



## Code of Behaviour

### Introductory Statement

This Code of Behaviour policy has been devised by the staff of Holy Spirit GNS and the members of the Board of Management. It was devised during the second term of the 2014/2015 school year. This policy applies to all pupils while in school and engaging in all school related activities including trips and outings. Updated in December 2025

### Rationale

The Board of Management of Holy Spirit GNS decided to review the Code of Behaviour to ensure that it is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB..*

It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23 (1) which refers to *the obligation on schools to prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. It details in Section 23(2), that the code of behaviour shall specify:*

- A. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school;*
- B. The measures that shall be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe those standards;*
- C. The procedures to be followed before a student may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;*
- D. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a student; and*
- E. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.*

### Relationship to Characteristic Ethos

Holy Spirit GNS strive to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The dignity of each pupil, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in this statement. As a staff we are aware of the importance of our pastoral care role in the welfare of our children, and are committed to safe guarding their well- being. 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 and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts. The code will be most effective where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents 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 also helps ensure a harmonious environment where all can work effectively.

## AIMS

In devising the code, consideration was given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school.

The aims are:

- (a) To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all
- (b) To create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development.
- (c) To ensure every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to behaviour in the school.
- (d) To encourage the involvement of both home and school in the implementation of this policy
- (e) To comply with legislation e.g. The Education (Welfare Act) 2000.

## PRINCIPLES

- (a) The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accept and work with these differences.
- (b) It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.
- (c) The school recognises that the educational needs of a student whose behaviour is unacceptable will be balanced with the educational needs of other students.
- (d) Every effort will be made to ensure that the code of behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner.
- (e) The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline in his /her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility with the staff for good order within the school premises.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

The school expects the highest standard of behaviour from its pupils including the following:

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

While the school has expanded on these principles to outline the "school rules", each class will display the "school rules" on the wall of their classroom. These rules will be discussed within the class and they will reflect the age and maturity levels of the students in the class. These rules will comply with Jenny Mosley's Golden rules, they will be recorded in simple language and they will be stated positively. Each class teacher will add to the "Golden rules" where they see fit. The rules will be referred to regularly and will form part of SPHE lessons.

**School Rules**

- We look after property- we don't damage things
- We listen to people- we don't interrupt
- We are kind and helpful- we don't hurt anybody's feelings
- We work hard- we don't waste time
- We are honest- we don't cover up the truth
- We are gentle- we don't hurt others
- Walk on stairs, corridors, in toilets and classroom

- Children are not permitted to wear make-up, false eyelashes or false nails, (inc. shellac, biab, acrylic
- Children are not permitted to wear rings or hoop earrings to school.

*School begins:* 8.55a.m.

*School Closes:* Junior and Senior Infants 1.35p.m.  
Other Classes 2.35 p.m.

### **Other Rules**

- Unauthorised use of mobile phones is not permitted.
- Chewing gum, crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks are strictly forbidden for lunch, as per Healthy Lunch Policy

### **Strategies for Encouraging Positive Behaviour:**

**Teachers and other school staff will use a number of strategies to promote positive behaviour at class and school level, for example:**

- Positive everyday interactions between teachers and pupils
- Good school and class routines
- Clear boundaries and rules for students
- Helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
- Exploring with students how people should treat each other
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Giving pupils responsibility in the school and involving them in the development of class and school rules
- Use a variety of reward systems e.g. star charts, Green Cards, student of the week etc
- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in a pupil's exercise book
- A visit to another member of Staff or to the Principal for commendation
- A word of praise in front of a group or class
- A system of merit marks
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
- Good manners month every November
- Star of the week at assembly
- Principals award at assembly

### **Disapproval of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with as follows: -**

(The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy)

- Teachers will use a "Step Chart" which will be displayed in their classroom (see Appendix 1). This step chart will be used at class teacher's discretion.
- Yellow cards and red cards used as communication of unacceptable behavior
- Friday detention for senior pupils who have been on the step chart on more than 2 occasions in the week (during school time)
- Lunch time detention with principal/member of staff
- Reasoning with pupils

- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Opportunity given to complete missing homework or other prescribed work
- Communication with Parents.
- Temporary separation from peers and/or loss of privileges.
- Referral to Principal/Deputy-Principal – yellow/red card
- Note to parents
- Pupils may be deprived of school outings for consistent misbehaviour.

