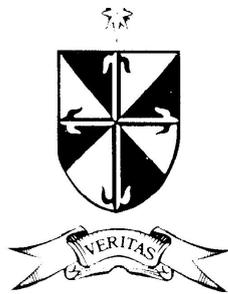


Dominican College Sion Hill



Pastoral Care Policy

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

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Section 1. Introduction

The Pastoral Care Policy of Dominican College, Sion Hill is underpinned by relationships of trust, co-operation, and partnership, shared responsibility among staff, students, parents, Guardians, other family members and all others involved in the school community. Our Policy is concerned with the development of the whole person.

This Policy is compatible with our vision statement and is supported by processes; programmes and structures that enable students achieve their full potential, academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially in a happy secure environment.

It aims for a school community based on Christian teachings where dignity, self-discipline, justice and forgiveness are evidenced so that all involved experience a sense of belonging. We are acutely aware of the difficulties faced by our students growing up in the 21st century and the many influences that they encounter from society. Our Pastoral Care policy provides for ongoing policy development, professional development, review of outcomes, etc., in order for appropriate staff training and effective structures to be put in place to address the many issues that face our students, in particular areas such as bereavement, special needs, crisis response etc. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Code of Behaviour.

Section 2. Pastoral Policies

Mission Statement
Admissions Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
SPHE and RSE Policy
Critical Incidents Policy
Code of Discipline and Behaviour
Special Education Needs Policy
Homework and Assessment Policy
Guidelines for the Protection of Children
Attendance Policy
Awards Ceremony
Substance Abuse Policy
Student Computer User Policy
Student Council Constitution
Continuous Professional Development
Parents' Association
Student Record Keeping
Pastoral Care Policy
Newcomer
Extra-curricular
The Guidance Plan

3. Positive encouragement

The school will acknowledge students positive contribution in the following ways:

A simple “Thank You” or similar comment

Acknowledgement by teacher in front of student's peers
Special mention at assemblies, over the Inter-com or in School Newsletters.
Positive mark in diary
Award of positive Certificate for exceptional contribution
Participation in school tours and collaborative musical productions.
Election of school Prefects and presentation of them to school community
Academic achievement awards.
Major awards at end of year Presentation Ceremony.

Section 4. The Care Network

Every member of the school community is part of the care network and contributes to its effectiveness. Because it is considered vital that a student is able to confide in a person of her choice in the school it is inappropriate to set up a care network hierarchy.

4.1 Pastoral Care Team

Principal and Deputy Principal	Overall responsibility for the management of the school
Guidance Counsellor	Guidance and Counselling
Year Heads	Building positive relationships and promoting positive behaviour within the Year group. Monitoring and supporting the welfare of students.
Class Tutors	Building relationships with their class groups.
Subject Teachers	Responsible for the teaching of their subject areas and maintaining positive behaviour within their own classroom.
Learning Support	Responsible for the Special Educational Needs of the students

4.2 Role of the Principal and Deputy Principal

Aim

To support the continuing development of the school towards the goal of being a Pastoral School by inculcating the values of self-respect and respect for others with a view to providing an environment where all stakeholders feel valued and students can achieve their full potential, academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially in a happy secure environment.

Staff

In endeavouring to ensure that all staff is constructively involved in the 'Pastoral process' the Principal and Deputy Principal shall:

- § Provide support to Tutors and Year Heads as well as any other member of staff involved in the Pastoral process.
- § Meet regularly with Year Heads and other members of the Pastoral Care Team.
- § Be available to staff on a one to one basis to discuss concerns re students, classes etc.
- § Be available to deal with students referred by Year Heads on Pastoral issues.
- § Ensure that resource materials are available with due regard to budgetary constraints.
- § Provide information and support for staff in relation to in-service courses
- § Maintain student files with regard to issues of pastoral care

Students

- § To encourage the participation of students in all aspects of school life with a view to fostering a vibrant school spirit and building positive relationships between students and between staff and students.
- § To be available, in liaison with the pastoral care team, to students on an individual basis.
- § Promotion of pastoral issues at regular assemblies for year groups, and other school events.
- § To develop, in conjunction with the Pastoral Care team, measures to aid the development of the student at every level.

Parents

- § Provide parents of incoming students with an overview of the pastoral system in the school
- § Encourage parents to actively support the school's pastoral system at information evenings for various year groups.
- § Encourage the positive involvement of parents in the life of the school.
- § Regular communication with parents on relevant pastoral issues, e.g. bullying, substance abuse etc.

