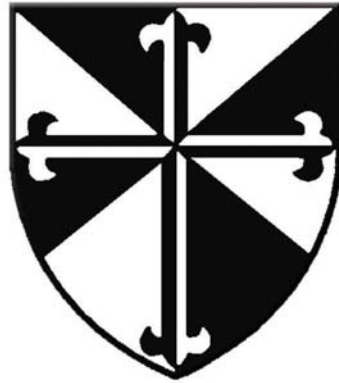
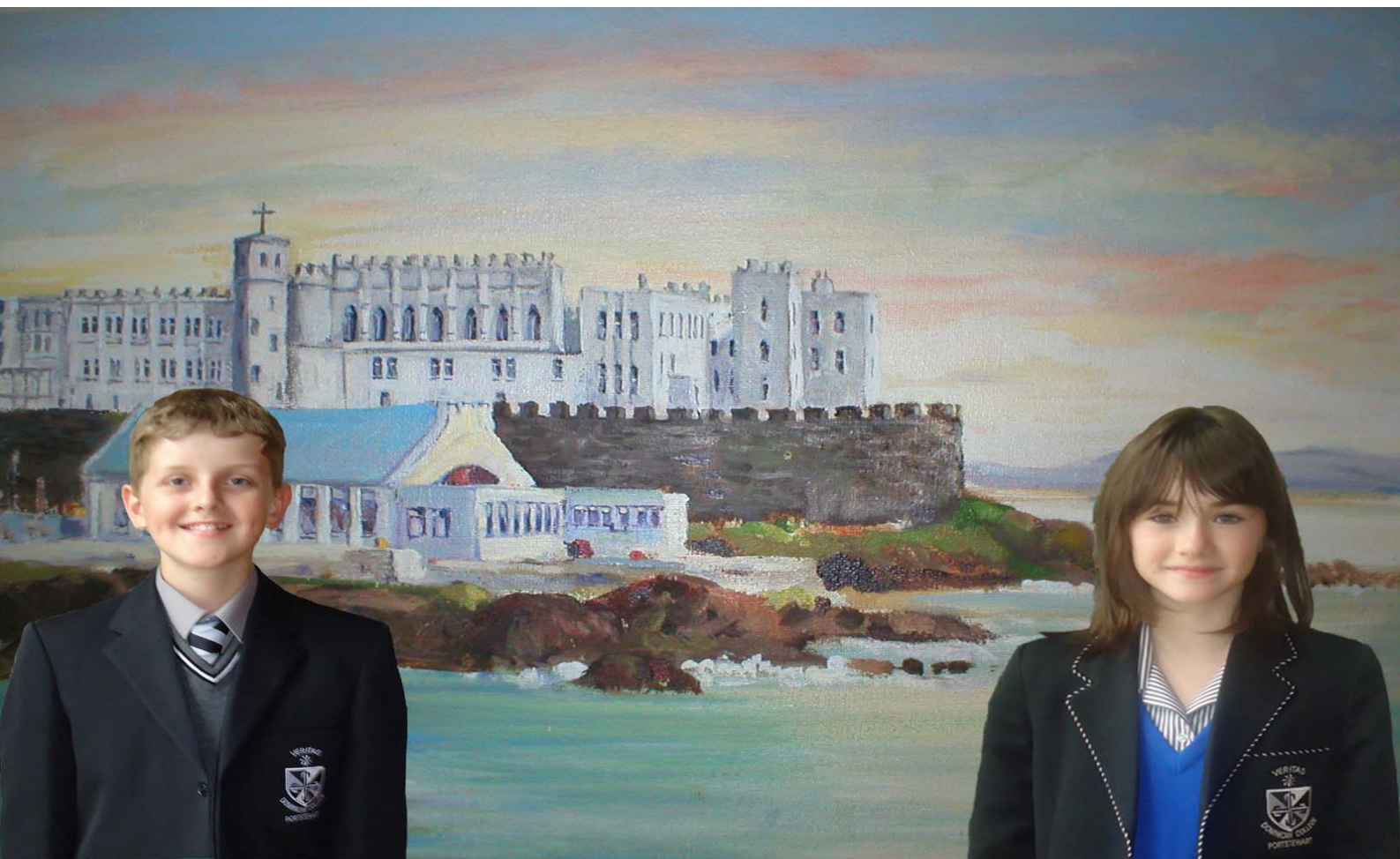


Dominican College



Portstewart



Prospectus 2012

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Thank you for your interest in our school.

Dominican College enjoys a wonderful location with magnificent views out over the strand, the sea and the town of Portstewart. Our students enjoy their school and appreciate its setting. There is a very strong sense of community within the College.

We seek a disciplined learning environment where everyone has a sense of purpose and where we develop everything that makes each individual the special person which he or she is. The College is unique amongst Catholic Grammar Schools in N. Ireland in that a very significant proportion of our students are drawn from other denominations as well as coming from a wide geographical area. This diversity helps us to get to know ourselves and others in a very real way and equips our students well for life after school.

High and rising academic standards are very important at Dominican and we seek to help each student achieve his or her best, in and out of the classroom, whatever their Transfer Grade. Our 2011 AS and A level results were the best ever. We have had more applications to join the school in the past four years than ever before, our 2011-12 enrolment of 500 is also the highest ever and we are very grateful for the positive interest in the school.

Dominican is constantly seeking to improve. In our most recent Inspection the Department of Education looked at our Creative and Expressive Studies and at our pastoral care provision including child protection.

