Holy Family NS, School Information

Ethos

Holy Family NS is a Roman Catholic School which aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. This school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Mission Statement

Holy Family aims to create a secure, caring and creative environment for all its children.

School Hours

School begins at 9:20 am
Junior and Senior Infants finish school at 2:00 pm
First-sixth classes finish school at 3:00 pm
Break times are 11:00-11:15 am and 1:00-1:25 pm

Assembly/Dismissal

Children should line up in an orderly fashion in their designated area through the blue gate, at the back of the school each morning. Children should be dropped off at the school between 9:10 and 9.20. Class teachers collect their line from the yard when the school bell rings at 9:20am. On wet mornings, the classroom doors will open at 9.10am. Parents are asked not to park in the designated drop-off zone at the front of the school. This zone is for our school buses.

Homework

Homework is allocated Monday to Thursday. Our Homework Policy is available on the school website:
https://www.holyfamilyballyshannon.ie/uploads/8/7/3/8/87385194/homework_policy__1_.pdf

Uniform

One active uniform worn daily, no variations permitted with the exception of plain navy shorts in warmer weather.
Order online:

[Holy Family N.S Ballyshannon - O'Reilly Sports (oreillysofficial.com)]

Books/School reports

School books, workbooks and copies are provided by the school. A stationary list is sent each year to parents and there is a small charge for art and craft and insurance expenses. A payment link is provided to parents for this in September and the cost is reviewed annually. Our aim is to keep costs to parents/guardians as low as possible.

Parent-Teacher meetings take place in November and an end of year written report is provided in June.

Staff

From September 2024 we have seven mainstream class teachers, two special class teachers, three special education teachers, one HSCL teacher, eight special needs assistants, an administrative principal, two part-time secretaries, a cleaner and a caretaker:

The following is the list of staff for the year 2025/2026:

Principal	Sarah-Jane Lewis
Junior Infants	Sarah Delaney
Senior Infants	Lisa Mullaney
1st Class	Pearse McGroary
2nd Class	Therese Curran
3rd Class	Alan Sweeney
4th Class	Sinéad Curran

5th Class	Ryan Foley
6th Class	Emer Johnston
Rock Hub 1	Edel McNally (Deputy Principal)
Rock Hub 2	Sinéad Luke
SET	Claire Martin
SET	Lorraine Sweeney
SET (Shared)	Andrea Maguire
Special Needs Assistant	Lorraine McCurtin
Special Needs Assistant	Kayleigh McDevitt
Special Needs Assistant	Kay Drummond
Special Needs Assistant	Clara Roberts
Special Needs Assistant	Ann McGrath
Special Needs Assistant	Irene Timoney/Seán Mulhern
Special Needs Assistant	Conor Browne
Special Needs Assistant	Angela Carroll
Special Needs Assistant	Lisa McInaw
Secretarial Staff	Paul Jordan
Secretarial Staff	Bernie Kavanagh
Caretaker	Seamus Coughlin
Bus Escort/Cleaner	Mary Clancy
Food Technician	Tetyana Starodubets

Board of management

The Board of Management has legal responsibility for the overall running of the school. The board members serve for a term of four years. Meetings are held at least once a term and usually there are five meetings per annum. A meeting may be convened at any time to deal with any urgent matters that may arise. The current board members are:
Very Reverend Canon Ramon Munster (Patron's nominee)
Aiden McGuinness (Patron's nominee)
Sarah-Jane Lewis (Principal)
Lorraine Sweeney (Teachers' nominee)
Siobhán Mulligan(Parents' nominee)
Adrian O'Reilly (Parents' nominee)
Marie Doherty (Community representative)
Bernie Gillespie (Community representative)

Parents Association

The school appreciates the valuable support of the Parents' Association. The Parents' Association works with the principal and staff to build effective partnership between home and school. Meetings are held regularly and at the AGM each year a new committee is elected. The current principal officers on the Parents' Association are:

Emma Gaughan (Chairperson)
Emily Larkin (Secretary)
Lynda Loughlin (Treasurer)

School accommodation

The school building has nine large classrooms with en-suite toilets, two learning support rooms, a general purpose/sports hall, a Sensory Room, an outdoor classroom in the center of the building, visitor toilets, a secretary's office, a principal's office and several storage areas. The Department of Education have sanctioned an additional build of new class and SET rooms, we await a start date for this building project. In the meantime, we have an Outreach Class located in Saimer Childcare next door to us. This class utilise all our learning areas and yard space.

Externally, we have separate junior and senior tarmac play areas, a basketball court, climbing wall and a sports field. Outdoor play and activity is promoted and fostered. We have a polytunnel learning space, climbing wall, agility trail and bike facilities. We participate in Amber, Active and Green Flag activities.

Policies

Copies of our Admission Policy, Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying/Bí Cineálta Policy are some of the policies available on our school website. Other school policies are available on request.

The Rock Hub

Named by our pupils, the Rock Hub contains two Autism Specialist Classes. These classes are a wonderful addition to our school and were established in September 2021. The children who are enrolled in our Rock Hub also integrate into our mainstream classes and some of the children in mainstream reverse integrate into our Rock Hub for programmes and activities that may support them in reaching their potential. We are committed to this inclusive

approach and all our pupils benefit from this embedded inclusion in our school.

