St Gerald's DLS College
Policy on Promoting Positive Behaviour

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1.0: Introduction by the Board of Management

This policy was devised in consultation with all the teaching staff in our school.   It was submitted to the Board of Management.   It is being reviewed as part of the School Development Planning Process.

In devising this Policy, we have given great consideration to the democratic and child centered principles of this school.   The establishment of a sound learning environment at school and classroom level is key to effective learning and teaching. Effective learning and teaching is dependent on positive relationships established at school and classroom level through inter-actions between staff and pupil and between pupils themselves. The development of a positive ethos within schools is the foundation for better learning as is highlighted by the National Behaviour Support Service.

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2.0: School Ethos

'**"St Gerald's College, is a Lasallian Centre and** t**he mission of the school is to give a human and Christian Education to the young, with special concern for the disadvantaged".**

3.0: Rationale

- To create an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and corporate responsibility.
- To promote a positive Catholic ethos through positive behaviour strategies and celebrations of success.
- To raise standards of attainment, behaviour and attendance for all pupils.
- To involve parents, pupils and staff in setting rules/standards of behaviour within the school.
- To get pupils to manage their own behaviour effectively while respecting the rights of others.
- To inform parents and pupils of sanctions that will be taken for negative behaviour (see our Code of Behaviour Policy)
- To develop social, Christian and Citizenship skills through a variety of school contexts.

4.0: Managing positive behaviour:

Positive behaviour is achieved in two ways:

1. Prevention – Preventative strategies which encourage each pupil to develop a sense of personality and self-discipline.
2. Management – When negative behaviour occurs we need to be able to respond positively and effectively and this is addressed clearly and objectively in our Code of Behaviour.

We try to do both by employing positive behaviour strategies through a number of initiatives and school policies and imposing understood sanctions when negative behaviour arises.

Before this document addresses strategies to promote positive behaviour it is important to describe challenge behaviour and its consequences on the learning environment.

Challenging behaviour, in the school context, encompasses behaviour that:

- Interferes with the pupil's own and/or other pupils' learning;
- Disrupts the day to day functioning of the school;
- Jeopardizes the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment;
- Has a duration, frequency, intensity or persistence that is beyond the normal range that schools tolerate; and
- Is less likely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions used by the school to address pupil misbehaviour.

5.0: Responsibilities:

- Staff: The school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, share a collegiate responsibility for consistently implementing school policy on positive behaviour. The Principal, Year Heads and Class Tutors have overall responsibility for ensuring positive behaviour.
- Parents: Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that they support their child in meeting school expectations in respect of positive behaviour.

- Pupils: Pupils' responsibility is to be responsible for their own positive behaviour and meet the expectations set out by the school.

6.0: Why and in what context, does challenging behaviour occur?

There are many reasons why children behave in a challenging manner. Therefore, identifying why they do so can be the key to finding a solution to the problems caused by the behaviour. This analysis must include a consideration of the behaviour and the context in which it occurs.

- Children with communication difficulties may engage in challenging behaviour. If a child is unable to express his/her needs or wants because of a lack of understanding or ability to use language, inappropriate behaviour may be used to express those needs. In such cases, teaching a child to use acceptable ways to communicate his/her needs may form part of the solution.

- Environmental factors may contribute to the problem. Children may react negatively to noise, heat and cold or to invasion of their space. Some children, particularly children with autistic spectrum disorders, may be over sensitive to certain stimuli such as noise, and may therefore react by displaying challenging behaviour.

- Attention-seeking is often identified as a cause of challenging behaviour. This begs the question as to why the child needs to seek attention in this way. Some children may be unable to manage a particular task and may be frustrated or bored. However, attention-seeking behaviour can also be a learned behaviour which has been effective in the past in ensuring that children get what they want. Even negative attention can be motivating for some children, especially if they feel that this is the only attention they receive.

- Factors associated with socio-economic disadvantage also influence the prevalence of challenging behaviour. Poor social skills and language development, associated with poor parenting skills may lead to a child exhibiting challenging behaviour. This behaviour may be used as a survival technique in the child's environment.

