



St Gerald's DLS College

WELLBEING POLICY

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Section A: Introduction

St. Gerald's DLS College (SGC) is a single-sex voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile, committed to providing a holistic education that supports the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and spiritual development of each student. In keeping with our Lasallian ethos, we strive to create a caring, inclusive and supportive environment where all members of the school community can flourish.

This Wellbeing Policy has been developed through consultation with the Board of Management, Senior Management, Staff, Parents and Students. It outlines the school's whole-school approach to promoting wellbeing and provides a framework for the supports, programmes and practices that contribute to the wellbeing of all students. While not intended to be exhaustive, the policy reflects current best practice and will continue to evolve in response to the needs of our school community. In this policy, the term 'Parent' is taken to include the term 'Guardian'.

Section B: Relationship of this Policy to Our Mission Statement

As a voluntary Catholic single-sex secondary school, founded by the De La Salle Brothers and under the trusteeship of Le Chéile, St Gerald's DLS College is guided by the values of the Lasallian tradition and the vision of the Le Chéile Charter. Consequently, all school policies and procedures are developed in a manner that reflects and supports the ethos, mission and characteristic spirit of the school.

The mission of a Lasallian Centre of Education is to provide a human and Christian education to young people, with particular concern for the disadvantaged. Central to this mission is the belief that each school is a community in which students, parents, staff and management work together in partnership for the good of all.

The characteristic spirit of St Gerald's DLS College is rooted in a philosophy of education that recognises the unique dignity of every person as a child of God. We value and respect the diversity of backgrounds, experiences and abilities within our school community and regard this diversity as a source of enrichment for all. The school is committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment where each student is valued, respected and encouraged to achieve their full potential.



This policy is therefore informed by and grounded in the mission, values and ethos of St Gerald's DLS College.

Section C: Rationale, Aims and Framework for Wellbeing

Rationale for the Policy

Wellbeing has become a focal point across the globe in all aspects of society, particularly in the education sector. Children from a young age spend a significant amount of their lives in an educational environment and naturally their “self-esteem will be influenced by the current climate of pressures in education of test results, grades and rewards for achievement [...] may have direct or indirect health consequences.” (Morrow 1999, 759). The promotion and delivery of Wellbeing is key to the Department of Education's mission in enabling children to develop and achieve to their full potential. (DoE 2019, 1)

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) highlights the necessity for a new area of learning at Junior Cycle: Wellbeing. This policy has been developed to ensure that St Gerald's DLS College adequately responds to the changing and diverse needs of each of our students. SGC is committed to the nurturing of the whole person so that they may be guided with care and respect to respond to the demands of modern life with resilience, optimism and a feeling of ownership.

There are already evident similarities between our own mission statement and the definition of ‘Student Wellbeing’ as outlined in the NCCA guidelines.

“Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.” (2021)

This area of learning will make the school's culture and ethos and commitment to wellbeing visible to students. It will include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students. It will enable students to build life skills and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school and their community.

Risk and Protective Factors for Student Wellbeing

Students can be exposed to many risks and protective factors which influence their well-being. Protective factors in the school environment that help to build resilience in young people include:

- Providing a positive school atmosphere.



- Ensuring a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school.
- Having protocols and support systems in place that proactively support students and their families, should mental health difficulties arise.
- Developing positive teacher/student and teacher/parent relationships.
- Supporting the development of positive relationships with peers.
- Fostering expectations of high achievement and providing opportunities for each student to realise their potential.
- Using positive classroom management strategies.
- Focusing on social and emotional learning and the development of problem-solving skills through our SPHE programme.
- Providing support for teachers, including professional development.
- Encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Providing students with information about the range of community supports and crisis agencies that exist.
- Working collaboratively to prevent students from early school leaving

Schools, therefore, play an important role in the lives of their students to help them enhance their wellbeing and develop positive mental health, that they can nurture throughout their lives. St Gerald's DLS College will aspire to facilitate the holistic development of each of our students using the six indicators of wellbeing as the focal point of our actions; Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware.

Aims of the Policy

- To provide for the wellbeing of all students in the school in the light of the school Mission Statement and the charter of our school trust – Le Chéile.
- To outline the policies, procedures, culture, ethos and the activities which serve to assist the wellbeing of students at St Gerald's DLS College, Castlebar.
- To recognise the interplay between and positive experience of school life, student achievement and long-term wellbeing.
- To offer a coordinated structure in supporting our young people through the creation of a multiplicity of opportunities both within and without the classroom focused on the promotion of wellbeing.
- To outline the ways in which the expertise of the staff and outside agencies are engaged to support and respond to needs.
- To provide an umbrella policy which outlines a structure that links a series of other policies that relate to wellbeing.



Scope of the Policy

This policy will impact on the whole school community, therefore it has been approved by the Board of Management in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal, school staff, parents and students. This commitment to wellbeing is implicit in the school's admission policy in the commitment to embracing the intellectual, physical, cultural, emotional, social, moral and spiritual growth of each student.

In the light of these core values, the school is clear that wellbeing must include a mental, physical, social and spiritual dimension. We thrive as individuals within a community and very often it is community that sustains us through challenges. Hence the emphasis of this policy on the role of the whole school community in the programme of wellbeing. This is a whole school policy in line with national guidelines (2019) which focus on "building a whole school approach to wellbeing and the curriculum for well-being that is the responsibility of all and supports well-being for all."

