



Salesian Secondary College,

Pastoral Care Policy,

Reviewed 2026

Mission Statement.

The mission of the Salesian Secondary College, Pallaskenry, is to provide the best possible education based on Christian/Catholic values in partnership with parents and within a caring community. This school incorporates the characteristics of Salesian Education as practiced by St. John Bosco in his "Preventative System".

In order to achieve this we aim to provide opportunities for students to:

1. gain skills, knowledge and understanding that will be of lasting value throughout their lives;
2. develop each individual's talents to the level of his/her personal potential for the benefit of Community and Society;
3. develop the characteristics appropriate to a member of a Christian community, including those of mutual respect and concern for others, irrespective of race, colour, gender or creed;
4. promote the physical and emotional well-being of students by developing self-esteem, personal responsibility and the ability to live and work with others;
5. work with staff committed to these ideals.

The Preventive System and the adult / young person relationship.

One constant in all Salesian work is that of the quality of the relationship between the adult and the young person. Don Bosco never believed in corporal punishment or repressive regimes of rules. Order was valued in all his work, but it had a human and caring face. Educators and young people know each other by name. Responsibility for the relationship lay first with the adult, but also there is to be an appropriate sharing of responsibility with the young person.

Don Bosco's "Preventative System" is built on three principles:

An educational relationship built on trust and reasonableness.

An encounter with the young that invites meaning and hope.

A relational approach that is seen in terms of kindness and partnership.

In Don Bosco's own words these have been handed down to us as the three principles of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness. In the Christian and Salesian tradition, every person is seen as a child of God and is to be treated with respect and dignity. There is a depth to every person that deserves exploration, education and celebration. This can only happen when there is a proper and caring relationship between the young person and the adult accompanying him or her. Don Bosco always tried to live by his Catholic faith, and for him this meant that no one in need should ever be turned away from his centres.

The Preventive System informs all the relationships which exist in Salesian Secondary College and underpins all interactions between staff and young people.

The ethos of Salesian Secondary College is that of a listening and caring school, where adults place the young person at the centre of what we do.

Rationale

The approach to pastoral care in Salesian Secondary College is based on the teachings of Don Bosco. Not only are students' academic needs met but care is taken of their emotional and mental state. Salesian Secondary College holds at its core the principle that all members of the school community should support each other in an environment of mutual respect. This principle extends to all students and all members of staff. The purpose of this policy is to promote effective and caring leadership and partnership among all the members of the school community. Through this partnership approach strong relationships based on respect,

understanding and a shared goal of a cohesive school community can be forged so that all members of the community feel empowered to reach their full potential. Our pastoral care policy underpins our holistic approach to the educational experiences of the young people in our care. The policy seeks to ensure that there is a continuum of support for the young people in our care.

School context

This policy has been developed in the context of the school's vision and mission statement. It was developed in the context of the school's other policies and relevant publications:

- Salesian Secondary College Code of Behaviour
- Salesian Secondary College Admissions Policy
- Salesian Secondary College Anti-bullying policy, procedures and charter
- Salesian Secondary College Critical Incident Policy
- Salesian Secondary College School Guidance Plan
- Salesian Secondary College Student Support Team Policy
- Student Support Teams (DES Publication, 2014)
- Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES Publication, 2013)

Legislative framework

The policy is underpinned by the relevant education legislation and by the appropriate Education research. This includes:

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs 2004
- Equal Status Act 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Children First 2011
- Child Protection Procedures
- Anti-bullying Procedures 2013
- Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools 2013
- Education and Training Boards Act 2013

Pastoral Roles and Responsibilities

Salesian Secondary College believes that a whole school approach to pastoral care is the most effective way of ensuring that the needs of all members of the school community are addressed, managed and respected. All members of the community have an important role to play and the following describe briefly some of the key responsibilities appropriate to each role:

The Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that:

