



St. Mary's Diocesan School

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Student Voice Policy

Mission Statement

St. Mary's Diocesan School is a Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Meath and patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The school is committed to the development of the whole person offering equal opportunities to all to achieve their full potential in a familial Christian environment. The school aspires to an education based on high ideals and a broad curriculum, which will allow our students to confidently play their role in society.

Aims

We aim to develop a community of learning in which each pupil's talents, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, may unfold as fully as possible in an atmosphere of openness, confidence and generosity. We seek to promote in all our students' qualities of honesty and integrity and the capacity for authentic, courageous self-expression. Our motto "In Christo Confido", inspires us to promote the emergence of reflective, articulate and committed Christians with a deep sense of their vocation to shape their world according to the values of the gospel.

Introduction

St. Mary's Diocesan School recognises that student participation is not only good practice but a key element of inclusive education and democratic school life. Students have a valuable contribution to make to the effectiveness of the school, and active involvement in decision making fosters leadership, responsibility, and preparation for citizenship.

This policy responds to the need for accountable leadership and problem-solving opportunities for our students, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

Rationale

St. Mary's provides numerous opportunities for students to develop leadership and representation skills. Formal student leadership benefits both the individual and the school community. Research and experience show that when students actively participate and their opinions are valued, they feel respected and motivated to contribute further.

Benefits include:

Improved communication and interpersonal skills.

Enhanced academic performance for student leaders.

Greater commitment and engagement from the student body.

Positive influence on school climate and culture.

Strengthened school spirit and cooperation.

Development of a supportive peer network.

This aligns with Looking at Our Schools 2016, which states that leadership should foster inclusion, equality, and holistic development.

Goals of Student voice opportunities

Represent student voice on matters of general concern.

Support school management and staff in school development.

Enhance communication between students, staff, and parents.

Promote an environment conducive to learning and personal growth.

Foster friendship, respect, and inclusion among students.

Contribute to policy development.

Develop skills such as leadership, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving.

Student Voice Structures and Responsibilities

Student Council

Work with staff, Board of Management, and Parents' Association.

Communicate and consult with all students.

Involve as many students as possible in activities.

Plan and manage the Council's annual programme.

Manage and account for any funds raised.

Promote student involvement in school affairs.

Ensure representation from each year group.

Represent their class group and communicate with Tutors and Year Heads.

Carry responsibility for class-related matters.

Differentiate from Prefects by focusing on class-specific roles.

Prefects

Act as role models in behaviour, punctuality, and attendance.

Demonstrate good work habits and organisation.

Support peers and promote positive behaviour.

Assist staff with duties and "meet and greet" functions.

Provide care and assistance to students who need support.

Peer Mentors

Support student well-being and mental health.

Meet regularly with support teachers to promote a caring environment.

Digital Leaders

Selected annually based on technical skills.

Assist staff and students with IT-related issues.

Promote digital literacy and problem-solving.

Monitoring and Review

Senior Management and the Board of Management will monitor implementation.

Policy will be reviewed as needed in consultation with students, staff, and parents.