Wellbeing is a multi-faceted concept and efforts to promote student wellbeing require a whole-school approach. Planning for wellbeing involves consideration of four main aspects of our school: Culture, Relationships, Policy and Planning, and Curriculum. The whole-school community will therefore contribute to supporting student wellbeing through our culture, our relationships, our policies and in the curriculum.

Structure of the Policy

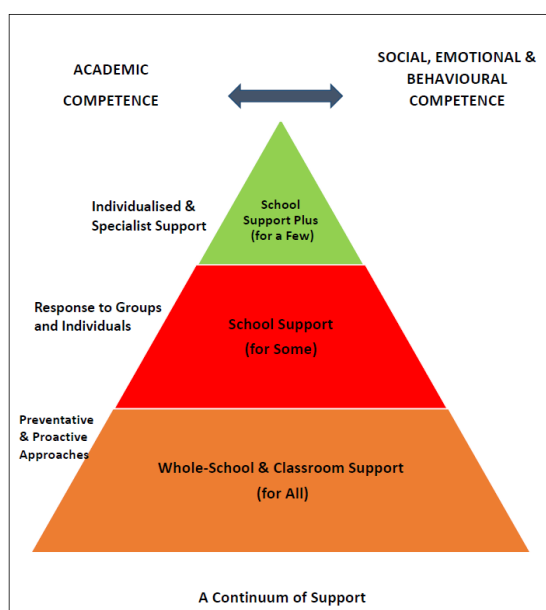
The philosophy of the policy is based on the NEPS document "Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools." This policy provides an overview of the provision for promoting and supporting the wellbeing of all students in the school, using the NEPS continuum of provision as a framework.



The NEPS document suggests a continuum of support, from ‘support for all’ through ‘school support for some’ to ‘school support plus (for a few)’. This policy will be structured on this basis and will allow us to outline the links between services, procedures and processes in the school as they relate to each other in providing for the wellbeing of students in this school.

School Policies Informed by Wellbeing:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Additional Educational Needs
- Personal Electronic Device Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour



Policy

- Admissions Policy
- Antibullying Policy
- Assessment and Reporting Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Homework Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Leaving Certificate Applied Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

Policy

- Relationships and Sexual Education Policy
- School Safeguarding Statement and Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- SPHE Policy
- Student Affirmation Policy
- Student Council Constitution

Any school policy that takes a holistic view of student wellbeing and promotes a safe and supportive learning environment can be informed by wellbeing.



Section D: Support for All

At this level we have a series of policies and procedures that promote wellbeing for all members of the school community – a whole school approach.

Processes on this level aim at:

1. The establishment of a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on wellbeing.
2. Promotion of an understanding of and commitment to wellbeing.
3. Early identification and intervention in the cases of challenge.

From NCSE, *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools - Guidelines for Teachers*:

All students have needs including the need to feel a sense of belonging, the need to communicate and to be communicated with and the need to be respected and valued. Meeting such needs is central to protecting and developing student mental health. These needs are met both within the classroom and within the context of the ethos and culture of the school. It is helpful, therefore, to be mindful of how the culture, ethos and learning environment of the school demonstrates to each student that he/she is respected and valued. The most successful outcomes are likely when all staff have a shared vision and collective responsibility for delivering the Continuum of Support. Equally, students benefit from learning about their responsibilities. Students can be engaged in school processes in many ways. For example, students can be consulted about classroom rules, or have a Student Council to represent their views.

Support for ALL aims to support and promote positive student learning and behaviour. Key elements of this approach are:

- Creating positive learning environments.
- Best practice in teaching, with a diversity of learning opportunities.
- Establishing and teaching clear behavioural and learning expectations for students.
- Having a system for reinforcing and monitoring students.
- A student support team.
- Listening to the voice of the student. (16)

The establishment of a safe environment that is conducive to wellbeing and which supports the prevention of factors that negatively impact on wellbeing.



Acceptable Use Policy

St. Gerald's DLS College (School) is committed to the correct and proper use of its ICT resources in support of its teaching & administrative functions. Our Acceptable Use Policy ensures that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's technologies in a safe and effective manner. Strategies are in place to maximise learning and reduce risks. Usage agreement from parent and student is required and every reasonable precaution is taken by the school to provide online safety.

Promoting responsible and safe use of technology can positively impact students' wellbeing. This is achieved by:

- Encouraging digital citizenship: A whole-school approach to Wellbeing provision promotes responsible digital citizenship that emphasises respect, responsibility, and ethics while using technology.
- Emphasising online safety: The Acceptable Use Policy addresses the importance of online safety, including the safe use of social media, protection of personal information, and reporting of inappropriate behaviour.
- Providing ongoing education and training: A whole-school approach to Wellbeing provision ensures that students and staff receive ongoing education and training on safe and responsible technology use, including cybersecurity awareness, digital literacy, and ethical use of technology.
- Promoting a positive school culture: The Acceptable Use Policy has been developed in the context of a positive school culture that emphasizes respectful relationships and support for student wellbeing, both online and offline.

A whole-school approach to Wellbeing provision, through an informed Acceptable Use Policy, can help create a safe, responsible, and positive digital environment that promotes student wellbeing.