- Salesian Secondary College has a Pastoral Care Policy
- The policy is reviewed on a regular basis
- Support is given for all pastoral care initiatives in the school
- Its members have an opportunity to make a contribution to the development of the policy
- The policy is made available to all members of the school community

The Role of the Principal and Deputy Principals

The Principal and Deputy Principals take the lead role in the pastoral care of the students. It is their primary responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of the students in the care of the school. The school's senior management carry out this function in a number of ways:

- Ensuring that the programmes and curricula on offer to the students are responsive to their needs and allows them to develop to their full potential.
- Ensuring that the structures are put in place to support the students' pastoral needs.
- Creating and fostering a climate and culture of respect among all members of the school community that allows students to develop to their full potential.
- Promoting a restorative approach to dealing with student discipline which seeks to build relationships based on respect.
- Supporting the continuous professional development of staff to manage the needs of students in our care.
- Supporting staff in responding to the needs of students.
- Coordinating a whole school approach to pastoral care.
- Proactively engaging with the pastoral care of all students including responding to the needs of students who may need extra support.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities for students to develop all aspects and facets of their character.
- Supporting parents in the holistic development of their children.
- Proactively facilitating the contribution of external agencies to the development of the students in our care.

Guidance Counsellor:

The Guidance Counsellor helps students to make decisions, solve problems, change

behaviour or effect changes in their lives. Counselling is offered on an individual or small group basis. The focus of counselling may be on personal, educational and career issues, individually or in combination. The Guidance Counsellor engages in a two way process of consultation with parents, teachers, school management and referral agencies. The following are the key elements of referral and counselling:

- School management, teachers, the Student Support Team and parents may refer students to the Counsellor. Students may also self-refer and friends sometimes consult the Counsellor resulting in the issue of an appointment. The voluntary participation in counselling of the referred student must be respected by all concerned.
- The Guidance Counsellor may recognise that an individual student needs assistance from other qualified helpers outside of school and organizes the provision of such assistance following agreed procedures with the school, parents and local agencies.
- Referrals may also be made by the Guidance Counsellors to other members of the Student Support Team as appropriate. Particular care is taken to involve all interested in the student's welfare and information will be shared as appropriate on a need-to-know basis.
- Recommendations are made about appropriate agencies. Parents may be requested to refer a student to an appropriate agency through his/her G.P. Where a referral is made, a detailed referral document is prepared and forwarded to the appropriate agency. The Guidance Counsellor liaises with the relevant external agency and provides subsequent in-school support for the student.
- Salesian Secondary College has 2 guidance Counsellors- Grainne Keane and Joanne Whelan.

Role of the Chaplain

- In Salesian Secondary College, we have 2 Chaplains, one member of Clergy and one member of the teaching staff.
- The chaplain is responsible for organising religious events throughout the school year in accordance with the church calendar.
- The chaplain is also available for meetings with students on a one to one basis to discuss matters of personal concern. Please refer to the Policy Governing One to One Encounters.

Chaplain Programme

- Beginning of School Year Mass
- November Prayer Services
- December the 8th Mass
- Christmas Prayer services
- Carol Services

- Don Bosco feast Day mass
- Catholic Schools week
- Lenten Prayer services
- Transition Year Mass
- Third Year Mass
- Graduation Mass
- End of year Mass

The chaplain will work closely with the Music Department to carry out all the above events.

Chaplains Available: Rachel Meehan and Fr. Dominic

The Role of the Subject Teacher

The Subject Teacher also has a key role in pastoral provision in the school:

- Like the Class Tutor, the Subject Teacher is in daily contact with the student and is therefore very well placed to identify any pastoral needs that emerge for their students.
- The Subject Teacher also has an important role in modelling appropriate behaviours, in creating a climate of mutual respect and fostering positive relationships.
- The Subject Teacher plays a valuable role in promoting self-esteem and fostering confidence and assertiveness.
- The Subject Teacher plays an important role in instilling key values and in communicating expectations of students with regard to behaviour, work ethic and progress.
- The Subject Teacher also promotes positive discipline through positive comments in the Student Journal, praise and encouragement of the student and through their role in determining the Student of the Month.

