



St. Dominic's Grammar School



Prospectus

*Mol an óige
agus tiocfaidh sí*





VERITAS
FOUNDED 1870



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Céad míle fáilte

Welcome

I am delighted that you have taken the time to get to know our school and on behalf of the governors, staff and students I warmly welcome you to St. Dominic's Grammar School. Choosing the right school for your child at this stage in their education is a very important decision. Be assured that in St. Dominic's we will care for, nurture and support your child to achieve their full potential and fulfil their hopes and dreams. My hope is that every St. Dominic's pupil that enters the doors of this beautiful school will enjoy their learning, seize the opportunities afforded to them, flourish, thrive and leave us as happy, confident and competent young people. We strive, as outlined in our vision, to unlock our individual and collective potential and to be prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century whilst reflecting our strong Dominican Ethos.

St. Dominic's was established by the Dominican Sisters, Cabra in 1870. Our school has a rich tradition and a long and well-respected history. Whilst the school building has changed over the years, the values and ethos imbued by the visionary sisters, all those years ago, remain strong within our school community. The students are encouraged to work hard, identify their gifts and talents, and to build on them, all in the spirit of truth. Our pupils achieve highly, and this is a key priority coupled with the development of character, honesty, goodness and kindness.

Our school is a Catholic School that promotes Christian Values. We are rich in diversity and welcome students from all faith traditions and none. We are committed to providing educational opportunities that enable students to grow and develop into mature young adults who will confidently take their place within society and make a positive contribution to



the Common Good. Many of our past pupils are influential leaders shaping our society on a local and global level.

The cornerstones of our school are the staff, community and parents/guardians who in the triangulation of relationships work together to create an educational journey that brings about academic success, improved life experiences and employment opportunities. I am privileged to be Principal of St. Dominic's where there is such a supportive, dedicated and highly motivated staff who are determined to provide a meaningful and purposeful education for your child. There exists within St. Dominic's a wealth of expertise and a rich tradition that promotes that special relationship that is so essential for real learning and success to happen.

We are delighted to offer students the full range of educational choice through the Entitlement Framework in a vibrant learning and teaching community that is situated at the heart of the Falls

Road. Students have access to state-of-the-art facilities that include an oratory, numerous ICT suites, drama theatre, library, gymnasium, sports-hall, specialist classrooms, laboratories, art and media studios, design and technology workshops, music tutorial rooms as well as dedicated study centres for Post 16 students.

We also provide a rich and varied extracurricular programme which allows our students to develop beyond the classroom. We are very proud of our student's achievements in all areas of school life and beyond.

Hopefully, through the information in this prospectus and your visit to our school on Open Day you will get a feel for the true spirit, ethos and culture of excellence that makes St. Dominic's such an exciting and vibrant place to learn and succeed.

Orla O'Neill

Orla O'Neill (Principal)

Our Vision



Each one of us is unique, created by a unique God, for a unique purpose

St. Dominic's is a community committed to mutual respect where every individual is valued, respected, encouraged and empowered to reach her/his potential in an atmosphere of love, forgiveness, honesty, openness and optimism.

We are committed to celebrating difference, to promoting equality, self belief and a culture of confidence where success is celebrated.

We strive to unlock our individual and collective potential and to be prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century, reflecting our strong Dominican ethos.

Our Aims



To bring our students to a full understanding of our Catholic faith and to promote Christian values and attitudes in all members throughout the school community



To awaken in students a sense of their dignity and self-worth and to promote self-confidence



To promote the physical, emotional and mental well-being of all our students and staff



To create warm, caring and positive relationships between all members of the school community and to inculcate in all members of the community respect for, and sensitivity to, the dignity, feelings, and rights of others



To promote the values of good citizenship throughout the school community



To build an effective partnership between parents, students, staff and the Board of Governors and to work together to fulfil the school's vision



To be a learning community for the development of all



To optimise the opportunities for our pupils through links with the wider community



To ensure that our students and staff are prepared effectively for the changing world in the 21st century