- Challenging behaviour may have an underlying medical cause or reason, such as pain, illness or sensory difficulties. Some forms of challenging behaviour are particularly

associated with certain conditions and disabilities such as repeated and involuntary body movements (tics) and uncontrollable vocal sounds (Tourette's Syndrome) or ritualistic or obsessive behaviour (Autistic Spectrum Disorders).

6.1: NBSS: Nine Contextual Factors

The nine contextual factors that contribute to punitive school environments and promote anti-social behaviour are as follows:

- Low student involvement in school activities
- Unclear rules for student deportment
- Weak or inconsistent administrative support
- Student academic failure
- Student deficiency in social & personal management skills
- Problems discriminating prosocial & antisocial behaviour
- Consequences delivered inconsistently
- Inadvertent reinforcement of antisocial behaviour
- Over reliance on punitive methods of control

7.0: Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

7.1: Developing Critical Social Skills in our Students

Through the class tutor system in conjunction with the SPHE program the staff at St Gerald's will endeavor to inculcate key social skills in the students because There is a direct, positive relationship between the amount and quality (integrity) of social skills training and change in social behaviour. By developing the skills we hope to develop students who are more considerate to their peers, teachers and society in general.

- How to follow instructions and why instructions are given.
- To accept teaching and to understand the benefits of a wholesome education.
- To learn how to disagree in a respectful and appropriate manner.
- To learn to accepting "No" for an answer and to understand that teachers. Say after considering what is best for the student.

- How to getting the teacher's attention or asking permission courteously.
- How to make a request which will elicit a positive outcome.
- How to greet someone in civil manner.
- How to give negative feedback constructively.
- The skills necessary to resisting negative peer pressure (Saying "No")
- How to apologize sincerely and demonstrate a change in behaviour which translates into action.
- The ability to engage in a conversation
- The ability to give and receive compliments
- To engage in volunteerism and understand the benefits of volunteering
- To objective evaluate peer behaviour and report negative peer behaviour

7.2: Strategies the staff of St Gerald's College employs:

Unfortunately, teachers face not only the challenge of managing their students' behavior while teaching the curriculum. They also face many conflicting theories about how to manage it: logical consequences, behavior management and assertive discipline, to name just a few.

The staff at St Gerald's College collectively accepts there is no one "correct" way to encourage positive classroom behavior. However they believe if a teacher begins with a good foundation, it is possible. The following guideline has been developed by the staff to help create an environment which supports nurtures and facilitates effective learning.

7.2.1: We think about our approach.

We take some time to think about the strategies we plan to use to encourage positive classroom behavior. Clarifying our strategies will make it easier for us to lead the class confidently and effectively.

7.2.2: We visualise possible challenges

We imagine possible classroom challenges and review your strategies for dealing with them. Having clear-cut strategies will help keep us grounded when these challenges do arise.

7.2.3: We make our expectations clear from the beginning

We make sure that students know what we expect of them. The classroom rules we present should be positive, specific and concise. We may wish to post them in the classroom or distribute them for students to sign. We spell out what will happen if students do not meet expectations. When developing class rules we consider the following:

- We try to have few in number
- They must have the essential aim of developing an environment which is conducive to learning Essential
- They must be enforceable
- We must apply the rules indiscriminately
- We strive to have them clearly visible and understandable
- We aim to have them positively phrased.
- We endeavor to have them teachable

7.2.4: We model positive behavior

Occasionally, we may have to remind ourselves to follow our own rules. For example, if we ask students not to be late it is important that we too, arrive to class on time.

7.2.5: We encourage and praise

We praise students who are excelling, and we don't forget to encourage those who are trying, but struggling. We acknowledge these students often lack confidence and need more positive reinforcement.

7.2.6: We show respect

We show respect for our students by listening to their needs and preserving their dignity. It also means living up to their expectations of us, such as greeting them at the beginning of class or returning corrected homework in a timely fashion.

7.2.7: We are consistent

We are sure to address student behavior in a consistent manner. We are wary of shifting

strategies when misbehavior occurs. To students, this may show a lack of decisiveness. Children have to learn positive behaviour and as in all aspects of life they sometimes have to learn from their mistakes. As in all aspects of managing behaviour CONSISTENCY is the key to success. Why? Preliminary findings from a survey conducted by the NBSS on Low Level Disruption found that only 5.8% of the 982 respondents agreed that school rules are "enforced consistently by all staff", 47% stating that enforcement was "consistent most of the time", with 43.2% reporting that consistency ranges from "some of the time" to "never".

