



**St Gerald's College  
Pastoral Care Policy**

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## **1.0: Type of School**

St. Gerald's DLS College is an all-boys Catholic voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Le Chéile Schools Trust.

## **2.0: Characteristic Spirit**

The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the Le Chéile Charter. It is underpinned by a philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human person as a child of God. The school sees the interaction of people from different backgrounds—spiritual, ethnic, language, special needs—as a gift that will enrich the community of the school and promote the growth and learning of all. Therefore, the school values each student and their family. It welcomes and is sensitive to each one, seeking to respond to their individual needs.

## **3.0: Board of Management**

The Board of Management will Ensure that there is a pastoral care policy in place and that it is implemented.

- Ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Support pastoral care initiatives in the school.

## **4.0: School Specific Ethos**

“St. Gerald's College, is a Lasallian Centre and the mission of the school is to give a human and Christian Education to the young, with special concern for the disadvantaged”.

St Gerald's College is specifically a Catholic School deriving its educational philosophy from Saint John Baptist de la Salle. As a Lasallian school, we have a special mission to nurture and support our most vulnerable students. In keeping with this philosophy, we welcome boys of all abilities.

St. John Baptist de la Salle believed that, in the person of the Lasallian teacher and within the Lasallian community of the school, a remedy was to be found for many of the ills of society. The need for such a remedy is just as evident today. Too many young people find themselves tossed about in a society which presents moral ambiguity and confusion. Too many are consumed by their wants rather than needs. For some, great peer pressure, low self-esteem



and poverty of love and affection are a daily reality. The demands of everyday life may force many parents to spend less time and energy on the Christian formation of their children. This is the context within which Lasallian schools were conceived and in which a De La Salle College continues to exist today and to find meaning.

We are reminded of our College ethos in a tangible sense in the many images of our founder and the patron saint of all teachers, St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle.

With one hand the teacher is pointing his finger to give instruction and guidance to the pupil while the other hand is around the shoulder of the pupil demonstrating love, care and support. The pupil is listening to the teacher and is open to learning demonstrated with an open book. Lasallian teachers see themselves in the place of Christ and in the place of a loving parent concerned with the physical, spiritual and educational welfare of all of our students.

The staff at St. Gerald's College understands that they are working with young people who are still developing and growing. Our students still have a lot to learn and a lot to experience. We believe in these young people, and so we work collectively to create a place of opportunity where we encourage all of our young people to grow to excellence in everything they do.

### **5.0: The Curriculum:**

The school provides a comprehensive curriculum that has breadth, depth and academic rigour. It facilitates and supports the students' search for truth and meaning. It encourages them to strive for excellence in all areas of human growth. It provides a range of learning opportunities including curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that helps them to explore their talents and to achieve their potential. It prepares them for active participation in society and for living fully in all areas of life including the world of work. It encourages them to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.

### **6.0: Pastoral Care Rationale**

The pastoral care aspect of the school community is a whole-school responsibility concerning students, staff and parents. It is a requirement of the 1998 Education Act that schools



“promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students.” St Gerald’s College aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity. It encourages, students to become involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities to ensure that all students achieve their true full potential. St Gerald’s College seeks to provide a safe and secure environment to maximise learning. We define learning as the academic development and personal growth of the student to his full potential. For such learning and development to occur an effective Pastoral Care structure must exist in the school.

### **7.0: Pastoral Roles: Definitions and Responsibilities**

At the centre of our pastoral framework are the pastoral roles, each of which contributes enormously to the pastoral care nature of the school community. While every staff member has a pastoral dimension to his/her role, we recognise that certain people fulfill key roles in this area.

These include the following :

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Head
- Class Head
- Subject Teacher
- Guidance Counsellor
- Special Needs Co-Ordinator

### **7.1: Staff (General)**

All teachers have responsibility for the pastoral care of students in the school. Through the planned curricular programme they will amongst other things:

Build up students’ self-esteem.

- Encourage students to be assertive where appropriate.
- Help students to make informed decisions
- Be responsible for subject-related matters concerning each student.
- Provide an environment conducive to the full human development of each student.



