



***Holy Family***  
**Senior National School**



# Information Booklet

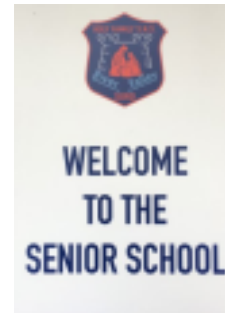
# Welcome

On behalf of Holy Family Senior National School (SNS) I would like to welcome you and your child to our school community. Holy Family SNS is a place of welcome and inclusivity. Our school is renowned for its warm, friendly atmosphere.

We hope your child will enjoy his/her learning experiences in our school over the course of their years with us. Our mission is to promote the fullest possible development of each child: socially, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually.

**As a school community, our strengths are many:**

- **Contented pupils who are willing to learn.**
- **A committed, hardworking Board of Management.**
- **A history of dedicated principals and deputy principals.**
- **Energetic, enthusiastic, good humoured, talented teachers.**
- **Our dedicated, caring team of Special Needs Assistants .**
- **Professional, caring administrative staff and caretaker.**
- **Interested parents and a supportive community along with a dynamic Parents' Association.**
- **Our ethos of welcome and care.**
- **Our strong sense of collegiality and willingness to work together.**
- **Our focus on kindness.**
- **Our pleasant and stimulating learning environment.**
- **Our celebration of successes: affirming and appreciating efforts made.**



We have put this booklet together as a general guide for parents/guardians. It provides information about school life and also includes information about some of our school policies.

Many school policies are posted on the School website and parents are asked to read these policies carefully. You are requested to read and sign an Acceptance of School Policies Form to confirm your acceptance of school policies as part of our school enrolment process.

We look forward to meeting you and your child/children.

**Geraldine Gowen, Principal & Fionnuala Shelly, Deputy Principal**

# Contents

## **1. About Holy Family SNS**

School Timetable

Board of Management

In School Leadership Team

Parents Association

The Student Council

School Community Committee

## **2. Primary School Curriculum**

## **3. Children with Special Educational Needs**

## **4. Communicating with the school**

Custody and Separation

Parent/Teacher Meetings

End of Year Reports

Homework

Yard Supervision

School Book Rental

School Uniform and Tracksuit

Pupil Absence from School

## **5. Medical Conditions and your child**

## **6. Other Information**

The Stay Safe Programme

Internet Access and the School Website

Social Media

Car Park

Dogs

One Way System

School Celebrations

## **7. School Initiatives and Programmes in Holy Family SNS**

Playworks

Rainbows

Localise

Green Schools

Cycle Right

After School Clubs

## **8. Extra-Curricular Activities**

Cross Country

Basketball

Senior Girls Football Team

Junior and Senior boys GAA Team

Hurling and Camogie

Soccer

Credit Union Quiz

Peace Proms

Córfhéile Guitar Choir

## **9. School Policies**

## **10. Pupil Online Database (POD)**

## **1. About Holy Family Senior National School**

Holy Family SNS is a senior, primary co-educational Catholic school serving the parish of St. Finian's in River Valley. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school provides primary education for boys and girls from Third class to Sixth Class. There are two special classes for pupils with Specific Learning Disabilities. The school is staffed with Mainstream Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers, two Special Class Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, an Administrative Principal and Administrative Deputy Principal as well as a full time secretary, part-time secretary and caretaker.

Holy Family SNS operates under the Rules for National Schools and Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidelines. The school is staffed in accordance with the schedule laid out each school year by the DES. The school is funded by annual grant aid from the DES. This funding is supplemented each school year by parent contributions for school materials and by fundraising. Holy Family SNS follows the curriculum prescribed by the DES, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act 1998. All pupils enrolled in the school are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum which includes the following subjects: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, SPHE and Physical Education.

The school provides Religious Education (Grow in Love Programme) for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic pupils participating in Religious Education lessons will attend Mass and other sacramental services in the church from time to time. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the Religious Education programme at the request of their parents.

The school calendar for each year will be made available prior to September and will be posted on the school website. Parents should note that planned school holidays may be subject to change by the Board of Management, in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather or unforeseen events.

### **School Timetable:**

Monday to Friday: 8:40am - 2.20pm

School gates open at 8.40am for admission of pupils. Before this time, the Board of Management is not responsible for the safety of the children on the school premises. As soon as the gates open, pupils go directly to their classrooms.