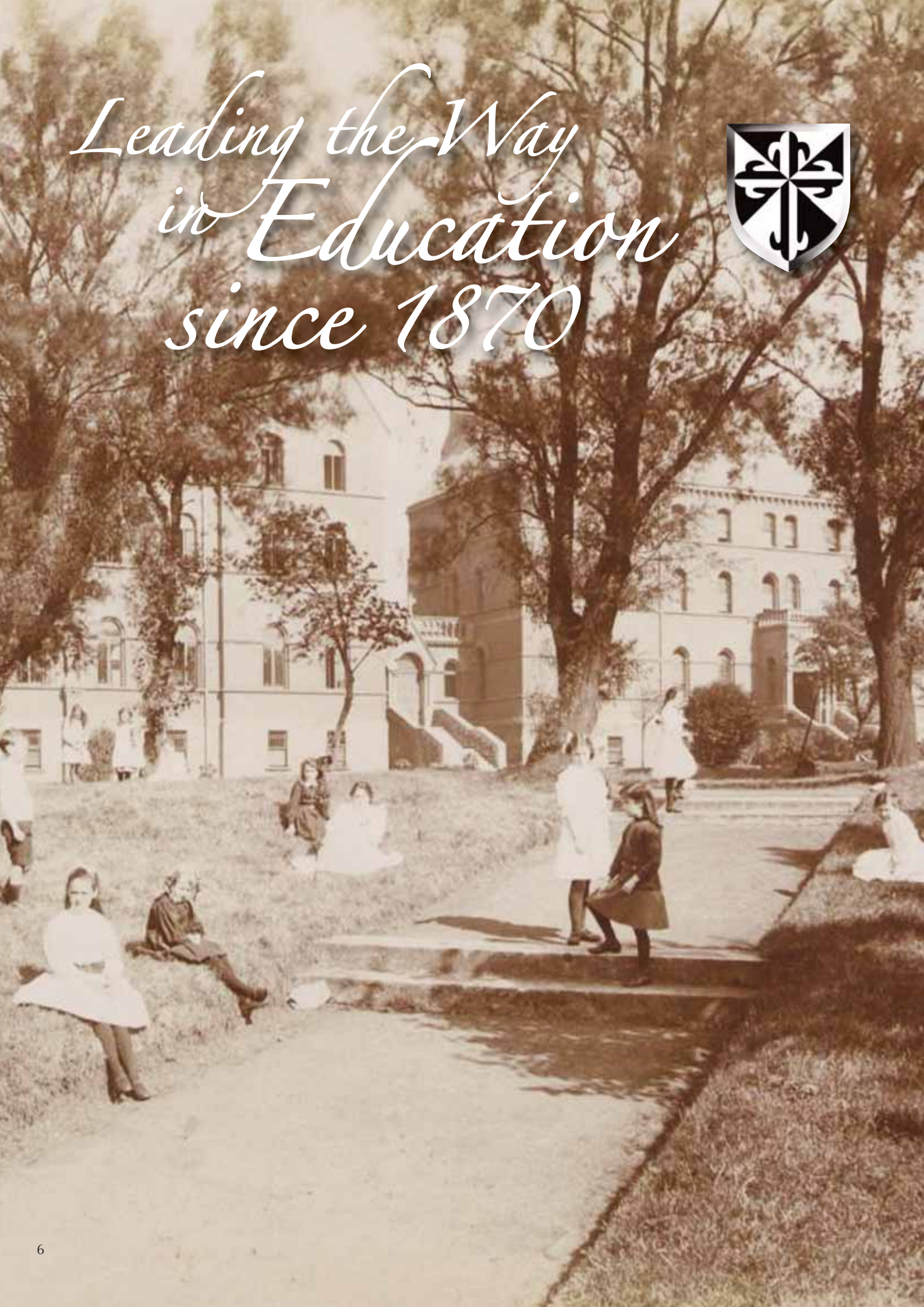


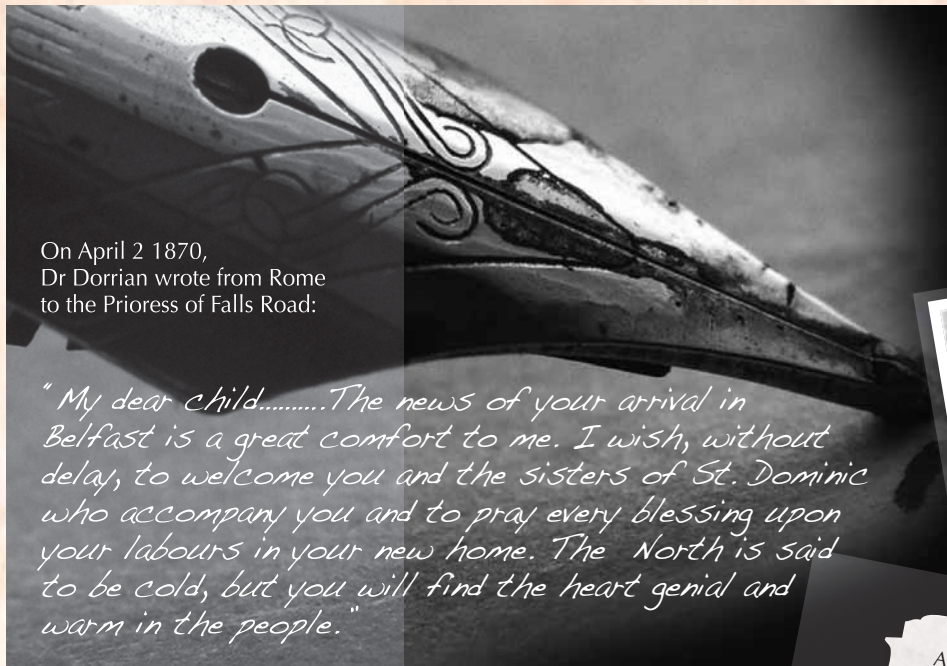
To ensure that our students have access to a wide range of learning opportunities



To develop a culture of high achievement among all pupils with every pupil reaching their full potential

*Leading the Way
in Education
since 1870*





On April 2 1870,
Dr Dorrian wrote from Rome
to the Prioress of Falls Road:

"My dear child.....The news of your arrival in Belfast is a great comfort to me. I wish, without delay, to welcome you and the sisters of St. Dominic who accompany you and to pray every blessing upon your labours in your new home. The North is said to be cold, but you will find the heart genial and warm in the people."



Advertisement for Dominican Convent
Irish News August 1896

"The course of studies comprises all the subjects of a Catholic Lady's Education. Pupils are prepared for the Royal University, Intermediate, Royal Academy of Music, Incorporated Society of Musicians, Civil Service and other Public Examinations, but Ladies not entering for these receive equal attention...."

St. Dominic's was founded by the Dominican Order in 1870 at the invitation of the Most Reverend Dr. Dorrian, Bishop of Down and Connor. It was originally named St. Mary's Dominican Convent. When it opened on April 25 1870, there were four pupils enrolled. The Boarding School opened on April 29 with one pupil. The Study Hall Block was built in 1897. The school has grown significantly over the years with the addition of the St. Margaret's Wing and the erection in the 1960s of St. Thomas's Building.

The school has been at the forefront of education in Belfast since 1870 and continues to grow in strength providing first class education for girls from the Belfast and Greater Belfast area. It remains under the trusteeship of the Dominican Order. Mrs Anne O'Neill was the school's first lay principal and she led the school effectively between 2001 and 2007 when she took over from Sr. Lucina Montague OP. Mrs Carol McCann then took over and led the school successfully until January 2022 when our current Principal Mrs Orla O'Neill then became Principal.