The Role of the AEN Department

The Additional Education Needs Department has a pivotal role in responding to the needs of the young people in our care who may have general or specific learning difficulties. These needs are often complex and may extend beyond the academic to comprise a wide range of interlinked social, emotional, behavioural and psychological needs. The coordinator:

- Coordinates the provision of all support for students with AEN in cooperation with the student's Learning Support Teacher drawing up Student Support Plans and strategies as targeted interventions for addressing the needs of the students.

- Liaises with all teaching staff relating to AEN students in their care.
- Coordinates the activities of our SNAs linking them in with specific students or class groups to ensure the needs of the students are being met.
- Manages the application for resources for our AEN students including securing teaching and SNA supports for our students as well as putting in place appropriate supports for examinations including State Examinations.
- Liaises with the Coordinator of the school's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class to ensure the needs of the students are being provided for on an on-going basis.
- Liaises with parents of students with AEN to address all of their needs including those of a pastoral nature.

The Role of our SNAs

Our School acknowledges the role played by our SNAs in meeting the pastoral needs of our students and particularly those students with extra educational needs. Our SNAs:

- Manage the complex variety of needs that some of our AEN students present with.
- Cooperate with teaching staff to ensure that they are informed of any emerging needs.
- Work collaboratively with teachers to ensure that the needs of the students are being met.
- Support students in response to any emerging or on-going needs.
 - Work with the AEN Coordinator and relevant Subject or LS Teacher in reviewing and managing the needs of the students.
- Promote the wellbeing of the students in their care.

The Role of the Parent

Salesian Secondary College acknowledges and welcomes the role of the parent / guardian in meeting the needs of their children. Parents can play an active role in pastoral care within the school by:

- Taking an active interest in all aspects of the education of their children from the academic and intellectual to the social, physical, personal, moral and spiritual development of their children.
- Communicating with teachers, SNAs and school management on a regular basis about the progress and needs of their children and in particular by monitoring and recording comments in their children's school journal.
- Attending regularly at Parent / Teacher meetings.
- Supporting teachers and SNAs in meeting the needs of their children.
 - Encouraging their children to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school life so that their children develop as fully rounded individuals and enjoy their time in school.
- Openly communicating with their child about key issues affecting them and by involving themselves in the challenges facing their child: internet use and online behaviour,

relationships and sexuality, school attendance & emotional upheaval.

- Acknowledging that life is often stressful and difficult and that the role of a school with wellbeing at its core is to build resilience: to teach a young person how to deal with disappointment, conflict, failure and times of trouble or upset.

The Role of the Student

Our students have a very important role in their own pastoral development. This role takes a number of different forms:

- Respecting all other members of the school community including other students, teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff.
- Cooperating with staff who seek to help address their pastoral needs.
 - Engaging in all aspects of school life for a more rounded and holistic educational experience.
- Seeking out opportunities for their own development within the school, working to build resilience and self belief and learning how to deal with conflict, upset, disappointment and failure
- Taking responsibility for their learning and for their development as young individuals.
- Acknowledging the rights of all other students to learn in a positive climate which values and nurtures learning and acting on this by behaving responsibly.
 - Communicating any needs that they may have to the appropriate member of staff.
 - Supporting other students who may have particular needs.
- Reporting any behaviours that are damaging to themselves or other students including bullying or other concerns about the health of fellow students.

The Role of the Student Council

The Student Council has an important role in pastoral care in the school:

- The Council proactively seeks out opportunities to develop the school for the benefit of all members of the school community thereby meeting the needs of that community.
- The Council acts as an advocate for students ensuring that the school community is responsive to the concerns and issues that impact directly on our students.
- The Council provides a support network for all students so that each student's voice can be heard.
- The Council liaises with the school management on issues that impact our students.
- The Council models confident, positive behaviour and attitudes which empower other students to develop similarly.

