"** and this will be closely monitored and signed by Year Head on a daily basis and will be signed by parents/guardians every day. • Record every positive & negative incident on VS Warel in the format of ***"Issue , Action & Outcome"***	• Year Head detention after school • Removal of privileges • Putting student on Report (see note) • A meeting with parents/guardians

Examples of High Level Behaviour	Possible Responses High Level Behaviour	Possible Sanctions
• Persistent serious misbehaviour • Refusal to follow teacher's requests. • Verbal /written abuse towards staff and students • Smoking/ Vaping on school premises or grounds • Setting off fire alarm • Substance abuse or dealing in prohibited substances (including aerosols vapes illegal drugs alcohol) • Inappropriate use of Internet • Violent/Aggressive behaviour, e.g. physical assault • Threatening language/actions towards staff or students	• Negotiate with student and discuss the impact of behaviour on others/ teachers and their learning. • YH/DP will get feedback from all the students teachers regarding the students' progress • YH/DP outlines expectations and gets a firm commitment for improvement- - ask the student what support they need. • Outline consequences/ rewards of making future choices regarding a positive route forward	• Year Head Detention • Meeting with parents/guardians • In House Suspension (see note 1 below) • Removal of privileges • Putting student on Report (see note 2 below) • Suspension • Expulsion

*** Notes**

1. **On Report**

- Students must get report signed in journal at the end of each period
- It is a student's responsibility to get their report signed
- Student must show their report to their Year Head at designated times throughout the day (at the discretion of Year Head)
- Student must see their Year Head after school each day to get report signed
- parents/guardians must sign report every night
- If a Year Head is not satisfied with the report, a detention may be given
- Failure to comply with the above will be referred to the DP

2. **In House Suspension**

- All staff will be informed by notification on the staff noticeboard and by email if a student that has been put on **in-house** suspension
- Staff will be asked to fill out a list of work for the student
- The students' parents/guardians will be informed of the **in-house** suspension.
- parents/guardians will be given an appointment to meet the Year head/ DP/ Principal
- The student will be on a daily report for the period of the suspension
- The **in-house** suspension will require the student to follow another class timetable which will be provided.
- The Year Head will monitor the students' progress throughout the day
- Subject teachers will provide work to DP and YH for the student
- The student will meet with the Year head at the end of each day of the in house suspension to review their work, behaviour and to sign their **report.**
- The student will meet with the Year head at an appointed review date after the **in-house** suspension has been completed. A restorative practice approach to be used at all meetings.
- Support of pastoral care team and /or BFL may be offered
- Students will be on report for 5 days following **in-house** suspension.
- While on report, students can receive merits for improved behaviour and a card acknowledging improvement is sent home at the end of this period.
- Failure to adhere to conditions of being **on report** is considered a serious example of refusal to follow a teacher's request.

Encouragements and Rewards



A Positive Focus in the Holy Child Community School:

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

Teachers use a range of rewards and a merit system to promote good behaviour where appropriate.

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

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

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

Merits are awarded to students who display academic excellence or endeavour, good behaviour or courtesy, positive participation or helpfulness or very good organisation. All students, regardless of ability, are able to earn merits. As a general rule this is based on a "brilliant" piece(s) of work, homework(s) classwork, project work, practical piece(s), etc.

Merits are entered into journals by staff members who are committed to actively supporting the promotion of good behaviour. The teacher uses their judgement/discretion on entering merits into the students' journals.

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

Other Forms of Reward used at Holy Child Community School

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

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

Rewards

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

- Postcards home
- Citations at Assembly

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

Cornelia Connelly Character Awards

Gratitude: A student who shows appreciation and gratitude for resources, opportunities and support given to them and encourages others in doing the same.	**Generosity:** **A student who shows an awareness of what needs to be done and a readiness to help others. Students who show selflessness and volunteer their help and time to do jobs, charitable events or organised school events.**
Compassion: **Students who are compassionate, kind and thoughtful people, who become involved in small and big ways. They reach out to others and show concern for people and issues outside themselves.**	**Joy:** **Students who contribute to the happy and joyful atmosphere in school. This joy can be expressed not only in smiles and laughter but openness and optimism in school and has made meaningful connections within the school.**
Courage: **Students who are courageous and challenge injustice and speak up for what is right. These students are resilient through difficult times.**	**Perseverance:** **Students who persevere in a task or action despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. Perseverance also relies on resilience and these students continue to navigate the ups and downs of school and personal life.**
Respect: **Students who show respect to each person, regardless of gender, age, race, religion or sexual orientation. These students respect staff, students and themselves and conduct themselves in a way that is respectful and all inclusive of all.**	**Trust:** **Students who conduct themselves in an honest and authentic way that inspires trust. These students are reliable and assure you that they will work well and reach their potential. They also trust in staff and are confident in the support given to them.**

Suspension and Expulsion

Authority to Suspend

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

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

The grounds for suspension

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

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

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

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

Suspension as a sanction

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

Circumstances in which suspension will be considered include:

- Repeated incidents of indiscipline in spite of warnings and counselling by staff.

