**St. Benedict’s National School**

**Code of Behaviour Discipline for Learning (DFL)**



This policy is set out in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act of 2000 in respect of all the children attending St. Benedict’s School, Ongar. The Policy was compiled in conjunction with The NEWB Guidelines in the development of a Code of Behaviour for the school.

The policy aims to promote positive good behaviour in the school and aims to enhance the learning environment where the pupils can progress in all aspects of their development. This policy aims to nurture each child to develop his/her potential in a caring and positive environment where the talents of each child are acknowledged and valued and where difference is valued and respected. The policy will outline a set of programmes, practices and procedures that together form St Benedict’s plan in helping pupils to behave well and learn well.

This code of behaviour is developed from a whole school approach in the promotion of good behaviour among all pupils, striving to ensure that St. Benedict’s N.S. is a happy place of learning and teaching for pupils and staff, and a place where parents feel welcome in the involvement of their child’s education and wellbeing in accordance with the school’s mission statement.

*St Benedict’s NS aims to provide a stable, safe and secure environment for pupils and staff and to foster a strong sense of community between management, staff, parents and pupils. The school will encourage and promote inclusion in all aspects of life and establish quality relationships within the school and the wider community, while striving to enable all pupils to reach their full potential in all areas of school life.*

# Aims of this Code of Behaviour

This policy sets out to provide the school community with an opportunity to;

* Help to build a shared commitment to the values and ethos of the school
* Give all the partners in the school community a sense of ownership of the code of behaviour.
* Create consensus about the kinds of behaviour and relationships that foster learning
* Build a shared understanding of how behaviour affects learning
* Strengthen positive relationships of respect and trust
* To enhance the learning environment for all pupils.
* To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.
* To develop all pupils’ self-esteem, promote positive behaviour and self- discipline.
* To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.
* To engage from a framework from which a whole school approach is involved in promoting good behaviour and a happy school.

**Roles & Responsibilities:**

The policy sets out a” Roles and Responsibilities” approach in relation to the Principal, the teaching staff and Special Needs Assistants, the children and their Parents and the Board of Management of St. Benedict’s N.S.

The schools Code of Behaviour shall be a flexible one, open to change and development, as new ideas and alternative ones present throughout the life of our school.

### Role of the Board of Management:

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Ratification and any future amendments to the Code of Behaviour will be the responsibility of the Board.

### Role of the Principal:

The overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. The Principal will develop and encourage good behaviour through a formal coordinated system, agreed by all partners in ensuring that a high standard of discipline is maintained in the school. The success of the school’s code of behaviour will be achieved through a supportive and positive interaction between all members of the school community i.e. Principal, teachers, parents, Special Needs Assistants, pupils and Board of Management.

* 1. Affirmation and validation of all good behaviour throughout the school regularly
  2. Visiting classrooms as an opportunity to encourage positive behaviour.
  3. Rewarding and praising achievements on a weekly basis awarding ‘Dalta na Seachtaine’.
  4. Supporting staff in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour of the school.

### Role of the Teachers:

Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

The teachers encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As teachers we should aim to:

1. Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
2. Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
3. Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
4. Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
5. Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
6. Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
7. To discourage physical aggression and encourage ‘*Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet’.*

**Role of the SNA:**

Each SNA is responsible for ensuring that standards of behaviour are maintained both in school and during yard. The SNA’s share responsibility with the teachers for implementing the DFL system that is used in St Benedict's NS. During teaching time, class teachers are responsible for the sanctions and rewards and will work cooperatively with the SNA to ensure that rewards and sanctions are applied when necessary.

### Role of the Pupils:

1. All pupils will be committed to adhering to the Code of Behaviour in the school.
2. All pupils should understand that sanctions are necessary for unacceptable behaviour.

### Role of Parents/Guardians:

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school. All parents/guardians will sign the Code of Behaviour on enrolling their child to the school.

### Introduction Statement:

The school is adopting the Discipline for Learning programme to support the Code of Behaviour in the school at present. The Principal, in consultation with the deputy principal, assistant principals and staff of St. Benedict’s N.S., have adapted the DFL programme and devised rules to suit the needs of all pupils in the school.