Student Support Teams

The school operates two **Student Support Teams (SSTs)** as an integral part of its whole-school pastoral care and student support structure. The **Junior Student Support Team** comprises the Year Heads of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year, the Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator and members of Senior Management. The **Senior Student Support Team** comprises the Year Heads of Transition Year, 5th Year and 6th Year, the Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator and members of Senior Management.

In keeping with the **NEPS Continuum of Support** framework, the purpose of the Student Support Teams is to provide a coordinated, collaborative and systematic approach to identifying and responding to the educational, social, emotional, behavioural and wellbeing needs of students. The teams provide a forum through which concerns regarding individual students can be identified at an early stage, relevant information can be shared appropriately, and suitable support and interventions can be agreed, coordinated and reviewed.

The Student Support Teams meet regularly and seek to:

- identify students who may require additional support;
- consider concerns raised by Year Heads, teachers, tutors, parents/guardians, students or other relevant personnel;
- coordinate appropriate supports within the school's **Support for All, Support for Some and Support for a Few** framework;
- agree appropriate actions, interventions and responsibilities;
- monitor and review the progress and wellbeing of students receiving support;
- facilitate communication and collaboration between relevant school personnel;
- liaise, where appropriate, with parents/guardians and external agencies or professionals;
- support effective transitions between year groups and particularly from primary to post-primary and from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle; and
- ensure that students experiencing significant or complex difficulties receive a coordinated school response and, where necessary, are referred to appropriate external services.

The work of the Student Support Teams is underpinned by a commitment to **early intervention, prevention, inclusion and student wellbeing**. Information discussed by the teams is treated sensitively and confidentially and is shared only with relevant personnel on a need-to-know basis, having regard to the welfare of the student and the school's responsibilities in relation to child protection, safeguarding and data protection.

Check & Connect Programme

The school operates a Check & Connect Programme as part of its whole-school approach to pastoral care, wellbeing and student support. The programme provides identified students with regular, structured contact with a designated member of staff who acts as a consistent and supportive adult within the school. Students may be identified for Check & Connect through the Student Support Team, Year Head, AEN team, Guidance Department or Senior Management where it is considered that additional pastoral support would be beneficial.

The purpose of Check & Connect is to promote student engagement, wellbeing, attendance and connection with school, while providing an opportunity for the early identification of difficulties that may be affecting a student's educational or personal experience. The programme complements the NEPS Continuum of Support by providing an additional targeted intervention for students who may require support beyond that ordinarily available through whole-school pastoral structures.

Depending on the individual needs of the student, Check & Connect may involve:

- regular scheduled check-ins with a designated staff member
- monitoring attendance, punctuality, engagement and general wellbeing
- supporting students with organisation, routines and goal-setting
- providing encouragement and recognising progress and positive engagement
- helping students to identify difficulties or barriers to their participation in school
- supporting positive relationships and a sense of belonging within the school
- communicating relevant concerns, where appropriate, to the Year Head, Student Support Team, AEN Coordinator, Guidance Counsellor or Senior Management
- reviewing the level of support required and referring concerns through the school's established student support structures where additional intervention is necessary.

Check & Connect is intended to provide students with a reliable, supportive and trusted point of contact within the school. It does not replace the role of the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, AEN team or other professional supports, but works alongside these structures to ensure that students experiencing difficulties are noticed, supported and connected with the appropriate level of assistance.

Class Tutor and Tutor Time

The **Class Tutor and Tutor Time** form an important part of the pastoral care structure in Salesian Secondary College. Each class group is assigned a Class Tutor who provides a consistent and supportive point of contact for students and helps to foster a strong sense of belonging, connection and identity within the class and wider school community. This role reflects the Salesian ethos of **Reason, Faith and Loving Kindness** and our commitment to ensuring that every young person is known, valued, supported and encouraged throughout their time in the school.