The Inspectorate found:

“The strengths of the creative and expressive subjects inspected, and of the school in general, include the:

- *Committed, caring, approachable staff, in particular the collegial approach of staff in supporting their pupils;*
- *Positive ethos and distinctive sense of community evident across the school;*
- *Excellent relationships between pupils and teachers;*
- *Consistently good and sometimes excellent quality of the teaching;*
- *Strong, open leadership of the Principal, ably supported by the Vice-Principal and SMT;*
- *High standards achieved by pupils in drama, music and physical education (the subjects being inspected);*
- *Enrichment provided for the pupils and the wider community by the extra curricular activities in drama, music and physical education.”*

In 2010 Mr Kevin Ramsay, our Head of English, was judged, in the prestigious *Teaching Awards*, to be the N.Ireland Teacher of the Year in a Post-Primary School. Mr Ramsay also has responsibility for Key Stage 3, including the Induction programme for our year 8 pupils.

In 2009 we were awarded the prestigious ICT Mark– Only about 20 of the 1280 schools in N.Ireland have gained this award. We are also one of very few Grammar Schools in N. Ireland to have gained Laureate status in the Educational Technology Sharing Excellent Practice Awards.

In December 2008 our English Department was “visited” by a ETI Inspector. This was a snapshot visit and not a full inspection. The Inspector found “excellent high challenge teaching”, “clear learning intentions”, “very responsive students”, “good behaviour and self-discipline” and an “inclusive, ordered, welcoming environment”.

Dominican College exists for its students. It is a privilege for me to be its Principal, working with a wonderful staff team to help each student fulfil his or her potential.

Dr Bob Cummings

January 2012

Dominican College

2 Strand Road, Portstewart BT55 7PF
Telephone: (028) 70832715 Fax: (028) 70834807
E-mail: info@dominican.portstewart.ni.sch.uk
Web site: dominican-portstewart.org.uk

PRINCIPAL:

Dr. Bob Cummings BSc; DPhil; DipASEd

CHAIRPERSON OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS:

Sr. Jacqueline O'Reilly OP

Admissions Number: 69

Actual Enrolment: 500

Enrolment Number: 480

Age Range: 11-18 years

HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

Dominican College is a Catholic Co-Educational Voluntary Grammar School. It was founded, as a school for girls, in 1917, by the Dominican Sisters, who had purchased a spectacular site, formerly known as "O'Hara's Castle". The school became co-educational in 1968 and has grown steadily to a current record population of 500 pupils, with 137 in the sixth form. The current ratio of girls to boys (5:4) is similar to the ratio of female staff to male staff.

Over the years the College has seen many changes. In the 1970's there were up to 130 boarders at the school but, when boarding ended in the mid 1990's, the boarding accommodation made way for new classrooms, an IT suite and the Art department. There is no longer a Community of Dominican Sisters living on the site but the rich legacy which they left us is at the heart of "In Search of Truth - The Dominican Way in Education" which we seek to follow (see next page). "Catholic Education -The Vision", published in 2006, summarises not only the essence of Catholic Education (see page after next) but also what is important to Dominican College.

Inclusiveness, outlined in The Vision, which the Dominican Sisters promoted, is very much alive in Dominican College today. We are currently the only Catholic Grammar School in N. Ireland where students of other denominations make up a very significant proportion of the school population and this provides our whole school community with wonderful opportunities. Students, staff and parents really value the fact that young people from differing denominations, religions and cultures learn together, from each other and grow with each other, within a Christian environment, in ways which are unique to Dominican College.

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH –THE DOMINICAN WAY IN EDUCATION

Dominican schools seek to create a Christ centred community permeated with the gospel spirit of freedom and love in constant search for Truth. The Dominican motto – “Veritas” reflects a desire to promote Truth in all its forms and the words of Christ:- “The Truth will set you free” underpin all our educational efforts. **Dominican schools are inclusive rather than exclusive and seek to nourish, support and develop the gifts of each individual student in a spirit of trust, freedom and co-operation.**

Dominican schools recognise that parents are the first and primary educators of our students and we seek to promote a partnership with parents, developing their interest, trust and involvement in the aims of the school. We acknowledge the many difficulties which can face the family unit and fully accept the right of all students to our care, whatever their background or circumstances.

THE AIMS OF DOMINICAN COLLEGE, PORTSTEWART

The aim of the College is to assist each pupil in his or her pursuit of full human and spiritual development. The school is concerned not merely with imparting knowledge and skills, which have their place, but, more importantly with training pupils to think, to evaluate and to make decisions.

We seek to engender an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, encouraging in pupils a sense of human worth, of the value of human life, a sense of choice, responsibility and decision making, a sense of fellowship, tolerance and respect for each other, a spirit of independence and initiative and the development of every aptitude. The school has a long tradition of educating young people from all Christian denominations and we value the contribution made to the school both by our Catholic students and also by those from other traditions.

Our pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of cultural richness and a respect for the environmental diversity of the world we inhabit.

Our aims are summarised in four statements, which are in accordance with the Declaration on Christian Education of the second Vatican Council and with Dominican educational policy. These are:

- The school values the importance and uniqueness of each person, and aims to help each reach his/her potential.
- We aim to provide opportunities and experiences through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which appreciates the varied needs of all pupils and prepares them for adult life.
- We seek to foster an educational partnership involving parents, pupils, school and the wider community for the benefit of all.
- We seek to create a school which, as part of a wider community, facilitates the implementation of these aims.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION –THE VISION STATEMENT

Catholic Education takes place in communities inspired by the Spirit of Christ. Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos, which is expressed in relationships within and beyond Catholic schools.