Pupils are dismissed at the end of the school day at 2.20pm. Parents should ensure that there are suitable home time arrangements in place for pupils appropriate to their age and class level. It is the responsibility of parents to inform the teacher/school office if there is a change of regular home time collection arrangements.

### **Board of Management:**

In accordance with DES regulations, Holy Family SNS is managed by a Board of Management (BOM) which is comprised of two nominees of the Catholic patron, two Teacher Nominees (including the Principal Teacher), two Parents' Nominees and two Community Nominees. The BOM has responsibility for the overall management of the school, for teaching and learning, the employment of staff, the upkeep of the school and for the implementation of DES directives. The Principal is responsible for the day to day management of the school. The BOM meets regularly during the school year to provide leadership and effective management of the school. In this regard, the BOM is supported by the Principal, Deputy Principal and In School Leadership Team.

### **In School Leadership Team:**

Since September 2018, the In School Leadership Team meets on a monthly basis to discuss goals, review progress and develop plans for the school. Team members work together to develop different areas in the school. Each member also leads smaller sub committees made up of volunteers from among the teachers and SNAs in order to harness talent and creativity.

For example, members of the In School Leadership Team have worked together with volunteers from the staff to develop our Student Council; another member of the team leads the School Community Committee made up of Pupils, Teachers, Parents and a Community Representative. The In School Leadership Team regularly engage in reviews and development of school policies.

### **Parents' Association:**

Parents of all pupils enrolled in Holy Family SNS are entitled to be members of the Parents' Association (PA). Holy Family SNS Parents' Association is affiliated to the National Parents Council (NPC). The PA committee is made up of parents/guardians elected at the Annual General Meeting usually held during the first term of school. The committee promotes the interests of the pupils in the school, in co-operation with the Board of Management, the Principal and teachers. The PA committee liaises regularly with the Principal and Deputy Principal to plan and support school activities, policy making and fundraising.

### **The Student Council:**

In the school year 2019/20, Holy Family SNS established its first student representative council. The Student Council affords pupils the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to school life by discussing and debating any issues brought to them by the students. There is one representative from each class and these are elected by their peers in the class. The class representatives change half way through the school year to allow more children to participate in the running of the Student Council.

### **School Community Committee:**

The School Community Committee is made up of teachers, parents, students and community representatives. Their latest project focused on developing the entrance area of our school. The area has recently been decorated with new signage (sponsored by Think PM), a world map and has

been repainted by volunteer parents from our school.

## **2. Primary School Curriculum:**

The primary school curriculum outlines what children learn in each subject, the approaches and methodologies used and how children's learning progresses through the primary school. The curriculum is learner-centred. 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 Primary School Curriculum aims to:

develop each child's potential to the full  
encourage in children a love of learning  
help them develop skills they will use all their lives

All pupils must participate in all (secular) curricular areas as prescribed by the DES. Pupils may not opt out of any of the prescribed subjects on the curriculum.

NOTE: Pupils who are not Roman Catholic will not be obliged to participate in the Religious Education programme. Parents should inform the school in advance, if they wish to withdraw their child from Religion lessons or events.

The curriculum comprises eleven subjects. As well as learning new ideas and finding out new information in the different subjects of the curriculum, children develop important skills such as communicating, estimating, problem solving, working scientifically, designing and making. The curriculum specifies the amount of time to be allocated to each curriculum area. At each class level, school work is appropriately differentiated by teachers as the need arises (either simplified or extended) to accommodate all ability levels within the class.

## **3. Special Educational Needs:**

Pupils are assessed annually to establish their educational needs. Standardised tests are carried out in Maths, English and Spellings by class teachers. Additional support teaching (either in-class or small groups) will be provided for pupils with additional educational needs by our team of special education teachers (SET). Our SET are all full-time members of staff. Our SET strive to provide the highest levels of support for children with additional needs within the school and they are supportive and flexible when working with class teachers across the school.

The Continuum of Support Model and Guidelines are adhered to in Holy Family SNS. The Guidelines present a continuum of assessment and intervention processes which acknowledges the central role of the class teacher supported as appropriate by the school's special education personnel and by agencies external to the school. The term 'continuum' has been used to reflect that individual special educational needs may occur anywhere along a continuum. The level of intervention and support provided in school should, therefore, be matched to those needs and their changing nature over time. For more information about the Continuum of Support Model and Guidelines, please refer to our Special Educational Needs policy on the school website.

