

Dominican College



Pastoral Care Policy 2024-25

VISION STATEMENT: “Inspiring, Motivating and Empowering Learners”

Our vision is to provide a child-centred, transformative and challenging educational experience, which shapes confident, aspirational, resilient and compassionate people.

Through a holistic approach to education, pupils will be supported and empowered to become critical thinkers, excelling across a wide range of academic and extracurricular areas, building character and developing enduring friendships.

Our pupils will be prepared to embrace the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world, making a positive contribution to the wider community, while upholding the values of truth, justice, integrity and love.

Mission Statement

“Dedicated to Truth and Respect, Committed to Realising the potential of all.”

In the tradition of our Dominican founders, all our work is informed by our Dominican values:

- **We see** the school as a community centred on Christ and so our values are those of the Gospel and our school motto VERITAS.
- **We acknowledge** the dignity and uniqueness of each individual, made in the image of God.
- **We seek** to base our relationships on mutual trust and respect.
- **We strive** to create a harmonious and safe environment where the gifts of each will flourish.
- **We elicit** the co-operation of our students in the pursuit of truth in all its forms so that they will learn to make informed judgements.
- **We uphold** the ideals of generosity, freedom, tolerance and responsibility in all areas of daily life.
- **We remain** open to the wider world – willing to adapt but always maintaining our Christian values.

Aims

Within the context of a purposeful learning community, and recognising the uniqueness of each individual, we aim to:

- Create an environment where we appreciate the fundamental dignity of each person and promote respect for self, for others and for the wider community;
- Promote a safe, stable harmonious atmosphere within which the values of truth, freedom, trust and responsibility are honoured;
- Support our pupils in every area of school life by ensuring the synthesis of the pastoral and academic aspects of the school;
- Offer a curriculum which enables every pupil to reach her full potential: spiritually, academically, morally, socially and aesthetically; and ultimately to contribute to society with integrity.

Context

The pastoral care system in Dominican College exists primarily to enable every member of our school community to feel safe, valued and to develop their full potential. It is inextricably linked with the academic, moral and spiritual life of the school. Every pupil and every member of staff is involved in it. Dominican Education, which fosters the growth of the whole person, finds expression in our pastoral programme.

The key to our pastoral systems lies in a phrase which has inspired Dominican educators over the years *“only in the measure that we elicit the co-operation of our pupils is our work a real success”*.

At the heart of this statement lie several values:

- **freedom** - since we hope to encourage a mature faith response, we will bear in mind the importance of winning the pupils' co-operation.
- **good relationships** will be fostered and form a bond between staff, pupils and parents.
- **responsibilities** - each student's contribution to the school will be acknowledged.
- **building up of a school community** permeated by a spirit of love, trust and forgiveness.

(‘In Search of Truth – The Dominican Way in Education’)

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of Dominican College have overall responsibility for pastoral and curricular provision and the arrangements for Safeguarding all pupils in the school. The Board has a statutory duty, under the Children (NI) Order 1995, to safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils at the school at all times when:

- they are on the premises of the school, or,
- elsewhere in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 places a statutory duty on Boards of Governors to Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for implementing school policies agreed by the Board of Governors and for the wellbeing of pupils and staff in the school. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that structures are in place which enable each pupil to receive the pastoral provision to which they are entitled.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team comprises, the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Designated Governor for Child Protection, the Principal and designated teachers. The Pastoral Vice-Principal is the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding & Child Protection and is supported by two Deputy Designated Teachers. Together, they have specific responsibility for the implementation of relevant safeguarding policies. Training and guidance are provided for all staff annually and parents and pupils are informed through Parental Information Evenings, ParentMail and Assemblies.

Pastoral Structure

All school staff are committed to the well-being of our pupils and the ethos of Dominican College. The Vice Principal for Pastoral Care has overall responsibility for leading the pastoral care structures and implementing all the pastoral policies. The school is divided into 3 key stages and each has a Key Stage Leader. In addition, one Senior Teacher works specifically with Year 8 to support the Transition process. There is a Head of Year for each Year Group and a Tutor for each Form Class group. A Senior Teacher has responsibility for Learning Support and Additional Educational Needs throughout the school. They work with all staff, in particular coordinating the work of Classroom Assistants and liaising with external agencies as appropriate.