Catholic Education is person-centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

Catholic Education is inclusive. It is respectful of, and engages with people of all beliefs; it encourages the religious development of all in their own faith.

Catholic Education is rooted in the Gospel values of Respect for Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the Common Good.

Together, Catholic Schools provide high quality, rounded education for all young people, so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential.

In Catholic Schools the person and message of Christ find expression in:

- Communities of Faith, Service, Prayer and Worship.
- The development of each person's full potential in a climate of joy, freedom, respect, challenge, co-operation and celebration.
- The enrichment of pupil life - intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, social and emotional.
- The promotion of a spirit of charity, social justice, global awareness and concern for others leading to practical outreach and partnerships.
- A culture of tolerance where people of diverse identities are recognised, welcomed, respected and cherished.
- Listening, mutual understanding, trust, reconciliation, healing and peace.
- The preparation of pupils to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives which will contribute to the common good.

Sources:

Proclaiming the mission - The Distinctive Philosophy and Values of Catholic Education, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001);

Building Peace Shaping the Future, The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland, (Ara Coeli, Armagh 2001)

Life to the Full: A Vision for Catholic Education, CCMS, endorsed by the Catholic Bishops of NI. (Veritas 1996)

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Pupils travelling to and from school can receive free transport, through a bus pass, providing that their home is more than three miles (as measured by the nearest available route) from the school and that transport to the school is available. Application forms for bus passes may be obtained from NEELB.

Alongside our Portstewart pupils we have pupils travelling to and from Dominican College from Aghadowey, Articlave, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Bushmills, Castlerock, Coleraine, Dunloy, Garvagh, Kilrea, Portrush, Stranocum and other outlying districts.

Morning buses leave from the various locations in such a way that children leave home at a reasonable time and are delivered to the school gates in time for the start of the school day. Return buses leave close to the end of the school day, normally enabling pupils to get home without undue delay. Later buses are available for those engaged in after school activities.

Transport arrangements brought in by the Department of Education in 1997 mean that some prospective pupils from the Coleraine area may have to pay for their bus passes. *Some of these currently receive free transport at post-16.*

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The school day begins at 8.55am and ends at 3.25pm. We operate a two-week timetable with five periods each day, except for Thursdays which have six classes. This structure was devised to support a broad curriculum and to enable a range of learning activities to take place within a single period. It also helps minimise time lost through travelling between classrooms.

THE CURRICULUM

Throughout the school pupils experience a wide variety of learning and teaching approaches, including active learning, group work, practical activities, project work fieldwork and educational visits.

KEY STAGE 3

Each year from year 8 to year 10 is divided into three teaching groups. The groups are balanced in terms of ability and gender. A wide range of teaching and learning strategies is encouraged with the focus, as it is throughout the school, on helping and encouraging each individual to achieve his or her best.

Year 8 pupils follow the Revised Curriculum and study English, Mathematics, Science, RE, a Modern Language*, Heritage Studies, Geography, Home Economics, History, Art, Music, Drama, PE, ICT, Technology as well as Learning for Life and Work:(Citizenship, Employability and PSHE). As well as taught ICT the use of ICT is incorporated into the work of other subjects.

In year 9 a second Modern Language** is taken. As part of their Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) pupils take the "Education for Love" programme. (* currently French; ** currently Irish or Spanish).

Year 10 pupils study their Science as individual subjects:- Biology, Chemistry and Physics. ICT is fully integrated into the curriculum rather than being taught separately and pupils currently prepare an ICT portfolio for accreditation by CCEA.

KEY STAGE 4

GCSE subject choices are made at the end of Key Stage 3. Subject selection involves students and parents in consultation with the Careers Department and subject teachers. English, English Literature, Mathematics, Physical Education (non-exam), Religious Studies and Learning for Life and Work form the Core, taken by all, with pupils choosing five further subjects from a range which usually includes French, Irish, Spanish, History, Geography, Home Economics, Science:Double Award, Science:Single Award, Art, Drama, Music, ICT, Business Studies, Business & Communications Systems and Design and Technology. Additional Mathematics and Statistics are available as extra GCSEs. Careers Education is taken by all. More subjects are being made available as the school moves towards meeting the Entitlement Framework.

SIXTH FORM

Students choose four or three subjects to take in Lower 6. In Upper 6 at least three subjects are continued to full A level / BTEC National Award. In addition all sixth form students take Careers Education, PE and RE and work on their Pupil Progress Files. A feature of the Lower 6 Curriculum is a week of Work Experience, involving a placement tailored to meet the needs of each individual student.

Subjects currently offered at AS, A level or BTEC are:

Art & Design	Biology	Chemistry	Construction*
Engineering*	English Literature	French	Geography
German*	Health & Social Care*	History	Home Economics
Irish	ICT	Mathematics	Mathematics–Further
Media Studies	Music	Performing Arts	Physics
Religious Studies	Spanish	Sports Science*	Technology & Design

**These subjects are offered in collaboration with other institutions. The range of options offered to sixth form students is being steadily extended to meet the Entitlement Framework.*

CURRICULUM DETAILS

Curriculum Years 8 and 9
(year 9 in brackets)

Subject	Periods	%Time
English	6 (6)	12 (12)
Mathematics	6 (6)	12 (12)
Science	6 (6)	12 (12)
R.E.	4 (4)	8 (8)
French	5 (4)	10 (8)
Heritage Studies	1 (0)	2 (0)
Irish / Spanish	0 (4)	0 (8)
Geography	4 (3)	8 (6)
History	4 (4)	8 (8)
Home Economics	1.3 (2)	2.7 (2)
Art	2 (2)	4 (4)
Music	1.3 (2)	2.7 (4)
Drama	1.3 (2)	2.7 (4)
P.E (inc swimming)	4 (2)	8 (4)
PSHE	1 (1)	2 (2)
Technology	2 (2)	4 (4)
ICT	1 (0)	2 (0)
Citizenship	1 (1)	2 (2)
Employability	1 (1)	2 (2)