We are proud of our long tradition of excellence and of our many famous past pupils who continue to play leading roles in society.

In 2008, the school celebrated the opening of the St. Thomas Aquinas Building and the refurbishment of the original school buildings began. The current facilities enable staff to deliver a curriculum which prepares our students for life in the 21st Century. We now have state-of-the-art facilities and specialist rooms for all subjects. Outdoor facilities include a multi-purpose pitch, tennis courts and recreation areas.

St. Dominic's is committed to constant review and updating of our facilities while also preserving our distinctive character and sense of history. We are proud of the school's place and contribution to Belfast and the communities we serve.





Transition

Key Stage 3

Beginning the Journey Year 8 Transition

To ease the process of transition for primary school:

- we visit feeder primary schools and meet teachers and pupils,
- we invite pupils and teachers from our feeder primary schools to school events;
- establish curricular links with local primary schools;
- create an Induction programme to match the needs of new pupils.

Year 8 pupils and their parents meet with our staff in early June to share information about specific individual needs. Pupils with additional needs meet the SENCo.

The school provides information about:

- early days in St. Dominic's;
- the opportunity to enrol in an activity-based summer camp;
- our Summer Maths Engagement Day for pupils and parents.

Two Induction days are held at the end of August to enable new pupils to meet and get to know their tutors and prefects as well as the procedures and layout of the school.

On Induction Day 2, parents are invited to attend a number of information sessions and to join staff and prefects for a barbeque at which parents have the opportunity to meet staff and prefects in an informal setting.

The first term is busy and exciting for Year 8 pupils.

Activities include:

- Halloween Fancy Dress;
- Christmas movie evening;
- Talks and workshops eg: Transition, Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- Christmas Pantomime;
- Outdoor Pursuits Trip.

Throughout Year 8 at St. Dominic's, pupils are supported by Class Prefects, their Tutor and Year Head.



Onwards and Upwards

In St. Dominic's, we are committed to developing well-rounded, well-educated, confident young women in a happy, welcoming, supportive environment. We understand the need to effectively guide and support pupils as they make the transition from primary to post-primary (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3), Year 10 to Year 11 (Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4) and Year 12 to Year 13 (Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5).

Key Stage 4

Individual transition meetings are also held with students and their parents at the beginning of Year 11.

At these meetings, the following topics are discussed:

- Target grades for GCSE;
- Planning and work ethic;
- Expectations;
- Meeting deadlines for coursework;
- Dates for controlled assessment and modular exams;
- GCSE grades required for specific university courses;
- Dates for assessments and reporting to parents.

Each student is given a booklet compiled by subject teachers on study techniques for specific subjects.

This is followed by workshops on:

- Study skills;
- Building resilience.

Key Stage 5

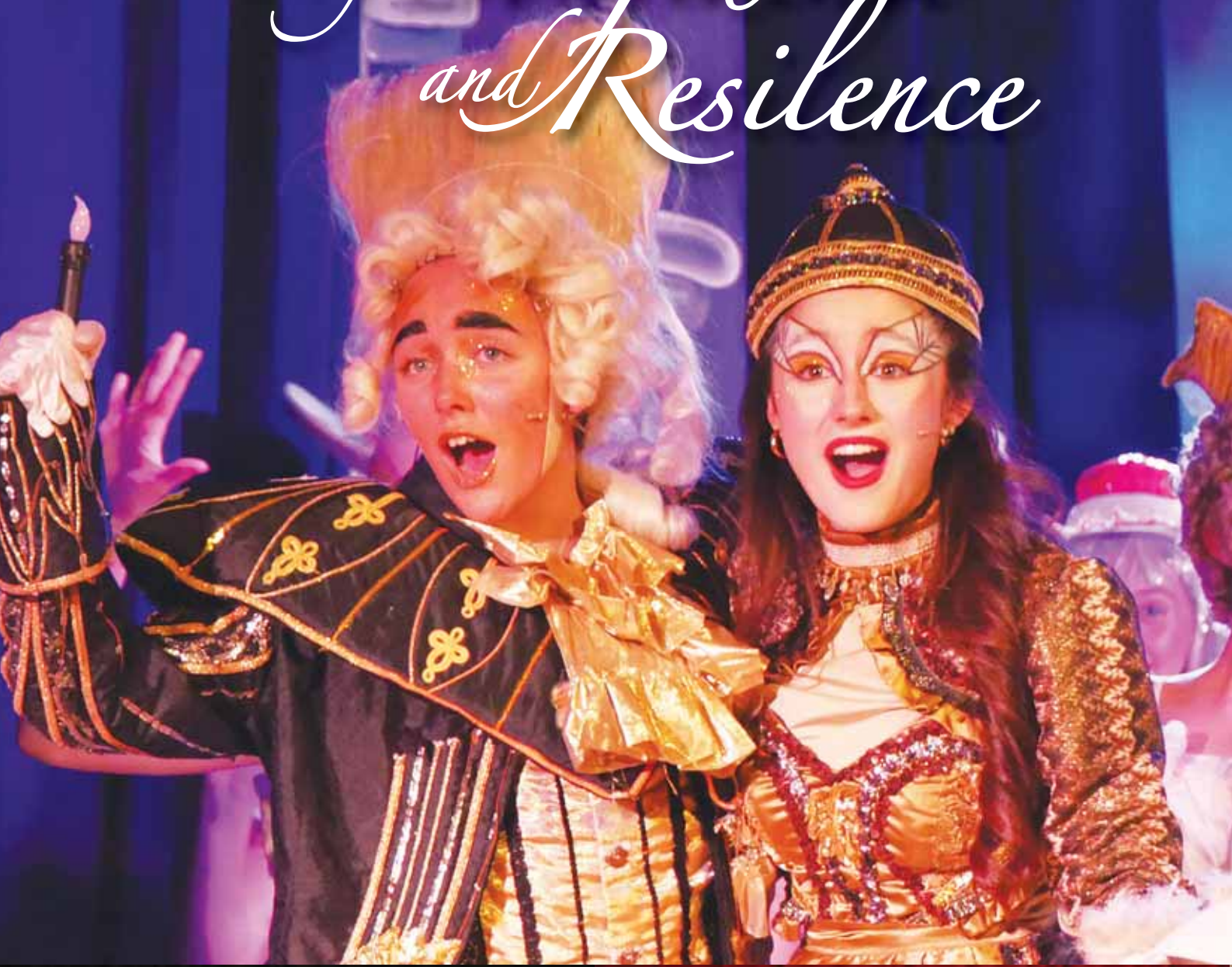
A mixture of individual and group meetings are held for students and their parents as they progress to Year 13.

