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27-Jan-26

One-to-One Engagement with Students Policy

St. Gerald's DLS College

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Board of Management

ST. GERALD'S DLS COLLEGE UNDER THE PARTRONAGE OF LE
CHEILE SCHOOLS TRUST



St. Gerald's DLS College
One-to-One Engagement with Students Policy

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1.0: Type of School

St Gerald's DLS College (SGC) is an all-boys Catholic voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Le Chéile Schools Trust. We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide. We aim to provide the highest standard of education for all our students.

We endeavour to fulfil our mission in partnership with parents/guardians, staff, students, trustees and the local community.

2.0: Board of Management

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

3.0: Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance for the safe, effective, and professional delivery of one-to-one teaching and support in a post-primary school context, in accordance with statutory requirements and best practice, with particular regard to student safeguarding.

This policy will deal with situations where a member of staff is dealing with one student only. This includes formal learning support, pastoral care, disciplinary meetings, career guidance, whilst dealing with injuries, movement breaks etc.

One-to-one sessions may only be conducted by authorised school personnel acting within the scope of their professional role, including:

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Guidance Counsellors
- Certified First Aid Responders, in emergency situations only
- Members of the Special Education Teaching (SET) Team



- Special Education Teachers delivering approved post-primary interventions eg PPAD-E testing / RACE applications etc.
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), as part of their assigned duties
- Class Tutors / Year Heads / Teachers / Ancillary staff / School employed staff

3.1: Legislative and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by and aligned with the following:

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2025)
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)
- Children First Act 2015
- Education Act 1998
- Child Care Act 1991
- SGC Child Safeguarding Statement
- SGC Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy (Bí Cinealta Policy)

3.2: Guiding Principles

- The safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the student are paramount.
- One-to-one interactions must take place in a manner that is transparent, open, and open to scrutiny.
- Professional boundaries must be clearly maintained, particularly in a post-primary setting where students move between multiple teachers and settings.
- All staff share responsibility for safeguarding students and must be Garda vetted.

4.0: Specified operational procedures for all staff involved in one-to-one engagements (including AEN withdrawals / SNAs etc.)

4.1: General Considerations

- All one-to-one interactions with students must take place in an open environment (e.g. canteen or hallway), a classroom with a glass panelled door, or the classroom door must be open.



- Where a suitable classroom is not available, an alternative supervised / open space such as the DLS room, learning-support room, or canteen area may be used, provided privacy and supervision are appropriately balanced.
- One-to-one sessions should take place during the normal school day, including timetabled support periods, unless explicitly approved by school management. For example, teachers giving feedback for project work at lunch or practicing mock orals for French / Irish before school, Music practicals etc.
- Staff should maintain appropriate records (preferably on Compass / School Diary) of one-to-one sessions, where required, including the date, time, location, and purpose of the interaction as the Principal may request the details.
- Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Physical contact with students should be avoided except where absolutely necessary, appropriate, and proportionate.
 - For example, when first aid must be administered at a match / after an accident in school – there should always be a second member of staff / adult present where possible. One qualified first aider may proceed in the case of a genuine emergency.
 - In PE class, whilst demonstrating techniques, appropriate touch may occur and this unavoidable.
- Given the post-primary context, staff must be mindful of power imbalance and age-appropriate interactions. If a student must be transported home / to hospital etc., two members of staff should always accompany them unless a parent or guardian is present. In the case of an away match, where there are only two teachers present, one teacher will need to remain with the group. In this case, the student may be accompanied by one teacher to hospital by bus or by ambulance. If the match takes place on school grounds, the Principal / Deputy Principal should be contacted.
- Transportation of students in private vehicles is strongly discouraged and should only occur in exceptional circumstances with prior approval from the Principal or parental consent. There must have been an attempt to make contact with the Parent / Guardian.



- Communication with students, including digital communication, must be professional, appropriate, and in line with school policy, only via school email address / google classroom.
- If a student becomes distressed during a one-to-one session, the member of staff should contact the Principal / Deputy Principal.
- There may be occasions when outside professionals e.g., NEPS/TUSLA may be required to meet with students/carry out assessments on a one-to-one basis but staff will be onsite and appropriate permission will have been sought from Parents / Guardians.