Curriculum Year 10

Subject	Periods	% Time
English	6	12
Mathematics	6	12
Biology	2	4
Chemistry	2.5	5
Physics	2.5	5
R.E.	4	8
French	4	8
Irish / Spanish	4	8
Geography	3	6
History	3	6
Home Economics	2	4
Art	2	4
Music	2	4
Drama	2	4
P.E.	2	4
Technology	2	4
Careers & Employability	1	2
Citizenship	1	2
PSHE	1	2

Curriculum Years 11 and 12 (Year 12 in brackets)

Subject	Periods	%Time
English	4 (4)	8 (8)
English Literature	4 (4)	8 (8)
Mathematics subjects	7 (7)	14 (14)
R.E.	5 (5)	10 (10)
P.E	2 (2)	4 (4)
Learning For Life & Work & Careers Education	4 (4)	8 (8)
Option 1	5 (5)	10 (10)
Option 2	5 (5)	10 (10)
Option 3	5 (5)	10 (10)
Option 4	5 (5)	10 (10)
Option 5	5 (5)	10 (10)
PSHE	1 (1)	2 (2)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The words of Christ “ The truth will set you free” underlie all our educational efforts. Through our Religious Education programme we aim to provide a climate in which students may experience and develop their Christian faith while promoting understanding of and respect for the faith traditions and cultures of others.

The R.E. programme for years 8 to 10 is developed from the Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 and is delivered through the “Fully Alive” series.

At Key Stage 4 GCSE students currently follow the AQA specification in Religious Studies and the CCEA specification is used at AS and A level. In the Sixth Form a non-examination Religious Studies course is taken by all students.

Religious Education lies at the heart of a Dominican school. The liturgical programme includes Morning Assembly with its time of collective worship and shared prayer, Retreats for each year group, Masses, Prayer Services and the Christmas Carol Service. The College Chaplain, Fr Raymond McCullagh, works closely with the R.E. department in addition to providing a valuable link between school, home and parish. Visits from local clergy of other denominations are welcomed. Talks by invited speakers complement what is done in the classroom and are valued.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education programme at Dominican College is designed to promote the growth and development of each pupil according to his/her ability and aptitudes. Pupils are encouraged to develop an active and healthy lifestyle, which, we hope, they will pursue throughout their adult life. We aim, through our various teaching methods, to develop an enthusiasm for sport within the pupils and to encourage both an awareness of others and the need for co-operation in sport.

Sporting facilities include: all weather hockey pitch, grass pitch, three tennis courts with synthetic, sand filled surface, sports hall with mini-gyms and assembly hall used for dance. The school also makes use of Coleraine Leisure Centre, including its badminton courts, squash courts, fitness suite and swimming facilities and the soccer pitches at The Warren, Portstewart.

We really value the addition, in 2009, of our new Sports Hall which has added considerably to our facilities.

Games and activities covered by pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 include:

Aerobics	Athletics	Badminton
Basketball	Cricket	Cross-Country
Dance	Football	Gaelic Football
Golf	Gymnastics	Hockey
Hurling	Minor Skills	Netball
Rugby	Softball/Rounders	Squash
Swimming	Tennis	Trampoline
Volleyball		

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY EDUCATION

In Dominican College Careers and Employability Education has three main aims:

- To help students develop an understanding of their strengths and talents in order to enable them to make wise choices within school and beyond.
- To encourage students to use a variety of sources to gather information about specific careers.
- To provide students with practical skills to equip them for independent living in adult life.

Careers and Employability Education is delivered through the various departments throughout the school as well as having specific timetabled time. For example, in year 10 time is set aside to help develop an understanding of employability to assist with GCSE subject choices.

Timetabled Careers and Employability classes are held throughout the senior school for every student in every year group. All our Key Stage 4 students not only study Learning for Life and Work but also take it as a GCSE . Pupils work towards creating a personal Career Profile and develop some of the skills necessary to enable them to secure employment in later life. Year 12 pupils take part in a “Post GCSE Information Day” and also liaise with outside agencies to help each individual gain awareness of the options available to him/her in order that each may make informed decisions.

All pupils in Year 13 go on Work Experience or Work Shadowing and take part in an Interview Skills Day. During sixth form, through visiting speakers, computer assisted learning programmes, individual interviews and research, there is considerable attention devoted to the process of selecting and securing a place at University.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Two statements which underpin the Special Educational Needs provision at the College and which were stated earlier in the prospectus are:

“Dominican schools are inclusive rather than exclusive and seek to nourish, support and develop the gifts of each individual student in a spirit of trust, freedom and co-operation”.

“The school values the importance and uniqueness of each person, and aims to help each reach his/her potential”.

We seek to identify and support students who have special educational needs and to ensure that those students have access to as wide and full a curriculum as possible. The College has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator who works with staff, parents and outside agencies, as appropriate, to address concerns and to make sure that the welfare and progress of identified pupils is monitored, evaluated and kept under review.

Copies of the school’s special educational needs policy are available on request from the school office.

EDUCATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Dominican College attracts pupils and staff from Catholic and other Christian denominations as well as some pupils from other faiths. Our pupils come from a range of backgrounds and differing home circumstances.

We welcome and value all members of our Dominican community equally and value the contribution made to the school by each of its members.