The school has access to the services of an Educational Psychologist under the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The Educational Psychologist works closely with the school in supporting pupils who are experiencing learning or behavioural or other difficulties. The

school also works closely with the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) personnel and services such as the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

It is important that parents inform the school at enrolment if a child has learning/behavioural/ social/ sensory or other needs that may impact on the child's experience of school. This also allows the school to seek appropriate teaching and other resources such as SNA support, assistive technology, physical adaptations to assist the child in school.

In our school, we have children receiving School Support in Literacy and Maths, School Support Plus (support for children with multiple diagnoses), English as an Additional Language (EAL) teaching, some attending a group for children who are exceptionally able; 18 children are pupils of the two Reading Classes for children with Specific Learning Disabilities and a number of children have the support of an SNA. We also have a Leabhair Power Group (paired reading group with members of the local community) and approximately 50 children receive support through this.

#### **4. Communicating with the School:**

Parents who wish to meet with the Principal/Deputy Principal should send a written note or email to the school office for the attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal requesting an appointment. The letter/email should give a brief indication of the reason for the meeting. For matters relating to a child's behaviour or a bullying report, the class teacher must be contacted first (See School Anti Bullying Policy). The school secretary will liaise with Principal/Deputy Principal and arrange a meeting at a mutually suitable time. For meetings with class teachers, parents should email the class teacher or write a note in their child's homework journal. Please note that emails sent in the evenings can only be dealt with the following day. Meetings with teachers are normally arranged to take place outside of class time to minimise disruption to school work.

- Parents are not permitted to call to classroom doors. If children forget lunches, PE gear etc., please put the child's name and teacher's name on the bag and leave it in the Secretary's Office.
- Please inform the Secretary (not the class teacher) in writing of any change of address; parents' phone numbers; contact person's phone number etc. and active email address to be used for Databiz for school notifications.
- If it is wet or very cold, children do not go out to the yard. Only in very exceptional circumstances (e.g. child on crutches or with stitches) can pupils be allowed to stay in and read outside the Principal/Deputy Principal's office at yard times. A letter requesting permission to remain indoors at yard time must be sent to the class teacher.
- A schedule of school holidays is available on the school website in advance of the school year. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking children on holidays during the school term. This can lead to pupils losing valuable teaching and learning time and falling behind in school work. Pupils may also miss important school assessment tests which cannot be repeated.

### **Custody/Separation:**

We encourage parents experiencing separation or family issues to come and speak confidentially to your child's teacher/s and/or Principal. The school will deal with such matters with sensitivity and compassion. Our primary concern always is for the wellbeing and overall development of the child.

When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers. Regarding the collection of child/ren from school - it is requested that the school be informed of any changes in collection arrangements in writing. Generally the school will contact the parent with whom the child normally resides and the school seeks that this parent will inform the other parent of meetings and arrangements. Special requests for separate communication may be accommodated by prior agreement only. School staff will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively with children experiencing separation and other family difficulties.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings:**

Parent/Teacher Meetings are normally held in November in order to discuss all aspects of a pupil's progress at school. Details of dates and times are confirmed in advance of the meetings. It is important that parents attend these meetings.

### **End of Year School Reports:**

Written Progress Reports are issued in June of the school year. The purpose of these reports is to inform parents of their child's progress, general behaviour and school attendance for the school year and to advise parents how they can further support their child's learning.

### **Homework:**

Each pupil in classes 3rd – 6th has a school journal in which he/she records homework. Homework is not normally given at weekends. Parents are asked to read their child's journal each night and check copies and books /reading to ensure that their child has completed all homework carefully.

Important Note: Pupils often talk about television programmes, computer games and online games which they have seen/played late at night. Some are too exhausted to derive any benefit from school the following day. Please ensure your child has at least ten hours sleep each night so that he/she can reach his/her potential at school.

### **Yard Supervision:**

Every day (except on wet or very cold days) the children go to the yard. There is a separate yard for each class year group. Each yard has a running area for tag and running games/ activities and a quiet area where children talk and interact or play quiet games. Each yard is supervised by a teacher and a SNA. The teacher has a yard notebook and records any accidents and incidents of behaviour of concern. The SNA on duty carries first aid supplies. Children who consistently misbehave are asked to stand at the side of the yard for a few minutes to reflect on their behaviour. After this time has elapsed, they return to playing. Names of children who persistently misbehave during a yard time are recorded in the yard book for the class teacher's attention. Children who are sick or injured are sent to the Deputy Principal's office for



monitoring. Parents/Guardians are contacted if a child bangs their head or sustains an injury/illness which needs attention. At the end of yard time, the teacher on duty rings the yard bell and the children line up and wait to be collected by their teacher.