Tutor Time provides regular structured contact between the Class Tutor and their tutor group and complements the work of the Year Head, Student Support Teams, Guidance Department, AEN Department and Senior Management. It provides an important opportunity to:

- build positive and supportive relationships between students and their Class Tutor
- promote a sense of belonging, class identity and connection with the wider school community
- provide students with important school information, notices and updates
- monitor Student Journals and support students in developing good organisational habits and routines
- recognise effort, achievement, improvement and positive behaviour
- encourage students to take responsibility for their learning, behaviour, attendance and participation in school life
- provide opportunities for students to raise general concerns or seek support
- support students at important transition points and during periods of difficulty
- promote the values, expectations and ethos of Salesian Secondary College
- identify emerging pastoral, educational or wellbeing concerns and, where appropriate, communicate these to the Year Head or other relevant members of the school's pastoral care and student support structures

The Class Tutor is **not expected to act as a counsellor**, but rather as a trusted and approachable adult who knows the students in their tutor group and can notice changes, listen appropriately and connect students with further support when required. Where a concern arises regarding a student's wellbeing, welfare, attendance, behaviour or educational progress, the Tutor should liaise with the relevant Year Head and, where appropriate, the concern may be referred through the school's Student Support Team or other established support structures.

Through regular Tutor Time, the school seeks to ensure that students experience meaningful connection with a member of staff who takes a particular interest in their progress and wellbeing. In this way, the Tutor system contributes to the school's preventative and early-intervention approach to pastoral care and supports the Salesian commitment to placing **students at the heart of everything we do**.

The Role of External Agencies

-The school makes use of the services of an Educational Psychologist on an occasional basis. As well as his / her own referrals, the Educational Psychologist manages referrals from the variety of sources outlined above.

-The school also facilitates visits by fully trained Care Workers from CAMHS on a regular basis to visit students with extra needs on an individual basis.

-Our local Salesian Priests and Brothers who visit the school on occasion to talk to the

students and to offer them support on a variety of spiritual and social issues.

-The school welcomes the involvement of the Garda Síochána in a community policing role whereby they talk to the students on a wide range of issues in a proactive manner to foster responsible citizenship.

-In addition to all of the above external agencies the school will also welcome guest speakers to discuss different contemporary social issues with the students. All such guest speakers are invited subject to the permission of the Principal and are always accompanied by teachers. These speakers contribute to the social, spiritual, intellectual and moral development of the students and therefore fulfil an important pastoral function in the school community.

Members of the pastoral care team.

The pastoral care team comprises senior management, the year heads, the class tutors, chaplain, teacher mentors, teachers allocated pastoral care time and the guidance and AEN departments. (Appendix A.)

Time Allocation

Meetings: Members of the pastoral care team meet regularly to discuss issues related to the pastoral life of students.

Pastoral Hours:

Currently, teachers are allocated time on their timetable, to provide pastoral care to students

5 Teachers have allocated time on their timetable for Pastoral Care issues.

Joanne Whelan and Grainne Keane – Guidance allocation of hours.

Time is spent meeting students for ongoing personal hours and career advice. 10 – 20 students are met approximately each week, most of which is done on a voluntary basis.

Steps involved in an effective pastoral care team:

- Students can avail of one to one meetings with the Guidance counsellor or a member of the pastoral care team
- Through the year head, tutoring and SPHE system, students can avail of the time to reflect on important life issues
- Through Religion class where students can meet with and discuss issues of importance
- Through the extracurricular activities that the school has, students can avail of a time to shine in a non-academic role
- Through the various liturgical services provided by the school, students can again

- shine in a non-academic role
- Through the student's council, students can meet with their peers to discuss matters of importance
- Through the school policies that are in place to protect the vulnerable student

Pastoral Care Procedures- Referrals

Students are referred to the Pastoral Care Team through:

Self – referral
Student referral

Staff referral
Parental referral

Agency referral



Referral to Pastoral Care Team

Please complete one form per student and submit form (hardcopy in pigeon hole or by email) to Pastoral Care Team Coordinator or Pastoral Care team member.