Our commitment to Education for Mutual Understanding is enshrined in the following aims:

- To encourage a school spirit of friendly relationships and communication between staff and pupils.
- To help pupils develop a critical awareness of cultural values and enable them to develop a strong sense of self.
- To encourage and promote a discipline system based on mutual understanding, respect and sensitivity to others.
- To provide an environment conducive to the understanding of and tolerance and respect for different religious, social, political and cultural backgrounds.

These aims are implemented at all levels of pupil development and across both the formal and informal curriculum. Specific implementation is also achieved through:

- The whole school Religious Education and Liturgical Programme
- EMU as a cross-curricular theme
- Other school initiatives and activities including:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| -Delaware Project | -International Day of Languages |
| -European Studies 16-18 | -Eco Club |
| -Joint School enterprises | -Riverside Theatre Concerts |
| -Environmental Awareness/Preservation | -Special Concerts |
| -Community Carol service | -Interdenominational liturgies |
| -CEM conference | -Morning Assembly |
| -Public Speaking & Debates | -Parental links and functions |
| -Saphara—linking with schools in India | -Educational visits |
| -Participation in Remembrance Day service | -Inclusive School Masses / Retreats |
| -School exchange visits to France and Spain | -Support for Trocaire & good causes |
| -Pupil and staff involvement in Gaeltacht | -ReadOn literacy & charities effort |
| -European Youth Parliament | |
| -Sponsored walk in support of local, national and international charities | |

EXTRA- CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Music, Drama and Physical Education, which are important aspects in the curriculum, are also pursued through extra-curricular activities.

Parents and friends are invited to major events performed by pupils. These include the School Musical (held every other year), concerts involving both music and dance held at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine and Drama productions.

A range of sporting, leisure and subject based activities is available to pupils as well as other activities, which can be broadly categorised as cultural, or community based. The list below is not exhaustive but shows the type and range of opportunities available.

Sports , Leisure and subject based activities

Athletics	Art Club	Badminton
Basketball	Chess	Football
Gaelic Football	Golf	History Den
Hockey	Hurling	ICT
Mathematics clinic	Netball	Reading
Science Club	Table Tennis	Trampolining

Competitive team sports include Hockey and Netball for girls and Badminton, Football and Gaelic Football for boys.

Cultural

Choirs	Dance Club	Drama	
Eco-Club	Educational visits	European Studies	
Irish Dancing	Language Societies	Music Groups	Quizzes
Saphara—India	School Magazine	Traditional Music	

Community

Carol Singing	Charity work	Community Service
Duke of Edinburgh / President's Award		Fund Raising*
Retreats / Reflections	St Vincent De Paul	Trocaire

+ music and drama events both in and out of school

**From 2001–2011 the school has raised over £100,000 for local, national and international charities. For 2011-12 our main Charities are Barefeet (A charity set up by a former Dominican student, Adam McGuigan using dance & theatre to help street kids in Zambia); Child Support, Uganda (A charity set up by a former Dominican student, Mairead Murphy working with HIV / Aids orphans in Uganda); Marie Curie Cancer Care (in recognition of the life and service of our Head of Chemistry) Dr Theo Laverty who died in April 2011; RNLI-Portrush, Amor, Vida Y Esperanza (Love, Life & Hope) -supporting children in Colombia, Out of Africa Missions,George South Africa (supporting a netball team from the townships to come to N.Ireland) and Saphara—supporting the education of underprivileged children in Northern India.*

In addition about £3000 is raised each year through other fund-raising activities such as “civvies days” and through support for the Trocaire Lenten campaign.

In June 2007 a team of Dominican students and staff travelled to Kenya to work with Habitat for Humanity to help in a house building project. In July 2011 a team of L6 Dominican students combined with students from Rainey Endowed Magherafelt and St Mary's Magherafelt to work with disadvantaged children in schools in Northern India through the charity—Saphara. It is planned that a second Dominican team will go back to these schools in July 2012.

PASTORAL CARE

Our pastoral care system exists primarily to enable students to develop their full potential. It is inextricably linked with the academic, moral and spiritual life of the school. It involves every pupil and every teacher and permeates every class and every school activity.

Essentially we seek to build up a school community, permeated by a spirit of love, trust and forgiveness. This involves fostering good relationships between staff, pupils and parents. It also involves encouraging and acknowledging responsibility and respect not only for self but also for others. Our pastoral care systems aim to build self-esteem and a sense of freedom in each student. Bullying has no place in Dominican College. A copy of our anti-bullying policy statement is available, from the school office, on request.

We recognise that the transition from primary to secondary school has the potential to be very challenging, given the change it involves for young people. Dominican College has an extensive induction programme for Form One pupils which really begins with their introduction to the school on their P7 Open Night.

18th & 19th January 2012	Open Nights
Early June 2012	Pupil Transfer Evening (new pupils & parents)
Late August 2012	Two Induction days for Year 8 pupils
Mid-September 2012	Evening mass for Year 8 pupils, parents & staff
Mid-November 2012	Form Teacher / Parent evening
January 2013	Year 8 pupils help with open night
Jan/Feb 2013	Parent Teacher Evening for Year 8 parents

Each pupil in Dominican College has a Form teacher who has daily contact with the pupil and responsibility for that pupil. We encourage good communication between pupils, staff and parents in order to help and support our pupils.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.....

When adults or organisations make decisions which affect children, they must always think first about what would be best for the child".