### **School Book Rental Scheme:**

The school operates a book rental scheme at all class levels for a selection of class books. There is a small annual fee charged to parents to cover the costs involved in renting these books. All rental books must be looked after and returned at the end of the school year in good condition for redistribution to other pupils. Parents will be liable to pay the replacement cost of rented books that are lost or returned in poor condition.

### **School Uniform & Tracksuit:**

Holy Family SNS uniform must be worn by all pupils each school day. Children in 3rd, 4th and 5th classes wear the school tracksuit and top as their uniform. 6th class pupils wear the formal school uniform on designated days and the school tracksuit and top on the other days of the week. Shorts may be worn instead of uniform trousers in hot weather but these must be knee length and navy in colour. No labels, denim shorts, leggings or sports shorts are allowed. Please check that runners, uniform and other belongings have been labelled. All "lost property" will be in the lost property area in the school.

In order to rotate between blocks of activities and sports within PE (e.g. swimming, basketball coaching, use of Community Centre or visiting coaches from external Sports Bodies like the GAA) PE time-tabling is normally organised in eight week blocks. Children will be informed of their planned PE activity days at the outset of an eight week period by the class teacher.

Rings & Earrings: The Board of Management in consultation with Holy Family SNS Parents' Association permit only stud earrings to be worn in school.

Make Up: Pupils are not permitted to wear any make-up, nail varnish, fake tan, eye liner etc. in school.

Footwear: Please note that runners with a roller option (heelies) are not allowed in either the school grounds or building.

### **Pupil Absence from School:**

The Education Welfare Act states that it is the duty of parents to ensure that their children attend school every day. It also requires schools to monitor pupils' attendance and to notify the Education Welfare Board of pupils who are absent for 20 days in any school year. All pupils are expected to be in school each day unless there is good reason for absence for e.g. illness. If your child is absent from school, please write a note to explain the reason for the absence, the dates involved and include the parent's/guardian's signature. Documentation may be sought by the Education Welfare Board which oversees school attendance for all children and this agency is now under the remit of the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA).

## **5. Medical Conditions and your Child**

It is important that the school is aware of any medical conditions that may affect your child during the

school day. In the case of a child becoming ill at school, a parent or guardian will be contacted. You will be notified if your child has any fall involving a bang on the head.

### **Infection in School:**

Infections in school-going children are common. Infection may spread rapidly when groups of children are in classrooms, so it is very important that the school should be informed when there is an outbreak of certain contagious infections. Your GP will be able to advise you on this.

### **If your child is sick:**

If your child is unwell, please do not send him/her to school as children are unable to cope with the demands of school when they are unwell. Should a child become sick during school hours, the child is made as comfortable as possible and the child's parent/guardian is notified straight away by telephone and asked to collect the child from the school office (not the classroom). Please see the following link for specific conditions:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/childcare/whenshouldmychildreturntoschoolchildcare/>

### **Emergencies during school hours:**

In the event of a child becoming ill at school or suffering a fall or injury, parents/guardians will be contacted by phone. It is very important that we have a contact number of a responsible adult who will be able to collect the child if the parent/guardian is not available. Parents are asked to make sure that the emergency phone number on their child's Enrolment Form is up to date.

### **Administration of Medicines:**

The Board of Management requires that parents inform the school and their child's teacher in writing of any medical condition their child may have. While the Board has a duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils when they are engaged in authorised school activities, this does not imply a duty upon teachers to personally undertake the administration of medicines. Under normal circumstances, no oral medicine or tablets will be administered by the staff. This includes medicines which have been prescribed by your own doctor for your child. If your child is ill enough to require medicine while in school, please keep him/her at home until the treatment is completed. Where children carry inhalers, they should be competent to self-administer.

In the case of long term illness requiring administration of medicine during school hours, e.g. diabetes, severe allergies, etc., parents must write to the Board of Management requesting permission for the administration of medicine during the school day and outline the procedure involved. Where children are suffering from life threatening conditions, parents should outline clearly, in writing, what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child. If specific staff members agree to administer the requested medication, the parents/guardians are required to indemnify the Board of Management and authorised members of staff in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of prescribed medicines in the school. Requests for administration of medication should be received at the beginning of each school year.

