

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School



Many Cultures, One Community

**Information Booklet for Parents
2025/2026 School Year**

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Welcome note from the Principal

Dear parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for enrolling your child with us in Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School. I hope that this marks the beginning of a long and happy relationship between your child, your family and your school!

For some of you, it will be the first time you have enrolled children in the Senior building, while for others, your child is following brothers and sisters who have already enrolled here. For all of you, I hope that we can continue to build on our commitment of developing Mary, Mother of Hope National Schools as a centre of excellence for all the children in our care, from their arrival in Junior Infants until they leave us in Sixth Class.

As you may already know, Mary, Mother of Hope National School was established in 2001. In 2008, the school split into Junior and Senior schools. In the current year, we have 432 pupils on roll. Next September we will have seventeen classes in all; four Third Classes, four Fourth Classes, four Fifth Classes and four Sixth Classes along with our Autism Class. We are particularly pleased when, in 2013, our school campus was enhanced by the addition of an All-Weather pitch, a new library and four support rooms, which were provided in the Gannon Tower.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National school provides an environment where all of our children are cherished and respected and can reach their full potential in a safe and caring atmosphere. In a constantly changing society it is vital that children's personal development, health and wellbeing are nurtured. The school values and promotes a harmonious environment which nurtures the potential of each child to become a productive member of the school community. The school also promotes co-operation between staff-members, B.O.M., the Parents Association, parents and pupils.

We have assembled this information booklet to familiarise parents with the policies and practices of the Senior school. We hope that in doing this we can help you as parents- the primary educators of your children- to support us in the important task of educating your children. We do not take for granted that you have chosen to send your child to our school, and we hope that, together, we can work in partnership to ensure that each child gains the maximum benefit of their time in our school.

As our community in Littlepace/Castaheany continues to grow, I hope that our school can provide a focus around which the community can also continue to develop. I urge all parents to take an active part in their children's education and to work with us in building Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School as a centre of excellence for our children.

Once again, welcome to our school!

Áine Fitzpatrick
Principal

12th June 2025

School Vision

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development, health and wellbeing of each child. We are proud to be an intercultural school, and abide by our motto 'Many Cultures, One Community!'

School Ethos

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values.

A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school seeks to foster an appreciation of, respect for and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

The school aims at fostering a sense of community between Management, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and the wider community.

The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.

The school staff aims at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment

Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents.

Ancillary staff in the school, are highly valued and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.

The school recognises and celebrates the dignity and value of each individual child. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils in their care.

Close contact is central to the positive experience of the child in school. We aim for parents and teachers to value, respect and support one another. We seek to collaborate as partners, in leading the young people in whose education we play such a crucial role.

The school's code of discipline reflects Christian values promoted in the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope.

Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church.

Prayer is a feature of the school day. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments in co-operation between home, school and parish. Children are given the opportunity to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school.

The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School At A Glance

Staff in the School

In September, 2025, the school will have the following staff:

- Principal: **Ms. Áine Fitzpatrick**
- Deputy Principal: **Ms. Éidín Macnamara**
- Sixteen Class-based Teachers
- Eight Special Education Needs (SEN) Teachers
- Eleven Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- One Caretaker: **Mr. Séanna O'Moore**
- One Secretary: **Ms. Ana Alupoiaie**

Contact Details:

Main School Telephone Number: 01 812 8693
Email address: school@hopens.ie

School Website: www.hopens.ie

The School Day: School begins: 8:50 a.m. School closes: 2.30 p.m.

Meeting with Teachers

All questions / queries re school should be directed initially to the class teacher. Our teachers will do everything possible to meet parents at a time that is mutually convenient. Please understand that during the school day, class-based teachers have teaching duties which take absolute priority. Parents wishing to meet a teacher should, in the first instance, contact the secretary to make an appointment.

Parent/Teacher meetings

These take place every year in November and provide a forum to discuss any matters pertaining to your child's progress at school.

School Reports

Reports are sent home at the end of the school year. The purpose is to inform parents of their child's progress. Please be discreet with your child when discussing school reports so that you do not negatively impact on his/her self-esteem.

Readiness for school

We ask parents to help encourage their children to become responsible and independent as they enter the senior end of primary school.

Children should come to school in their school tracksuit *each day* and should present in a neat and tidy fashion. They should have all the books and equipment they need to complete their work in class, including a fully equipped pencil case. Details of these requirements are set out in the book lists.

As they get older, your children should be encouraged to take responsibility for getting themselves ready for school. This includes packing their own school bags, making their own lunch and getting their school uniform ready the night before school. While this may prove difficult initially, perseverance pays off in the end!!



Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School School Uniform

In the interest of continuity and to preserve a single identity for the campus, the uniform for Mary, Mother of Hope Senior school is the same as that for the Junior School.

Following a review of the school uniform policy in Mary, Mother of Hope Junior and Senior National Schools in 2023, it was decided that the school uniform will consist of **the school tracksuit only**.

Suppliers: There are two suppliers of the school tracksuits. These are:

Grants Uniforms, Unit 121 Coolmine Industrial Estate (Eircode D15 HWOX)

Leddys Uniforms, St. Brigid's Shopping Centre, Main St. Blanchardstown (Eircode D15 XH92)

Uniform for All Pupils In Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National school

- School tracksuit with light blue polo shirt
- White socks
- Suitable runners

The School Crest



The detail on the school crest contains the following symbols:

- The ring, as a sign of unity
- The book, as a sign of knowledge and learning, containing the Greek letters Λ Ω , (alpha and omega)
- The lily is the symbol of Mary, Mother of Hope, the patron of the school.
- The name of the school appears in Irish on the outline of the crest.
- The inscription in Latin reads 'Per Scientiam Ad Unitatem', meaning *through knowledge to unity and understanding*

Uniform Policy of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior N.S.

Rationale

Following a collaborative process between the staff, the Board of Management and the Parents' Association of the school, this uniform policy is set out in order to:

- reaffirm the Board's commitment to the safety, protection and welfare of every child in our school.
- formally outline the reasons for a school uniform and confirm its importance.
- provide clear direction and guidance to parents and staff so that breaches can be addressed in a fair and consistent manner.
- create a clear and separate uniform policy, by updating the information contained within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Following a review of the school uniform policy in Mary, Mother of Hope Junior and Senior National Schools in 2023, it was decided that the school uniform would consist of **the school tracksuit only**.

Aims and Objectives

- It is the policy of the school that all pupils wear a uniform during school activities. This includes the entirety of the school day and on special school-organised events outside of school hours.
- The wearing of a uniform helps to promote a positive image for the school.
- It contributes to the development of a sense of pride in the school.
- The wearing of a uniform prevents competition among pupils in the matter of dress and therefore reduces costs for parents/guardians.
- The wearing of a uniform contributes to health and safety by ensuring all uniform items will not cause harm or injury.
- It makes pupils recognisable as members of the school and ensures that pupils are easily identified outside the school on school trips and at sporting or other events.

Uniform Details

The school uniform for boys and girls in the school is as follows:

The uniform consists of:

- School tracksuit
- Light blue polo shirt
- White socks

Suitable runners, with adequate grips, must be worn at all times.