Extract from United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)

The welfare of the pupils in our care is paramount. Dominican College's Child Protection Policy is designed to help protect all pupils in our care from harm. A copy of the Policy is available on request from the school office or through the school web-site. When abuse is suspected or when a pupil makes an allegation that he or she is suffering, or has suffered abuse, the school has a statutory obligation, under the Children (N.I.) Order 1995 and in line with the requirements of the Department of Education circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care: Child Protection, to make a referral either to the social services of the local Health and Social Services Trust, or to the Police.

A Designated teacher and Deputy, with responsibility for Child Protection have been appointed and all members of staff have been made fully aware of the necessary procedures to be followed. If parents have concerns regarding their child's safety they should contact the designated teacher.

Designated Teacher: Dr. Cummings

Deputy Designated Teacher: Ms Ronan

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Every pupil is required to wear the designated school uniform throughout each school day, when representing the school, when travelling to and from school and on other occasions as directed. The school uniform suppliers are Couples, Coleraine and McKenzie Menswear, Portstewart. No other outlet has permission to claim to sell Dominican College uniform.

Pupils should be aware that their personal appearance matters – that they should always be clean, neat and tidy. Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and to the school to take pride in their appearance, including the way in which they wear their uniform.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The school Discipline Policy reflects the aims of Dominican College. This means that the emphasis is on encouraging, developing and maintaining high standards of self-discipline, self-control, self-respect, respect for others and courtesy. This creates and maintains an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness in the school and ensures a safe and stimulating environment in which “to assist each pupil in his or her pursuit of full human and spiritual development”. A “Code of Conduct” sets out the standards expected in a range of areas of school life. Copies of the Code are available, on request, from the school office.

Where breaches of discipline do occur, they are dealt with by the class teacher, form teacher or senior member of staff as appropriate, following guidelines laid down.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an essential part of the learning process. It allows pupils to:

- Revise and reinforce what they have learned.
- Work independently.
- Develop a responsible attitude and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Practise and develop self discipline and organisational skills
- Prepare for future class work.
- Extend work done in school.

Dominican College pupils are provided with detailed homework diaries in which to record work which has been set and the date on which such work is due. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children’s homework with the assistance of the diaries and to provide a congenial working environment.

All students are expected to work at home every school night. As a guide the following ‘average’ times are suggested:

Key Stage 3	1 ½ hours per night
Key stage 4	2 – 2 ½ hours per night
Lower and Upper 6	3 hours per night

POLICY ON DRUGS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

The Board of Governors and staff of Dominican College value the uniqueness and importance of each person and strive to promote actively the self-esteem of all pupils. We aim to ensure that positive health messages are delivered in the classroom and in all aspects of school life. The school does everything in its power to discourage and prevent the use of all harmful and illegal substances.

The Drugs Education Policy at Dominican College is in line with the policies of all post primary schools in the Ballymoney, Coleraine and Moyle council areas.

The aims of the policy are to:

- i. Outline and implement a drugs education programme.
- ii. Outline the procedures for dealing with a drugs related incident which may occur during curricular or extra-curricular time.

An educational/teaching programme has been developed at Dominican College which will:

- support the overall aims of the school
- identify the needs and experiences of all pupils in the school
- be progressive and take account of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the pupils at each Key Stage
- equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to avoid the misuse of drugs

Dealing with/investigating a Drugs Related Incident

When a teacher becomes aware of any situation where he/she suspects the misuse of drugs the following procedures should be followed:

- i. Confiscate any substance, labels or other items which could be of use in identifying the substance and as soon as possible take this to the Principal.
- ii. If the Principal is not available it should be given to another member of the Senior Management Team or the Drugs Co-ordinator.
- iii. Take any immediate steps thought necessary to ensure that the health and safety of the pupil is protected.
- iv. Detain all pupils suspected of being involved in the incident until they can be interviewed by the Principal.

The Principal will investigate the incident more fully and a written record will be kept. The parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Any further action will involve the parent and may include disciplinary action and/or medical, pastoral or counselling elements including the involvement of outside agencies.

In considering these actions the school will have regard for the interests of the pupils involved, balanced against the interests and well being of other school members.

Permanent exclusion may be used as a last resort.

Voluntary Contributions

Seeking to provide the highest standards of equipment and facilities for our pupils involves considerable expense over and above the funding which the College receives from the Department of Education. Parents are requested to make an annual donation of £50 per pupil to help meet these needs.

Optional Extras

Parents will be charged for:

- i. individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument
- ii. individual vocal training
- iii. speech and drama lessons arranged through co-operation with the school
- iv. lockers for safe storage of pupils' personal belongings (one-off charge £5).

Transport

Pupils will not be charged for travelling to timetabled Physical Education activities except for Year 8 swimming where a charge of £10 is made to subsidise costs.

Appropriate charges will be made for travel to after-school events such as theatrical visits, sporting events, matches etc.

Residential and Educational Trips

Charges will be made in respect of all residential and non-residential activities which take place wholly or more than fifty per cent outside school hours when the child's participation has been agreed in advance by the parent.

The charge will include the cost of travel, entrance fees, materials, books, instruments and other equipment, non-teaching staff costs and insurance costs.

Where a school activity involves pupils spending a night or nights away from home charges will be made for board and lodging.

Public Examination Entries

The entry fee is paid by the school for a pupil to sit once any GCSE, AS or A level examination for which the school prepares the pupil.

Any other Examination Entry and Amendment fees are payable by the pupil.

Practical Subjects

Charges will be made for ingredients and materials needed for courses in practical subjects where parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

Breakages and Fines

Fines may be imposed by the school for any incident which causes damage or waste with regard to school property. Defaced, damaged or lost textbooks or items of equipment will be charged for where this is a result of the pupil's behaviour.

