**Student Voice Policy**



The Student Voice Policy outlines De La Salle’s approach to engaging students in dialogue about their teaching, learning and wider student experience. It outlines what facilities are in place to support this dialogue at every level of their education.

The role of the Student Council

A Student Council is a representative body through which students can become involved in the management of the school, working with the principal, the Board of Management and staff for the benefit of the school.

The Student Council is the primary outlet of the Student Voice.

The key role of a Student Council as set out in the Education Act is "to promote the interests of the school and the involvement of students in the affairs of the school, in co-operation with the board, parents and teachers".

Objectives of the student council:

* To enhance communication between students, management, staff, and parents
* To promote an environment best suited to learning
* To promote respect amongst pupils
* To support the management and staff in the development of the school
* To represent the views of the students on matters that concern them

The Importance of the Student Voice

* Dialogue with students is integral to delivering a high-quality student experience. It is essential that all students have opportunities to evaluate their experiences within the school.
* It is essential to ensure that students are central to governance and decision making; ensure that students are central to quality assurance and enhancement; provide opportunities for students to become active participants in their learning; foster collaboration between students and staff.
* Student experience encompasses the learning, teaching, and the wider student experience, including the standard of student support services. Student feedback is therefore an important part of quality maintenance in the school.
* Students are not a singular group and as such there will be a range of student voices within the school community, across the various year and class groups. Our student body is diverse and students will have varied views on issues. When seeking feedback from students, it should be ensured that approaches used are inclusive and enable all students to participate so that as many student voices as possible are heard.

Underlying Principles of the Student Voice

* Be enhancement-focused: Ensuring each student has a voice, via representation or other feedback mechanisms.
* Include all students: It is essential that student representation and feedback activities be accessible to all.
* Encourage positive practice as well as identify areas for improvement: Representation and feedback should be valued by all as opportunities to acknowledge strengths as well as to identify weaknesses and share concerns.
* Students should be free to give honest feedback with no undue influence.
* Where feedback results are shared, steps should be taken to protect respondent anonymity unless the student or students have consented to share their feedback without anonymity.
* Be transparent: When feedback is collected from students, it should be made clear why it is being collected, what will be done with it, how it will be used and by whom. When decisions are made, or changes are affected as a result of student feedback, this should be highlighted.
* Be considered and responded to: Students should be made aware of the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and where relevant, the actions taken and why. Feedback may not automatically lead to change or action but should always result in a response and explanation.

If the value of a Student Council is to be fully realised, it is important that the Board of Management involves the Council in the development of school policies in areas such as bullying, discipline and uniform requirements, and in the planning and organization of school activities and events.

Board of Management listen to the Student Council and respond in a meaningful way to its concerns.

The Student Council and the Principal

The principal promotes a school culture which recognises the potentially valuable input that students can make, in the development of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

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| Students | * Give feedback on the school environment and their experiences; be they positive or negative * To be respectful in their criticisms of the school community * To acknowledge the importance of the Student Voice and its role in our school |
| Management | * To give proper acknowledgement to the importance of the Student Voice and its outlets * To work constructively with Students and the Student Council |
| Teachers | * To co-operate with the feedback of the students * To acknowledge the wants and needs of the students within the Student Voice |

Ultimately, the Student Voice seeks to represent students as both the individual and collective which is essential for a healthy environment within the school. The student voice acts as a bridge between staff and students and exists solely to further the development of the school, school community and wellbeing of all those within.

Ratified:19/01/23



Principal



Chairperson of Board of Management