Wearing of School Shorts in warm weather:

In the months of September, May and June, the boys and girls coming to school may choose to wear knee-length hemmed shorts to school, with the school tracksuit. These are available to buy from our uniform suppliers.

School shorts, altered from the school tracksuit *and hemmed*, are also acceptable.

Footwear

Children should wear **suitable runners, with adequate grips**.

Pupils will not be allowed to participate in P.E. activities without such runners.

A list has been drawn up, in conjunction with the Parents' Association, of types of footwear that are deemed as unsuitable for school and which **may not be worn**. These are:

Converse Runners/ vans/ pumps
Knee length Boots
High Heels
Wedge Runners

Girls pumps: shoes with no grips
Flip flops /open backed shoes
High Tops

Jewellery

The only jewellery allowed is a watch, one bracelet and/or stud earrings. No other jewellery, such as rings or necklaces, are allowed in accordance with Health and Safety best practice.

Hair and Grooming

Make-up is not to be worn at any time at school or at school-organised events. The wearing of nail varnish, nail polish or false nails is also forbidden, unless at designated times. Pupils coming to school wearing make-up will be asked to remove it at the earliest opportunity.

We encourage hairstyles to be kept neat and conventional. It is expected that hair be kept a natural colour. Extreme contrasts are not acceptable.

It is expected that all students keep their hair clean and neat every day.

Notes

- The wearing of a uniform is compulsory in school and at school related activities unless otherwise specified.
- Uniform should be clean and neat at all times.
- All items of school uniform should be clearly labelled to ensure that they are not lost or mislaid.
- In the event of a dispute regarding the acceptability of a pupil's uniform, the school authority is the arbiter, subject to the Board of Management.
- Coats, jackets, caps and other non-uniform items may not be worn in class, at class-related activities or in the school building.
- Breaches of the Uniform Policy will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.

Monitoring & Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board on an on-going basis. It will be reviewed by the Board annually in order to maintain an integrated and inclusive approach, taking into account school resources, changes in legislation, DES regulations, the needs of pupils and the changing profile of our community.

This policy will be circulated to all school staff, members of the Board and volunteers and will be readily accessible to parents/guardians.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School Members of the Board of Management

Patron Nominee	Ms. Anita Diggin, Chairperson
Patron Nominee	Mr. Michael Shea
Principal Teacher	Ms. Áine Fitzpatrick
Teachers' Nominee	Ms. Marina Horan
Parent Nominee	Mr. David Shakeshaft
Parent Nominee	Ms. Adele Campbell
Community Nominee	Mr. John Kinsella
Community Nominee	Ms. Regina Hendrick

Mary, Mother of Hope National School Members of the Parents' Association

The Parent's Association plays a valuable role in the running of our schools. They provide a necessary link between the work we do as teachers in the school, and the important work of parents in the home. They support the school Boards of Management in the development of school policies and play an invaluable role in raising funds for additional materials and resources for the schools.

In the course of the school year, the Parents' Association organises a number of activities, in and out of school. These include Funky-Hair day, Sponsored walks, coffee mornings, refreshments for Graduation day and other school meetings, Christmas activities to name a few! This was a huge undertaking and highlights the strengths and benefits of partnership between home and school.

A joint Parent Association operates across the Junior and Senior schools. The current executive officers of the P.A. are:

Chairperson: Lorraine Shakeshaft

Treasurer: Rachel Conroy

Secretary : Jean Murdiff and Shirley Brady

The Parent Association meet regularly throughout the year in the Community Centre and all are welcome at these meetings. The Parent Association AGM will be held in September 2025. Parents are reminded that all parents are automatically members of the Parents' Association. We appreciate your on-going help and support!

The Primary School Curriculum in Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School fully embraces the primary curriculum, which is based around the core principles of child-centered learning. We identify with the three main aims of primary education:

- to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment. Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church. Prayer is a feature of the school day. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments in co-operation between home, school and parish. Children are given the opportunity to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school. The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

We fully endorse the vision of the Primary school curriculum. We celebrate the uniqueness of our children, as expressed in each child's personality, intelligence and potential for development. We nurture the child in all aspects of their development, including spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

The curriculum in our school is learner-centered. It emphasises the importance of literacy, numeracy, and language, while at the same time responding to changing needs in science and technology, social personal and health education, and citizenship. The curriculum is presented in 6 subject areas comprising 11 subjects:

Primary School Curriculum	
Areas	Subjects
Language	English, Gaeilge, Modern Foreign Language
Mathematics	Mathematics
Social and Environmental Education	History, Geography
Arts Education	Visual Arts, Drama, Music
Science, Technology and Engineering	Science, Technology and Engineering
Wellbeing	Physical Education Social, Personal and Health Education

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Extra-Curricular Activities

The holistic development of the children in our care is a central aim of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School. Children are offered a variety of experiences in school which are designed to support this aim. The school is also anxious to provide opportunities for children to develop skills, interests and hobbies together with a healthy attitude to leisure *outside* of the formal school day.

To this end, the Boards of Management wishes to encourage and facilitate the development of quality after-school activities in the school- both free of charge and paid activities. The board has developed a policy and a set of guidelines for after-school activities. This aims to ensure that after-school activities are provided in a safe and secure environment. It should also assist parents in making decisions in relation to such activities.

A number of voluntary extra-curricular activities are provided free of charge by school staff, in conjunction with the school. These include:

- The school choir
- Gaelic Football
- Hurling
- Camogie
- Basketball
- Athletics

The school has had tremendous success in developing Gaelic Games in conjunction with our local club, Erin Go Bragh. This has included reaching the finals of the Cumann na mBunscoil Junior and Senior hurling finals in Croke Park and Parnell Park on many occasions in recent years.

We are anxious to continue this tradition and we encourage all of our children, boys and girls, to take part in Gaelic Games in school and after school.

A number of paid after-school activities are also provided after school. At the beginning of each school-year, we draw up a menu of the after-school activities which are proposed in that school year. An application form is also provided. Parents who wish to enroll their children on any of these activities are then given the opportunity to do so at a registration day in September sent out on Aladdin. To date these activities have included Guitar, Homework Club, Art Club, Maths Club, Board Games Club, Performing Arts and Sports and Fitness.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Homework Policy

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up in order to have a consistent approach to homework amongst the teachers in the school and as a way of effectively communicating the school's approach to homework to parents

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

- To enhance pupil learning by consolidating the work done in school.
- To encourage consistency throughout the school.
- To promote a similar approach to homework across all class levels.
- To encourage positive home-school links.
- To enhance children's study and concentration skills.

1) Why give homework?

- Homework reinforces what the child has learned during the day and is, therefore an essential part of the learning process.
- Homework is differentiated where necessary.
- Homework provides a link between teacher and parent and helps develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less- and all homework assigned should be attempted.

2) How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:
- if homework has been neglected during the week
- in senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "homework off" as an acknowledgment of some special occasion. In addition, homework passes are given to children who have not missed a day in any month, in accordance with the school's attendance policy.
- Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

3) What is the content of homework?

- Homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks, digital tasks using Seesaw and written tasks. It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work and should therefore be completed with equal care.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, digital homework, Religious work, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents have an important role in listening to reading and listening to items to be learned to help ensure that this work is done well.

4) How much time should a child spend on homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

3 rd class	Up to 30 minutes
4 th class	Up to 40 minutes
5 th class	Up to 50 minutes
6 th class	Up to 1 hour

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

5) How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
- Preventing interruptions from other children or distractions, such as television and gaming consoles.
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.

6) The Homework Journal

- Each child has a homework journal. The journal offers parents and teachers an invaluable way of communicating between home and school. As with all books and copies, the Homework Journal should be kept neatly and free of any scribbles/drawings or other such marks.
- If parents wish to communicate with their child's teacher, the Homework Journal should be used. (additional pages are available at the end of the journal for this purpose)
- Parents are asked to check the journal each day for notes from the teacher.
- School notes and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis
- It is a requirement of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School that parents will be asked to inspect the homework that their child has completed and to sign the child's homework journal on a **daily basis**. Teachers will check homework journals on a daily basis. If parents do not sign the journal, teachers will make contact with the parents, to address the matter.
- Parents should check that children record their homework neatly in the correct page and tick each item of homework when completed.
- Parents should also make sure that their children get into the good habit of putting their books away at the end of their homework and checking their bag to ensure that they have all the equipment and books they need for the next day in school.

7) How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However, with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework journal every day.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week.
- Some items of homework (and class-work) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

8) Differentiated homework.

- Homework may be differentiated at the discretion of the class teacher and the SET team for various children. The child will be closely monitored in this regard.

9) When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances. Parents are discouraged from writing notes excusing their children from homework because of after school or other leisure activities.
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

10) When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school, before any television is watched, while your child is still fresh. However, some children need a break before starting homework.
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school

11) Failure to complete homework

Failure to complete homework assigned will be regarded as a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be treated in accordance with that code.

Remember

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school and the policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development, health and wellbeing of each child. It is an intercultural school, and abides by its motto 'Many Cultures, One Community!' The school seeks to foster an appreciation of, respect for and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

The school aims at fostering a sense of community between Management, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and the wider community. Close contact is central to the positive experience of the child in school. The school strives for parents and teachers to value, respect and support one another. The school recognises and celebrates the dignity and value of each individual child. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils in their care.

The school staff aims at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment.

The school's code of discipline reflects Christian values promoted in the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope.

The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

The school's high expectations around attendance

Attendance at school is a requirement under law. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We aim to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

- We expect children to be in school every day of the school year unless this cannot be avoided.
- We expect children to be in school for the full school day.
- We expect all school absences, regardless of the duration, to be accounted for by parents/guardians electronically or in written format.

How attendance will be monitored

Attendance at school is a requirement under law. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We aim to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

- We expect children to be in school every day of the school year unless this cannot be avoided.
- We expect children to be in school for the full school day.
- We expect all school absences, regardless of the duration, to be accounted for by parents/guardians electronically or in written format.

The whole-school approach:

The climate and atmosphere in our school is warm, welcoming and supportive. Pupils with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis are supported. We also work closely with parents of children with medical conditions to ensure school is fully accessible for them.

We strive to ensure all pupils feel safe, happy and secure. We are an intercultural school and we ensure pupils are active participants in their own learning, that learning is fun and that pupils experience success and positive reinforcement. We aim for the full and harmonious development of all pupils in our care. We implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school. We also prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school.

Promoting good attendance:

We highlight the importance of good attendance with parents at Induction Transfer meetings and at parent teacher meetings if the need arises. The school encourages and promotes good attendance by:

- Rewarding pupils with full attendance each month by giving them a *Homework Pass* which allows the pupils one night free from written homework. (The months of December, April and June are exempt)
- By acknowledging excellent attendance at the end of the school year (trophies for full attendance and certificates for pupils who missed 5 or less days).

Responding to poor attendance:

- Where class teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they bring this to the attention of parents at an **early stage**: poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage
- Written contact is made with parents when a child has missed 15 days.
- A phone call is made to parents of children who missed 20 days or more and this is followed through with a letter.
- Referral to Túsla is made when a child has missed 20 days.

School roles in relation to attendance

Parents

- To ensure their child attends school as fully as possible throughout the school year.
- To ensure that their child is in school by 8.50am each day and stays until 2.30pm.
- To notify the class teacher electronically through Aladdin or in writing of all absences.
- To work with the Class Teacher and/or Principal where there are issues around a child's attendance.

Teachers

- To call and record attendance on the school's electronic platform 'Aladdin' by 10:30am
- To record lateness.
- To send notes/make phonecalls to parents requesting written explanations of absence if these have not been given.
- To keep all notes of explanation on file and to accurately record reasons for absence on Aladdin.
- Where class teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they bring this to the attention of parents at an **early stage**: poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage
- To send letters to parents when a child misses 15 days and 20 days.
- To liaise with the principal in relation to concerns about attendance /lateness of children in their class.

AP2 Postholder

- To monitor school attendance on a termly basis and prepare letters to go home with children when they've reached 15 days and 20 days of absence.
- To liaise closely with teachers when concerns arise with children's attendance and/or punctuality.
- To prepare packs of homework passes to be given to each class teacher in September with a detailed monthly schedule attached. These are to reward children with full attendance each month.
- To order trophies for children with full attendance each academic school year.
- To liaise with the principal and print attendance certificates for children with 'Excellent' attendance each school year.

Principal

- To monitor attendance data and identify trends and patterns in attendance.
- To follow up on poor attendance/punctuality.
- To work closely with parents of children with medical conditions to ensure school is fully accessible for them.
- To make reports to Túsla and liaise with Túsla staff where necessary.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)

Parents, BOM, Parish, Mary, Mother of Hope JNS, Túsla, Érin GO Brágh GAA, Teachers running After School Activities and camps,

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored

It will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management with alterations made where required.

Promoting Punctuality in our school

Punctuality is promoted in the school, with the children being reminded regularly of the rule 'at ten to nine be in your line'. Parents are asked to ensure that children come to school on time every day, to establish good life-long habits.

Parents who wish to collect a child from school before the end of the school day should report to the office. Parents should send a note to the class teacher explaining the absence, preferably with at least one day's notice. The school secretary will ask parents to complete the sign-out book. She will then collect the child from the class.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Healthy Eating Guidelines

1. Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School, through these guidelines, aims to help all those involved in our school community; children, staff and parents, in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.
2. (a) Nutrition is known to be one of the key factors influencing the health of school children and adults. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The taught curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles.

(b) A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from the first four shelves of the food pyramid i.e.
First shelf: Vegetables, salad and fruit
Second shelf: Wholemeal cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta and rice
Third shelf: Milk, cheese and yoghurt.
Fourth shelf: Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

(c) Children may have one or two treats on special days e.g. end of term, the day of Christmas holidays, summer holidays etc. On these days children will be allowed to include some food from the top shelf of the food pyramid. Occasionally, teachers may give a sweet or a lollipop as a reward.