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR ENTRY INTO YEAR 8

Respective functions of the Board of Governors and Principal in relation to Admissions to the school

The Board of Governors is the relevant admissions authority for Dominican College, Portstewart ("the College"). The Board of Governors draws up and approves the Admissions Criteria and delegates to a Selection Sub-committee responsibility for considering all applications for admission to Year 8 including applications for Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision. Any reference to the term 'the Board of Governors' within these Admissions Criteria includes the Selection Sub-committee nominated and approved by the Board of Governors, for the purposes of applying the Admissions Criteria set out in this document.

The Board of Governors has agreed that in the event that the number of applications for places at the College exceeds the College Admissions Number of 69, the criteria set out below will be used. The Board of Governors will not use as a criterion the position of preference given to the College on the Transfer Form, i.e. a child who has chosen the College in any position on the Transfer Form will be considered equally with those who have put the College first.

Pupils resident in N. Ireland at the time of their proposed admission will be considered before any pupil not so resident.

It is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that all the information required by the College, accompanies the Transfer Form. Failure to provide the required information may result in the College being unable to consider the application.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should note that they may be required to produce documents verifying information pertinent to the College's Admission Criteria. Original documents are required; facsimiles or photocopies will not be accepted. Where the Board of Governors has a general knowledge or belief of a problem relating to false or incorrect information the College will take action to ensure that no pupil gains a place through use of such information.

The College will initially consider only those pupils who have taken the GL Assessment provided by the Post Primary Transfer Consortium and those for whom Special Provision applies.

Subject thereto pupils shall be admitted in the following order:-

- 1 Preference will be given in the strict order of the GL Assessment Grade (A, B1, B2, C1 and C2) i.e. pupils obtaining a Grade A will be admitted before those with grade B1, who will in turn be admitted before those with Grade B2 and so on. Reference to Grades includes those deemed to be equivalent after consideration of "Special Circumstances" and "Special Provision".
- 2 Where selection has to be made between pupils who have the same Grade, as defined in criterion 1, the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order set down until all places are filled:-
 - *^(a) Pupils who have a child of the family currently enrolled in the College or who will be enrolled in the 2012-2013 school year.
 - *^(b) Pupils who do not fulfil criterion (a) but had a child of the family enrolled in the College for 2 or more years.
 - ^(c) Pupils who are the first or only child in a family, eligible to apply for admission to the College.
 - * (d) Pupils who have a parent who was enrolled at the College for 2 or more years.
 - (e) The age of the pupil as entered on the birth certificate - preference being given to the older pupil(s)
 - * Full name(s) and dates must be given.
 - ^ "Child of the family" was defined in Transfer 2010 Guidance from the Department of Education in N. Ireland.

Should places remain after those with GL Assessment Grades A-C2 have been admitted, the College will consider applications equally from those whose GL Assessment Grade is D, those deemed to be equivalent to Grade D after consideration of "Special Circumstances" and "Special Provision" and all other pupils, including those who have not taken the GL Assessment. These remaining places will be allocated on the basis of non-academic selection, using the criteria set in criterion 2 above, in the same order as set out above, until all the remaining places have been allocated.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND/OR SPECIAL PROVISION

Consideration of a claim for Special Circumstances and/or Special Provision consists of two parts. The first requires the consideration of whether there is sufficient evidence to permit a child to be considered as having Special Circumstances or attracting Special Provision, or both; if a child is permitted to be considered as having Special Circumstances or as attracting Special Provision, or both, the second part of the consideration requires an educational judgement to be made on the totality of the material presented to the College so that a Grade equivalent to that which the child would have obtained in the GL Assessment under normal conditions can be awarded.

It is for **parent(s)/guardian(s)** to present all such material as they consider will assist the College in performing both parts of the consideration described above. It should be noted by parents/guardians that both parts of the consideration referred to involve an exercise in judgement.

Special Circumstances

Claims for Special Circumstances should be attached to the Transfer Form.

The Selection Sub-committee of the Board of Governors will consider applications on behalf of pupils for whom it is claimed that their performance in the GL Assessment was affected by medical or other problems, in accordance with the "Special Circumstances" Section set out in the "Access Arrangements and Special Circumstances Policy" and with the "Guide to Claiming Special Circumstances for children taking the GLA Entrance Assessment" available either from the College or from the College website (www.dominican-portstewart.org.uk) and using the procedures set out in the "Post Primary Transfer Consortium Guidance Notes" contained in the "Registration Pack" available from the College or from the College website.

Full details of the Special Circumstance and independent supporting evidence must be provided. Where the problem was a medical one which affected the child at the time of the assessment, the College will require evidence that the child was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the medical problem, around the time of the assessments.

There are two important forms to be submitted by parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to make a Special Circumstances claim:

1. Notification of a claim for Special Circumstances must be registered at the Assessment Centre by **4.00p.m. on Friday 16th December 2011** using "**Form SCR**". The SCR Form is in the "Claiming Special Circumstances Pack" which is available from the College, from the College website. Claims not registered by the 16th December 2011 may not be considered by the Selection Sub-Committee.
2. Full details about the Special Circumstances claim must be provided at the time that the Transfer Form is completed in February 2012 using "**Form SC1**". The SC1 Form is also available from the College or from the College website. It must be attached to the Transfer Form, together with supporting independent, verifiable documentary evidence before the Form is sent to the NEELB Transfer Department. Please note that it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to obtain supporting documentation and to ensure that the Form SC1 is completed properly and that all information and forms are submitted to the NEELB Transfer Department at the correct time.