Vice-Principal (Pastoral)						
Leader of Key Stage 3			Leader of Key Stage 4		Leader of Key Stage 5	
Head of Year 8	Head of Year 9	Head of Year 10	Head of Year 11	Head of Year 12	Head of Year 13	Head of Year 14
Year 8 Class Tutors	Year 9 Class Tutors	Year 10 Class Tutors	Year 11 Class Tutors	Year 12 Class Tutors	Year 13 Class Tutors	Year 14 Class Tutors

Year 8

When Year 8 pupils join the school, they are cared for by a dedicated team of Class Tutors and a Head of Year who work together to support them, liaising with parents to ensure that they settle into life in Dominican College. There is a comprehensive programme of events to support the process of Transition to Year 8.

Tutor Class

There is a timetabled Tutor Class during which the pupils follow a Pastoral Programme that is tailored to the needs of each Year group. This complements the Personal Development curriculum, delivered to pupils in Years 8-12 as part of Learning for life and Work. External agencies also deliver programmes on a wide variety of issues.

Celebrating Achievement

In line with our Positive Behaviour policy, we have a system of celebrating and rewarding achievement, through assemblies, school website, social media and Prizegiving events.

Vice-Principal (Pastoral)

The Pastoral Vice-Principal has responsibility for the pastoral care of both staff and pupils and the day-to-day implementation of all pastoral policies. The Vice-Principal leads and manages a Pastoral team comprising:

- Leaders of Key Stages 3, 4, and 5 (Senior Teachers);
- Head of Sixth Form;
- Heads of Year;
- Learning Support / Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs);
- Counsellors: a teacher counsellor; and a counsellor from Familyworks (Schools Counselling Service);
- a range of external agencies.

The Pastoral Vice-Principal will:

- Act as Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- Oversee the regular review and updating of all pastoral policies in accordance with any relevant DENI circulars;
- Work with the Key Stage Leaders and Heads of Year to ensure that all pastoral and discipline issues are addressed in line with the relevant policies;
- Oversee standards of Uniform & Behaviour;
- Monitor attendance and punctuality in accordance with school policy and liaise with the EWO other external agencies as required;
- Oversee SIMs data on pupils and liaise with Key Stage Leaders and Heads of Year to ensure follow-up where required;
- Oversee the design, review and update of all Pastoral Programmes ensuring that they are tailored for each year group and follow the pastoral and preventative curriculum;
- Be responsible for Induction of New Staff, Substitute & Student Teachers well as the programme of Induction & EPD for beginning teachers;
- Oversee the implementation of Pupil & Staff Well-being initiatives;
- Liaise with external agencies, the Heads of Year and Key Stage Leaders to ensure that each year group attends organised events related to the preventative curriculum;
- Coordinate and oversee school health teams (vaccinations etc.);
- Oversee Medical and Care Plans, Safety Plans;
- Coordinate and monitor the work of the School Counsellors;
- Liaise with external Agencies (CPSS/SS/ SAM/EWO/Family Support Hub/Familyworks);
- Oversee the running of the Student Council (alongside the Leader of KS5);
- Liaise with the Head of Support services on matters of pupil health and safety;
- Monitor Healthy Eating in school & Canteen;
- Work with the Principal and SLT to develop Parental engagement.

Key Stage Leaders

Key Stage Leaders are members of the Senior Leadership Team. Their role is to Lead, Guide, Monitor and Support the Heads of Year in delivering the highest quality pastoral care; supporting the learning and attainment of our pupils. With regard to their Key Stage they will:

- Work with Heads of Year on the design and implementation of Action Plans;
- Oversee the design, review, implementation and monitoring of the Pastoral Programmes for each year group;
- Oversee pupil attendance, progress, attainment, reporting and behaviour in the Key Stage;
- Work with the Heads of Year to ensure that all pastoral and discipline issues are addressed in line with the relevant policies;
- Attend Assemblies for each year group/key stage as appropriate;
- Foster relationships with parents and guardians to support the learning and well-being of pupils;
- Liaise with external agencies, Heads of Year and Pastoral VP to plan and deliver events related to the preventative curriculum and/or study needs of pupils;
- Liaise with the Heads of Year to plan and Coordinate all school events including Parent-Teacher meetings, Induction sessions, Parent Meetings, Options events, Masses, Assemblies, and oversee all activities and events in which the year groups are involved;
- Monitor SIMs data and check tracking data on pupils, liaising with the Heads of Year to ensure that reports are analysed and follow up meetings arranged as required;
- Refer matters to curriculum and pastoral VPs as appropriate.