***7.1.1: The Role of the Principal/ Deputy Principal:***

- The Principal and Deputy Principal will work to ensure that our school is primarily a caring community.
- The Management is committed to supporting all those involved in the pastoral care programme at the College.
- There are weekly meetings with Year Head giving them the opportunity to share information about students in their care.
- Management also makes time available to meet with parents, other staff and students in a supportive atmosphere.
- On behalf of the Board of Management, the Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral care needs of students are met.

***7.1.2: The Principal***

- appoints a pastoral care team (from among the teaching staff) and work closely with this group.
- keeps the Board of Management informed regarding issues of relevance.

***7.1.3: Year Heads / Co-Ordinators***

- will liaise with the Pastoral Care team.
- will attend weekly year head meetings.
- will have overall responsibility for the year group.

***7.1.4: Class Heads***

- will take a special interest in his/her tutor class and in the welfare of each of its individual students. For this reason, wherever possible, Class Teachers are assigned on the basis that they have regular contact with the class group.
- will have access to relevant information on the students in their class. Likewise, the Class Teacher will share information, as appropriate with relevant members of the staff.
- will work closely with the Year Head in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- will ensure that each student in the class properly maintains the Student Journal.



- Will foster a supportive , positive atmosphere in which success and achievements are highlighted and valued. He/she will liaise with class teachers, parents and Year Heads on a regular basis.
- Will monitor students behavioural and homework records.
- No major sanction will be imposed without consultation with the relevant Class Teacher

***7.1.5: Subject Teachers :***

- are familiar with, and are in support of the pastoral care policy.
- promote a positive teaching and learning environment within the classroom and report concerns to appropriate persons.
- Year Heads are available to subject teachers to support them in their work.
- The Class Head offers particular support to new members who may be experiencing difficulty with classroom management.

***7.1.6: The Role of the Guidance Counsellor in Pastoral Care Provision***

- The Guidance Counsellor helps students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviour or effect changes in their lives.
- Counselling is offered on an individual or small group basis. The focus of counselling may be on personal, educational and career issues, individually or in combination.
- The Guidance Counsellor engages in a two way process of consultation with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies.

The following are the key elements of referral and counselling:

- School management, teachers and parents may refer students to the Guidance Counsellor. Students may also self-refer and friends sometimes consult the Counsellor resulting in the issue of an appointment.
- The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred student must be respected by all concerned.
- The Guidance Counsellor may recognise that an individual student needs assistance from other qualified helpers outside of school and organises the provision of such assistance following agreed procedures with the school, parents and local agencies.



- Particular care is taken to involve all interested in the student's welfare and information will be shared as appropriate on a need-to-know basis.
- Recommendations are made about appropriate agencies. Parents may be encouraged to refer a student to their G.P.
- Where a referral is made, a detailed referral document is prepared and forwarded to the appropriate agency. The Counsellor liaises with the individual psychologist/psychiatrist and provides subsequent support for the student.
- The Guidance Counsellor attends weekly meetings with The Principal/ Deputy Principal, Special Needs Co-Ordinator and the SPHE Co-Ordinator.
- If a student is under 16, the Guidance Counsellor will seek permission from a parent/guardian before she will meet with the student.

#### ***7.1.7: Special Needs Co-Ordinator***

- The Special Needs Co-ordinator will:
- Establish a list of students in need of resource hours.
- Refer students to the school Psychologist for learning support / resource testing.
- Allocate resource hours to students in consultation with learning support teacher, guidance counsellors and resource teachers.

#### ***7.1.8: SPHE Co-Ordinator***

Through the implementation of the SPHE programme, the SPHE Co-ordinator and the SPHE team will provide the students with the unique opportunity to develop the skills and competencies to learn about themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development.

#### ***7.1.9: Learning Support/Resource Teachers***

The Learning Support Teachers support students academically as well as socially and personally to facilitate their holistic education. Their work is carried out in small groups and in mainstream classes with the subject teacher.

#### ***7.1.10: Special Needs Assistants***

The Special Needs Assistants provide care and assistance to students allocated in their care.