Anti-Bullying Policy

“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.”

This guiding principle prompts us, through this whole school policy to develop a school environment that allows our students to develop; physically, socially, spiritually, morally and aesthetically. We endeavour, with our Educational Partners to strive in creating a caring environment of mutual respect, where each individual is cherished and nurtured to a personal, intellectual and moral maturity.



The Board of Management is fully committed to preventing and tackling bullying behaviour at the school and recognizes its serious impact on the lives of pupils. The following key principles of best practice guide this commitment:

- To promote a positive school culture and climate that welcomes diversity, fosters inclusivity, encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment, and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- To instil a school-wide approach that fosters a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- To continue with the implementation of education and prevention strategies that build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils, and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- To ensure the supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- To make available supports for staff to ensure consistent recording, investigation, and follow-up of bullying behaviour, including the use of established intervention strategies, and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Wellbeing provides a framework for supporting the mental, emotional, and physical health of students, which is essential to preventing bullying behaviour. The provision of Wellbeing in our school can further develop a culture of inclusivity, respect, and understanding that makes it less likely for students to engage in bullying behaviour. Additionally, instruction in wellbeing provides students with the necessary tools and support to manage their emotions and behaviours in a healthy way, reducing the likelihood of aggressive or harmful actions towards others. Therefore, an effective antibullying policy must be integrated with a comprehensive wellbeing policy to promote a safe and nurturing school environment for all students.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools as part of this overall child protection policy.

The Board of Management has ratified the appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (The Principal) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy Principal). All concerns regarding the welfare of a child should be reported to them. There is an obligation on the school to provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their wellbeing and protect them from harm. In situations where school personnel suspect that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, or is being neglected, they should ensure



that such concerns are reported to the Designated Liaison Person (The Principal) or the Deputy-Principal if he is unavailable.

The Designated Liaison person will deal with the Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of and/or concerns about child abuse or neglect.

Code of Behaviour

St Gerald's DLS College Castlebar is a school community of students, teachers, ancillary staff, and parents/guardians, which fosters an ethos centred on providing a human and Christian education to young people, with a special concern for the disadvantaged. As a Lasallian Centre, the mission of the school is to uphold these values and support the holistic development of all students.

Our school seeks to build a learning community that welcomes, and witnesses to, the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the Le Chéile Charter. The school draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past and the charism of the De La Salle Brothers who began this school. Our school is committed to creating a place of inclusivity, equality and openness, where people can live with and be taught by one another, however diverse our experiences might be. It offers educational opportunities which promote excellence so that students can respond responsibly to their own lives, the lives of others and the earth, which is our home.

All members of this community have a right to be safe and respected. This code of behaviour is our policy to support these key rights and an outline of the strategies and sanctions which serve to protect those rights.

At St. Gerald's DLS College, we understand that students are constantly developing and learning. As such, we have developed a code that recognizes the potential for students' behaviour to change. This code outlines specific strategies, goals, incentives, and motivation that are designed to support students in managing their behaviour. Our ultimate goal is to create an environment that encourages excellence in all aspects of a student's life, and we believe that by providing the necessary tools and support, we can help our students achieve their full potential. This code gives priority to the promotion of good behaviour, affirming that behaviour; thereby creating and sustaining the environment for effective teaching and learning.

This code also clearly outlines our response to behaviour which undermines the positive climate of our school. The code seeks to involve students, teachers and parents in the process of managing behaviour which hinders the promotion of positive teaching and learning.



Data Protection Policy

A whole-school approach to Wellbeing provision recognises the importance of protecting personal information and fostering trust and confidentiality. The Data Protection Policy ensures that personal data is collected, processed, and stored securely and in compliance with relevant data protection laws, which supports the school's commitment to promoting student wellbeing.

St Gerald's DLS College Castlebar Data Protection Policy has been prepared in line with the General Data Protection Regulation of 2016 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The policy applies to all school staff, the Board of Management, parent(s) / guardian(s), students, (including prospective students) their parent(s) / guardian(s), applicants for positions within the school and service providers with access to school data.

St. Gerald's DLS College is aware of its responsibilities as a controller of personal data under GDPR. St. Gerald's DLS College respects the privacy of students, staff and visitors to the school and is committed to protecting their personal data. We will safeguard the personal information under our remit and develop a robust data protection regime that is effective, fit for purpose and demonstrates an understanding of, and appreciation of the GDPR.

Our GDPR Principles can be summarised as follows:

- We will process all personal data lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- We will only process personal data for specified and lawful purposes.
- We will endeavour to hold relevant and accurate personal data, and where practical, we will keep this up to date.
- We will not retain personal data for longer than is necessary.
- We will keep all personal data secure.
- We will endeavour to ensure that personal data is not transferred to countries outside of the European Economic Area ('EEA') without adequate protection.

Dignity at Workplace Policy

This Policy sets out the criteria upon which a positive working environment in St Gerald's DLS College is created and maintained where one's dignity at work is recognised and protected. A core employment value is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed a working environment where s/he may expect to be treated with dignity both by management and work colleagues. This approach is a positive emphasis on the importance of each individual and the contribution s/he makes to the success of the workplace. It guarantees the optimal working conditions that allow individuals to freely maximise their role in the workforce. Sound management ethos is based on providing leadership that encourages individuals in this regard.