Head of Year

The primary responsibility of the Head of Year is to ensure the well-being of pupils in their year group and to promote and monitor their progress and development. The Head of Year has responsibility for ensuring that there is a positive atmosphere across the year group, characterised by good relationships at all levels. The work of the Head of Year and Tutors complements the work of the Heads of Department and subject teachers, in promoting pupils' academic and personal development. The Head of Year is the first point of contact for parents. They will have high expectations of the year group and will:

- Lead the team of Tutors, giving a clear vision and direction for work, providing guidance and support to tutors in promoting the academic and personal development of pupils in their class;
- Monitor the quality of learning experienced by the year group, liaising with Heads of Department and offering support and guidance where necessary;
- Make contact with parents as appropriate, in line with school policies;
- Promote the ethos of the school through leading weekly assemblies, ensuring the spiritual development of pupils and that achievements are rewarded and celebrated;
- Design, review and update the Pastoral Programme for their Year Group;
- Monitor the delivery of the Pastoral Programme in Tutor Class;
- Monitor pupil attendance and punctuality in line with school policy;
- Monitor pupil behaviour and deal with all pastoral and disciplinary issues in line with the pupil Code of Conduct and all relevant pastoral policies;
- Monitor all SIMS data on pupils;

- Meet regularly with their Key Stage Leader (Senior Teacher);
- Liaise with external agencies, KS Leader and Pastoral VP to plan and deliver events related to the preventative curriculum and/or study needs of pupils;
- Liaise with their KS Leader to organise the Parent-Teacher meeting and oversee all activities and events in which the year group is involved.

Class Tutor

The primary responsibility of the Class Tutor is to ensure the well-being of pupils in their tutor class and to promote and monitor their progress and development. The Tutor will take a personal interest in each pupil and ensure that there is a positive atmosphere of concern and friendliness which should characterise the whole school. The class tutor is the first point of reference for any concern from teaching staff. They will have high expectations of the year group and will:

- Deliver the pastoral programme, through tutor class under the direction and guidance of the Head of Year;
- Implement the key aspects of the school's policies including those for behaviour, anti-bullying, attendance, uniform and safeguarding;
- Promote high standards of attendance for pupils in their tutor class and ensure the accurate record of daily attendance, in line with the Pupil Attendance policy;
- Take daily class assembly on days when there is class registration, beginning with a prayer or reflection.
- Monitor progress and encourage pupils in their learning and have high expectations for their application to work and attainment;
- Promote respect for all members of the school community through regular reinforcement of points of courtesy and good manners;
- Promote positive relationships between all class members, being vigilant to any pupil who may be experiencing difficulty;
- Monitor pupil behaviour and achievement using SIMs Behaviour Manager and discuss the record with each pupil on a regular basis;
- Monitor pupil attainment using SIMs records and discuss progress with each pupil, providing mentoring support as appropriate;
- Discuss and emphasise the Code of Conduct as published in the homework diary, reminding pupils of their responsibilities regarding behaviour and uniform and possible consequences;
- Make contact with parents under the guidance and direction of the Head of Year;
- Liaise with the Head of Year, the Safeguarding Team and the SENCO to report issues as appropriate.

Subject Teachers

All teachers are committed to fostering and promoting the Dominican ethos of the school and ensuring that a safe and secure environment is created and maintained for pupils. Subject Teachers provide leadership in the classroom and keep their pupils' well-being and attainment as the central focus of their work. They will:

- Promote the well-being of pupils;
- Set high expectations for pupils' behaviour;

- Ensure that classwork is tailored to the abilities and aptitudes of their pupils;
- Implement the Pupil Code of Conduct consistently, having regard for the subject merit/demerit procedures;
- Implement the Target-Setting Policy to ensure pupils' aspirations are balanced with realistic expectations;
- Ensure that pupils are motivated and that their potential and value is recognised through acknowledgement of efforts and progress made;
- Consult with the Head of Department regarding pupils causing concern;
- Liaise with the Class Tutor and Head of Year, and Senior Teachers when appropriate. Refer to the School Procedures and Pupil Code of Conduct.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to abide by the Pupil Code of Conduct and treat all members of the school community with respect and kindness. Our senior pupils play a leading role in the school's pastoral system. Sixth-Form pupils are encouraged to assume leadership roles and act as mentors in both pastoral issues and in providing peer support with academic work.