Our DFL system is based on three components:

1. Rules
2. Rewards
3. Sanctions

***Rules***

***Classroom:*** At the beginning of each academic year, the class teacher will introduce the “Classroom Rules”. Class rules will be kept to a minimum and are devised for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. Where possible, they emphasise positive behaviour. Rules will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual differences. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

### Junior Classroom Rules

1. Kind hands, feet and words
2. Sit safely and quietly in your place
3. Good listening
4. Put up your hand
5. Do as you are asked
6. Wait and take your turn
7. Do your best!

### Senior Classroom Rules

1. Pupils must be on time and wearing full uniform.
2. Homework must be completed.
3. Raise your hand to speak and listen when others are speaking.
4. Ask permission to leave your seat.
5. Respect everyone.

***Outside the Classroom:*** Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet’ slogan will be acknowledged and a succinct set of yard rules will be introduced at the start of each academic year.

Pupils will be encouraged to play calmly at all times and be inclusive of other pupils. Break times will be supervised at all times by staff.

* Children are not allowed to enter the school building on their own (except when accompanied by a staff member).
* Pupils will be encouraged to play in a fair and caring way in designated areas.
* Pupils will not be allowed to bring food to the yard. Eating of lunches will be accommodated before each break in the classrooms.
* Pupils will respond to the school bell at all times. First bell freeze, second bell walk to line up in the designated line up areas.

### Junior Outside the Classroom Rules

1. Walk quietly in the corridors.
2. Kind hands, feet and words.
3. Play safely in your own yard.
4. Do as you are asked immediately.
5. Freeze when you hear the bell.
6. Line up safely and quietly.

### Senior ‘Outside the Classroom’ Rules

1. Walk silently in the corridors on the right.
2. Play safely at all times.
3. Do as you are asked immediately.
4. Freeze when you hear the bell.
5. Walk to your line safely.

## Rewards

Rewarding the pupils and focusing on the positive behaviour is the most important part of the DFL system. Part of the vision of St Benedict’s N.S. is to help children achieve their personal best and thus prepare them for further education, life and work. We recognise that there are many different forms of intelligence and similarly that children use a variety of approaches to solve problems. Our reward system seeks to provide encouragement to all children of all abilities and talents. Children will be encouraged, praised and listened to by adults in the school. Praise is earned by the maintenance of good standards as well as by particularly noteworthy personal achievements.

Annual school tours and class trips will be reserved for those who have consistently strived to behave well. The Discipline for Learning System will be used as a strategy to encourage good behaviour.

### Strategies for showing approval and promoting good behaviour:

1. **Verbal affirmation** of pupils in the school environment thus setting a positive atmosphere in relation to behaviour. There will be an emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions.
2. Ignoring minor non-disruptive and attention seeking behaviour and an emphasis to ‘catch them being good’.
3. Assign **classroom tasks/jobs** (e.g. messenger, setting up art/PE equipment) to acknowledge good behaviour.
4. **Dalta na Seachtaine** award takes place on a weekly basis.
5. Collectively rewarding classes through **‘class dojo points’** .
6. Optional treat at the end of term.
7. Class dojo may be used to reward children for additional good behaviour. Children who earn dojo points should not have them removed as a sanction.
8. Formally and informally communicating good behaviour to parents through

### SeeSaw.

**Dojo Points and Prizes**

Students in the classes 3rd - 6th are individually rewarded for good behaviour with Dojo points and have the opportunity to collect points to receive a prize throughout the school day. Each child who has behaved well will receive their points from their teacher.

In the classes, pupils earn 5 merit stamps/dojo points a day for:

1. Homework *(all homework must be completed* ***and*** *signed by a parent/guardian).*
2. Punctuality
3. Uniform
4. Behaviour in the classroom
5. Behaviour outside classroom

Pupils can receive rewards when they reach the following targets or at a target of the class teacher’s choice:

* 1. 3rd – 6th class: 125, 250, 375, 500 (increments of 125) dojo points.

These rewards can range from lucky dip, homework pass, to extra golden time/yard time etc.

***Sanctions***

The following behaviour checks/steps are followed if pupils do not follow the rules:

# Classroom Sanctions

### Junior Classroom Sanctions

**Stage 1:** Teacher moves the pupils' names to stage 1. A verbal warning(s) may be given to the child before this happens but the verbal warning is at the discretion of the teacher.

**Stage 2: Name moved** from stage one to stage two. The child is informed of the reason for this happening.

**Stage 3: Time-out:** Pupil’s name is moved to stage 3. Pupils work on their own at a separate desk (time at teacher’s discretion). Infant teachers may use a timer for time-out.