5.0: Specified operational directions for Guidance Counsellors

5.1: General Considerations

- The guidance counsellor is a fully qualified Guidance Counsellor, a member of the Teaching Council and Garda vetted.
- The Guidance Counsellor is a full member of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and is available to attend six sessions of Supervision through the IGC each academic year.
- The Counsellor will have sensible regard for the student's beliefs and values. They will work in ways to promote the students' personal autonomy, freedom of choice and self-direction.
- The Counsellor records a list of students detailing who they met on a one-to-one basis and relevant notes regarding the sessions.
- All one-to-one meetings with students take place in the Counselling/Guidance office or classroom with glass windows or with the door open.
- Any concerns (Child Protection) that the Counsellor has regarding the safety of a student is discussed with the Principal (DLP) as a matter of urgency. If the Principal is unavailable, the issue will be discussed with the Deputy Principal (DDLp).



5.2: Responsibilities and Duties of the Guidance Counsellor

Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor by the Pastoral Care Student Support Team, Year Head, AEN team or they can self-refer. In the sessions the Counsellor should always be mindful of:

- their role and explain the boundaries within the Counsellor/student relationship
- their qualifications, areas of expertise, relevant limitations, the nature of counselling activities involved and the reasons for undertaking them and the benefits to the student in the case of counselling
- any referral options which may benefit the student where any presenting issue is beyond the Guidance Counsellors' current level of competency
- confidentiality in the counselling process and the limits of confidentiality
- the students' right to engage in and withdraw from involvement in the process at any stage.
- seeking consent in advance from parents/guardians for the student to attend counselling session(s), particularly ongoing therapeutic counselling. Written or verbal permission will be obtained from at least one parent/guardian prior to the commencement of sustained support (more than three sessions).
- situations where a student presents as being at risk. In this case, the Guidance Counsellor will prioritise immediate safeguarding action and inform the DLP and the parents/guardians as appropriate
- keeping all sensitive written records in a locked filing cabinet in the Guidance Counsellor's/Principal's office. When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the student. Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted. Statutory and data protection responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded.



6.0 Implementation

6.1: Child Protection Reporting Procedures where something happens / disclosed in a one-to-one situation:

- All staff, mandated or otherwise, are expected to enact the Children First Act 2015 and comply with the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.
- Students must be informed, in an age-appropriate manner, of the limits of confidentiality, particularly in pastoral, guidance, or behavioural support contexts.
- Where a concern arises regarding a student's safety, welfare, or wellbeing, confidentiality cannot be maintained.
- All child protection concerns, disclosures, or suspicions must be reported without delay to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- Where a concern meets or may meet the threshold for a mandated report, the DLP will make a report to Tusla – Child and Family Agency in accordance with statutory procedures.
- Where the DLP is unavailable, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) will assume responsibility but attempts must have been made to contact the DLP.
- Parents/guardians will be informed by the DLP/Principal in line with Children First / Child Protection guidance, unless doing so would place the student at further risk.
- All records relating to child protection concerns are handled confidentially and stored securely in accordance with GDPR and school policy in a locked cabinet in the DLP's office.



7.0: Roles and Responsibility for the One-to-One Procedures:

- The Board of Management (BOM) has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements at post-primary level.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal are responsible for the monitoring, implementation, and review of this policy.
- All staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and for maintaining a safeguarding-focused approach in all interactions with students.
- Year Heads, Class Tutors, teachers, SET / AEN members and school staff have a key role in monitoring and supporting appropriate implementation within their areas of responsibility.
- Parents / Guardians have a role in supporting the implementation of this policy and feedback at any stage is welcome.
- Students also share a role in giving feedback and engaging appropriately with the policy.

8.0: Communication and implementation

- This policy applies to all curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular school activities involving one-to-one interaction.
- Newly appointed staff will be informed of this policy as part of the school's formal induction process by the new teacher induction team and they will be given access to it in the Staff Handbook, which will be forwarded to them at the beginning of their tenure.
- Students and Parents / Guardians will be informed about this policy via the school website and Compass.



9.0: Review and Ratification

- This policy is published on the school website and is available to the Department of Education, Tusla, and the School Patron upon request.
- The policy effectiveness will be monitored via staff survey, through Student Council feedback and meetings of the senior leadership team.
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, or sooner if required by changes to legislation or Department of Education guidance.

Signed: 
Patricia Melvin
Chairperson of BOM

Signed: 
Shaun Burke
Secretary of BOM

Date of next review: Annual BoM Child Protection Safeguarding Reviews