4.3 Role of the Guidance Counsellor

Dominican College, Sion Hill has a fully qualified Guidance Counsellor to provide educational and personal counselling as well as vocational career guidance. The Guidance Counselling service is seen as having a central role in the continuous guidance process of each individual student which begins prior to the entry of the student to the school and concludes when the student has left the school.

This service is provided by the Guidance Counsellor and members of the school's Pastoral Care team who work with a variety of others, including members of staff, parents, and other professionals outside the school setting.

(For a detailed outline of the Guidance Service please see Guidance Policy)

4.4. Role of Year Head

1. Build on the pastoral role of the tutor in the areas of personal development, class spirit, participation in school activities, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and addressing the needs of vulnerable students.
2. Help students change behaviours or effect changes in their lives on personal and educational issues.
3. Reviewing academic and other progress of students
4. Reviewing involvement in extra-curricular activities
5. Take registration daily
6. Check absences and punctuality
7. Check notes for special permissions
8. Distribute messages/letters/tickets etc.
9. Have regular checks on uniform/ school diaries/classrooms/lockers/books
10. Make general comments regarding each student on School reports
11. Liaising with the Deputy Principal in relation to students scheduled for detention.
12. Making contact with parents where deemed necessary
13. Liaise closely with Class Tutors/Teachers and deal with ongoing disciplinary problems
14. Liaising with the Principal/Deputy Principal, in relation to meetings/discussions with parent(s)/guardian(s).
15. Recording meetings with parent(s)/guardian(s) etc.
16. Assisting with organising of classes and class groups where necessary

4.5 Role of Class Tutor

It is the policy of this school that each class is designated one teacher as Class Tutor who is responsible for that class in a special way. The duties of the Class Tutor include instilling a good class spirit and collective responsibility amongst students. The Class Tutor takes an interest in each individual student with particular regard to their personal difficulties.

During the school year the Class Tutor carries out the following:

1. Explaining the school's Mission Statement, the goals of the school, the Code of Behaviour, the schools' rules, classroom guidelines, personnel, time-table and fire drill procedure.
2. Promoting in each student a good class spirit, e.g. cards to someone sick etc.
3. Encouraging participation in school activities.
4. Instilling a sense of collective responsibility as a class group
5. Taking an interest in each individual student, particularly addressing the needs of the vulnerable.
6. Reviewing academic and other progress of students
7. Make general comments regarding each student on School reports
8. Following through on the Behaviour Code
9. Addressing the needs of vulnerable students
10. Reviewing involvement in extra-curricular activities
11. Have regular checks on uniform/ school diaries /lockers.
12. Ensuring all new students settle in, especially in first few weeks
13. Liaising with staff.
14. Weekly check of School Diaries
15. **N.B.** Generally 'problems' that arise regarding a student are dealt with in the following way:
 - § Class Teacher – Class Tutor – Year Head
 - § (When referring students to the Year Head – the teacher consults with the Year Head outlining the nature of the issue.)

4.6 Role of the Learning Support Teacher

Provides educational support to children with Special Educational Needs through Individual Education Plans (IEP) which are prepared for students by the Learning Support Teacher in collaboration with the Principal, Class Teachers, parents and students themselves.

4.7 Role of Student Council

Sion Hill has an active Student Council which gives the students an opportunity to be involved in the life of the school.

The school supports the role of council, which it sees as having a beneficial impact on the environment of the school. The council has helped in the creation and maintenance of a positive school atmosphere and has allowed for a more caring, supportive and inclusive environment to be developed.

A member of the teaching staff is nominated as staff representative on the Students' Council, with responsibility for ensuring effective communication between the two bodies.

Currently Ms. P. Quinn has this role.

The Student Council has a positive educational benefit by providing an introduction to the principles of the democratic system through the election process. The management and organisation of the Council helps in the development of communication and leadership skills of students.

It provides a support network for students where they can contribute their ideas on ways to enhance student life.

The Council is an intermediate body between staff, management, parents and students. The Council meets the Board of Management annually to exchange views. The council is a valuable resource to management, teachers and other students.

Section 5. Pastoral Care Programme

Code of Behaviour and Discipline
Regular assemblies
Year Head/Class Tutor Time
1st Year Information Night for in-coming parents
Information Meetings for TY.
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)
Student Council
Study Skills Programme
Workshops/Programmes e.g. Anti bullying. Substance abuse.

Section 6. Social Personal and Health (SPHE) Programme

6.1 Social, Personal and Health Education

Social, personal and health education, as part of the curriculum, supports the personal development, health and well-being of young people and helps them create and maintain supportive relationships.