This is best achieved in our school through the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment. Integral to this employment value and in particular to the principle of mutual respect is the commitment to provide a workplace free from bullying.

This policy ensures that all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly. Its purpose is to eliminate the potential for bullying, sexual harassment, victimisation or discrimination in the workplace. The Complaints procedures as agreed by the A.S.T.I., the T.U.I., the D.E.S. and the J.M.B. are operated in this school.

In encompassing the whole-school approach to Wellbeing, the Dignity at Work policy promotes positive relationships, respect, and communication among staff members. This includes providing a supportive and inclusive work environment that values diversity, promotes good mental health, and encourages staff to take care of their wellbeing.

Health & Safety Policy

It is the policy of St Gerald's DLS College Castlebar to do all that is reasonably practicable to secure the Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees and to protect all other persons i.e. students, contractors, visitors and the general public, in so far as they may be affected by St. Gerald's College undertaking.

The Board of Management recognises its overall responsibility for Health and Safety at St Gerald's DLS College Castlebar and meets this through:

- Providing and maintaining, for every employee etc., a safe and healthy environment in which to work.
- Compliance with all relevant legal provisions and Approved Codes of Practices relating to health, safety and welfare at work.
- Informing employees of safety regulations applicable to them, and providing training and instruction to enable employees at all levels to perform their work safely and without risks to their health and welfare.
- Maintaining constant and continuing interest in Health, Safety and Welfare matters applicable to St. Gerald's College's activities, and brief employees as necessary.
- Providing for effective and timely consultation with employees and contractors on matters which affect their Health, Safety and Welfare.
- Implementing safe systems of work incorporating any necessary safety devices and personal protective equipment, and supervising their use.
- Monitoring Health, Safety and Welfare performance both proactively (by carrying out Health, Safety and Welfare inspections) and reactively (by analysis of accidents and work-related ill health) as detailed in the Policy Document.



- Providing the necessary competent advice on occupational Health, Safety and Welfare issues as detailed in the Policy Document.

The Health and Safety Policy is an essential component of the whole-school approach to Wellbeing provision as such recognises that the physical environment is just one component of overall wellbeing. Thus, the Health and Safety Policy ensures that the physical environment is safe and supportive, while also addressing the broader social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff.

Pastoral Care Policy

Through our approaches to pastoral care, St Gerald's DLS College aims to provide students with the necessary support to navigate challenges and succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Our policy focuses on the social and emotional wellbeing of our students, on creating an environment where they feel supported, valued, and safe, and on creating a culture of care and support that promotes the mental and emotional health of all staff, parents, etc.

The pastoral care aspect of the school community is a whole-school responsibility concerning students, staff and parents. 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.

Substance Abuse Policy

Drugs, and their misuse, is an area of concern for parents, teachers, and students. The prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse in modern society and its growth among young people pose challenges and opportunities for the school community as an important social partner in providing drug awareness and education. As a Le Chéile school we are constantly striving to realise the ideal of Education in line with the Le Chéile Charter and the De La Salle Ethos.

St. Gerald's DLS College is a place where students feel safe and cared for, where the individual is respected both as a person in his/her own right but also as an integral part of a larger learning community, where justice and fairness are mediated in its structures and procedures. This holistic approach to education and the communal context in which it takes place underpins our



policy on Substance Abuse. We are committed to addressing the needs of the whole school in relation to substance misuse.

- St. Gerald's DLS College recognizes the importance of a whole school approach to Wellbeing and will provide appropriate education in the area of health education and substance use for all students, as part of this approach.
- This education will be integrated into relevant subject areas, including S.P.H.E., Wellbeing, C.S.P.E., and others, including Religious Education, Science, etc., in order to ensure that students receive a comprehensive and holistic education on issues related.
- St. Gerald's DLS College will encourage and facilitate contributions from parents, parties with relevant expertise and experience, and relevant outside agencies to support the whole school approach to Wellbeing, provided that such contributions complement the school's approach, values, and ethos.
- Drug Awareness and other relevant programmes will be offered to parents and teachers of St. Gerald's DLS College when opportunities to do so arise and the School's resources permit, as part of the School's commitment to promoting a culture of wellbeing for the entire school community.
- Guidelines and agreed procedures for the management of drugs-related incidents will be issued to all staff members, as part of the school's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Section E: Support for Some

This policy employs a comprehensive school-wide approach, as stated in the introduction. However, it also employs a targeted approach that focuses on several identifiable groups of young people who may be at risk of developing unhealthy behaviour patterns, displaying symptoms of mental health challenges, or belonging to specific at-risk categories.

From NCSE, *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools - Guidelines for Teachers*:

In some cases, supports offered at Support for ALL level are not enough to fully meet the student's needs and School Support may be required. The learning support/resource teacher/ Head of Year/ Guidance counsellor and perhaps the student support team, as needed, may be involved in the solution orientated process at this point. School Support involves systematic gathering of information and the development of some kind of intervention plan. This plan can take many forms and could be called a School Support Plan/ Group Intervention Plan or Individual Learning or Behavioural Plan. (32)



These structures seek to provide a more targeted support structure to promote and scaffold wellbeing for these identified groups.