The Claiming Special Circumstances Pack includes a "Claiming Special Circumstances" Guide for Parents and Guardians in addition to the SCR form and the SC1 Form.

Please note that if a claim for Special Circumstances is made in respect of matters for which Special Access arrangements were granted for a child, the Selection Sub-committee will take into account the fact that the child was granted Special Access arrangements for those matters.

Evidence required with a claim for Special Circumstances

Every claim for Special Circumstances must have supporting evidence which includes **both**:

- a. details of the medical or other problems which occurred just before or during the GL Assessment with verification by an appropriate professional; Please note that where the problem was a medical one which affected the pupil at the time of the Entrance Assessment the College will require the production of evidence that the pupil was examined by a medical practitioner in relation to the medical problem around the time of the Entrance Assessment.
- b. educational evidence to show that the Grade achieved in the GL Assessment does not correspond to the academic ability of the child because he/she experienced medical or other problems just before or around the time of the GL Assessment.

The SC1 Form provides spaces for the pupil's standardised scores in English / Literacy and Mathematics / Numeracy throughout Key Stage 2 to be included. It is for parent(s)/guardian(s) to present all such material as they consider will assist the Selection Sub-committee in its considerations. The Selection Sub-Committee will consider all evidence provided in exercising its judgement in order to award a Grade to an applicant. In all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight. It should be noted by parent(s)/guardian(s) that considerations of a claim for Special Circumstances involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation. Applications considered under Claims for Special Circumstances will be judged on the evidence made available to the College.

Where a Claim is accepted and the educational and other evidence justifies an upgrade the higher Grade will be used. Where a Claim is accepted and the educational and other evidence does not justify an upgrade OR when the Claim is not accepted, the original Grade will stand.

Special Provision

The Selection Sub-committee of the Board of Governors will consider applications on behalf of pupils for whom a Claim for Special Provision is made in the following cases:

- (i) Pupils whose parent(s)/guardian(s) wish them to transfer to the College from schools outside Northern Ireland;
- (ii) Pupils who have received more than half of their primary education outside Northern Ireland.
- (iii) Pupils whose educational provision to date has been negatively affected by serious medical or other problems which are supported by independent verifiable documentary evidence and who have not taken the GL Entrance Assessment.

To apply for Special Provision, parent(s)/guardian(s) must complete Form SP1, which is available from the College or on its website. This Form must **be attached to the Transfer Form**, together with supporting documentary evidence before it is sent to the NEELB Transfer Department by the Primary School Principal in February 2012. Please note that it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to obtain supporting documentation, to ensure that the SP1 is completed properly and that all information and forms are submitted to the NEELB Transfer Department at the correct time.

A copy of the completed SP1 form should also be sent directly to the College school by 7th March 2012. In cases where the Transfer Form is sent to NEELB later than 7th March the completed SP1 form should also be sent directly to the College. Further guidance on applying for Special Provision is provided with the SP1 form available from the College or its website.

It is for parents/guardian(s) to present all such material as they consider will assist the Selection Sub-committee in its considerations. It should be noted by parent(s)/guardian(s) that such considerations involve an exercise in judgement and not precise calculation.

Where the grounds for a Claim for Special Provision are met, the Selection Sub-committee of the Board of Governors will determine an appropriate GL Assessment equivalent Grade for the pupil. The Selection Sub-committee may require an assessment of a pupil's abilities to be carried out by a suitably qualified person or body, appointed by the College. Other useful evidence would include:

- 1. the report(s) of any assessments carried out by ELB educational psychologist(s) or suitable expert
- 2. standardised assessment scores obtained by the pupil in Key Stage 2 or
- 3. other appropriate educational information if (1) or (2) is not available.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are free to provide any other educational evidence for consideration by the Selection Sub-committee by attaching it to the Transfer Form and Form SP1. The Selection Sub-Committee will consider all evidence provided in exercising its judgement in order to award a score to the applicant. However the onus lies with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide such evidence and have it when necessary appropriately verified. It should be noted that in all cases independent evidence will carry greater weight.

Following determination of a GL Assessment equivalent Grade such pupils will then be considered, with all other pupils, by application of the Admissions Criteria.

Those pupils to whom this Special Provision applies may have sat the GL Entrance Assessment, in which case the Grade obtained will also be considered.

Verification of all Information

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on the Transfer Form or appended to the Transfer Form by parent(s)/guardian(s). For verification purposes original documents are required and not facsimiles or photocopies. The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide any requested verifying documents within the deadline set by the College will result in either the withdrawal of a place or the inability of the school to offer a place.

The responsibility to ensure that:

- the Transfer Form and other necessary documentation is correctly completed;**
- any Special Circumstances and /or Special Provision being claimed are properly documented as described in detail above and in the guidance documentation available from the College; and**
- any required verification documents are provided within specified deadlines,**

lies with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child. Failure to ensure that this occurs will lead to any request for special circumstances not being considered and/or the application not being considered by the Board of Governors and/or the withdrawal of a place in the College.

ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8 AFTER 1 SEPTEMBER 2012

Parents who wish to have their child considered for admission in the event of a place arising after 1 September 2012 should write to the Principal clearly stating this. In the event of a vacancy arising, the above criteria will be applied to these applications.

Applications and Admissions

Year	Admissions No.	Total Applications All Preferences	Total Admissions
2009/10	69	104	71
2010/11	69	106	70*
2011/12	69	102	70*

This table does not include children who were admitted to the school with a statement of special educational needs.
* includes 1 child admitted under an Exceptional Circumstances Body appeal



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