Topics which are addressed include:

- Time management;
- Expectations and work ethic;
- AS and A2 modular and non-modular systems;
- Grade entries for university courses;
- Individual target grades for A Level.

Transition and in particular to Key Stages 3 and 4 is supported by a number of careers and subject information events.

Building Confidence and Resilience



As well as encouraging all pupils to strive for their best in academic subjects, we provide our pupils with an all-round education by offering a rich and varied extra-curricular programme.

Pupils are encouraged to share in the extra-curricular life of the school to further develop self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience as well as numerous personal and interpersonal skills.

Participating in the many school clubs and activities provides pupils with the opportunity to learn teamwork and leadership skills, whilst having fun.



Extra-Curricular

Music

We have a strong musical tradition which greatly enhances the pupils' learning experiences. They have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of musical activities throughout the year, including playing and singing at the school's liturgies, the annual Christmas Carol Service and Spring Concert and the biennial musical. The Choir have performed in numerous prestigious venues including the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Waterfront in Belfast, the National Concert Hall in Dublin, the Irish and British Embassies in Rome in addition to the Irish College in Rome. The Choir has sung at other prestigious venues including the City Hall, the Harbour Commissioner's Office and the University of Ulster. They have also performed with the celebrated Belfast singer, Mr Brian Kennedy for President Mary McAleese and with Peter Corry and the Ulster Operatic Society at the Christmas Musical Extravaganza at the Ulster Transport Museum.

Drama

St. Dominic's Drama Department is renowned for the breadth of enrichment activities provided for our students which include:

- The annual Choral Speaking Competition;
- The annual Shakespearean Festival;
- The biennial musical;
- Trips to the theatre including trips to the West End and Broadway;
- Drama Club;
- Drumalis Scriptwriting Weekend;
- National Theatre Connections Competition.

Past Productions

- 2000** Celebration of Dominican Education (Waterfront Concert Hall)
- 2001** The Wizard of Oz
- 2002** The Causasian Chalk Circle
- 2003** Cinderella & The Visit
- 2004** The Canterbury Tales
- 2005** Aladdin & The Good Woman of Szechwan
- 2006** The Threepenny Opera
- 2008** A Night at the Musicals
- 2010** The Wizard of Oz
- 2012** Annie
- 2014** Oliver
- 2016** Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat
- 2018** Westside Story
- 2022** Beauty and the Beast





Sport

We recognize the importance of physical activity in promoting both physical and mental well-being and are constantly seeking to enhance the sporting opportunities for our pupils.

Pupils can avail of a wide range of activities including:

- Athletics
- Netball
- Basketball
- Gaelic Football
- Camogie
- Fitness training
- Rugby
- Handball
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Water Polo
- Dance
- Lacrosse
- Tag Rugby



Other Extra-Curricular

Activities Include:

- African Drumming
- Coding Club
- Seasonal Cookery Club
- An Cumann Gaelach
- Drama Club
- Spanish Club
- Habitat for Humanity
- Homework Club
- Maths Club
- Mock Bar Trial
- Rosary Club
- Politics in Action
- Science Club
- Technology Club
- Art Club
- Choir
- Creative Writing Club
- Cumann Ceoil
- French Club
- Eco Club
- History Club
- Technology Club
- Magistrates Mock Trial
- Music (GCSE)
- Orchestra
- Public Speaking
- Young Enterprise



School Trips



Our pupils' learning experiences are enriched significantly through the variety of school trips which are organised including:

- Music trips to places such as London, Dublin, Prague and Rome
- Local and International History Trips
- Business Studies and Drama Trips including trips to New York and London
- Gaeltacht
- Intensive Spanish Courses in Seville
- French Trip to Paris and Euro Disney
- Politics trips to the House of Lords, Stormont and to Dublin
- History trips to Dublin and to Krakow (Poland)
- Outdoor Pursuits Trips

We believe that school trips contribute in a special way to our pupils' education through broadening their horizons, helping to develop warm and lasting friendships and strengthening pupil-teacher relationships.



Leadership

Building leadership capacity is central to the school's work. Our pupils are encouraged to seek out and seize opportunities for personal development and to reach beyond their comfort zone. Our Senior Student Leadership programme ensures that pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership through working with younger pupils. Many senior pupils also act as Subject Mentors and in this capacity, they provide invaluable additional support for pupils who are struggling in specific subject areas.

We aim at building resilient, resourceful, responsible, reasoning and reflective young adults. Pupils are given additional opportunities beyond the school day to develop these attributes.

These include the Friends Forever Programme, the Rotary International Award, the Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life programme, the Rank Foundation Scholarship and the Belfast City Council Inspire Leadership programme. These programmes give our pupils the opportunity to travel to various parts of Ireland and the UK as well as globally to the US. Our pupils form friendships with young people from all over the world, get involved in innovative, character building activities and learn skills that help them develop as young leaders.