In relation to the Discipline Code and Anti-bullying Policy:

Each policy has a set of procedures in relation to engaging with some students who have not lived up to the expectations in the codes.

- Discipline Code: Refer to pages 12,
- Anti-bullying Policy: Refer to pages 17 and 18.

Use of restorative reflection processes:

The year heads and teachers, in conjunction with a Coordinator of Positive Behaviour, use the restorative reflective practice process to approach behaviour issues in a calm and structured manner. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of the consequences of actions and assists in rebuilding relationships following serious incidents. Additionally, it provides a framework for staff to work sensitively and progressively with students who require support and structure in developing good interpersonal skills and behaviour moderation. Restorative practices facilitate this positive progression and growth.

Proactive pastoral care team and engaging interventions:

Our pastoral care team is comprised the guidance counsellor, the anti-bullying co-ordinator, the principal and deputy principal. The team regularly reviews its current caseload, including students referred by staff, parents, or peers. They monitor ongoing concerns and collaborate to establish plans of action, refer students to external agencies when necessary, and identify areas where staff may require additional training or skill development. The team's focus is on providing comprehensive support to all students, ensuring their well-being and success.

AEN Team-work:

The AEN team oversees student progress in Learning Support, ensuring that student support files are being created, planning for testing and target achievement, examining resource allocation in the context of newly identified needs and requests for support from teachers and parents for students. Planning for AEN delivery takes into account high and low incident needs students through withdrawal, team teaching, small class groups, and ASD support. In keeping with the ethos of the school we also support those students whose need has been more locally identified by mainstream teaching staff in consultation with parents. Adjusting the level of academic stress and reorganising support is a key element to managing student wellbeing. This



work is governed by the AEN policy which details the practice in the school in relation to the individual students.

Guidance counselling and mentoring:

Targeted guidance is delivered by our guidance counsellor. This supports students with study, anxiety, passivity, relationship, peer, social or addiction issues in an in-school support environment.

Year head -tracking-report & reward systems

Year Heads offer targeted support to students with behaviour management, organisation issues, time management, study skills difficulties, school/life balance issues in a supportive, mentoring fashion. Where a report system might assist, this is monitored by the year heads who also use reward systems to support improvements.

Health Alert information

Under the procedures outlined in the medical policy of the school a list of students with health-related issues is maintained by management and circulated as needed to all members of staff. Students with a chronic or life-threatening serious illness are placed here with key actions and contacts listed.

Staff Wellbeing

Staff work in a supported environment. Undoubtedly, the nature of the role – in seeking to develop the whole person – is hugely demanding.

The Board of Management sees its role as supporting and affirming the work of its staff. At each board meeting the Principal's report keeps the Board informed of the work of staff. This is formally affirmed at staff gatherings, through the agreed report and through contact from the Board Chair and the principal with individual members of staff.

School Management work collaboratively with the whole staff. Particular requirements are listened for and responded to. Management respect the professional commitment of each staff member and regard them as colleagues and friends. Management is understanding of the complex pressures which may come to bear on all members of staff from time to time and respond with compassion. At staff meetings and through weekly email correspondence, teacher/staff achievement is recognised; staff is kept informed through ease of access to management at all times. As a consequence of staff commitment, student behaviour and engagement with school is of a high level at this time.



Each year the staff Social Committee organise a number of events to mark the end of each term or special events. Staff members are regularly reminded of the support available through the Employee Assistance Scheme.

Promoting wellbeing

- Our Commitment to quality Teaching and Learning

The management and staff of St Gerald's DLS College are committed to the creation of positive, engaging learning experiences for our students.

- Use of a variety of learning & teaching methodologies and strategies

Mindful of the mixed ability settings in the majority of classes, staff utilise a variety of teaching approaches and methodologies to maintain student engagement and maximise learning and achievement. In recent years staff has attended in-services in Assessment for Learning (AFL) methodology, team teaching, differentiation, sharing success criteria and the organising of group work and active learning methodologies. Emphasis has also been placed in recent years on the integration of ICT into teaching and learning in the school. These skills are of benefit in creating an engaged learning and teaching environment.

- Mixed ability class grouping

St Gerald's DLS College operates a mixed ability class grouping policy apart from the banding of core subject; English, Irish and Maths to allow for uptake at differentiated levels. This serves to promote a sense of democracy and a sense of community in all classes. In keeping with best practice, staff see this structure as central to the promotion of student self-esteem.

- The promotion of a culture of high expectations in all elements of school life

Explicit in our Behaviour Code and in our Mission Statement is the strong encouragement to create a culture of high expectation in our students. Whether in relation to academic achievement, social engagement or behaviour management, students are consistently reminded of the value the school places on their wholehearted engagement in school work and its hope and expectation for them as individuals and members of a community. There is an active policy in the core subjects of English and Maths (literacy and numeracy) to promote uptake of Higher Level papers and this is a strategy of our literacy and numeracy initiatives which have been part of School Self Evaluation and School Improvement Plans.



- Positive relationships

Our promotion of positive relationships is based on the recognition of the dignity of each individual and the importance of respectful relationships between teachers, students & parents. Building an emphasis on positivity and on rewarding positive behaviour underpins all the relationships in St Gerald's DLS College.