#### ***7.1.11: Religious Education Team***

- Through the implementation of the RE programme, the RE team will:
- Promote in each pupil a knowledge of their faith and its practice in everyday life, while adhering to the school ethos.
- Ensure high standards and effective delivery of Religious Education within the school.
- Implement the pastoral care initiatives, which help students experience an affinity with the school.
- Cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

#### ***7.1.12: Students' Council***

The Students' Council has a very important role to play in the area of pastoral care.

It endeavours to:

- provide a support network for the students where they can contribute their ideas on ways to enhance student lives.
- encourage students to become self-confident, responsible, caring and independent young women who are prepared to take on the challenge of adult life.
- liaise with other partners within the school community.

#### ***7.1.13: Parents' Association***

The Parents' Council offers valued support to the school community in a number of ways.

The Parents Council will:

- act in an advisory capacity in promoting the educational and Christian ethos of the school and the general welfare of its students.

#### ***7.1.14: Chaplaincy***

In a school community, where the dignity of each individual is respected, the role of the Chaplain has an important pastoral dimension while also ensuring that a reflective, spiritual approach permeates the daily life of the school. The Education Act, 1998, Section 9 (d) notes the obligation placed on schools to “promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students in consultation with parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit



of the school". In St Gerald's our school chaplain is selected by the Parish Priest. Fr Shane Sullivan was appointed Chaplain for St Gerald's in September 2016

His responsibilities are as follows:

- He visits the school and various classes in cooperation with the teacher.
- He facilitates various Religious services throughout the year e.g. Opening School Mass, November prayer service for the dead, reconciliation service during December, Christmas Carol service and Graduation Mass in May.
- He supports the outside initiatives and social outreach that the students are involved in such as Peer 4 Peer and the John Paul II Awards.

It is hoped that the Department of Education & Science (DES) will make funds available for the employment of Chaplains in Voluntary Secondary Schools in the coming years. (Community Schools have Chaplains paid by the DES). The Board should, however, examine what, if any, arrangements for Chaplaincy are currently in place in the school and keep the matter under review.

### **8.0: Pastoral Programmes**

There are a number of programmes with a strong link to the Pastoral Care Programme of the school.

Social, Personal and Health Education supports the personal development, health and well-being of students and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships.

The aims of this programme are

- To enable the students to develop skills for self-fulfilment and living in communities.
- To promote self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To enable the students to develop a framework for responsible decision-making.
- To provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

All Junior Cycle students receive one period per week of SPHE. Teachers of this subject plan the programme together and all attend relevant inservice training.



### ***8.1: The Mentoring Programme***

A group of Fifth Year students (normally twenty-four) work with the First Year classes as part of the schools Mentoring Programme.

The aims of this programme are:

- To help First Years in the transition from Primary to Secondary School.
- To enable them to get to know each other better and extend their range of friendships.
- To provide an additional network of support for First Years.
- To provide an opportunity for young people to share their gifts and talents with other young people.

The Peer Mentoring Programme forges strong bonds between the First Year classes and their chosen Mentors. The Mentors carry out a wide range of activities with their classes which build on the students self-esteem and confidence. This programme occurs for one period per week in the first term and on a needs basis thereafter.

### ***8.2: Anti-Bullying Programme***

The Anti-Bullying Programme reflects the school's total opposition to bullying and its commitment to deal swiftly with any bullying incidents that arise. During the school year there is an Anti-Bullying Week.

The aims of this programme are:

- To raise awareness about bullying and related issues among the student body
- To remind students of the policy and procedures for dealing with bullying incidents
- To provide coping strategies for students
- To enhance students' self esteem

The school adopts an active whole-school approach to bullying. The full range of activities aimed at preventing bullying and the procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are outlined in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **9.0: Review**

This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the subject department and update where necessary.



Signed: *Brendan Forde*

*Brendan Forde*

**Chairperson of BOM**

Signed: *Daniel Hyland*

*Daniel Hyland*

**Secretary of BOM**

**Date of next review: September 2017**