- Failure to recognise and submit to the legitimate authority of the school.
- Behaviour which is considered to interfere with the right to learn of other students.
- Particularly serious incidents which endanger the welfare of others or themselves

Suspension as part of a behaviour management plan.

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

- Enables the school to set behavioural goals with the student and their parents/guardians.
- Gives school staff an opportunity to plan other interventions.
- Impresses on a student and their parents/guardians the seriousness of the behaviour.
- Sets down certain conditions for the student before they return to class.
- A suspended student and their parent/ guardian must meet the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the House-head and teacher(s) before returning to school/ relevant class.
- The school shall ask the parents/guardians to offer every support to the school in helping the student to modify their behaviour on returning to school.

- When suspension has been for an offence in class, a returning student will be accompanied by the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the House-head before being accepted back to that class and if necessary a note, signed by student and parent/guardian, for the relevant teacher.

Forms of Suspension

Immediate Suspension

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

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

- Verbally abusing a member of staff
- Physical threats or violence towards a member of staff.
- Harassment of a member of staff.
- Physical abuse to other students

Procedures in relation to immediate suspension

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

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

The period of suspension

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

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

Suspension during a state examination

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

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

Appeals

Local appeal

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

Section 29 appeal

Where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches twenty days, the parents/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act 1998, as amended by the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007.
At the time when parents/guardians are being formally notified of such a suspension, they and the student shall be told about their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and shall be given information about how to appeal.

Implementing the Suspension

Written notification

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

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- The reason for the suspension
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents/guardians (for example, parents/guardians might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the Code of Behaviour)
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management and the procedures for that appeal
- The right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under section 29 of the Education Act1998.

Grounds for removing a suspension

A suspension may be removed if the Board of Management decides to remove the suspension for any reason or if the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science directs that it be removed following an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998.

After the suspension ends

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

Re-integrating the students

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

Records and Reports

Formal written records shall be kept of:

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

Report to the Board of Management

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

Report to National Education Welfare Board

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

Review of use of suspension

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

The grounds for Expulsion:

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

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

Grounds for Expulsion include:

A proposal to expel a student requires serious grounds such as that:

- The student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- The student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety.
- The student is responsible for serious damage to property.

The grounds for expulsion may be similar to the grounds for suspension..

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

Expulsion for a first offence

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

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

Determining the appropriateness of expelling a student

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

Procedures in respect of Expulsion

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

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

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

The Process:

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

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

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

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

parents/guardians and the student shall have every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made about the veracity of the allegation, and before a sanction is imposed.

Where expulsion may result from an investigation, a meeting with the student and their parents/guardians/ shall be essential.

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

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

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

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

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

- Inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
- Ensure that parents/guardians have: all relevant records: the allegation(s) against the student; the matters investigated by the Principal; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents/guardians.
- Notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing.
- Advise the parents/guardians that they may make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.

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

Consistent with its obligation to give parents/guardians sufficient notice of a hearing, the Board shall hold a meeting to consider the Principal's recommendation as soon as is feasible. Its first duty at this meeting is to review the Principal's investigation and satisfy itself that the investigation was properly conducted according to fair procedures. The Board shall also undertake its own review of all documentation and the circumstances of

the case. It shall ensure that no party who has any involvement with the circumstances of the case is party to the Board's deliberations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Step 5: Consultation arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

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

- Make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultation with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the student, and anyone else who may be of assistance.
- Convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (*Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section24).*

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

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

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

Suspension shall only be considered where there is likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to expel

Where the twenty day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student shall be expelled, the Board of Management shall formally confirm the decision to expel (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson and the Principal). parents/guardians shall be notified immediately that the expulsion will now proceed. parents/guardians and the student shall be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record shall be made of the decision to expel the student.