- Broad provision of programmes and a comprehensive curriculum

Central to the ethos of the school is a belief in the importance of providing a broad spectrum of curricular programmes and subjects. Subject choice in First and Fifth Year is based on student preference. Option bands are built based on students' preference (once timetabling flexibility allows). This helps to meet the educational needs of a broad spectrum of our student cohort whilst also offering staff the opportunity for a diverse teaching experience.

This supports a positive student experience of their learning choices.

- Junior Cycle

In First Year, students get the opportunity to experience a full range of subjects available at Junior Cycle level in September.

This process allows students to make an informed choice in choosing their subjects going forward for the Junior Cycle. With an informed experience of each subject, delivered in a mixed ability environment, we believe that our First Years are less likely to find themselves struggling in a subject area in which they are not engaged.

- Transition Year

Transition year involves engagement in a wide and varied programme of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular experiences.

Student growth, maturity and self-awareness are central to the programme. Student work placement, engagement with social justice causes, third level and college tasters, and career explorations all develop opportunities for student learning.

Academically, students receive opportunities in all the subjects available at senior cycle in St. Gerald's DLS College. This programme allows the staff the opportunity to teach in a creative manner, explore the vocational aspects of each subject and offer subject extension and enrichment opportunities.



- Leaving Certificate

St. Gerald's DLS College offers an extensive range of subjects at Leaving Certificate level. This comprehensive approach to subject provision increases the opportunity for student subject contentment, which in turn maximises student engagement in the context of the content-laden curricula to be studied.

- Study Skills, Homework and Assessment Policies

In the pursuit of academic excellence, it is our belief that appropriate study and revision practices must be in place for all students. It is essential that students, through self-discipline, develop a habit of study. The appropriate amount of time spent on homework, study and revision is outlined in the Homework Policy.

The school promotes an engagement in evening study for students who desire a supportive structure for study.

St. Gerald's DLS College undertakes, in conjunction with the Guidance Department in the school, a comprehensive study skills programme with all students. Talks are provided on a yearly basis to students on the structuring of study and on learning strategies. Study skills are delivered in classes to all students.

Support Structures

- Pastoral Structures

St Gerald's DLS College has a full suite of pastoral support structures which provide support for all students as part of their general education in the school.

- Recognition systems

Hand in hand with the culture of high expectation is our culture of recognition. Staff members are strongly encouraged to use practical reward mechanisms to celebrate this positivity. This policy has had a very positive impact on student behaviour in the school. Staff use Compass to award Merits based on student participation, engagement, interaction and achievement.

- Leadership role of Year heads

Our Year Heads work in a committed manner to manage the wellbeing of each year group. Year Heads lead the whole group, offer mentoring guidance to the students who need extra support and work one on one with the few. Year Heads also work closely with the Deputy



Principal, Guidance counsellor, Class Tutors and the pastoral care team in the provision of student support. The Attendance strategy in the school is implemented and monitored by the Deputy and Year Heads in each year.

- Use of intercom, school website & local media to celebrate student & staff achievement

In order to promote an awareness of the many accomplishments and positive events undertaken by our students (with the support of our staff) we use electronic media to celebrate the whole life of the school and offer reward and recognition for the diverse achievements at the school. Students are congratulated over the intercom on achievements and students are acknowledged to the Staff and the student body.

- Use of Assemblies and the Tutor system

Each term begins with a formal year group assembly which reinforces the core aspects of the school Mission statement and the key elements of the Code of Behaviour couched in the terminology of the positive reinforcement. Each class group has a Class Tutor and Year Head who knows the students in the group and connects with them regarding work and attendance.

- Student Council Engagement and activities

The Student Council is task and activity centred. The Student Council has the opportunity to present student plans and concerns to management in a coordinated fashion. This structure promotes a sense of involvement in the development of the school and a sense of partnership between students and teachers.

- Parents' Association engagement & activities

The Parents' Association in the school meets once or twice a term. Working with parents to plan for student wellbeing is central to its function. Parents are also engaged in developing policy and procedure.

- Transition programme from primary to secondary

The school has worked to develop a systematic approach for the transition of students from primary. This involves a close working relationship with the primary principals, teachers, and SNA's and the AEN department. Student profiling forms developed by the DES are received from the students' Primary schools and are used in conjunction with our own school developed form to create a profile of incoming students. School management and the SE Team co-ordinate the use of these forms in supporting the transition of students into the school. The transition programme also involves a series of events (the Open Day, the Induction Day and the



Orientation Day) which allows each student become familiar with the geography of the school, the key personnel, their hopes and anxieties, the expectations the school will have of them and the additional supports and activities they may avail of. First Year SPHE/Wellbeing classes begin with a unit on transition from primary to post primary school.

- Staff with both a professional and personal commitment to the wellbeing of our students

Our staff sees its role as supporting and leading forth the whole person. In keeping with the Mission Statement, staff at the school aspires to develop the whole person, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural and physical. All relationships at our school are built on the central tenet of respect. The learning and teaching environment is a place of great endeavour at the school while the number and diversity of curricular activities and the extracurricular provision is a testament to staff commitment to our students. The extra activities, talks, tours, trips and events organised in parallel to the curriculum is central to the positive relationships at the heart of school life. All of our initiatives are led by staff. This commitment greatly enhances the relationships at the school.

- Pastoral Programmes and curricula

We have a full suite of pastoral support programmes which provide support to all students as part of their general education in the school.