## 6. Other Information

### **The Stay Safe Programme:**

The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary school children. The Stay Safe Programme was updated in 2017. Its overall objective is to prevent child abuse, bullying and other forms of victimisation. The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to reduce children's vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. The programme develops children's ability to recognise, resist and report risk situations or abusive encounters by teaching children:

- Simple rules to help them avoid abuse
- To identify for themselves unsafe or upsetting situations
- To respect and value the rights of others
- The language and skills they require to seek help

The children are taught the content of the Stay Safe lessons in the classroom by their class teacher, and can then discuss the lessons at home with their parents. The lessons teach children about what to do if they're frightened or upset. One of the central messages children learn is that if they ever have a problem, they should tell an adult they know and trust. There are five topics discussed in the Stay Safe Programme: Feeling Safe/Unsafe, Bullying, Touches, Secrets and Telling and Strangers.

Each topic is dealt with in an age appropriate manner, in a way that emphasises positive experiences while acknowledging that there are times when children may feel unsafe, threatened or frightened. Through classroom discussion, role-play and repetition, children learn simple safety strategies for dealing with problems. Children learn that they should always tell an adult who can help. The overall message is that children will learn to: Say 'No', Get Away and Tell.

As part of the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum, the Stay Safe Programme is taught every second year—in 3rd class and 5th class. Further information on Stay Safe can be found on <http://www.staysafe.ie/>

### **Internet Access & School Website:**

The school has an Acceptable Use Policy which governs access to the internet by pupils. Parents are reminded of their responsibility to monitor their child's use of the internet and other social media outside of school hours. The school includes advice and guidance for pupils and parents as part of the cyber safety programme within the SPHE curriculum. As part of the enrolment process, parents are invited to give consent to the school to place photographs of pupils and their work (as deemed appropriate) on the school website.

The school website <http://holyfamilysns.ie/> is regularly updated and parents should consult the website for school news. A newsletter is produced regularly and is emailed to all parents. It is also available on the school website. Letters and email messages may also be sent home to parents of

particular classes as necessary with information about important school or class events. Please check school bags regularly for such notes. The school communicates with parents by email regularly so please check your emails for updates.

### **Social Media:**

The school does not allow pupils to access social media sites. However the school is aware that some pupils in senior classes are accessing these sites outside of school hours. Parents are asked to carefully monitor their child's use of mobile technology. Please go to <https://www.webwise.ie/> to become familiar with internet and mobile technology safety. Parents should contact the Gardaí with concerns if their child receives inappropriate communication via social media.

### **School Car Park:**

Please note that the car park is for staff cars only. Please ensure that the main gates to the school are never blocked by cars. Your attention is drawn to the double yellow lines and the yellow box outside the school gates where parking is not permitted. We all have a responsibility to keep the children safe.

### **The One Way System:**

It is really important to ensure that all parents adhere to the one way system on the road outside the school and that all children cross the road with the assistance of our traffic wardens. The one way system, (which runs from the direction of the church toward the school) helps with the traffic flow and supports your children in entering and leaving the school safely. The clearway outside the school is NOT a drop off area. On wet mornings, it is acceptable for children to arrive at school at 9.00am. For the sake of ALL children, please follow the One Way System.

### **Dogs:**

Dogs in the school grounds have the potential to frighten or injure pupils. As a result, dogs are not permitted on the school grounds.

### **School Celebrations:**

As part of the school curriculum, and school life in general, we celebrate festivals such as Halloween, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. We also acknowledge other traditions and national events.

**Important Note:** If your child is having a birthday party, we ask parents to refrain from distributing party invitations in school and in the school yard in the morning or at home time. Children from the class who may not be invited can feel upset and left out. It is best to discreetly pass any invitation directly to the parents /adult guardian of the pupil. Please do not ask the school personnel for phone numbers or addresses of children in the class – as the school cannot release this information to parents. We also ask that birthday cakes/party bags to share with the class are not sent into school as food sharing may pose safety issues for pupils with allergies.

**7. School Initiatives / Programmes in Holy Family SNS (Below is a sample of the range of activities available in Holy Family S.N.S. Please note that these activities are dependent, from year to year, on staff availability. )**

**PlayWorks:**

During 6th class, the pupils have the opportunity to be involved in an initiative called PlayWorks. Sixth class Playworks volunteers plan, organise and supervise a variety of yard games for the pupils on the 3rd, 4th and 5th class yards at lunch time on timetabled days during the week. The 6th class pupils have the opportunity to develop their interpersonal and leadership skills.