Fill in *Student Behaviour Reflection Form* (See appendix 2)

- Suspension/expulsion (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by Circular 7/88).

### **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A STUDENT FAILS TO OBSERVE THE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal *based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours*, as follows:

#### **Examples of minor misdemeanours:**

- Interrupting class work,
- Arriving consistently late for school,
- Running in school building,
- Talking in class line,
- Leaving litter around school,
- Not wearing correct uniform,
- Being discourteous/unmannerly,
- Not completing homework without good reason,
- Not having homework signed by a parent,
- Rough play leading to unintended injury to self/fellow pupils.

#### **Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:**

1. Verbal reprimand / reasoning with pupil
2. Noting instance of yard misbehaviour in yard book.
3. Teachers will use a “Step Chart” which will be displayed in their classroom (see Appendix 1). This step chart will be used at class teacher’s discretion.

#### **Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with regular occurrences of minor misdemeanours**

##### **Phase 1**

1. Child will be placed on Step 1,
2. Child will be placed on Step 2,
3. Child will be placed on Step 3,
4. Note home to parent/guardian.
5. Removal of reward or privilege

**Phase 2:**

1. Phone call home
2. Class teacher meets one/both parents
3. Principal/Deputy Principal meets one/both parents concerning behaviour.

**Examples of serious misdemeanours**

- Constantly disruptive in class i.e. repeated instances of misbehaviour, persistent interruptions,
- The use of abusive and offensive language against teachers and students and any persistent misbehaviour that puts the educational welfare of other students at risk.
- Making untrue statements about others
- Stealing
- Damaging other pupil's property
- Bullying / Back answering a teacher
- Frequenting school premises after school hours without appropriate permission
- Leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission
- Deliberately injuring a fellow pupil
- Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours:**

1. Child will be placed directly on Step 4
2. Child will fill out a behavioural sheet. This sheet will be signed by parent/guardian, student, teacher and principal. **N.B remember to photocopy behavioural sheet before it's sent home. Teacher must record date and event in personal diary.**
3. Principal meets with one/both parents
4. Chairperson of Board Of Management informed and parents requested to meet with Chairperson and Principal
5. Contact Gardaí if a child leaves school premises without permission.
6. In cases of Infant parents, teacher will contact parents/guardians by phone or other.

Where there have been repeated instances of serious misbehaviour and all the above steps have been followed then suspension will be considered for a temporary period of time in accordance with the TESS procedures. Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for schools. Appendix One for procedures to be followed for suspension and expulsion.

**Examples of Gross Misdemeanours**

- Vandalism - Setting fire to school property / deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on/Graffiti.
- Aggressive threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil
- Bullying
- Supply or use of illegal drugs.
- Serious theft
- Bringing weapons to school.
- Mobile phone/unauthorised device usage on school grounds.

**It should be noted that these lists consist of examples only: It is not meant to be a totally comprehensive list of misdemeanours and procedural steps.**



**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours**

1. Child will be placed directly on Step 4, (see appendix 1)
2. Child will fill out a behavioural sheet. This sheet will be signed by parent/guardian, student, teacher and principal.

**(N.B. remember to photocopy behavioural sheet before it's sent home. Teacher must record date and event in personal diary).**

3. Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents
4. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e. *"No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality"*.

**RECORD KEEPING**

- A record will be kept in the school of all instances of serious misbehaviour by pupils.
- Breaches of behaviour will be recorded in writing by the class teacher and if necessary by the Principal and will be stored in a central file.

**Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion****SUSPENSION**

Normally, other interventions will have been tried before suspension and the school staff will have reviewed the reasons why these have not worked. Suspension can provide a respite for staff and the pupil, give the pupil time to reflect on the link between their action and its consequences and give staff time to plan ways of helping the pupil to change unacceptable behaviour. The decision to suspend a pupil will follow from serious/gross misbehaviour:

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

**Procedures for Suspension**

The Board of Management of Holy Spirit GNS will follow the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing a Code of Behaviour (Chapters 10 – 12).

Fair procedures (i.e. the right to be heard and the right to impartiality) will be applied at all times. Accordingly, pupils and their parents will be fully informed about the alleged misbehaviour and the processes that will be used to investigate and decide the matter and they will be given an opportunity to respond to an allegation before a decision is made and before a serious sanction is imposed. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Board may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary when the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of pupils or staff of the school, or any other person (p73). Automatic suspension will apply in the event of a student engaging in gross misbehaviour (see above).

The Board of Management will also follow the factors to consider before suspending a student (p.72) and the factors to consider before proposing expelling a student (p82).

**In relation to suspension,**

- Communication to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained. In some circumstances it may be necessary to contact parents by phone.
- The parents/guardians and the pupil will be invited to meet with the Principal and/or Board of Management to discuss the proposed suspension.
- The Board of Management has delegated responsibility for suspension to the principal in the event that immediate suspension of a pupil is warranted (Guidelines p73). The parents/guardians and child will be invited to discuss the matter with the Principal and the procedures governing suspension will be applied.
- Where parents do not agree to meet with the Principal, written notification will serve as notice to impose a suspension.
- A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents/guardians
- A suspension will *not be for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is necessary in order to achieve a particular objective.* The letter will confirm:
  - The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
  - The reasons for the suspension
  - Any programme of study to be followed
  - The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents (for example, the pupil and parents might be asked to reaffirm their commitment to the code of behaviour)
  - The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management
  - The right to appeal to the Secretary general of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998 Section 29).
- The suspension will be recorded on the TESS '*Student Absence Report Form*' (when applicable).
- When a period of suspension ends, the pupil will be re-admitted formally to the class by the principal. The school will help the pupil catch up on work missed and the pupil will be given the opportunity and support for a fresh start.
- Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Principal and/or the chairperson of the Board of Management.
- If a pupil continues to misbehave she may be suspended for a major fixed period (up to ten days) to allow for consultation with both the pupil and the pupil's parents/guardians to address the issues.
- As outlined above, parents/guardians and pupil will be given the opportunity to discuss the issues with the Principal/Board of Management.
- The Education Welfare Officer will be informed when a student has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively.
- Section 29 Appeal – when the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days the parents may appeal the suspension under section 29 of the Education Act and will be given information about



how to appeal.

**PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION** – The procedures outlined on pages 83 – 86 of the guidelines will be followed (see steps 1-6 below):

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

**Procedures for notification of a pupil's absence from school**

1. A written excuse on paper or Aladdin must be presented explaining absence from school for any number of days or part thereof. Parents are asked to note mid-term breaks and end of term closures when planning family holidays. It is inadvisable for students to miss time out of school term due to holidays. The school requests advance notification in writing should this occur.
2. If a child is absent for 20 days the school is obliged to inform the TESS. In the event of a child missing 20 days from school, parents will be informed of this in writing.

**Relationship to other school Policies**

- Other relevant school policies (eg. Health & Safety) will be referred to as appropriate.
- The school's Bí Cinealta is attached to this policy.

**Review**

The policy will be revisited at staff meetings and will be reviewed as appropriate

Ratified by the Board of Management: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**To be returned to the school**

I have read the *School's Behaviour Policy*. I agree to encourage my child to observe the rules of the school and I am willing to support the school in the implementation of all aspects of the Code of Behaviour.

**Signature of Parent/ Guardian:** -----

**Date:** -----