Pupil Experiences

Here three students write about their experiences in some of many Leadership programmes / projects which are offered in the school:

Send My Friend

“Send My Friend To School is a campaign that brings together young people from schools all across the UK to fight for every child’s right to a quality education. As part of Send My Friend, my fellow campaign champion Ellie and I travelled to the Houses of Parliament in London and the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool, along with a group of other campaigners that I had never met before, from all different parts of the UK. Together we took part in various social action projects, including photo stunts, question panels and lobbying various MPs in the hopes of making change. Send My Friend To School has empowered me with the knowledge that anyone can make a difference in the world, and has provided me with the tools to do so. I have forged so many new friendships and met people from all around the world that I never would have got the chance to meet without the campaign. I got the chance to meet and talk to the Cuban Ambassador to the United Kingdom while at the Labour Party Conference, and I also had the pleasure of meeting fellow education campaigners from Ghana via a Zoom call . The experience really has changed my life for the better, and I look forward to remaining a part of the expanding Send My Friend to School community, both here in Northern Ireland, and worldwide.”

Lucy – Year 11



Friends Forever

Friends Forever is a programme that brings together groups of young people from the entire island of Ireland, in the hopes of building peace and a better future. As part of Friends Forever, I travelled to New Hampshire with a group of people I had never met before, from different backgrounds than my own and we took part in various social action projects during our time there such as volunteering with homeless shelters, delivering speeches to rotary groups on topics we are passionate about and pushing ourselves to new heights by climbing Mount Monadnock. Friends Forever has empowered me with the knowledge that anyone can make a difference in the world and has provided me with the tools to do so. I have made life-long friends through participating in this experience, and we continue with our social action work both individually and as a team since returning home. The experience really has changed my life for the better, and I look forward to remaining a part of the expanding Friends Forever community, both here in Ireland, and worldwide.

Rebecca - Year 13

Rank Foundation

St. Dominic’s is delighted to have been invited to join the Rank Foundation Leadership Fellowship Programme.

“I am only at the beginning of my Rank Leadership journey and I have already been granted with experiences I can continue to look back on with fondness. I was asked to attend a Leadership Day in London at the start of the school year where I got to collaboratively work with other scholars in a day filled with icebreakers, discussions and more interestingly; movie-making based on global issues (with the privilege of a professional film crew teaching their skill sets to us). Having been the only scholar from outside of England, Scotland and Wales, granted me this sense of independence knowing I have an opportunity to fulfil within my own community here in Belfast. Additionally, we stay in contact over Zoom to discuss the wide scope of what ‘leadership’ entails and what we can make of that. Along with the generous £3,500 towards 3 years of university tuition fees, I will be able to volunteer my help in two community action placements within the summers following sixth form. This can be located anywhere in the UK and target any disadvantaged groups. I am beyond excited to finally put my ambitions into action by taking full advantage of what The Rank Foundation has to offer me.”

Nadia – Year 13



To the classroom and beyond

Across the curriculum, there are many opportunities for pupils' learning to be supported and their learning experiences to be enriched. There is an after-school homework club and numerous revision and booster classes that take place throughout the whole year. Many of the after-school activities and school trips add a special dimension to the learning experience and enhance pupils' motivation and enjoyment. We believe that the multiplicity of activities, events, competitions and projects that we have to offer, make St. Dominic's a learning community in the fullest sense. Here is a list of some of the enrichment activities that take place in our school:

Science

- Biology, Physics and Chemistry Olympiads
- Salters Junior Chemistry Competition
- Schlumberger Bursary for Physics
- QUB Physics Competition
- MiSAC Annual Competition
- RSC Schools' Analyst Competition
- Biology Challenge
- ReelLIFE Science Competition
- RSB BioArtAttack Competition
- BT Young Scientist

English

- Book groups
- Student Newsletter
- Mock Bar competition
- Trips to the theatre

ICT

- G.C.H.Q. Cyberfirst Girls Competition for year 9 pupils
- Cyberfirst Competitions / Workshops for year 10 pupils
- Talks from BringItOn
- Research & work experience opportunities with QUB and large computing companies such as Kanios and Liberty IT for KS4 & 5 students

Irish

- Poetry Gael Linn Annual Quiz
- Abair Public Speaking
- Feis Bhéal Feirste
- Gaeltacht Residential
- Gaeltacht Summer courses



Business Studies

- NI Business Challenge for Schools Annual Competition in conjunction with Queen's Management School, BDO Northern Ireland and Henderson Group.

Maths

- QUB Annual Maths Competition
- Belfast Higher Education Consortium
- Mathematics Olympiad
- UKMT Junior, Intermediate and Senior Competitions
- Maths in the Real World Photography Competition
- World Maths Day Competitions
- Maths Week Ireland Competitions
- Sentinus Engineering Research and Development Team Challenge
- Cross-curricular theatre and cinema trips
- Senior Maths Mentors for KS3
- Year 8 Numeracy Day

Psychology

- Book lending Club

Sociology

- QUB A-Level Sociology conference

Technology

- Year 10 Technology Club - Year 10 club provided every Thursday after school
- Seasonal Technology Club - Various workshops aimed at Year 8/9 throughout the year

Art

- Texaco Art Competition
- RUA and True Colours Art Exhibitions
- Intaglio Printing workshops with Robert Peters and various Local Artist Workshops

French

- Y10 Francofest Competition
- Trips to Donegal for Y10 Intensive weekend course
- Trips to Paris and Euro Disney
- Anthéa Bell prize for young translators.
- NICILT summer challenge.

Spanish

- Y10 Hispanofest Competition
- Intensive Spanish course in Seville
- Trips to Donegal for Y9 and 10 Intensive weekend courses
- Spanish Club.



