This policy is set out in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000) in respect of all the children attending St. Benedict’s School, Ongar

**The Philosophy of Our School Mission Statement**: In St. Benedict's we seek to provide an environment where the Christian values of mutual respect, tolerance, care and justice are encouraged and nurtured. Our school complements the efforts of parents in the fostering of living these values. Each pupil is unique, has different gifts and different needs. Our school strives to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which develops the individual's talents and abilities. St. Benedict's encourages self-discipline and responsibility; and fosters the development of skills which enable pupils to use life positively and creatively. It is our wish that pupils share fully in the life of the school and leave us as caring and capable young people who will contribute positively to their communities.

**How our Code was developed.** This code was developed in consultation with all the education partners involved in the life of the school. The Patron, the Board of Management, Teachers, Parents and pupils were all involved in the drafting of this document. Guidance was sought from:

* ***Developing a Code of Behaviour : Guidelines for Schools(2008)*** *NEWB*
* ***Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties; A Continuum of Support (2011)*** *NEPS.*
* ***Discipline for Learning.*** (Dr. Adrian Smith ) (Appendix I)

**Our Vision for Relationships and Behaviour in the school and the ways in which the School Promotes Good Behaviour.** The Code of Behaviour in St. Benedict's is a statement of good practice which covers all the aspects of a school that contribute to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive ethos. Respect for the health, safety and welfare of each member of the school community guides this code. In recognising the aspiration in the school mission statement to provide the best school environment in which to teach, learn, work and play, there is a duty and responsibility for all to play their part and to recognise the rights of all to proceed in their roles without threat, danger or obstruction and with the support and respect due to each individual. The school expects good behaviour to be the norm and always acknowledges good behaviour.

**The role of pupils, staff and parents in helping each other to uphold the standards expected in the school.** All members of the school community are expected to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and to foster an atmosphere of courtesy and mutual respect. Good school discipline, which fosters an effective and stimulating learning environment, depends upon full co-operation between all members of the school community. The support of parents/guardians greatly assists the school in the implementation of our Code of Behaviour.

**Aims of our Code of Behaviour:**

* *To foster acceptance of and adherence to an agreed set of principles of behaviour and contribute to mutual respect.*
* *To support effective teaching and learning.*
* *To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration of others.*
* *To develop self-esteem, promote positive behaviour and self-discipline.*
* *To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.*

**Promoting a Positive School.** St. Benedict's seeks to provide a school environment in which pupils have every opportunity to learn and to develop as a person. Working together, pupils, teachers and parents have a responsibility to contribute positively to school life. We therefore encourage all to strive for the highest standards of work, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Pupils are expected to co-operate fully with teachers and to challenge themselves to achieve their best in every aspect of life in the school. The school community will strive to:

* *Treat everyone and everything with respect.*
* *Show kindness, fairness and courtesy and willingness to work together.*
* *Follow the agreed school rules class/golden rules.*
* *Attend school and be punctual.*
* *Make use of every positive learning opportunity afforded at school.*
* *Work hard and act sensibly.*

**Roles and Responsibilities of Staff Members in relation to Behaviour:** All staff share responsibility for good order in the corridors, school grounds and during school events. Teachers are primarily responsible for maintaining discipline in their own classes. For misbehaviour the teacher will impose an appropriate reprimand and / or appropriate sanction.

**System of Referral and Procedures**: Teachers keep written records of breaches of discipline by pupils. Records of serious breaches of discipline are retained on file by the principal. Copies of letters sent to parents and records of phone-calls and meetings with parents will be retained. The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged based on a common-sense approach with regard to gravity and frequency. Good behaviour in St Benedict’s is supported through the use of the DFL system. (*See Appendix I*)

St. Benedict's operates a positive proactive approach to encourage good attendance. Procedures regarding this approach are outlined in the school’s Attendance Policy.

Homework is an integral part of every child’s education as it supports and reinforces the work which has been previously taught in various curricular areas. The format and expectations for homework will be explained to pupils and their parents at the beginning of the school year. Guidelines are given in our school policy on homework about the length of time homework should take and parents are asked to ensure that homework is completed. Pupils who do not complete homework assignments on a regular basis and, without good reason will be reprimanded in accordance with our Code of Behaviour. Parents are asked to send a note in the homework journal if their child had a particular difficulty in completing home-work tasks.

A teacher will refer a pupil directly to the Deputy Principal or Principal only in the event of a serious breach of discipline. Teachers do not remove pupils from the classroom and leave them unsupervised outside the classroom. If immediate intervention is necessary the Deputy Principal or Principal will be contacted explaining the problem. Where there are persistent occurrences of behavioural difficulties in St. Benedict's we will endeavour to utilise a ***Problem Solving Process Approach*** as advised by NEPS. We ask the following four questions:

*1. What is the concern? (Starting Point)*

*2. Why is it happening? (Information Gathering and Assessment)*

*3. How can we help? (Planning and Intervention)*

*4. Was the intervention effective? (Review)*

##### When concerns cannot be met through our whole school framework and classroom structures and supports, St. Benedict's will endeavour to meet the needs of pupils who fall into such a category by implementing a continuum of support as advocated by NEPS. Such pupils will be supported through a three stage process of classroom support, school support and school support plus up to the point of benefiting from the development and implementation of an individual behaviour support plan.

##### St. Benedict's has in place clear procedure for investigating alleged incidents of bullying within the school. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial will be noted, investigated and dealt with. A record of all allegations will be kept on record by the Principal. In dealing with difficulties which arise the following measures/sanctions may be used depending on the seriousness of the offence.

* *Reasoning with pupil.*
* *Verbal warning.*
* *Additional work.*
* *Note to parents in the pupil’s journal.*
* *Reduced break or loss of privilege.*
* *Referral to Principal/Deputy Principal.*
* *Phone call to parents/guardians.*
* *Meeting with parents/guardians.*
* *Use of an Individual Behaviour Plan.*
* *Communication/consultation with parents.*
* *Referral to BOM*
* *Temporary Suspension*
* *Permanent Suspension in accordance with the;* ***Education and Welfare Act (2000)*** *and* ***Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools(2008) NEWB***

**Procedures for Temporary Suspension or Permanent Expulsion:**

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Principal regarding Temporary Suspension in accordance with the*; Education Welfare Act* (2000) and*Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (2008)* NEWB. In the case of gross misbehaviour the board will authorise the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate temporary suspension, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Permanent Suspension/Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with the *Education and Welfare Act (2000).*

**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 teacher/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. *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.*
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 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.*
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.*

**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.*

***(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 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.

**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 co-ordinated 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 supportive and positive interaction between all members of the school community i.e. Principal, teachers, parents, Special Needs Assistants, pupils and Board of Management. This is achieved through:

* *Affirmation and validation of good behaviour regularly.*
* *Visiting classrooms to encourage positive behaviour.*
* *Rewarding and praising achievements on a weekly basis awarding “Dalta na Seachtaine, Rang na Seachtaine “.*
* *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. Teachers aim to:

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

**Role of the Pupils:** All pupils will be encouraged to commit to adhering to the code of behaviour in the school and to understand that sanctions are necessary for managing 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 be asked to sign the Code of Behaviour on enrolling their child to the school.

This Code of Behaviour was ratified by the B.O.M. of St. Benedict’s Primary School on:
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**Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­\_\_\_\_\_ Nigel Williamson (Chairperson).**

**Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Deirdre Coyle (Principal).**