Appeals

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

The Appeals Process

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

Review of use of Expulsion

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

KEY REQUIREMENTS: EXPULSION

Applying the Guidelines means:

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

Ensuring the policy is widely communicated

Developing and documenting good practice in the use of expulsion

Having fair procedures for investigation and decision making

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

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

Appendix 1 - Special Clases

HCCS has 3 special classes, 2 classes for students with ASD and 1 class for students with Moderate Learning difficulties.

The Code of Behaviour applies to all students however the school recognises that for some students school rules will be developed in a language and manner appropriate to their age and stage of development. HCCS recognises that the students may need to be taught how to relate cause and effects of behaviour in more tangible ways e.g. through the use of role play and images. The school also recognises that the students use a variety of approaches to internalise and learn new skills. Students will be encouraged, praised and listened to at all times by the staff in the school.

Vision and Aims

The aims of the Code of Behaviour are to:

- provide strategies for all school staff and parents/guardians on behavioural expectations.
- facilitate the holistic development of every child through teaching and learning.
- provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- provide a safe and secure learning environment for all our students.
- to promote positive behaviour while noting the difference between students and the need to accommodate these differences.
- create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.
- to teach, foster and encourage socially acceptable behaviour within the school and the community at large.
- to ensure that students behave in a respectful manner towards each other, school staff and the wider community.
- to ensure that the systems of rules, rewards, consequences and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- to assist parents/guardians and students in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their cooperation in the application of these procedures.

Implementation

The successful implementation of this policy will depend on the co-operation of the whole school team with the support of parents/guardians and visiting professionals. Parental knowledge and the school staff experience of each student will create a solid foundation for the successful implementation of this policy.

Collaborative Approach

It is the responsibility of the school management and staff along with students and their parents/guardians to work together to create a positive school climate that will support and promote good behaviour. In achieving this objective each partner has their own role and responsibilities.

Our school will

- Provide a safe and comfortable environment for the education of all students.
- 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 Code of Behaviour as required.
- Support and implement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Promote a structured and calm environment for all students.
- Physically modify the environment to reduce risk factors e.g. throwing.
- Speak to the students calmly, firmly and positively.

Students' Responsibilities

Each student to the best of their ability will be encouraged to try to

- Sit and work for short periods of time.
- Always try to do your best
- Share with others
- Take your turn
- Good listening
- Follow simple instructions
- Be kind and always use your good manners
- Be cooperative at all times.

The school rules will be presented and reinforced with students in language appropriate to their individual needs, such as

- Good listening
- Good walking
- Good looking
- Kind/gentle hands
- Good choices

Activities to encourage positive behaviour include

- Circle time in the classroom
- Role play and social stories
- Revising class/school/playground rules

- School assembly
- Providing individualised and necessary supports to support students to participate in the school community.
- Being on report

Bullying

Students should never bully others and never allow others to bully them. Bullying is always unacceptable. Positive behaviour shall at all times be encouraged within the school. In the event of misbehaviour staff will need to analyse the specific behaviour and complete an ABC form.

- Praise positive behaviour at all times.
- Provide opportunities/adequate time for the student to respond.
- Keep a record of instances of serious and/or repeated misbehaviours.
- Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among students.
- Recognise and affirm good work.
- Prepare schoolwork in advance of class allowing for predictable structure.
- Be courteous, consistent and fair.
- Respect the students' dignity.
- Provide support for colleagues through effective communication i.e., regular class meetings and Student Support Plans
- Communicate with parents regularly and report matters of mutual concern.

Parents/Guardians

The BOM and staff of HCCS acknowledge the valuable role parents/guardians play in the education of their children. Therefore, collaboration between home and school is essential and encouraged for the holistic development of each child.

Parents/guardians are requested to support the school staff in keeping the rules of the school. This can be done by

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Encouraging students to have a sense of respect for self and for property.
- Encouraging and helping their child to cooperate with the school rules.
- Where applicable, helping their child by supporting them to achieve the goals of their Student Support Plan.
- Being interested in, supporting and encouraging their children's schoolwork.
- Being familiar with the code of behaviour and supporting its implementation.
- Cooperate with teachers in instances where their child's behaviour is causing difficulties for self or others.
- Attending meetings and appointments in the school as requested.

- Communicating with the school staff any problems which may affect their student's progress or behaviour.

The staff of our school always welcomes the opportunity to discuss with parents/guardians any behavioural problems that may arise from time to time. With mutual respect, trust and goodwill these occasional problems are readily solved.