**Stage 4: Yellow Card:** Pupil’s name is moved to stage 4. Pupils are sent to a different teacher at the same class level where possible. Name and action(s) will be logged on Aladdin in the **general notes document**.

**Stage 5: Red Card:** Pupil’s name is moved to the red zone. Pupil remains/returns to a different classroom with a red card. Incident is reported to the Principal/ Deputy Principal and details are logged. Child is taken by the principal/deputy principal to their office and spoken to. Official Letter is sent to parent(s) / guardian(s). Parents are contacted to inform them of the incident and a meeting is arranged if necessary. The Principal/Deputy Principal and class teacher meets with parent(s) / guardian(s) – problem is **resolved** or **possible suspension** may occur if the problem is not resolved.

**VERY SERIOUS** cases of misbehaviour may result in the child being automatically moved to **Step 5.**

At this point, upon investigation, **SUSPENSION** may occur.

### Senior Classroom Sanctions

**Stage 1:** Teacher moves the pupils' names to stage 1. A verbal warning(s) may be given to the child before this happens but the verbal warning is at the discretion of the teacher.

**Stage 2: Name moved** from stage one to stage two. The child is informed of the reason for this happening. They lose their Dojo point for that day for class behaviour.

**Stage 3: Time-out:** Pupil’s name is moved to stage 3. Pupils work on their own at a separate desk (time at teacher’s discretion).

**Stage 4: Yellow card:** Pupil’s name is moved to stage 4. Pupils are sent to a different teacher at the same class level where possible. Name and action(s) will be logged on Aladdin in the **general notes document.**

**Stage 5: Red Card:** Pupil’s name is moved to the red zone. Pupil remains/returns to a different classroom with a red card. Incident is reported to the Principal/ Deputy Principal and details are logged. Child is taken by the principal/deputy principal to their office and spoken to. Official Letter is sent to parent(s) / guardian(s). Parents are contacted to inform them of the incident and a meeting is arranged if necessary. The Principal/Deputy Principal and teacher meets with parent(s) / guardian(s) – problem is **resolved** or **possible suspension** may occur if the problem is not resolved.

**VERY SERIOUS** cases of misbehaviour may result in the child being automatically moved to **Step 5.**

At this point, upon investigation, **SUSPENSION** may occur.

### Indoor Rainy Day Procedures

1. All children must be seated during indoor breaks on rainy days.
2. Children must ask permission from a staff member in order to leave their seat.
3. Children who break the rules will be put on timeout outside the room for a period of time at the discretion of the staff member.

# Outside the Classroom’ Sanctions

### Junior ‘Outside the Classroom’ Sanctions

**Step 1: Verbal Warning:** Teacher/SNA corrects pupil’s behaviour/action and draws attention to which rule has been broken.

**Step 2:** **Time out area:** Pupil is asked to stand outside the playing zone on a painted spot for 3-5 minutes depending on class/age.

**Step 3:** **Yellow card:** If the offence is repeated or any other rule is broken, the pupil will be asked to stand in the time out area. They are placed on time out again for the remainder of the break. Pupil’s name and a description of what occurred must be logged on Aladdin in the **general notes document**. The pupil’s name is moved to stage 3 in the class. If the child is already on stage 3 or higher they are moved to the next stage.

**Step 4: Red card:** For extremely serious offences children can be given a red card by a staff member on the yard.

Procedure: The child is asked to stand out by the yard teacher/SNA and the Principal/Deputy Principal is sent for. The incident is recorded by the

principal/deputy principal. All above parties will liaise together to deal with the situation effectively. Parents will be informed.

### Senior ‘Outside the Classroom’ Sanctions

**Step 1: Verbal Warning:** Teacher/SNA corrects pupil’s behaviour/action and draws attention to which rule has been broken.

**Step 2: Time out area**: Pupils are asked to stand outside the playing zone in the red area for a period of time at the discretion of the staff member who put them there.

**Step 3:** **Yellow card:** If the offence is repeated or any other rule is broken, the pupil is asked to stand out. They are placed on time out again for the remainder of the break. Pupil’s name and a description of what occurred must be logged on Aladdin in the **general notes document**. Name is moved to stage 3 in the class. If the child is already on stage 3 or higher they are moved to the next stage.