(d) Following discussions with Staff and Parent Association members it was agreed that parents should not send cakes or sweets to school on the day of children's birthdays. We are happy to acknowledge birthdays in class and to sing "Happy Birthday" but school staff will not distribute sweets, cakes or "Goodie Bags" sent to school.

(e) Cans of fizzy minerals and glasses are not permitted for health, safety and litter reasons. Healthier choices of drink include water, milk and unsweetened juice. Furthermore, crisps, sweets, chewing gum are not permitted in school.

(f) Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage for the small break include fruit, yoghurt, fromage fraise, crackers, carrot/celery sticks, raisins and cheese strings.
3. The school has adopted the Hot Lunches Scheme which provides children with a menu of hot lunches that they can choose to be delivered to their classroom each day. This initiative provides children with a healthy hot lunch and has proved to be a very successful initiative in our school.
4. Children are required to bring all uneaten foods, wrappers and any other packaging home in their lunch boxes to be disposed of properly in the child's own home so as to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
5. All classes will receive a minimum of 2 lessons on healthy eating.
6. Teachers will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
7. Children will be reminded of the school's healthy eating policy at assemblies.
8. Eating Times for Children

10.45 -11.00am	Fruit Break: Small portable snack taken to yard for eating under supervision
12:20 - 12.30 pm	Hot lunches can be eaten in the classroom.
9. Parents of new children enrolling at Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will receive the Hot Lunches Menu each week and parents can make meal choices alongside their children each week.

Healthy Eating: Good Food for our Lunch Boxes

Foods allowed	Foods <i>Not</i> allowed
Fruit <i>At least one portion of fruit daily</i> Apple, orange, banana, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, satsuma, manadarin, grapes, plum, peach, pear, pineapple chunks, mango, dried fruit-raisins sultanas, etc. Vegetables (raw/salad) <i>At least one portion of vegetable daily</i> Carrots, peppers, broccoli, celery, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber etc. Types of Bread White, brown, wholemeal, soda, pittas, wraps, bagels, tortillas, bread rolls, scones etc. Crispbreads Breadsticks, plain, savoury or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads, water biscuits, crackers, plain ricecakes etc. Yogurts Fruit yoghurts and yogurt drinks Cheese Hard/soft cheese: grated, slices, triangles, cheese strings, cheese tubs with breadsticks etc. Sandwich fillings Salad with ham, chicken, turkey, corn beef, tuna, salmon, cheese, egg, jam, hummus, etc. Cold Cooked dishes Rice/ pasta/ couscous/ chickpeas with/without meat & veg. Fluids Water, milk, diluted drinks, smoothies, yoghurt drinks, soups in thermos flask	<i>The following foods are not allowed in school. Children will be asked to put them back into their lunch boxes and a note sent home explaining the school policy.</i> • All Sweets • Biscuits and cakes • Fizzy drinks • All types of crisps and popcorn • Chewing gum • Fruit winders • Chocolate bars and chocolate biscuits • Chocolate yoghurts • Isotonic drinks Unhealthy lunches which we recommend against There are a number of lunches that children bring to school which we would recommend against. These include commercial products which are marketed as 'health snacks' such as RiceKrispie Squares, but which are in fact very high in sugar and are of little nutritional value. • Chocolate spread on sandwiches • Croissants, buns, sweet bread and cakes • Custard, rice puddings, dessert yoghurts • Ricecakes with chocolate/yoghurt toppings • Cold cooked foods such as sausage rolls and burgers

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Code of Behaviour

Foreword

At Mary, Mother of Hope our Code of Behaviour is reflective of the overall ethos of our school which promotes respect, forgiveness and new beginnings in a positive, safe and happy environment where excellence is strived for at all times.

Discipline in schools is an essential element of the socialisation of children, of the formation of their characters and of the process of education. This requires the use of certain controls. These do not threaten the children's independence, self-esteem and self-confidence, but enable them to appraise their behaviour rationally in terms of what is right and what is wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. Furthermore, they allow the children to develop an awareness of the impact that their behaviour has on others.

The school, and every teacher, will ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. The teacher's duty of care is a professional duty of care, reflecting the teacher's training, skill and knowledge.

The standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour apply to any situation where the student, although outside school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities.

The school has an active Positive Behaviour Committee which regularly examines and updates procedures while promoting and rewarding positive behaviour on an ongoing basis.

Aim of the Code of Behaviour

This code was developed in order to foster a positive and supportive learning environment in the school, where our children feel respected, secure and happy.

This requires the co-operation of all the school community, including the children, parents, teachers, staff and Board of Management.

Principles underlying the Code of Behaviour

- (a) The underlying principles of our Code of Behaviour are reflective of the overall ethos of our school, which recognises the uniqueness of each child, with different needs, cultural backgrounds, experiences, abilities and capacities.
- (b) We seek to support children in all aspects of their development, including their behaviour.
- (c) It is by providing our children with an environment that promotes, develops and maintains supportive and respectful relationships that the aim of this code can be achieved.
- (d) We aim to nurture children's personal development, sense of responsibility and awareness of the needs of others so as to enable them to become active and responsible citizens.
- (e) We recognise the right of all children in our care to an educational experience in an ordered and relatively disruptive free environment.
- (f) Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will yield the most effective results.

Statement of Positive Behaviours

These have been drawn up in school with children and staff. They are couched in positive terms, and each statement is a definite behaviour which the children can understand and relate to-

- ✓ **We are kind and thoughtful.**
- ✓ **We are responsible for our actions.**

- ✓ **We show respect for ourselves and others.**
- ✓ **We take pride in our school and community.**
- ✓ **We always work to the best of our ability.**

We are kind is based on the expectation that children will think of how their behaviour affects others and treat all members of the school community – pupils, staff, parents, visitors – in a thoughtful and caring way.

We are responsible is based on the expectation that children are responsible for their own actions and the impact those actions have on others. It is also expected that children take responsibility for their work and that is always completed to the highest standards appropriate to the child concerned. They are also expected to show responsibility by coming to school on time and fully prepared for the day which includes wearing the appropriate uniform, with homework fully completed and with everything they need for the school day including a healthy lunch.

We keep our classroom happy and safe is based on the expectation that children behave in a manner which is appropriate to the classroom by following teachers instructions without delay, being polite and mannerly, treating their classmates and teacher well, working hard and moving about the room in a safe and orderly way.

We show respect is based on the expectation that children treat their schoolmates in the way in which they themselves would like to be treated, that they do not destroy or interfere in anyway with people's property and that they speak and act politely and mannerly in the presence of staff.

We take pride in our school is based on the expectation that children keep their school and classroom clean and tidy, that they wear their uniforms, that they behave in an exemplary manner when representing the school on trips and that they show support for all members of the school community.

Bullying

In discussing the issue of bullying with our children, we will reinforce the following message:

- Bullying is always wrong.
- I should never bully others.
- I should always tell my parents or teacher if it happens to me.
- Mary, Mother of Hope National School is a 'bully- free' zone.