The Education Act (1998) places an obligation on schools to promote the social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them.

The Aims of SPHE:

- 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.

SPHE is a part of the Junior Cycle Curriculum. It builds on the various Life Skills, Health Education and Pastoral Care programme.

In Transition Year the “Personal Development” module builds on the Junior Cycle SPHE Programme.

Dominican College Sion Hill strives to provide a supportive school environment in which

- People feel valued
- Self-esteem is fostered
- Fairness and tolerance are evident
- High expectations are the norm
- Those having difficulty are supported
- Communication is open
- Effort is recognised
- Difference is valued
- Conflict is handled constructively
- Initiative and creativity are stressed
- Social, moral and civic values are promoted.

The recommended time allocation for SPHE is one class period per week or equivalent. The SPHE programme provides a variety of learning experiences. In the programme our students encounter a wide range of issues which are introduced in ten modules during the three-year cycle. These include physical and mental health, communication, relationships, sexuality, influences and decisions, substance use and safety. The emphasis is on building a foundation of skills, values, attitudes and understanding relevant to all these areas

The ten modules are:

- Belonging and Integrating
- Self-management: A sense of purpose
- Communication Skills
- Physical Health
- Friendships
- Relationships and Sexuality
- Emotional Health
- Influences and Decisions
- Substance Use
- Personal Safety

(For more details on these programmes see the relevant policies in the appendices)

- **Belonging and Integrating.**

Developing and enhancing group skills and communication skills. Learning to plan personal and group goals and targets. Examining the dynamics of family relationships and understanding individual responsibilities as a member of the school community. Identifying consequences and types of loss. Recognising bullying and being aware of school policy. Identifying staff for help.

- **Self-Management: A sense of purpose.**

Reviewing effective work and study practices including organising homework, personal work schedules and study skills. Increasing awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses. Understanding the importance of teamwork and identifying sources of personal support.

- **Communication Skills**

practicing the skills of listening and self-expression. Being sensitive to the opinion of others. Learning and using appropriate communication. Learning the skills appropriate to conflict resolution. Understanding different types of communication.

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- **Physical Health**

Learning the importance of personal hygiene. Exploring the meaning of a balanced diet and physical exercise for general health and well being. Examining eating patterns and personal exercise. Looking at the symptoms of common ailments. Being aware of occasions when help may be needed.

- **Friendships**

Defining the nature and characteristics of good friendships. Changing friendships and the impact of gender of friendships. Relationships between siblings. Identifying and developing skills for dealing with bullying behaviour.

- **Relationships and Sexuality**

In planning for the RSE module individual schools will be guided by its RSE policy which will have been prepared in consultation with parents, teachers and management authorities.

This module is designed to develop communication and decision making skills in relationships. To look at the causes of conflict in relationships. Explore some aspect of sex stereotyping. Give young people knowledge of the physical, emotional and psychological changes related to adolescence. Have a clear understanding of male and female reproductive systems and the development stages from conception to birth. To emphasise the three 'R's, respect, rights and responsibility.

- Emotional Health

Recognising the common moods and feelings in adolescence and respecting the feeling of others. Looking at issues of body image and self-confidence. Appreciating stress and the consequences of stress. Developing skills for expressing feelings.

- Influences and decisions.

Evaluating some of the strongest influences on attitude and behaviour and heightening awareness of who influences them and why. Learning to respect the individuality and uniqueness of each person. Learning skills to make and apply decisions. Thinking ahead.

- Substance Use

Examining the use and misuse of medicines and drugs. Examine ways of avoiding smoking. Implication of alcohol use and patterns of alcohol use in Ireland. Effects of drug use.

- Personal Safety

Examine ways of keeping safe, road safety, fire drills. Exploring potential Hazards travelling to and from school. Looking at areas where they might be at risk of attack, assault, abuse, intimidation or where their personal safety might be threatened. Sources of crisis support such as help agencies.

Section 7. Review

The Pastoral Care Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Pastoral Care team.

Appendix 1

Uniform

Regulation Grey Skirt

Grey Trousers (available to order)

Students may wear either trousers or skirt

Black Reversible winter Fleece Jacket with hood and Sion Hill Name

Regulation Red Jumper with School Crest

Blouse with White Revers/Long Sleeves

School Scarf

Black knee socks

Low black, navy or brown shoes

Sports Uniform

White Aertex Sports Shirt

Hooded Track Suit Top (Sion Hill name)

Black track suit bottoms

Grey pleated games skirt (for school hockey teams)

Nb School Uniform and sports uniform may not be mixed