**Rainbows:**

Rainbows is a free, voluntary service for young people experiencing loss following bereavement or parental separation. Every year, we support as many young people in our school as we can. We try to have a bereavement group and a separation group. The groups meet weekly with two facilitators per group over a nine week period. We try to offer training every year to new teachers who wish to become Rainbows facilitators. We are very proud to have a dedicated and supportive team of facilitators in our school. As facilitators we are humbled and privileged to work with such wonderful young people and we are thankful for the trust their parents and guardians have placed in us.

**Localise:**

Localise youth volunteering challenges young people to come together and make a difference in their local community by being of service to others. Through the Localise youth volunteering programmes, young volunteers directly address the needs of the most disadvantaged locally, serving the homeless, the elderly, the disabled and other groups needing support. Our school has had a close relationship with Localise for over 10 years. Members of the 6th class group, usually about 20 children, are selected to take part in a 10 week programme. We are generally inundated with applications for Localise each year. The children, with guidance from mentors and adult members, come up with ideas for a project to help an organisation within the community. Every year, through Localise, the school organises a Christmas Fundraiser for St. Vincent De Paul. In recent years, the pupils involved in Localise have gone to local nursing homes with Christmas cards and they sing Christmas carols for the residents. Localise also run a mentor programme. The students involved are all past pupils who joined in 6th class and stayed on to continue their good work. As youth mentors, they support the new 6th class pupils who join the group in September and they are taught how to facilitate Localise meetings. They also participate in and organise their own community based project. Some of the students who joined Localise in 6th class, have gone on to become young adult leaders and indeed adult leaders. Localise is and has been a very successful and rewarding programme for our pupils. In 2018/19, our school was one of the first schools in Ireland to achieve the Volunteering for All Award which is on display in the school foyer.

**Cycle Right:**

A cycling training course takes place for all 6th class children . The course is composed of theory, a lot of practice and some simple bike maintenance. The children are allowed to bring their own bike to school once or twice a week (approximately), for a six week period. Firstly, the children learn how to execute bike manoeuvres like stopping, starting and they learn how to signal properly before turning. There is a road track marked out on one of the yards that includes major and minor roads along with a roundabout. The children learn about the proper timing of signalling and road position using the track. After a few weeks, when children have gained in confidence and competence, they put their new found skills into practice on the road with the assistance of our Community gardaí. At the end of year, we have our annual cycle to the Naul, where approximately 60 children are chosen to cycle to the Naul for breakfast. Again, the gardaí assist the school with this.

**Green Schools Initiative:**

Holy Family SNS is participating in the An Taisce Green Schools Initiative. We encourage environmental awareness amongst our pupils. Our class teachers will be encouraging a “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” Policy and in light of this, pupils are encouraged to bring in lunch boxes instead of wrappings, reusable bottles or tetra pack instead of single-use plastic bottles and to recycle as much as possible. Recycling arrangements have been made in each classroom.

**After School Clubs:**

The school has a wide and varied range of after school clubs. Clubs such as Art, Homework, Knitting, Drama, Table Tennis, French... to name but a few. These Clubs usually run for eight to ten weeks and are very popular with all the children. The information about these clubs is distributed to children in September and at the beginning of each new session. Places are filled on a first come basis.

**8. Extra-Curricular Activities -Below is a sample of the range of activities available in Holy Family S.N.S. Please note that these activities are dependent, from year to year, on staff availability.**

**Cross Country:**

The Cross Country season usually runs from September to October/November and then March/ April. The school participates in three competitions. Approximately 100 children take part in a one-off Cross Country event in mid-October hosted by St Helens NS and Naomh Mearnóg in Portmarnock. The same group of children take part in the Fingal Cross-Country League which is organised at five meetings in Newbridge House, Blanchardstown and Santry Stadium over the Autumn and Spring. All runners get an opportunity to run in two of the five League Meetings with the elite top 50, representing Holy Family SNS at the finals in Santry Stadium. Fifth and sixth class children are eligible to run in the “MarathonKids” event held in Santry every November. The idea is that the participants run 25 miles over a two month period and then travel to Santry to run the final mile to complete their marathon and receive their medals. The normal Cross-Country training regime of Monday-Wednesday-Friday lunchtime training sessions allows the MarathonKids runners to bank their 25 miles throughout September and October. All classes take part in a one-off race in October in which all pupils run or walk the standard cross-country race length (if medically permitted) and the cumulative score of all finishers determines the champion class within each age group. Sprint squads are selected in late April and train throughout May to take part in the Cumann na mBunscol Sprints Competition in Santry Stadium in early June.