This information is developed further in the school's policy on bullying.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Encouraging Positive behaviour is best achieved by fostering a positive atmosphere in class and throughout the school. Praise may be given in any of the following ways:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in pupils journal or notebook
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Stamps, stickers, stars, certificates etc.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- An acknowledgement to parent, either written or verbal.
- Star Pupil Award
- Positive comments from another teacher
- Special announcement on P.A system or at assembly
- Golden Time
- Homework Pass
- Class based system of merit
- Positive Behaviour Card Report
- Records of positive/improved behaviour in Behaviour Book
- Special Awards for good behaviour from the principal.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School Code of Discipline

Essential Consideration:

At all times teachers are aware of their professional duty in “loco parentis” as they consider the needs of all children in their care. Teachers will take particular care in helping students who have special educational needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school and classroom practices aim to support good learning behaviour which is valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.

There are many strategies, which are open to the teacher and school in showing disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy pursued.

The degree of misbehaviour 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. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates some of the behaviours which falls into each category.

Minor Misdemeanours

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Arriving late
Not wearing full uniform
Homework not completed and/or signed
Needlessly interrupting class work
Not following teachers' instructions
Behaving inappropriately in line
Interfering with others work or property
Running in school building
Rough play
Leaving litter around school
Discourtesy to others

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

- Supporting the child in reaching the desired level of behaviour in the school, in a positive way
- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Note of misbehaviour recorded by the teacher in the teacher's behaviour book
- Parents may be informed in writing, through the child's homework journal or by a separate note if the teacher deems it appropriate.

Serious Misdemeanours

Examples of serious misdemeanours:

Continuous occurrence of minor misdemeanours
Deliberately hurting a fellow pupil
Refusing to work
Putting safety of self or fellow pupils at risk in the school, in the yard or at break time
Stealing or damaging property
Leaving school without permission
Use of unacceptable language
Telling lies, Being disrespectful

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours

In class

- Supporting the child in reaching the desired level of behaviour, in a positive way
- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Note of misbehaviour recorded by the teacher in the teacher's behaviour book

- Communication with Parents – verbal or written.
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privilege
- Extra work
- Writing of explanation or apology
- Pupil asked to speak with Principal or Deputy Principal
- Use of behaviour contracts
- Detention during playtime
- Explore possible benefits of shortened day

Communication with the home

Central to the success of this policy will be the support given by parents to the school in implementing the policy. Maintaining good communication between home and school is an important part of this process. This can be done by:

- Verbal communication with Parents
- A written note in the child's homework journal which the parent must sign
- A separate written note to the home explaining the misbehaviour. This may include a request for parents to meet with the class teacher and/or the Principal or Deputy-Principal.
- Improvements in behaviour should also be noted and rewarded by communicating with parents

Gross Misdemeanours

In cases of gross misdemeanours, the school reserves the right accorded to schools under Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by circular 7/88, namely suspension and or expulsion.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Ongoing and frequent incidences of serious misbehaviour

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil

Setting fire to school property

Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on

Abuse of mobile phones as outlined in the policy

Not adhering to the anti-bullying policy.

Steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours

Suspension

1. Child may be removed from peer group and brought to the office
2. Chairperson of Board of Management will be informed and parents will be requested to meet with the Principal, Chairperson and class teacher if appropriate. Chairperson may delegate this responsibility to the Principal on occasion.
3. Chairperson/Principal will sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents for a maximum initial period of three days
4. All communications 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
5. A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents
6. When a period of suspension ends, the school principal will meet with the pupil in the company of his/her parent(s) in order to formally re-admit the pupil to school or 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 chairperson of the Board and the Principal.
7. If another period of suspension is required the BOM will be asked to make a special decision to authorise a further period of suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. In exceptional cases the BOM may authorise a further period of suspension in order for the matter to be reviewed.

Expulsion

Expulsion will be considered only in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 -(6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by Circular 7/88 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*”.

All guidelines laid down in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare Act 2000) in relation to expulsion will also be strictly adhered to.

24. (1) *Where the board of management of a recognised school or a person acting on its behalf is of the opinion that a student should be expelled from that school it shall, before so expelling the student, notify the educational welfare officer to whom functions under this Act have been assigned, in writing, of its opinion and the reasons therefore.*

(2) *The educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving a notification under subsection (1), make all reasonable efforts to ensure that provision is made for the continued education of the student to whom the notification relates.*

(3) *For the purposes of subsection (2), the educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving the said notification:*

make all reasonable efforts to consult with the principal of the school concerned or a person nominated by him or her, the student concerned and his or her parents, and such other persons as the educational welfare officer considers appropriate, and convene a meeting attended by him or her of such of those persons as agree to attend such meeting.

(4) *A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.*

(5) *Subsection (4) is without prejudice to the right of a board of management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured*

Parents will also be informed of their right of appeal under Section 29 of the same Act.

Parents are required to sign a statement declaring their support of the school's Code of Behaviour and the procedures contained therein upon admission to Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School.

Promoting Positive Relations In Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School Anti-Bullying information for Parents

This information document was produced by a group of parents and teachers working together, in conjunction with the development of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Rationale

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National school seeks to provide an environment where all of our children are cherished and respected and can reach their full potential in a safe and caring atmosphere. In a constantly changing society it is vital that children's personal development, health and well-being are nurtured. They are encouraged to maintain supportive relationships to become active and responsible citizens in society. The school values and promotes a harmonious environment which nurtures the potential of each child to become a productive member of the school community and later on this citizenship will promote harmonious and productive relationships at home and at work. The school also promotes co-operation between staff-members, B.O.M., parents and pupils.

Aims of the school's Anti-Bullying policy

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To enhance the self-esteem and independence of the child.
- To foster in the child a sense of care and respect for her/himself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being.
- To develop the skills needed to form meaningful relationships with peers, family and the wider community.
- To develop in the child a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to active and participative citizenship and appreciation of the democratic way of life.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To take the lessons learned to their own families and workplaces in the future.

What is bullying?

- Bullying is aggression of any kind-verbal, physical and psychological that is repeated, systematic and persistent.
- It can be carried out by an individual or a group against others.
- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour and is done on purpose.
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Types of Bullying.

Physical: hitting, kicking, taking/damaging belongings, pushing, shoving, pinching, tripping etc..

Verbal: name-calling, threatening, sarcasm, insulting, spreading rumours, teasing/taunting etc..

Emotional: gossiping about, embarrassing someone, ignoring, abusive texting, e-mailing or phone calls, ridiculing, humiliating, making fun of someone etc.

Gesture: stare or look.

Exclusion: isolates a child, often done by former friends.

Extortion: demands for money, lunch and belongings.

Racist: using racist taunts, gestures or graffiti.

Tell Tale Signs and Effects of bullying.

- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress:
 - refusal to say what is wrong.
 - problems with sleeping, bed wetting, nightmares.
 - headache, stomach or bowel disorders.
 - lack of appetite or comfort eating.

- development of nervous ticks or stammering.
- indications of alcohol, drug or substance abuse.

- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour toward others:
 - becoming withdrawn or unhappy.
 - clinging.
 - attention seeking.
 - aggressive behaviour toward others.
 - temper tantrums.
 - feeling isolated, betrayed or hopeless.
- Out of character behaviour in school:
 - poor attention span.
 - loss of concentration, interest and enthusiasm in school.
 - poor attendance and not wanting to go to school.
 - staying behind in school after class is over.
 - asking parents to bring them to and from school.
 - reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.
- Increased demands for pocket money/stealing.
- Loss of or damage to personal belongings.

