**De La Salle College Positive Discipline Policy**

The De La Salle College’s policy on Positive Discipline is broadly based on our school’s mission statement which states:

 ***“Our community aims to assist our pupils to develop their full potential in a Christian environment.  In our school this vision will be achieved by mutual respect and co-operation amongst all partners in an open, safe and caring environment”***

Our policy reflects the beliefs of the teaching staff as we try on a daily basis to live out the La Sallian ethos and ensure that all our students are cherished, respected and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The **five core principles** of the Lasallian ethos are:-

* Faith in the presence of God
* Respect for all people
* Inclusive community
* Quality education
* Concern for the poor, and social justice

Our Positive Discipline policy draws from the above principles and complements them in an ongoing basis in the everyday school environment.

Positive Discipline is defined as a discipline model used by schools and in parenting that focuses on the positive points of behaviour, to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities.

Our policy on Positive Discipline encompasses the recognised criteria necessary for Positive Discipline to work. This includes the following:

1. Does it help students feel a sense of connection and belonging?
2. Is it mutually respectful and encouraging?
3. Is it effective long-term? Punishment works short term, but according to research has negative long- term results.
4. Does it teach important social and life skills? Respect, concern for others, problem solving and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.
5. Does it invite students to discover their capabilities?

Our policy on positive discipline aims to meet this criteria outlined chronologically below:

1. **A sense of connection for the student:**

There is a very strong sense of connection amongst our students with each other and to the school. This is strengthened and nourished by such activities and initiatives as;

* The promotion of the De La Salle name in a positive light in local publications at local and school events.
* The school’s size allows for everyone to know everyone within the school. Students are always referred to by their names.
* The wearing of the school uniform as a reinforcement of the student’s identity as a member of our school body.
* The regular shared attendance with the local community at religious services under the school flag.
* The encouraged attendance at all school sporting events and at related celebratory functions.
* The involvement in school team activities such as football/hurling/athletics/drama/sponsored and nature walks.
* The involvement by students in the students’ council.
* The yearly election of class prefects.
* The displaying of year group photographs around the school-older brothers, fathers, uncles, grandfathers).

Our school believes that students with a greater sense of community generally accept the established norms of a school, leading to a more harmonious environment for all.

**2. Mutual respectfulness and encouragement:**

* There is some evidence that a sense of community among staff members may be an “important precursor to the development of a sense of community among students.” (Royal and Rossi, 1997) Modelling appropriate relationships among the adults seems to support students in developing appropriate interpersonal relationships.

A visibly friendly and approachable staff encourage and nurture similar qualities in the students.

* It is important therefore for the staff members to display a good rapport with each other and that this would be visible to the student body in the everyday interaction in the school

A good atmosphere among the staff however should be second only to a positive and respectful relationship between the staff and the student body. In our school one of the strongest drivers of such a relationship is the size of the school population. The fact that everybody knows everybody in De La Salle is always seen and promoted as a positive contributor to the good relationship between the staff and students.

Encouragement is exercised in class rapport, exam reports or homework corrections where the use of positive criticism and suggestion is much more effective than causing upset and self doubt in a student.

**3. The long-term outlook of discipline:**

Any code of behaviour in a school will have to be backed up with a series of sanctions issued when that code is breached.

We try, in the school, to always use encouragement and a positive approach to any disciplinary action issued.

These may include

* Entries on VSware of a positive nature to reflect good student behaviour of any kind deemed worthy of an inclusion or acknowledgment.
* There is a very robust Class Teacher System in the school where a teacher is recognised by a class as being approachable on any particular issue. This teacher may also kindly encourage a student identified to be in need of academic guidance or indeed the teacher and student may search for a solution to a particular problem. This can be very encouraging and effective for the student.
* Any transgressions by students are not dwelled on and students are assured that they are starting with a clean slate and will be treated as such. There are not only second chances in De La Salle College but as much as is possible an endless opportunity for a student to redeem themselves.

**4.Important social and life skills**. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)

The students are encouraged always to participate in group activities. Social skills are learned in such environments.

Examples include:

* Sporting activities and PE class
* Geography fieldtrips
* Transition year outings
* French/Italian exchanges
* Drama/Debating
* Class group work/project work
* Charity collection at Christmas
* Life skills classes in Transition Year
* Collective design and production of artefacts in technology
* A first year/fourth year ‘buddy system’.
* TYO work experience
* Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme

**5. The students own awareness of their capabilities.**

Skills and capabilities can span areas like sport, class/exam work, practical work, drama and community work.

There is a strong academic tradition in De La Salle College of which we are very proud and make every effort to maintain.

All students start each subject at Higher Level and the vast majority of them remain at that level. They are given continuous encouragement and learning support in and out of class in order for them to achieve high academic attainment. However the school understands that all students are not equal academically and every student is encouraged and supported to achieve their personal best in the class room. The Learning Support and Resource team endeavour to preserve a student’s self-confidence and esteem if they are struggling academically. The Learning Support and Resource team work closely with all subject teachers to try to ensure no student finds themselves in a situation they cannot cope with or that will diminish their self-esteem.

While the career guidance counsellor helps steer each student in a career path that is most suited to their skills recognising that every student has individual strengths and offer them paths that they may well not even have been aware of.

There is a practice in the school where a student’s own achievements outside of the school are sometimes acknowledged by management over the intercom in an effort to congratulate the student in the school community setting. This practice is the Principal’s way of letting the student know how proud everyone is of his individual achievement.

As a reasonably sized school, De La Salle is in a fortunate position where students are known to all teachers and any difficulties they are encountering in their personal lives are noted and responded to accordingly.

This policy is a work in progress as the teaching body learns every year from experience. Students can today present with many challenges and difficulties in their personal life. The staff in De La Salle make every effort to rise to this challenge and strive to give the students a positive experience in their day by smiling, greeting, teaching and caring for them.

**Training and Development**

As part of our New Teacher Mentoring Programme all new teachers are made aware of the benefits of positive discipline. The strong sense of collegiality in De La Salle also helps to nurture this and so new teachers find it an easy and supported way to teach.

**Ratified:** 19/01/23

**Monitoring of Policy, Review and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed in 2025.



**Chairperson of Board of Management**



**Principal**