Mentors

Year 13 students are invited, each year, to apply to become Pupil Mentors. They receive training from several outside agencies, including TAMHI, Childline and YMCA. Mentors are assigned to each junior class (Years 8 -10) with the main aim of getting to know the pupils and assisting with any difficulties. They are alert to the needs of younger pupils, and the signs of problems which may arise. There is a designated area in the school where Mentors can be contacted by pupils who feel they need help or advice. Any further support can be arranged after an initial meeting. Mentors will always seek guidance from staff, and they report regularly to the Head of Sixth Form, relevant Year Heads and the Pastoral Vice Principal.

Prefects

Towards the end of Year 13, pupils are invited to apply for positions of responsibility within the Head Prefect Team. The structure of the team is currently as follows:

Head Girl				Head Mentor	
Deputy Head Girl	Deputy Head Girl	Deputy Head Girl	Deputy Head Girl	Deputy Head Mentor	Deputy Head Mentor
Senior Prefects assigned to various areas of School Life				Senior Prefects assigned to Year Groups	
Subject Prefects				Class Prefects	

Prefects promote a sense of responsibility and commitment among the entire pupil population. They establish positive working relationships and provide effective channels of communication between pupils and staff. Prefects are assigned a variety of tasks which contribute to the smooth running of the school, promote pupil well-being, and encourage participation in school life.

Student Council

The Prefects lead the Student Council; organising and chairing monthly meetings and reporting student views to Senior Staff. Representatives from all Tutor Classes throughout the school attend these meetings where a range of issues affecting pupils are discussed.

Coordinator of the Liturgical Life of the school

The Liturgy Coordinator arranges all Masses and liturgical events in school. They provide support and guidance for all staff in delivering assemblies and prayer services.

Counselling Services

An integral part of the school's pastoral care is the provision of Counselling Services. There are two counsellors available. This includes a trained member of staff, Mrs Quinn in addition to a counsellor assigned to the school by Familyworks. Pupils can self-refer, be referred by the Year Head or at the request of parents/guardians. The Pastoral Vice Principal coordinates appointments with the two counsellors. The counselling sessions are strictly confidential except when issues of Child Protection arise. Family counselling support services can be availed of through a referral to the Family Hub.

External Agencies

The school has a Service Level Agreement with the Educational Welfare Service and the Pastoral Vice Principal meets termly with the designated EWO (Educational Welfare Officer). Staff from the Safeguarding Team attend all LAC (Looked After Children) conferences and all Social Services Case Conferences and Family Meetings. The school maintains strong links with a wide range of agencies in delivery of its pastoral programme and preventative curriculum.

Parents

In line with our Dominican Ethos, we recognise parents and guardians as the primary educators of our pupils and aim to promote a positive relationship with them to ensure the very best outcomes and educational experience for all of our pupils. Parents and guardians are made very welcome in school and in addition to concerts and productions, Masses and other social events, we hold regular curriculum information sessions for parents as well as annual parent teacher meetings. We actively encourage parental engagement and have hosted parent training sessions provided by outside agencies. Parents' first point of contact is with the Head of Year, who they may contact through e-mail or by telephone. All parents are registered with ParentMail and SIMS ParentApp and receive regular communication from the Principal, Vice-Principals and other members of staff as appropriate.

Links to Other Policies

The Pastoral Care Policy operates in conjunction with other relevant policies:

- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour (currently under review)
- CRED
- E-Safety
- Drugs
- Administration of Medication in School Policy
- Bereavement & Critical Incident (currently under review)
- SEN
- ASD
- Pupil Attendance
- Pupil Target Setting

Approved by:	Mrs Sheila Crea (Chair of governors)
Date:	Oct 2021
Last reviewed on:	Oct 2021, June 2024
Next review due by:	

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and amended as appropriate in accordance with any relevant DENI circulars.