School policy on the prevention of bullying.

- Children will be made aware of, with constant reminders as to the general policy of Discipline within the school—the do's and don'ts of behaviour. The emphasis, as always should be of the positive benefits to all pupils in obeying these simple rules.
- Children must understand that if they bully, they will be reported and all reports will be followed up. This in turn will underpin the message that bullying will not be tolerated in our school.
- All reports of bullying even those which appear trivial will be acknowledged, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling.
- Serious cases will be referred to the Deputy Principal and/or to the Principal.
- Parents will be informed by either the class teacher, the deputy principal or the principal earlier rather than later.
- Teachers/parents will impress on children that reporting incidents of bullying is acting responsibly and not telling tales. Children should be praised for telling.
- Teachers will record incidents and take appropriate measures in accordance with the school's code of discipline.

How can Parents help?

- Tell the child they do not deserve to be bullied.
- Find out the facts about a bullying incident.
- Don't agree to keep the bullying a secret.
- Talk to the teacher or principal if it is happening in school or on the way to or from school.
- Help your child practise walking with confidence, shouting "no" and running away.
- Collect your child from school.
- If you feel it would help your child's confidence ask around about clubs that he/she could join.
- Check that your child is not inviting bullying by some unacceptable habit such as spitting, kicking etc.

- Invite children to your home to help your child make friends.
- Encourage your child to work at friendships.

In our school, Teachers help prevent bullying when:

- We listen to and encourage children to tell about bullying.
- We are fair.
- Differences between individuals are celebrated.
- We raise children's self-esteem.
- We are assertive, not aggressive, role models.
- Anti – bullying policies and procedures are devised and implemented.
- We act immediately to stop and condemn bullying, fighting or cruelty.
- We make it clear to pupils that there will be consequences for bullying.
- We keep records of incidents.
- We do not blame victims for being bullied.
- We encourage and reward good behaviour.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023.

It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner. It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school.

It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management only. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1: Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2: Written (10 days)

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3: Board of Management (20 days)

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that: a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious; b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board; c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or; d) where recourse to law has been initiated. Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4: Decision (5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Acceptable Internet Usage Policy

Introduction

At Mary Mother of Hope Senior School, we recognise the many opportunities digital technology offers in enhancing teaching and learning. As a school, we are committed to equipping our pupils with the skills and understanding they need to navigate the digital world confidently, creatively, and responsibly.

The internet is a powerful resource for learning, communication, and exploration, when used appropriately, it can open doors to a wealth of information and experiences that enrich a child's 'educational journey'. Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S places a strong emphasis on the safe, respectful, and responsible use of digital tools and online platforms.

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the expectations and guidelines for the appropriate use of digital technologies within our school. It is designed to ensure that all members of our school community: pupils, staff, and parents understand the importance of digital safety and act in a manner that reflects the values of our school.

General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn, and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. The most recent review took place in May 2025.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

School Strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

Users to whom this AUP Applies

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.

It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.

Promoting Safer Use of the Internet

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. implements the following strategies to promote safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of Internet Safety as part of our implementation of SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- The WebWise programme will be taught as part of the SPHE programme every September. It will be introduced in 3rd class and elements will be revisited yearly in 4th, 5th and 6th classes. 3rd and 4th class will cover the 'HTML Heroes' programme while 5th and 6th will cover 'My Selfie and the Wider World'.
- The topic of Internet Safety will be revisited throughout the year, with particular focus around Safer Internet Day in February.
- Mary Mother of Hope SNS will avail of opportunities to facilitate outside agencies and speakers for pupil and parent Internet Safety Talks.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of Internet Safety.

Serious Online Safety Incidents

Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute. Should serious online safety incidents take place, the school principal or in her absence, the deputy principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the school principal and the Digital Learning postholder.

Content Filtering

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network: Level 4. This allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.

- Students taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- When using Seesaw, the schools agreed digital platform for remote learning/homework, students will be outside the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. broadband network. Therefore, it will be incumbent upon their parents/guardians to ensure adequate internet safety precautions are taken.

Internet Use

The following Statements apply to Internet use in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school to their class teacher in the first instance and then to the principal or deputy principal.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students and staff will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other Internet users.
- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Email and Messaging

The following statements apply to the usage of email and Messaging services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- The use of personal email accounts is only allowed at Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. with expressed permission from members of the teaching staff.
- Students do not have permission to access email services on any school devices.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher

- Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or “reply all without the permission of the originator.
- Students must only use approved school email for school related activities and for registering on school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.
- Students should report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Pupils should report any such communications to a teacher.
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Social Media and Messaging Services for Staff and Students

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

Blogging and Video Streaming Services

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is only used with express permission from and the supervision of teaching staff.

Social Media and Messaging Services

The following statements apply to the use of Social Media and messaging services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. Community.
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. community on social media.
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of bring Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. on any social medium.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

In line with the Teaching Council of Ireland’s Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012):

- Teachers should ensure that all forms of communication with students, colleagues, parents, and school management are appropriate, respectful, and professional.
- Teachers must refrain from accessing, downloading, or possessing any inappropriate materials in any format during school activities.

Additional information to be found at <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/fitness-to-teach/updated-code-of-professional-conduct/>

Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the usage of personal devices in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Pupils are prohibited from bringing smart devices to school or on any school outings. These devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, electronic watches, or any other technology capable of operating interactively or autonomously.
- Pupils are permitted to wear personal activity-tracking devices (such as a ‘Fitbit’) provided that such device does not have sound recording or photographic imaging capability. These devices are required to be free of games or apps. This ensures that even wearable devices meant for tracking physical activity are limited strictly to their primary function, reducing the potential for distraction or misuse during school hours.

- Students found to be using smart devices in school and who are sending nuisance text messages, or who are taking unauthorised images with a camera, still or moving, are in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use policy.
- Further information can be found in the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy.

Mary Mother of Hope Schools' Community Commitment

In partnership with parents, the staff and the Board of Managements of Mary Mother of Hope Senior and Junior schools introduced the schools' 'Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code'. In February 2025.

- Parents have voluntarily committed to delay the purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.
- This collective agreement supports a school culture that values face-to-face interaction, focus, creativity, and emotional wellbeing.
- Our staff and parent body work together to ensure that this message is reinforced consistently across home and school settings.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Seesaw

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. uses Seesaw as the agreed digital learning platform for both in-school and remote learning. Students use Seesaw to complete and submit classwork, homework, and digital projects. Teachers share assignments, give feedback, and communicate with pupils and families via Seesaw. Students must use Seesaw responsibly, following teacher instructions and school guidelines at all times. Any misuse of Seesaw will result in restricted access and communication with parents/guardians.