Visiting Professionals

The BOM and Staff welcomes and acknowledges the important role of the visiting professionals in each student's development. Relevant professionals will be consulted about students' programmes and will work in consultation with the class teacher to promote and encourage positive behaviour.

Minimising Inappropriate Behaviours

As each child is unique, so too are their needs. Different strategies will be effective with different students. Teachers and staff confer with their colleagues and/or parent/guardian when behavioural issues arise.
When approaches are identified to address the behavioural needs of students, it is important that all members of the school community, including parents/guardians work in a consistent manner, so as to minimise inappropriate behaviours and to enable the student to have a clear understanding of expectations of their behaviour.

Effective management of behaviour involves adherence to some basic strategies including

- Clear communication of student support plans
- Low arousal – quiet/calm approaches
- Clear communication
- Consistent responses
- Appropriate programmes which consider the specific and common needs of all students e.g., sensory needs
- Positive, trusting relationships
- Having extensive knowledge of each student's personality.
- Being able to read individual student's moods and act accordingly.
- Distracting the student to prevent the situation from escalating.
- Creating a safe class environment to protect staff and students.
- Collaboration with parents and visiting professionals on causes of challenging behaviour.

Other effective management of behaviour and to promote/acknowledge positive behaviour

- Positive role modelling by staff and constant reaffirmation of what is acceptable behaviour.
- To use the student's personal likes as a reward to promote positive behaviour.
- Being on report

Low Level Behaviours

Low level behaviours	Responses to behaviour
• Outbursts of crying and shouting. • Physical contact i.e., pushing, slapping to gain attention. • Un-cooperative on a one-to-one basis.	• If the student has a Positive Behaviour Support Plan it should be followed • Reminder of the school rules • Redirect the student to another activity • Adapt the sensory environment to meet the students' needs and within school limits • Verbalally reprimanding the student – advising them not to repeat the behaviour • Time in a quiet place to allow the student regulate their behaviour • Temporary separation from peers for a maximum of 5 minutes. Staff will then reassess the situation. • Loss of privileges depending on the students' ability to understand delayed gratification i.e., loss of music, loss of a reward token, loss of a sweet etc. • Referral to SENCO, DP or Principal in particular if staff/student is injured or there is property damaged. • Communication with parents/guardians to inform of the behaviour and to seek support.

High Level Behaviours

High Level Behaviours	Responses to behaviour
• Uncooperative in a group situation where the behaviour is a danger to and disrupts the rest of the class. • Aggressive physical contact i.e., forceful slapping, hitting/punching, aggressive pushing, biting. • Intentional physical destruction of class property i.e., deliberate throwing of objects. • Any behaviour that is seen as causing a threat to the health and safety of classmates and/or staff.	• Have knowledge of the student's support and behaviour plan. • Remove other students out of the situation for their own safety. • Give the student space and time to calm down. • At all times remain calm but firm. • Seek assistance if necessary. • Temporary separation from peers for 5 minutes. Staff will then reassess the situation and repeat as necessary. • Loss of privileges depending on the student's ability to understand delayed gratification • Referral to principal in particular if staff/student is injured or there is property damaged. Where there is serious damage i.e., items broken or a staff member requires medical attention then the student will be sent home until all appropriate repairs/staff are available • Communication with parents/guardians. Parents/guardians to be contacted about a serious incident. • Accident/Incident forms to be completed.

Managing aggressive or violent behaviour

When the usual strategies are not effective then the staff will look at the antecedent-behaviour-consequences (ABC) checklist which examines

- Possible causes/reasons for the behaviour
- The nature and frequency of the behaviour – relevant tick charts to be filled in
- What happens as a result of the behaviour?

- Where a student displays continuous misbehaviour a behaviour plan will be devised in their student support plan. Relevant professional support may be sought.

This type of assessment enables staff to make adjustments to the class environment and to the students' daily school routine. In exceptional circumstances, a shorter school day may be introduced to allow the student to become accustomed to the school routine and expectations. The plan will be shared with all school staff, parents/guardians to safeguard consistent implementation.

Involving Parents/Guardians in management of problem behaviour

- Parents/ Guardians shall be contacted about a serious incident involving their child.
- The SENCO, DP or Principal will contact the parent by email or phone.
- If parents have any queries or concerns, they can contact the school or make an appointment to meet the SENCO or Principal.
- When deemed necessary by the Principal, a copy of the accident/incident form may be sent to the parent/guardian.

Suspension

In cases where student and/or staff safety is compromised, students may be suspended.
Please see HCCS suspension and expulsions section.