## **Basketball**

Holy Family SNS basketball teams were established in January 2019 by Ms. Parker. In November 2019 both teams had great success winning their finals in the Primary Mini Basketball League. The trophies are proudly displayed in the entrance hall of the school. From September 2020 the teams will be proudly representing the school in their new basketball jerseys, which were sponsored by our Student Council. "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team" (Phil Jackson). This is the motto of basketball in Holy Family SNS.

## **Senior Girls Football Team:**

The Senior Girls football team is made up of girls from 5th and 6th class. Trials are run in September and the team is selected for that school year. The team takes part in two competitions. The first is the 'Cumann na mBunscol' league which starts in September. Teams from all across Dublin compete to play in the final in Croke Park. The second competition is the 'Fingal League' which consists of teams in North County Dublin. This starts in February/March and if teams are lucky enough to succeed they play the final in Parnell Park.

## **Junior and Senior Boys GAA Teams:**

There are two boys GAA teams in the school. The Junior Boys team is made up of boys from 4th and 5th class. The Senior Boys team is made up of boys from 5th and 6th class. The teams enter two competitions each year, the Fingal League and the Cumann na mBunscol League. These leagues are great fun and a great opportunity to represent the school. On a few occasions, our school teams have made it to the finals in Parnell Park. Training for these teams is at yard time once or twice a week. All are welcome to come along and train.

## **Hurling and Camogie:**

The school has Senior Hurling and Camogie teams which are made up of boys and girls in 5th and 6th class. The teams are entered into the Cumann na mBunscol competition in Spring. The finals of this competition are played in Croke Park. Training for hurling and camogie usually starts after Christmas. All players are welcome to come along and try it out.

## **Soccer:**

Within the school, we have both a boys and girls 11-a-side team. These teams are entered into cup and league competitions which will begin early March running until late May/early June. Throughout the year, there are a number of competitions and blitz' in which the school is also involved. There is a Spar 5-a-side in which the school enters two boys and one girls team. The school takes part in an FAI Futsal competition for boys and girls of 4th class. This generally takes place in October. The school also take part in a Grassroots football competition where fair play is the main focus on the day. In order for this to happen, a number of teachers volunteer their time to train and coach these teams as well as organising pitches, referees and transport to the games.

**Credit Union Quiz:**

The school has, for a large number of years, participated in the annual Credit Union Quiz. The quiz teams are picked in October each year - we enter both the Irish League of Credit Unions competition and the Members First Credit Union competition. Anyone from 3rd to 6th class is eligible to try out. We have reached the National Finals on several occasions.

**Peace Proms:**

The Peace Proms is a fantastic event where children get to perform with the Cross Border Youth Orchestra of Ireland. Each performance has a choir of 2,500 children who learn singing and dancing parts to songs and medleys.

**Córfhéile Guitar Choir:**

The Guitar band features boys and girls from Mr. Gormly's after school guitar classes, as well as other accompaniment (for e.g. box drum, electric drum, violin, recorder, tin whistle, keyboard, guitar, ukulele and bass guitar) and singers. The band often perform at the Córfhéile in the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght. They also perform in the school hall during Seachtain na Gaeilge for their friends and classmates.

**9. School Policies**

Holy Family SNS has a range of school policies covering many aspects of school life. All policies are available to parents as necessary. School policies are reviewed and updated in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Below is a summary of some of the more relevant policies.

**School Code of Behaviour:**

Holy Family SNS has a Code of Behaviour Policy, which was devised in collaboration with the school community. Our Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships and procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and to prevent unacceptable behaviour. This policy is linked to the current school Anti-Bullying Policy. All parents are expected to support the school in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour .

**Anti-Bullying Policy:**

The school's policy complies with the Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools 2013. Every pupil has the right to education in an environment free from intimidation. Repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, by an individual or group against another pupil will be treated as an extremely serious matter by the school authorities.