The following statements apply to the use of Digital Learning Platforms in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.'s digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform enable two-way communications.
- Staff must only use their school email for accessing the school digital learning platform.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.
- Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.
- Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

Using the Internet at Home for School Purposes

- Where homework is assigned using ICT, pupils are expected to follow all of the rules outlined in this AUP. They are expected to behave online in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. Any breaches will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person on learning platforms such as Seesaw or Padlet.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Prior to using online learning platforms, students will be educated in school on the appropriate way to use these tools to enhance their learning.
- Parents/guardians are advised to keep themselves informed of online safety through reputable organizations such as:

Organisation	Online Safety Site
Government of Ireland	https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/#
Webwise.ie	https://www.webwise.ie/parents/advice-top-10-tips-for-parents/
Spunout.ie	https://spunout.ie/category/life/privacy-security/

Remote Learning Policy

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. uses Seesaw as the official platform for remote learning. Pupils are expected to log in regularly, complete assigned tasks, and engage respectfully with teachers and classmates. All posts and communications must be appropriate and related to learning. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support younger children with access and submissions. Any misuse, including inappropriate content or behaviour, will be addressed in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and AUP.

Audio, Images and Video

The following statements apply to the use of audio, images and video in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- As part of the school's AUP, parental consent for the use of digital images in accordance with the AUP policy will be requested when the child enrolls in the school.
- Staff are permitted to take digital/video images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the distribution of those images.
- When taking digital/video images ensure that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute
- Students must not record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Pictures to be published on the school's website, or elsewhere, which include pupils will be selected carefully and will comply with good practice guidance on image use
- Pupils' full names will not be used on a website or blog in association with photographs.
- Parents are asked not to share group images or videos of students or teachers taken during special school events.
- Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Students must not share audio, images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community.
- Sharing explicit images/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images/video of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Website

The following statements apply to the use of the school website and class blogs in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

- Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities.
- Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. web pages
- The Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
-

Promoting Kindness and Respect Online

Mary Mother of Hope Senior School is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for our school community, both in person and online. As a school, there is an expectation that everyone in our school community will use digital tools kindly and responsibly.

'Being Kind Online' means:

- Treating others with respect in all digital interactions.
- Thinking before posting, sharing, or commenting:
- Asking: *Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?*
- Reporting harmful online behaviour to a trusted adult.
- Understanding that online words and actions have real-life impact.

In Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S., we encourage pupils to be positive digital citizens, ensuring our digital footprint supports peers, celebrates others and that the internet is used positively, kindly and responsibly.

Cyberbullying

In line with the Bí Cineálta procedures:

• Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

• This form of bullying can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

• Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

• As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

Support Structures

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of the internet or digital technologies may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities including An Garda Síochána.

Permission Forms

Parents sign consent for the school's Acceptable Use Policy on Admission to the school.

Students sign consent for the school's Acceptable Use Policy through the Student Consent Form (Appendix 1).

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

The use of smartphones and other technologies is now a feature of daily life for people of all ages. While smartphones offer numerous advantages, they can expose primary school children to several risks including cyberbullying and encountering harmful content.

In schools we see directly the negative impact on children of smartphones/devices and social media usage. There is an increasing amount of national and international evidence to support the case for delaying its introduction until children are older. Links to some examples of this evidence are available in the appendices.

In response to the various concerns of childhood smartphone use, parents in several school communities across Ireland have agreed not to provide their child with a smartphone until they finish Sixth Class. Many schools and organisations have come together to create a charter for all primary school pupils. The 'Gen Free' charter asks parents not to buy their child a smartphone or allow them on social media until they leave primary school. It calls for our primary aged children to be:

Gen Free - Free from smartphones, Free from social media and Free to be kids.

In December 2024, Mary Mother of Hope Parents Association and the junior and senior schools conducted a parent survey of smartphone and social media use by children in primary school. Results of the Mary Mother of Hope Schools survey found:

- 93.1% of parents felt that primary school children should not own their own smartphone.
- 96.6% of parents felt that primary school children should not have access to social media.

As a result of this survey, the Parents Association with the support of the junior and senior school staff and Board of Managements are introducing a '**Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code**'. The '**Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code**' is one in which as many parents as possible in Mary Mother of Hope Schools voluntarily agree to delay purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.

It is hoped that collective participation in this voluntary code will provide parents and guardians, who are concerned about their child having personal access to a smartphone, with a tool to help address the risks of smartphone use.

Collective parental agreement to hold off on purchasing smartphones will reduce peer pressure and support parents in saying no. Parents will also have data as a tool to respond to the possible pressure from their children, for example "82% of 3rd class parents have opted in to the "Smartphone Free Voluntary Code".

There are many benefits for children in delaying smart phone/social media usage and these are outlined below:

Enhanced Social and Emotional Development:

Delaying smartphone ownership can foster better social and emotional development in children. They can learn essential face-to-face communication skills and build stronger interpersonal relationships without digital distractions.

Exposure to unwanted, negative behaviours by others is also reduced. Online content and social media use can affect the mental health of young people through increased anxiety and stress, cyberbullying, self-harm, disordered eating and suicidal ideation.

Unfortunately, social media allows children to communicate with their peers in ways which can cause hurt and harm to others and many children do not understand the potential impact of their actions.

Improved Concentration and Academic Performance:

By postponing smartphone usage, children can focus on their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Reduced screen time can enhance concentration and critical thinking skills.

Reduced Screen Time:

Delaying smartphone ownership limits a child's exposure to excessive screen time, reducing the risk of negative effects such as sleep disturbances, decreased physical activity and cyberbullying.

Safer Online Experience:

Young children are more vulnerable to online risks including the spreading of misinformation through online channels, negative effects on body image through social comparison and the lack of age verification.

Delaying smartphone access allows parents/guardians to educate children about responsible internet use and gradually introduce them to digital technology in a controlled environment.

Parent-Child Bonding:

Without the constant distraction of a smartphone, parents/guardians and children can engage in more meaningful activities together, strengthening the parent-child bond.

The Age of Digital Consent

It is important for parents to be aware that in Ireland, the Age of Digital Consent is 16 years of age. It is important also for parents to adhere to age ratings on apps and on the video games their children play. Please see the **Children's Data and Parental Consent Publication** in the appendices

Parental Controls

Parents should make full use of the available parental controls on any device they give their child access to. Parental controls are available on most Internet-enabled devices including computers, smartphones, tablets and gaming systems. Parental controls can help reduce the risk of your child encountering inappropriate content when they are online.

What about children who already have a smartphone?

It is a parent/guardian decision as to whether it is appropriate to continue allowing their child to have access to a smartphone/device. Some parents/guardians may wish to consider pausing current smart phone access if appropriate for their child. However, the Parents Association and schools would encourage all parents/guardians to review the age-appropriateness of any apps that children may be using including Snapchat (current minimum age is 13), Tiktok (current minimum age is 13), and WhatsApp (current minimum age is 13).

Mary Mother of Hope Schools remain mobile phone and smart device free – children should never have a personal smart device in school, including smart watches.

Mary Mother of Hope Schools Access to Technology

We recognise that as part of the school's education programme pupils have some supervised access to technology to support their learning. This allows our children access to online educational resources that can greatly enhance their learning experience.

This is separate to the voluntary agreement that is being proposed. Access to and use of the internet during the school day is outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and any proposed voluntary agreement would not interfere with this.

Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

Key points:

1. All information provided is confidential. Any data collected will only be shared numerically by class level and for information purposes only.