History

- Trips to Dublin
- Junior History Club
- Working with Holocaust Education Trust to hear survivor testimony and learn lessons from the Holocaust
- Participation in Lessons From Auschwitz Programme

Government & Politics

- Study Visit to Stormont
- Participation in Politics in Action
- Towards a Better Understanding Leadership Award

Drama

- Weekend script-writing
- Trips to local theatres
- Trips to Broadway & West End
- Workshops with theatre practitioners
- Lighting and sound workshops
- Shakespeare Festival
- Q&A sessions with actors and directors

Physical Education

- Year 13 and 14 P.E. students have a range of opportunities to take on leadership roles throughout their course and are expected to plan and deliver 6 coaching sessions to younger pupils at the school
- Attend outdoor pursuits activities- mountain biking and rock-climbing
- Organise Sports Events- Orienteering/sports days. All KS3 and 4 pupils complete CPR training
- Awareness sessions- Wheelchair Gaelic football (delivered by Ulster GAA)
- Opportunities to coach at extra-curricular clubs
- Early morning training sessions- Gaelic football
- Senior pupils have access to the fitness suite during free periods- for well-being
- Peer mentoring- sharing of best practice across the department- pupil led
- Participation in trials for a range of sports.

Media

- Film club
- St. Dominic's Film festival
- Film competitions
- Cinema visits
- Shakespeare festival trailer competition

Music

- Junior, Senior and Chamber Choirs
- Senior Orchestra
- Junior Strings
- Wind Band
- Junior and Senior Cumann Ceoil Groups
- Ukulele Group
- Boomwhacker Group
- Biennial Senior Choir trips to European destinations; Cologne 2023, Rome 2018, Prague 2016.
- Trips to Ulster Orchestra concerts in The Ulster Hall.
- GSOTM Belfast Schools Traditional Music Competition (Winners 2022)
- Ballymena and Hollywood Music Festivals
- Inter-Community School Choir Gala Competition (FISCA)
- BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year
- BBC Radio Ulster School Soloist of the Year
- Annual Spring Concert in St. Anne's Cathedral/Ulster Hall
- Junior Concert
- Christmas Carol Service
- PPU Carol Service and November Mass of Remembrance
- Whole School Mass for Opening of School Year
- Year 14 Leavers' Mass and Year 8 Mass
- Trócaire 'Hope Springs Eternal' Concert with The Priests and Margaret Keys
- Christmas by Candlelight with Belfast Pops Orchestra
- Candelight Christmas at Clonard with Karl McGuckin
- City of Belfast School of Music Christmas Concert
- Belfast Harbour Commission Events



Geography

- Fieldwork - KS3 outdoor learning and fieldwork experiences, GCSE river study & AS sand dune study
- Trips abroad – Italy including Rome, Capri, Vesuvius
- Eco/Geo Club - wildflower planting, litter picking, beach cleans, working with Belfast Hills Trust, willow making, pond dipping, sunflower planting, bee preservation, Green Schools Global Citizenship Marine Preservation workshop, Junk Kouture competition, Department of Infrastructure Conference on Sustainable Transport, conference on climate change & sustainability, making sustainable Christmas presents, upcycling
- Eco Schools Green Flag Award
- Carlingford Adventure Centre annual trip
- Send My Friend to School campaign including 2 students selected as UK Campaign Champions
- Oxfam campaigns
- Trocaire The Right Focus competition & documentary winners
- COP27 Simulation event
- UK Polar Network - Antarctica competition
- Geographical Association lectures (in association with QUB)
- As part of the Eco Club Eco Committee: Work with Belfast Hills Partnership, Beach clean ups and Environmental awareness projects

Religion

- Day retreats at Clonard for year 8, 9 and 10, led by the youth ministry team
- Love For Life workshops offered to year 9, 11 and 12
- Enrolment of year 13 pupils in the Down and Connor Cephas Programme - an accredited course
- Weekly Oratory Prayers in the oratory
- Promotion of period dignity
- Trócaire game changers competition
- Holocaust Memorial Day competition
- St Columbanus art/ essay competition
- "Switch off Fortnight" - year 9 environmental awareness / tackling climate change.
- Organisation of Hampers for various charitable organisations eg. Springfield charitable association
- Toy appeal for local charities every Christmas

Other

- Green Flag Award - St. Dominic's awarded 2022
- Oxfam Climate Justice
- Send My Friend programme
- Trocaire The Right Focus competition winners
- Trocaire workshop The Right Focus
- Rotary Club - Friends Forever International programme
- Young citizens Mock Magistrates Competition
- Habitat for Humanity – links with other Schools.



Curriculum Provision



Underpinning all aspects of our academic provision is our strong commitment to meeting the needs, aspirations, abilities and the talents of all of our pupils. We are a self-evaluating school and as part of this self-reflection, we evaluate our curriculum offering to ensure that we meet the needs of our students. Our school vision states that we want all of our pupils to be happy and successful in St. Dominic's, and as such, our curriculum planning ensures that we offer a range of subjects and pathways which allow our students to be successful and to prepare them for life after St. Dominic's in an increasingly competitive environment.

Pupils learn most effectively when their learning is relevant and stimulating and when there is a positive and happy learning environment, characterised by quality relationships at all levels. In St. Dominic's, we are confident that there is a positive learning environment and this has been evidenced by the very positive feedback we receive regularly from both parents and our pupils when we audit our current provision. All of our staff are fully committed to providing the best possible experience for all of our students. They use a variety of strategies, new technologies and novel approaches to motivate and stimulate learning, focus on how pupils learn, and provide appropriate support to ensure that all of our pupils achieve their full potential.

Our current subject offerings in each Key Stage are listed.