**Child Protection Policy:**



The Board of Management's child safeguarding statement is in accordance with the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017. It is displayed in the school foyer and on the school website and is reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

### **Healthy Lunches Policy:**

We implement a Healthy School Lunches policy in Holy Family SNS. We ask that all parents adhere to this policy when preparing school lunches for their child. We recommend that sandwiches, cheese, fresh or dried fruit and a healthy non fizzy drink would be appropriate in a child's lunchbox. Children are requested not to bring in sweets, chocolate, crisps, yogurt, yogurt drinks, popcorn or peanuts. Glass bottles are not allowed in the school. Emphasis will be placed on having a healthy snack/lunch each day. Teachers will reinforce the healthy lunch message in class. For safety reasons, we do not allow children to share food with other pupils in school. Some of our pupils suffer extreme reactions to specific foods including peanuts. We would ask parents to emphasise this rule and the reason for it when talking to their children. We ask parents to co-operate with the teachers in implementing healthy eating in the school by giving children a reusable plastic lunchbox and a drink in a reusable bottle or tetra pack. We encourage children to bring home uneaten food as part of our Green School Initiative.

### **Mobile Phones and Smart Watches Policy:**

If a student brings a mobile phone to school, it must be kept switched off before he/she enters the school grounds until he/she leaves the school grounds in the afternoon. If a mobile rings or if a pupil attempts to make a call or record by photo/video, the phone will be confiscated and retained in the school office. The phone will only be available for collection by a parent of the pupil concerned and a report on the matter will be retained in the child's file. This policy also applies to all school activities off school grounds.

This policy also applies where children wear smart watches that are internet enabled and which can record, take photos, take/make calls, receive/send messages. Any watches with these facilities must be switched off and stored in the child's school bag for the duration of the day. If a watch rings or if a pupil attempts to make a call/message or record by photo/video, the watch will be confiscated and retained in the school office. The watch will only be available for collection by a parent of the pupil concerned and a report on the matter will be retained in the child's file. This policy also applies to all school activities off school grounds.

## **10. Primary Online Database (POD) – Department of Education and Skills:**

The following information has been prepared by the Department of Education and Skills to inform parents/guardians about the function of the Primary Online Database (POD) and to explain the information that Holy Family SNS is obliged to upload onto POD in respect of your child.

### **What is POD?**

The Primary Online Database is a nationwide individualised database of primary school pupils, facilitating the monitoring of educational progress as pupils move through the primary education system and on to post primary. The system allows schools to make online returns to the Department of Education and Skills and provides the Department with the comprehensive and in-depth information

needed to develop and evaluate educational policy.

### **What is it used for?**

- Completion of the National School Annual Census.—As of September 2016 POD is the mechanism for schools to complete the Annual Census.
- Teacher allocation and payment of capitation and other grants—Information submitted through the Annual Census forms the basis for teacher allocation, capitation and grant payments for each school.
- Resource allocation and planning purposes.
  - Statistical Information—POD is the source of statistical information for the primary school sector.
- Register of pupils—POD has removed the need for schools to maintain a hardcopy of their schools Clárleabhar, as necessary information is recorded on the system.
- Centralised updating of school information—POD provides a single point for schools to view and correct the details held by the Department.
- Verifying student identity for services operated by the Department.

### **What information is recorded on POD?**

The following information is collected for each pupil on POD:

- Personal Information –PPSN, Name, Birth Certificate Name (if different), Date of Birth, Gender, Mother's Birth Surname, Address (including Eircode), County of Residence, Nationality, Mother Tongue, Irish Exemption (if any).
- Enrolment Information—Standard (i.e Third Class etc.), Teacher / Class Name, Enrolment Source, Enrolment Date, Leaving Date, Leaving Destination, Pupil Type, Class Type (for pupils in Special classes) and Integrated Indicator (for pupils in Special Classes)

There are also two optional fields of data on POD—Religion and Ethnic or Cultural Background. As these are considered sensitive personal information under the Data Protection Acts, they can only be recorded on POD with the explicit written consent of the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s). Further details on the information collected on POD including the purpose for which it is collected, the period for which it will be retained and the legal basis for its collection can be found in the POD Fair Processing Notice, available on <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Primary-Online-Database-POD-/>

### **Access to POD**

Each school can access only their own pupil's records on POD. Within the DES, access to the individualised information recorded on POD is restricted to a small number of staff within the Statistics Section.

## Our world map.



## Our Outdoor Classroom



## Our Sensory Corridor