**Step 4:** **Red card:** For extremely serious offences children can be given a red card by a staff member on the yard.

Procedure: The child is asked to stand out by the yard teacher/SNA and the Principal/Deputy Principal is sent for. The incident is recorded by the

principal/deputy principal. All above parties will liaise together to deal with the situation effectively. Parents will be informed.

After a student’s name receives 3 yellow cards in one term this converts into a red card. The student will be sent to the Principal/Deputy Principal’s Office to explain their behaviour. The red card procedures are followed.

### Procedures for Temporary Suspension or Permanent Expulsion:

**Suspension**

Suspension is defined as “requiring a student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days”. (NEWB Guidelines)

Exclusion for part of the school day or asking Parents/Guardians to keep a child from school, as a sanction, counts as suspension. Suspension will be considered as part of a range of sanctions where a child has engaged in a serious or gross misbehaviour. While suspension should be a proportionate response to the behaviour that is causing concern, a single incidence of serious misbehaviour may be grounds for suspension. The decision to suspend will be based on the following grounds:

* The seriously detrimental effect on the education of the other children of the child’s behaviour to date.
* Whether the child’s continued presence in the school constitutes a threat to health and safety.
* The child is responsible for serious damage to property.
* Is the behaviour of the child serious enough to constitute a gross misdemeanor which is unacceptable to the school principal/Board of Management.

The purpose of the suspension is to give the child/parent/guardian/staff time to consider the child’s actions and to consider the implications for the other children in the class group. It will also provide the school with time to devise ways to help the child improve the child’s behaviour in the future.

The Principal can suspend a child for periods of up to three days. The Principal and Chairperson can suspend a child for periods of up to five days. If a longer suspension is proposed, the Principal should refer to the Board of Management for consideration and approval. Reports to the Board and to the relevant authorities should be made in line with NEWB Guidelines.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a child. This authority will be exercised inline with the procedures outlined in the Development of a Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools NEWB.

### 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 are:

* Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a staff member/pupil.
* Setting fire to school property.
* Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on.

**Steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours expulsions and suspensions**

### Suspensions

* 1. *Pupil will be removed from peer group and brought to office.*
  2. *The Principal will be informed and parents will be requested to meet with the Principal and the class teacher if appropriate.*
  3. *The Principal can sanction immediate suspension for a maximum initial period of three days. The Chairperson and Principal can sanction immediate suspension for a maximum period of up to five days. Full Board of Management approval is required for any suspension of more than five days.*
  4. *All communications to parents regarding the suspension or the possibility of suspension of a pupil 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 pupil will be readmitted formally to the class by the Principal, or where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved earlier, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal.*

### Expulsions:

Expulsions will be considered only in an extreme case, when all other steps and procedures have been exhausted, and 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.*

1. *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.*
2. *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.*
3. *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.*
4. *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 be informed of their right of appeal under Section 29 of the Education Welfare Act.(2000). Parents are welcome to contact the Principal to discuss any problem their child may be experiencing in school and can make an appointment by telephoning the school office.

### Children with Special Needs

All children are required to comply with the code of behaviour. However, the school recognises that children with special needs may require assistance in understanding certain rules. Specialised behaviour plans will be put in place in consultation with parents and the class teacher, SET/SNA, and or the principal will work closely with home to ensure that optimal support is given. Cognitive development will be taken into account at all times. Professional advice from psychological assessments will be invaluable.

The children in the class or school may be taught strategies to assist a pupil with special needs, adhere to the rules and thus provide peer support. This will be done in a supportive and safe way, acknowledging and respecting the difference in all individuals.

### Communicating with Parents

Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children. Parents and teachers should develop a joint strategy to address specific difficulties, in addition to sharing a broader philosophy which can be implemented at home and in school.

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.

Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to teachers about any significant

developments in a child’s life (in the past or present), which may affect the child’s behaviour.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

* + Informal and formal parent/teacher meetings
  + Through children’s homework journal (infants do not have a homework journal, please check bags for notes)
  + Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school
  + School notice board
  + Newsletters/school web-site/emails
  + Texting Parents through Aladdin (Our school text messaging system)

This policy was ratified by staff and board of management on \_\_4th October 2021\_\_\_\_\_\_. 

Signed: \_ (Chairperson of Board of Management) Signed: \_ (Principal)