2. Each family's right to decide whether or not their children have access to the internet or a smartphone is respected and there is no obligation to join if you do not wish to do so.
3. This is not a solution in itself, to the growing problem but it is potentially one tool which may be helpful to those who wish to avail of it.

How to sign up:

Please indicate your preference to join Mary Mother of Hope Schools' Smartphone Free Voluntary Code on your child's Aladdin's Permission page. *Please complete for **each of your children**.*

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Policy regulating the use of Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Modification of the School's Mobile Phone Policy.

Introduction

In the interest of privacy and safety, the Board of Management of Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School took the decision to withdraw consent for the possession of mobile phones by pupils of the school anywhere on the campus in 2013 and again in 2019 following a full review of the policy in conjunction with staff, parents and the Board of Management.

Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

This policy was further reviewed in May 2025 following the introduction of Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code. In February 2025, the Parents Association with the support of the junior and senior school staff and Board of Managements introduced the 'Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code', encouraging all parents in Mary Mother of Hope Schools voluntarily agree to delay purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.

Mary Mother of Hope SNS Mobile Phone and Smart Device Free

Mary Mother of Hope SNS remains mobile phone and smart device free. Smartwatches that can access the internet, take photographs and record media are not permitted to be worn in school, even when in 'school mode'. Children should never have a personal smart device in school (in the building, on the school grounds or during off-site activities such as tours/ sports events/ visits to the church etc.).

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones, smart devices and tablets by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions.

The promotion of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment is a priority of the Department of Education and Skills. Research shows that digital technologies can play a positive role in supporting high quality teaching, learning and assessment. The use of tablet devices and smartphones is now an integral part of the lives of children and young people. The school's Digital Learning Plan and Acceptable Usage Policy outlines how digital technologies will be used in the school to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

In developing this policy, the Board of Management took account of the fact of the many benefits to technology. While smartphones and smart devices offer numerous advantages, the Board is also aware of the dangers which unchecked access to this technology can present. They can expose primary school children, to several risks – including cyberbullying and encountering age inappropriate and harmful content. Smart devices and access to the Internet have the potential to be increasingly abused, especially by young people who may not always be aware of the consequences of their actions.

There is an increasing body of evidence of cyber-bullying at primary and post-primary level whereby young people can use this new technology to victimize others. This can take many forms- the abuse of texting services and/or social media apps, the use of camera or video camera facilities on such devices or the inappropriate use of the internet. It is clear to us that children of primary school age have not developed the emotional or social maturity to deal with and think through the consequences of mis-use of this technology.

School Procedures

The Staff in the school and the Board of Management have given very careful consideration to the matter. We have come to the view that, while there may be a certain advantage to children having a mobile or smart device with them in school, the potential for mis-use and damage is much greater.

Given that the Board of Management has overall responsibility for the welfare, the well-being and safety of all the children in our care, the Board has taken the decision to **withdraw consent** for the possession of mobile phones and smart devices in the school. Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school.

In the interests of Health and Safety of our pupils, the school phone is available to pupils, with their teacher's permission, to phone a parent during the school day. Parents are welcome to contact the school (01 8128693) should they wish to speak with or relay a message to their child.

Using Mobile Phones or Smart Devices Inappropriately

Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school. Pupils who are found with a mobile phone

or smart devices in their possession on school premises or during school-related activities will be treated as having broken the school's Code of Behaviour and will be disciplined accordingly. The device will be confiscated and will only be released to the child's parent by the school principal.

Should it come to our attention that children are misusing phones or smart devices by uploading images, through social media apps and/or sharing negative commentary about parents, peers or teachers children will face sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy. This policy includes any interactive device which has a camera, messaging function or games.

Implementation

While members of the Board of Management do not make this decision lightly, we hope that parents will understand that the greater good is paramount in this matter. The Board urges all parents to give this matter their fullest co-operation. The Board will keep this policy under ongoing review.

Sample of School-Based Activities in Recent Years

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Yard Buddies

Whole-school Mindfulness Mornings

Wellbeing day

Friendship and Anti-Bullying Week

Fingal Fitness

Trips to Glasnevin Cemetry

Dancing with Yas

Confirmation

Intercultural Week

Cycling Safety (5th Class)

Outdoor Caroling

Marathon Kids

STEM Initiatives

Class Bloggers

Drumming Workshop

World Book Day

Paired Reading with the Junior School

Sports Day

Science Week and IBM Science Fair

Gaelic Football (Boys & Girls)

Camogie, Hurling, Athletics

Handwriting Competition

Halloween Fancy Dress

Halloween Cinema

Halloween safety

Lego Club

Chess Club

Book Fair

Funky Hair Day

Food Dudes

Maths Week, Maths Trails and Fun Day

Visits from Accord

Reindeer Food Sale - St. Vincent De Paul

Horse Riding

Show Your Colours to the World

Green Schools Committee

Friends for Life

Erin Go Bragh Gaelic Coaching

Cricket Ireland

Cheerios Childline Breakfast

Active Schools Week

FAI Spar Soccer Tournament

Playground Orchestra

Visiting Story Tellers

School Cake Sale for Carlingford

Swimming Lessons at National Aquatic Centre

School Quiz Team

Buddy System with classes in the Junior School

Genius Hour Projects

Carol Service

Sponsored Walk

Lenten Trócaire Boxes

6th Class Transition to Post Primary Workshops

6th Class Graduation

St. Patrick's Festival- *Green Day!*

National Spring Clean- Neighbourhood Clean-Up

Catholic Schools Week

Art Competition in Memory of Aaron Osasere

Tree Planting in Memory of Kerri Behan

Creative Writing Competition in Memory of Mr.

Gannon

School Tours: Crystal Maze, Navan Adventure Centre,

Clara Lara, Carlingford Adventure Centre,

Boys and Girls Basketball Teams

Action Team Partnership Group

Exploration Dome

Draíocht / Blanchardstown Library Partnership

School Talent Show

Don't be Mean behind the Screen workshops

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

What the children say about the school.....

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a welcoming, bright and colourful school with lovely, smart teachers and joyful, happy children.

In my school, I always feel safe.

I think Mary, Mother of Hope is a special school where people from many countries become a community.

This school is a great place for learning because the teachers have a great way of teaching.

We do really fun things and have lovely teachers. It is the best school ever.

What makes our school great is our slogan "Many Cultures One Community"

We are positively encouraged to do our best in all areas. Excellent support is also provided for children experiencing difficulty.

Many interactions between Students, Parents, Teachers. This promotes our school - it's like one big happy family

The children in our school are kind and friendly. I love learning about other cultures too.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a friendly, healthy and fair school where we celebrate many cultures and we are looked after very well by the caring principal and teachers.

I love the way my school is so colourful

Our school makes learning fun.

In the senior school, we are more responsible and independent.

We work enthusiastically on more challenging topics.

We go to church and pray together.

Everybody in my school is so kind to me. I really love being here.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a school where we are all different, yet the same.

We have a colourful school run by a good principal.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is full of nice teachers and fun, wrapped in one!

Notes:



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Email: school@hopens.ie

Visit us at www.hopens.ie