Gaeilge

Cuirtear ranganna Gaeilge ar leith ar fáil do dhaltá a thagann ó bhunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge. Déanann siad GCSE Irish i mbliain a deich agus GCSE Gaeilge i mliain a dódhéag. Bliain i ndiaidh bliana, tagann scaifte daltaí chuig Ardscoil Naomh Doimínic ó bhunscoileanna éagsúla ar fud na cathrach.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum:

- Art and Design
- Computer Programming
- Drama
- English
- French
- Geography
- Gaeilge
- History
- Home Economics
- Information Communication Technology
- Irish
- Learning for Life and Work
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Science
- Spanish
- Technology and Design







Key Stage 4 Curriculum:

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Careers
- Chemistry
- Double Award Science
- Drama
- English Language
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Gaeilge
- Geography
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Information Communication Technology
- Irish
- LLW
- Mathematics
- Media Studies
- Physics
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish





Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and feedback to pupils lies at the heart of pupil progress. Pupils are continuously assessed throughout the year at all Key Stages. In Years 8-10, they have one set of formal exams in the summer term, however regular reports inform pupils and parents about progress throughout the academic year. Year 11 and 12 pupils sit many external module examinations in summer terms and hence their formal internal exams take place in the middle of the year. Pupil achievement is closely monitored by teachers and the relevant pastoral and curricular teams, ensuring that each child is encouraged and supported to overcome any challenges they may face. Parents receive regular written reports and additionally have an annual opportunity to meet each subject teacher. St. Dominic's firmly believe that the relationship between pupil, parents and school is fundamental to the success of each girl.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum:

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- English Literature
- French
- Financial Studies (Diploma)
- Further Maths (To AS level only)
- Geography
- Government and Politics
- Health and Social Care
- History
- ICT
- Irish
- Maths
- Media Studies
- Music
- Physics
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Spanish
- Sports Studies
- Technology and Design
- Theatre Studies



Supporting and Guiding





Pastoral Care in St. Dominic's

In St. Dominic's Pastoral Care permeates all aspects of school life and all members of staff take responsibility for the care and welfare of our students. St. Dominic's provides a holistic education which combines academic excellence with the development of the whole person. Our aim is to develop students spiritually, academically, morally, emotionally, culturally and socially so that they are well-developed and well-equipped to face the many challenges of the 21st century. Fundamental to our pastoral approach is the promotion of a caring ethos and good quality relationships throughout the entire school community.

The Pastoral Care Structure

The Class Tutor has daily contact with the student and monitors progress, behaviour and well-being.

The Year Head has overall responsibility for one year group.

The Head of School has an overall responsibility for one or two year groups, supporting the Year Head in their role.

The Vice - Principal co-ordinates the Pastoral Care System.

The Prefects serve as role models, act as mentors and provide an additional channel of communication between students and staff.



The PSHE Programme

PSHE is Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education. The PSHE programme has been designed to ensure that our students grow in their self-esteem, resilience, confidence and independence of thought. Our PSHE programme places personal development and the acquisition of personal, learning and thinking skills at the heart of the curriculum. There is a dedicated 30 minute PSHE class once a week as well as immersion days when students are taken off timetable for retreats, Love for Life workshops (which focus on sex education and healthy relationships) and workshops on resilience. Speakers and outside agencies also deliver workshops and talks to all year groups on important issues such as safe social networking, wellbeing and good mental health, road safety, study skills, relationships, drugs and alcohol education.







Mentoring in St. Dominic's

Our Tutors and Year Heads are given time to provide academic and pastoral mentoring to students in their classes throughout the year.

All our KS3 and 4 classes are assigned at least two Year 14 prefects. The Year 8 prefects work very closely with their tutor groups throughout the year. At the beginning of Term 1, they attend registration with their assigned classes, lead PHSE lessons and assemblies, focusing on issues or challenges that are particular to Year 8. The senior students are also given the opportunity to mentor younger students. All Year 8 students are supported by their mentors to facilitate their transition to secondary school. This also provides all our Year 14 students with a leadership role working with young people to develop their social and interpersonal skills.

Additional Educational Needs

Every child has the right to achieve their full potential and here in St. Dominic's, we provide the necessary support for every individual's needs. The school SENCo and Assistant SENCo lead a team of dedicated learning support assistants and together with all staff in the school they enhance the learning of every child in the school. When necessary, additional literacy and numeracy support is provided by teachers as well as access arrangements for public exams.

We have a state-of-the-art building with modern facilities which include lifts, ramp access, disability-access facilities and a medical room. Other facilities include a Hub area where pupils with additional needs can meet and relax in a quiet, comfortable area.

Student Voice

At St. Dominic's we believe that having an effective student voice is an integral part of school life. We recognise how important our students are to the whole school community and ethos and we therefore take every opportunity to ensure that our students are not only given a voice but are heard. The opportunities we have for student voice are widening and the contribution of student voice to whole school improvement is invaluable.

Through Student Voice discussions and evaluative questionnaires, students are asked to evaluate school facilities, the quality of whole school provision, including a termly evaluation of the Pastoral Care programme and the quality of learning and teaching. Their views enable us to evaluate our practice and identify areas for improvement.



Aspiring The Role Models - Some of Our Own Leading Ladies



Ms Eileen Lavery
Head of Strategic Enforcement
at the Equality Commission



Ms Nichola Mallon
Lord Mayor of Belfast 2015



Ms Mary Clare Deane
CEO of Grand Opera House



Ms Mary Lewis
Barrister, Governor



Dr Anne Marie Telford, Former Director of
Public Health, with Dr Maria Moloney,
International Business Woman
and Geraldine McIlwee, Former Vice-Principal



Ms Rotha Johnston
Entrepreneur and Pro Vice-Chancellor
at QUB with Mrs McCann



Dr Catherine Larkin
Consultant Gastroenterologist



CEIAG

Careers education, information, advice and guidance is a key aspect of school life in St. Dominic's. All pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 receive careers lessons as part of the employability aspect of Learning for Life and Work. All Year 10 students also receive guidance on Options at GCSE and are fully supported in their choices. All pupils in Years 11 and 12 have a timetabled careers period once a week. Pupils in Year 13 and 14 have timetabled sessions led by a dedicated careers team who provide individual advice and guidance on the process of applying to universities and on interview preparation and various aptitude tests. All pupils in Year 12 have an individual interview with the School Careers Officers from the Department of Employment and Learning. All Year 14 pupils have access to an individual interview with our Head of Careers, Mr Owen Murray.