- Our SPHE programme.
- Our RE programme.
- Our CSPE programme.
- Our Guidance programme.
- Our RSE programme.

Wellbeing & the Curriculum

In our school we have chosen to strongly prioritise and highlight wellbeing within our school community. This is reflected strongly in our curricular provision. There is a coherent and coordinated approach to the provision of CSPE, PE, SPHE and Guidance as part of the wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle. Staff are afforded opportunities to work collaboratively in planning for these subjects and CPD is actively supported. Curricular provision is informed by student and parental feedback. Guidance-related learning is an important aspect of the wellbeing curriculum in junior cycle. The guidance counsellor works collaboratively with staff in relation to the wellbeing programme and its implementation. The guidance counsellor actively supports students in Junior Cycle, both through the teaching of Guidance and counselling support on an individual basis.



We endeavour to provide a Junior Cycle Programme that builds the foundations for wellbeing. We do this through the provision of a programme that is:

- broad and balanced,
- provides choice,
- has meaning and relevance,
- is enjoyable and engaging,
- provides opportunities to experience challenge and success,
- equips students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop as learners and build positive relationships.

Wellbeing provision (weekly) at Junior Cycle

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
CSPE – 1 hour SPHE – 1 hour PE – 2 hours Wellbeing modules* – 1 hour	CSPE – 2 hours SPHE – 1 hour PE – 1 hour Food Nutrition – 1 hour	SPHE – 1 hour PE – 1 hour
Total: 5 hours	Total: 5 hours	Total: 2 hours

** The Wellbeing Module is delivered on a rotational basis throughout the school year and may include areas such as:*

- *Introduction to Guidance (Learning to Learn, Strengths and Interests)*
- *Digital Media Literacy*
- *Mental Skills*
- *The Importance of Sleep*
- *Personal Wellbeing and Growth*

The content of these modules may be reviewed and amended periodically in response to student needs, curriculum developments and available expertise.

Our co-curricular programme

Through the goodwill and hard work of our staff our students are offered a wide and varied programme of co-curricular activities which serve to involve the students in extension activities and stimulates a positive staff-student relationship- these include involvement in art projects and competitions, poetry, choir, essay and creative writing opportunities, debating, subject and general quizzes, science club (BT, Scifest), drama and musicals, etc. School teachers also



organise co-curricular trips and visits for theatre and drama, history, science related as well as tours.

Our Extracurricular programme

Through the hard work and commitment, the staff also provides a broad programme of extra activities. These include Gaelic football, Basketball, Camogie, Soccer, Athletics, Rugby, Badminton, Table Tennis, as well as other outdoor and indoor activities. Again these events serve to broaden the educational engagement and sense of belonging central to a sense of wellbeing at school. This programme is complimented by our lunchtime programme which offers students a broad array of activities.

Mental Health Promotion & Wellbeing themed Weeks

Two weeks each year are given over to a focused examination of an aspect of wellbeing. Speakers and workshops on anti-bullying, drug and alcohol awareness, mindfulness, nutrition, mental health, sexual health, spirituality. Wellbeing in a Christian sense is developed around the concept of being aware of the dignity of every human and the entitlement to respect in that context and the right of all to pursue happiness though the achievement of such happiness can never be guaranteed. This week is drawn from staff, local and national expertise and involve student engagement in the planning and evaluation process. Throughout the year students are invited to hear the insights of an array of motivational speakers on a broad range of topics.

Our involvement with Pieta Amber Flag Initiative

The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the individual efforts of primary and secondary schools, Youthreach, third level institutions, community groups and clubs to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being.

Social Justice Engagement

In line with the core Lasallian principle, Concern for the Poor and Social Justice, there is a very strong commitment to Social Justice especially in our school.

“The Lasallian school calls its members to an awareness of the poor and victims of injustice and responds to their needs through programs of community service, advocacy, and justice education. This core principle is expressed through the Lasallian ideal: “Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve.”

Through the PE/TY/RE/SPHE/LCVP/LCA Departments, students are engaged in a number of social justice and fundraising events throughout the year. These include raising student



awareness on elderly care through fund raising and visiting nursing homes in the area, through the organisation of a Christmas jumper day to raise funds St Vincent de Paul, fundraising, Pieta House and encouraging advocacy for homeless charities

Engaging students in community development and support for the more vulnerable in society assist the development of awareness in our boys.

Section F: Support for the Few

This support focuses on putting in place interventions for young people with more complex and enduring needs.

From NCSE, *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools - Guidelines for Teachers*:

The School Support Plus processes will generally require more intensive and individualised supports and may involve external professionals and support services. School Support Plus applies to students whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress was considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions at the previous levels. In post-primary schools, many of these students will have been enrolled with this level of support already identified, having known and documented needs. Other students may have needs that only emerge during the course of their post primary education. (52)

- Close relationship with external agencies and services

The Pastoral Care, guidance teacher and school management avail of all the supports or agencies appropriate to the identified needs of “the few” students. The school has worked to establish close supportive relationship with a broad spectrum of services in order to have the capacity to call on the expert assistance available. Such services and external partners include:

- Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and TUSLA
- External counsellors & Psychotherapists Foróige Youth & Family Support Service
- Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs)
- Garda Youth Diversion Programme workers,
- G.P.s
- HSE Children and Family Services
- HSE Social services
- HSE West, Adult Counselling Service
- Jigsaw



- Mayo Counselling Services
 - Mayo Mental Health Association
 - Mindspace Mayo
 - MyMind
 - National Education Psychological Services (NEPS)
 - Pieta House
 - Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO)
 - SpunOut
 - Turntome
- SNA Team work

Our team of SNA's work to support those students with access to the expert skills required to assist students navigate the school day. Members of the SNA team also help to support students with organisational or behavioural difficulties to support the wellbeing of these students.