Referring Teacher:

Student Name:

Year / Class:

Date:

Reason for referral:

[illegible]

Strategies

Policy Evaluation

This policy is incorporated into the body of School Policy from the date of ratification.

The review process will include consultation with:

- School Staff
- Students
- Board of Management
- Parents
- External agencies where appropriate

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on ____29/9/2026____.



Secretary to the Board

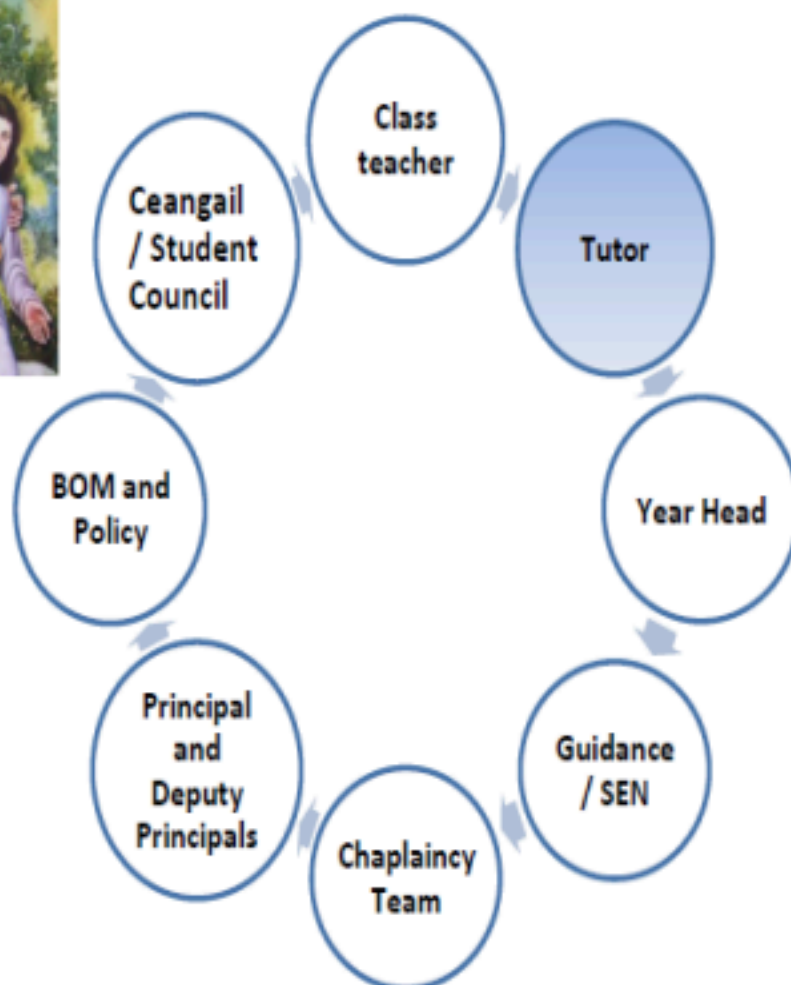


Chairperson

Appendix A

Pastoral care of the Salesian Secondary College's student:

Our Pastoral Care Structure is the bedrock of all we do in Salesian Secondary College....



Related Policies:

Anti bullying Policy

Code of Behaviour

Policy governing one to one encounters

Wellbeing Policy

Policy governing the management of external
persons Health and Safety Policy

Child Safeguarding Statement 2018

Child Protection Procedures 2017

SPHE Policy

Critical Incidence

Bi Cinnelata

Appendix C

Current Members of the Pastoral Care Team

DLP: Keith O Rahilly

DDLDP: Mike Lavan

Deputy Principal: David Ryan

Co-Ordinator: Rachel Meehan

Guidance: Grainne Keane

Guidance Joanne Whelan

Teacher: Neil Barry

Teacher: Mary O Connell Murphy

Teacher: Eilis Lavan

Teacher: Gareth Airey