Pupils across all years are encouraged to avail of opportunities for personal development beyond the school day. The emphasis of the entire CEIAG programme is centred on helping our pupils to make informed choices at all transition stages. Every subject department in the school contributes to careers advice. Speakers from universities are invited to address pupils and parents on current entrance requirements for a multiplicity of subjects. Pupils have access to a wide range of careers material and in particular through a resource called Unifrog. They have the opportunity to attend careers events both inside and outside school. The school also organizes events to support pupils preparing for interviews related to Third Degree Education and beyond. Work experience/shadowing forms part of our Year 13 programme and pupils also have the opportunity to attend specialist Open Days for a wide variety of courses and career areas as well as visiting Open Days at our local universities. Pupils who wish to apply to the Oxbridge universities are given the opportunity to participate in a Higher Education + project which has been initiated by Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and subsequently to participate in summer school programmes in either Cambridge or Oxford.

In keeping with our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support at each transition stage, St. Dominic's uses Unifrog, an award-winning, online careers platform. All students in Years 8-14 have access to this excellent website.

The Unifrog platform is designed to support learners in making the most informed decisions about their futures and has a range of tools that are suitable for all year groups. Each student has their own personal account that provides a wide range of information related to their interests and aspirations.

Speakers for Schools offer Virtual Work Experience programmes (VWEX), which are free to use and allows our pupils to access work experience opportunities anywhere in NI or indeed the UK. Speakers for Schools also offer weekly broadcast schedules for every career area as well as inspirational talks which subject teachers can draw on.

Overall, students at St. Dominic's are very well informed about their career options and job prospects as they prepare to leave school.



Mary McAleese
Former President
of Ireland



Relationships that count



Relationships are key to success

In St. Dominic's, we firmly believe in the necessity of building strong relationships between the school and parents and see this as key to the school's effectiveness. Beyond the many events which include Parents' Meetings, Induction and Careers events, concerts and school shows, the following contribute to developing a strong partnership between the school and our parents

Parent Link

Our Parents' Association, Parent Link further enhances the relationship between the school and parents. The main focus of the organisation is to ensure that parents have the opportunity to be fully engaged in their children's education and to provide effective communication channels between home and school. This group is an invaluable sounding board for the school and acts in an advisory way on many aspects of school life including policy development.

Activities led by Parent Link include annual parent-staff trips and events to support school fund-raising for our many charities.

Partnerships with Parents

As valued stakeholders of the school, our parents are also actively encouraged to share their expertise and views on the quality of school provision. Through meetings, discussions and evaluative questionnaires, we invite parents to evaluate school policies, the effectiveness of leadership and management within the school, the learning and teaching and extra-curricular opportunities provided for their daughters. Parents are also invited to attend support meetings as needed.

Parent Workshops

We invite parents to Parent Workshops/Talks during the school year.

These are designed to support parents and pupils with all aspects of their children's education and life both within and outside the classroom.

The workshops address the areas of importance in relation to equipping our pupils for life in the twenty-first century and include study skills, appropriate use of social media, positive relationships, building resilience/confidence and mental health and well-being.

We also offer parent/student themed cookery classes in advance of Christmas.

Community Outreach and Fundraising

St. Dominic's promotes and celebrates community outreach. The school runs 5 structured volunteering programmes; the Dirt is Good programme (Year 8), the Diana Award Ambassador programme (Years 12/13) and the Peer Coaching programme (Year 13) led by the school's volunteer coordinator while the Eco-club and Send my Friend to School campaigns are run by Mrs McCartan and Mrs Dickson respectively. In addition to the structured programmes, we provide flexible volunteering initiatives including the Pioneer and Giving Nation awards for Years 8-10 and the Impact awards for Year 11-14. Pupils are encouraged to apply for volunteer leadership roles and as such we currently have teams of pupils serving on the Belfast City Youth Council, the Translink Youth Forum, the NICCY Youth Forum and four pupils are serving as #iWill Youth Ambassadors representing Northern Ireland. The school also supports pupils undertaking the Pope John Paul II Award.

In 2021/22 St. Dominic's won a series of national volunteering awards including the Circle of Life Award, The Queens' Award for voluntary service and the Platinum Champions Award. Two pupils were national champions (at Key Stage 3 and Key stage 4) at the Get Set for Community Action awards and the school's Eco club was successfully nominated for the BBC Regenerators' 'Hall of Fame'.

In terms of fundraising, St. Dominic's is fully committed to raising funds for local charities and students give generously to the various charities through a wide range of fundraising activities. At Christmas, Year 14 lead the Shoebox Appeal while all classes prepare a Christmas hamper and buy gifts for the St. Vincent de Paul Appeal with teachers also getting involved by taking part in the annual Teacher "talent" show! At Easter, each class takes on a fundraising activity to raise money for Trócaire and different year groups focus on fundraising for a charity of their choice such as Action cancer, Cystic Fibrosis Trust and CLIC Sargent. At St. Dominic's we firmly believe in the importance of helping others and reaching out to those in need.



“ Education at St. Dominic’s is much more than a set of grades. Although the academic element is important, first and foremost we want students to be happy. We want them to have a holistic experience during their time at St. Dominic’s and this includes taking part in activities beyond the classroom, and of course ... having fun. ”





are motivated students



St. Dominic's Grammar School
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Fax: 028 9031 2682
www.stdominics.org.uk

School Management Information

Principal: Mrs Orla O'Neill

School Type:
Catholic Girls' Voluntary
Grammar School

Age Range
11-18 years

Chairman of the
Board of Governors
Mr Rory Galway

Approved Enrolment: 966

Year 8 Intake 141



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