7.2.8: We keep students busy and challenged

Busy students are far less likely to exhibit disruptive behavior. We make sure that students are working at appropriate levels; boredom and frustration often lead to students' acting out.

7.2.9: We listen to students' suggestions

When building our foundation, we to draw from students' and other teachers' past classroom experiences. We ask students to make suggestions about what should be expected of them and how misbehavior should be addressed. Students are often more responsive to rules they helped create.

7.2.10: We strive to reward our students'

We believe where good behaviour is reinforced and acknowledged, it is more likely that it will become internalised. Public acknowledgement of positive student behaviour also helps to promote a sense of community within a school. We have developed a rewards system which acknowledges our student's contribution to the school community.

7.2.11: We use sanctions as a last resort

The reasons we use sanctions as a last resort is because we believe Punishment alone will not lead to a durable change in behaviour and that some forms of punishment may in some cases actually be rewarding and maintaining problem behaviours.

7.2.12: When using the last resort

When using sanctions we make it clear that we are against the behaviour not the person. We avoid early escalation to severe sanctions, reserving them for the most serious misbehaviour. We avoid whole group sanctions that punish the innocent as well as the guilty. We take account of individual circumstances and we encourage students to reflect on the effects of misbehaviour. When developing consequence the staff and management ensure our sanctions adhere to the following guidelines:

- Logical – appropriate to the behaviour
- Directed at the behaviour
- Predictable
- Fair
- Consistent
- Immediate

The staff at St Gerald's acknowledges that creating an environment in which students know and follow the rules is challenging, but not impossible. With a little patience and perseverance, a teacher can lay a foundation for respect and positive behavior in a classroom that lasts all year. Our primary aim for this strategy is to transition the classroom from behavioural battle zone to a behavioural learning zone.
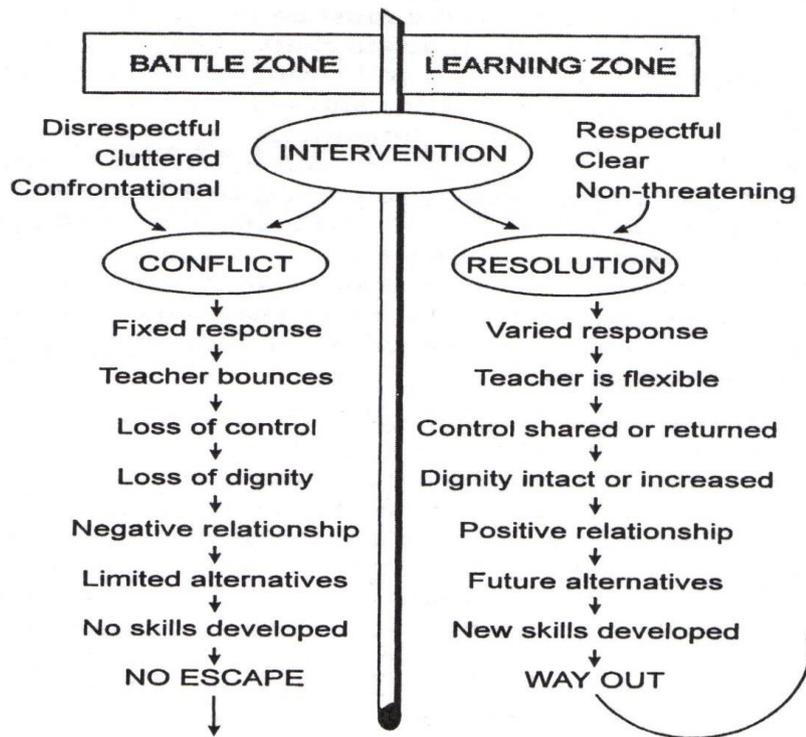
8.0: Monitoring

The Principal will liaise with the Deputy Principal and Class Heads in monitoring the implementation of the policy.

9.0: Implementation

This policy was adopted by policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: _____
The implementation of this policy will be consistent with the whole school planning process.

Signed:_ *Brendan Forde*   **Signed:**_____

Brendan Forde   *Daniel Hyland*

Chairperson of BoM   **Secretary of BoM**

Date of next review:_____