Extra-curricular activities

The school participates in a number of extra-curricular initiatives. In 2019/20 we worked towards achieving an Active Schools Flag, a Health and Wellbeing Flag and an SFI Discover Science and Maths Award. In 2020, we were awarded the Amber Flag for Mental Health and Wellbeing. In 2021 we were awarded the Active School Flag and in 2022 and 2024 we were awarded two Green School Flags in 2022 and 2025. We continue to work on initiatives in these areas.

We enter a number of inter-school sporting competitions each year including Gaelic football, hurling, soccer and athletics. Each year we hold an internal school Gaelic football competition with the emphasis on participation and enjoyment. Swimming lessons are organized for 1st to 6th and our Rock Hub classes in Ballyshannon Leisure Centre. Pupils in our Rock Hub classes also attend Liquid Therapy Surfing. Every summer we hold a Sport for All Day where our pupils can enjoy lots of different sporting activities, these include mini games, coaching and Zumba!

Teachers are encouraged to organize field trips for their classes throughout the year.

We regularly support dramatic productions and each class stage their own Christmas Show in the school hall. During Christmas 2020 and 2021 each class made a Christmas Mini Movies so families could enjoy performances at home. They were uploaded to our Youtube Channel for everyone to enjoy! Since then we have had live performances in the school and the Rock Hall for Christmas, they are also recorded for family and friends to enjoy. An end of year school trip is organized for each class in June.

Our senior classes also participate in debating and robotics competitions annually.

ICT

The school has G-Suite for Education and use Google Classroom in Senior Classes and Seesaw in Junior Classes. We have developed the technological infrastructure of the school and all classes have the use of Interactive Panels. We also have multiple suites of ipads for use in classes. We also have VEX robotics in our Senior classes.

In line with our Acceptable Use Policy social media groups should not be used to discuss school policy, staff or to try to influence the decisions of other parents. This is in the interest of respect and fairness to everybody and as these groups are not moderated.

Parents/Guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with our Acceptable Use policy available on the school website:
https://www.holyfamilyballyshannon.ie/policies.html

Green School Programme

We are participating in the Green Schools Programme. We were awarded the Litter & Waste Flag in 2022. Our aim is to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. This year we achieved our Water Flag and we are now working on the theme "Travel".

Cycle Bus

Our pupils participate in our Cycle bus every weekly in Autumn and Spring/Summer, weather permitting. We meet in the Mall Park and cycle to school. We are so lucky to have the help of Ballyshannon Gardaí and even other schools in the area have hopped onto our cycle bus!

Communication

The welfare and progress of your child in Holy Family NS is our primary concern. With that in mind we have an open policy with regard to parental

communication and home links are strongly encouraged in the following ways:

- Parents/guardians are frequently informed of school activities by email, newsletter or text.

- Each Teacher has a school email address where parents can contact them.

- Formal parent/teacher meetings are scheduled each November. However, parents are welcome to speak with the class teacher at any time. Other than minor communication, parents should make an appointment in advance via email or phone and they will be accommodated as soon as possible.

- The school website address is www.holyfamilyballyshannon.ie. Here you can find further school information, school policies and information and pictures of class activities.

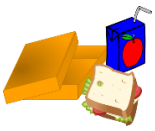
- We also have Facebook and Instagram accounts. We share activities and information on school social media and have found this to be an effective way to welcome the school community into our classrooms and share school life.
  You can find us on:

https://www.facebook.com/Holy-Family-National-School-443493775761145/

Instagram follow us on holyfamilyns

Healthy Eating Policy

The school has a healthy eating policy. We ask parents to ensure that their child bring a wholesome, healthy lunch each day. It should contain fruit, sandwich and a natural drink. On Fridays, children may bring a small treat with them. **Fizzy drinks, chewing gum and nuts are prohibited.**

Every child in the school receives a free school lunch.  As part of the new Deis scheme we have had access to funding for full school lunches from January 2023. Our school lunches are provided by Fresh Today and free hot meals are provided. Water towers are in every class and drinking bottles

are provided to all children in the school at no cost to parents. There is a daily choice and this can be changed weekly. Menus are available on the Fresh Today website: www.freshtoday.ie

SPHE

Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a very important element of the school curriculum. SPHE covers a wide range of topics such as self-identity, making decisions, citizenship and relationships, which equip children with many of the skills and knowledge needed in today's world.

Holy Family NS teach both the Stay Safe Programme and the RSE Programme as per best practice recommendations. The aim of the Stay Safe Programme is to prevent both physical and sexual abuse of children. The Relationship and Sexuality (RSE) Programme includes the learning, understanding and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, sexual identity and intimacy. Parents are informed in advance of these lessons of their content.

We are an Amber Flag School: Promoting Positive Mental Health

We are delighted to have achieved the Amber Flag Award twice, this award focuses on wellbeing and along with the many wellbeing focused activities we have in the school, we also use the Incredible Years, Friends for Life and Fun Friends and Weaving Wellbeing programmes that promote resilience and confidence in children.

We welcome you all to our school community and look forward to exciting times with you on your primary educational journey!