- Year Head Mentoring

Year Heads work closely to monitor, support and guide the few students who struggle in the school context.

- Pastoral Support and Counselling

The school's guidance counsellor plays a critical role in supporting the few students who require more intensive and specialised support for their mental health and wellbeing. This support is often necessary for students who are experiencing significant emotional, behavioural or psychological difficulties, which are impacting on their ability to engage with their learning and school community.

The guidance counsellor's role involves working collaboratively with the school's pastoral care team, parents/guardians and outside agencies, to assess and provide appropriate interventions for these students. This may include individual or group counselling, referral to outside agencies for specialised support, or working with the student's teachers to create personalised learning plans that consider their mental health and wellbeing needs.

Additionally, the guidance counsellor may play a key role in crisis intervention, providing immediate support to students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency situation. In such instances, the guidance counsellor may work closely with other members of the pastoral care team, external agencies and emergency services to ensure that the student receives appropriate and timely support.



Section G: Monitoring Procedures

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored as follows:

- Teachers, tutors and other staff members will monitor student wellbeing, engagement, attendance, behaviour and participation in school life, raising any concerns through the appropriate support structures.
- Class Tutors and Year Heads will promote the wellbeing supports available within the school and will encourage students to seek assistance when needed. They will also respond to student wellbeing concerns as they arise.
- Student wellbeing concerns may be raised and discussed at weekly Pastoral Care Team meetings. Appropriate interventions, supports and referrals will be considered where necessary.
- Wellbeing matters may be discussed at Staff Meetings, Year Group Meetings and other relevant forums. Staff will be encouraged to share observations, identify emerging trends and review the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives.
- Where concerns arise regarding a student's wellbeing, appropriate supports may be put in place. These may include engagement with the Class Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Additional Learning Needs Coordinator, School Completion Programme, Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, external agencies, or other relevant personnel, subject to parental consent where required.
- Student voice will inform the ongoing review of wellbeing provision through surveys, Student Council engagement, focus groups and other appropriate consultation processes.
- Wellbeing-related initiatives, programmes and interventions will be reviewed periodically by the Wellbeing Team, Pastoral Care Team and Senior Management Team to evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas for development.
- Relevant data, including attendance patterns, behaviour records, student surveys and feedback from students, parents/guardians and staff, may be used to inform the ongoing development and review of wellbeing provision within the school.
- Staff will be encouraged to engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) relating to wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding and mental health promotion, and opportunities for the sharing of good practice will be facilitated where possible.



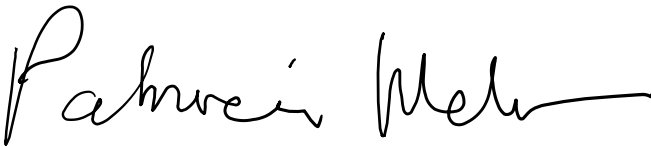
Section H: Review Procedure

This Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Wellbeing Team in consultation with students, staff, parents/guardians, the Student Council and the Parents' Council. The review process will take account of feedback from the school community, relevant wellbeing data, changes in legislation and Department of Education guidance, and the evolving wellbeing needs of students.

Any proposed amendments will be presented to the Board of Management for consideration and ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th August 2026.

Date of next review: June 2027

Signature (Chairperson): 

For and on behalf of the Board of Management

Signature (Principal): 



Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is present when a person realises their abilities, takes care of their physical, emotional and social health, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and can contribute positively to their community.
Student Wellbeing	Student wellbeing refers to the overall experience of students in school, including their physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
Pastoral Care	Pastoral care is the system of supports, guidance and interventions provided by the school to promote students' personal development, wellbeing and educational success.
Wellbeing Team	The Wellbeing Team coordinates, promotes and reviews wellbeing provision throughout the school.
Pastoral Care Team	A group of school personnel who meet regularly to identify and support students experiencing academic, social, emotional, behavioural or attendance-related difficulties.
Guidance Counselling	Guidance counselling supports students in the areas of personal and social development, educational planning and career decision-making.
Student Voice	Student voice refers to the active involvement of students in expressing their views, contributing to decision-making and helping to shape school life.
Restorative Practice	Restorative practice is an approach that seeks to build, maintain and repair relationships through dialogue, reflection and accountability.
Inclusion	Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all students feel welcomed, respected, valued and supported regardless of their background, identity, ability or circumstances.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding refers to the policies, procedures and practices used to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
Mental Health	Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing and affects how they think, feel and act.
Resilience	Resilience is the ability to cope with challenges, setbacks and adversity and to recover positively from difficult experiences.
Whole-School Approach	A whole-school approach to wellbeing recognises that wellbeing is everyone's responsibility and is promoted through the school's culture, relationships, curriculum, policies and daily practices.