



Salesian Secondary College.

Statement on School Vision,

Ethos and Mission.

Preamble.

Salesian Secondary College is a voluntary, catholic, secondary school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. We cater for boys and girls from 1st to 6th Year, typically from the ages of 12 to 18.

Salesians Ireland is part of a global congregation of over 15,000 brothers and priests, who work in 134 countries worldwide. The Salesian Congregation is engaged in a broad range of youth ministry initiatives throughout the world including, schools, youth clubs, outreach and care homes for homeless and abandoned youths, parishes, chaplaincies, retreat work, universities and international missionary work.

The mission of the Salesians is youth-focussed following in the footsteps of St. John Bosco (1815-1888). He believed that a safe, healthy passage from childhood to adulthood is the right of every child.

While thinking about these questions is important, it is our actions that define us as a Salesian school.

Early beginnings in Copsewood College.

The Foundation House of the Salesians in Ireland opened its doors in 1919, with an Agricultural College on the campus. The future bishop of Limerick Louis (Denis) Hallinan, while studying in Rome, met with Don Bosco, with a view of becoming a Salesian. Don Bosco advised him to return to Limerick where one day, he told him, he would be a great help to the Salesians. When Hallinan became bishop of Limerick (1918-1923), he allowed the Salesians to set up a community and school in his diocese. Fr Aloysius Sutherland SDB, who later became the first Rector of the Salesian Community in Pallaskenry, purchased the Copsewood Estate, and the life of the Salesian work in Ireland began in Pallaskenry. The Secondary School gradually grew-up adjacent to the Agricultural College.

The Foundation House in Pallaskenry is still home to an active Salesian Community, the members of which are intrinsically linked to the life of our school. The College Chapel is also the national shrine for Mary, Help of Christians, and the Salesians here provide parish supply work as well as chaplaincies.

Rationale.

The visit of the Rector Major, Don Ángel Fernández Artime SDB, to our school in 2019, our centenary year, gave rise to a new discussion about our ethos and our mission and the desire to articulate those anew for our contemporary situation.

This Statement is written to outline the unique ethos of our school and to ensure that the Salesian educational philosophy is at the core of our work in Salesian Secondary College.

The purpose of this statement is to ensure that:

- We acclaim and celebrate our Salesian charism and heritage
- We encourage our whole school community to continue growing in a deeper understanding of our ethos.
- We secure the centrality of our ethos and the Salesian philosophy in all our educational activities today and in the future.

Scope.

This Statement outlines a way of thinking and being which infuses all the relationships and activities of the Salesian Secondary College. It aligns with similar statements made by the Salesian Agricultural College, Pallaskenry.

This policy document recognises the entire Irish legislative framework under which Voluntary Secondary schools operate and, in particular, The Education Act 1998 and Child Protection Guidelines 2017.

Don Bosco's Preventive System is a value-based educational system which was developed by him during the 19th century. Its great value is its adaptability to changing cultures and circumstances. For this reason Don Bosco refused to write a detailed and prescriptive account of his educational methods. What he left us was a set of fundamental principles and values. The ultimate aim of his method was to enable young people to find autonomy in life, becoming "Good Christians and Honest Citizens".

There are many similarities between Bosco's system and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the principles of Restorative Justice, which are discussed widely today.

When we speak of a wholistic education in our school, and in this document, we speak of an attempt to cherish and nurture the whole person in all his / her complexity. References to "holistic" education are not comprehended here, such references tending to be understood in a populist way as education of the spirit alone.

Ideas and convictions of our Salesian School.

The aim of Salesian Secondary College Pallaskenry, is to provide our students with the best possible education based on sound up-to-date educational theories and techniques. It is underpinned by the bedrock of Gospel values and the characteristics of our Salesian Education as practiced by St John Bosco in his Preventive system.

We state our mission as follows:

"Salesian Secondary College is a voluntary, catholic, secondary school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Our school dedicates itself to educational excellence taking into account the uniqueness and complexity of each individual pupil."

We strive to create an atmosphere where pupils are happy and thrive in an environment imbued with St. John Bosco's three educational principles of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness."

To achieve this mission aim to provide opportunities for students:

- We strive for academic excellence and skill, according to the abilities of each individual
- We strive to enable our students to develop "wholistically", in a balanced way, i.e. physically, spiritually, morally, artistically, mentally and emotionally
- We strive, as a Catholic school, to be faithful in passing on Gospel values
- We strive to nurture mutual respect and concern for others, irrespective of ethnicity, colour, gender, sexual orientation, social status or creed.

In this Statement, these goals are restated in the wider context of our school philosophy and ethos.

Vision.

Don Bosco's "vision" for educating young people developed over time, as he came to understand the meaning of a symbolic dream which he had when he was just nine years of age. At the time the dream made no sense to himself or his family. But when, as a young priest, he began to work with poor, homeless, rough boys on the streets of Turin, his dream slowly began to reveal itself to him. The visionary and prophetic nature of this and other dreams had a profound effect on him.

In his dream, he was visited by a man of dignified appearance in white robes who, when the young John raced to stop a crowd of children swearing and fighting with his own angry words and his fists, told him that these difficult children would not be won over with violence and harshness. The young Bosco didn't understand this and asked the man to show him how. The man said that a woman would come to him to explain.. Then, in his dream, a beautiful lady in long robes appeared to him and told him that these difficult children would only be won over by reason and loving kindness.

The implications of this dream remain at the heart of his educational system and they are shared by us now in our Salesian school.

Philosophy.

Bosco's vision for the young became a philosophy for education, which has been passed down to us as Salesian educators. His profound experience of sharing his life with very poor, difficult young people in his first self-constructed school known as the 'Pinardi Shed', and later in Valdocco, shaped his thinking about, not only how to teach them, but, also, to show them how to trust again. He said: "It is not enough to love young people, they must know that they are loved." "Education, he said, is a matter of the heart..... and there can be no genuine education without trust."

In teaching his followers his ways, he developed his Preventive System. From an adult viewpoint, the world of young people may seem confusing, changeable and chaotic. Yet it is full of potential, creativity and hope, awaiting appropriate direction and a suitable environment in order to develop. During his lifetime, his methods proved extraordinarily successful, not only in educating and reforming difficult youths but also in producing saints, like St Dominic Savio.

The Preventive System today is based on Bosco's three pillars: Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.

Reason: Teachers are challenged to be reasonable in all dealings with our young people. Students learn, by example, to be reasonable in their dealings with each other and with those in authority. Critical thinking is encouraged and practiced. In particular, “reason” should be brought into moments of conflict and asks teachers to avoid harsh, degrading or physically punitive methods when dealing with negative behaviour.

Religion: Religion refers to the motivation behind the process and the moral and spiritual insights necessary to guide this process to its ultimate goal of “Good Christians and Honest Citizens”. In the Salesian heart, there is always a place for joy and hope. The Christian story is to be told and celebrated, as is daily life. A commitment to the Gospel values is developed through reflection and practice. Justice for all is central. Guidance in all things spiritual is a challenge that is met daily. Jesus, the good shepherd, is our inspiration and Mary Help of Christians, our support.

Loving Kindness: The third touchstone of Bosco’s Preventive System, Loving Kindness, is the cornerstone for building the relationship and persevering in it. It is an approach rooted in the gentle, optimistic spirituality of Bosco’s patron, St. Francis de Sales and in the ideal of Christian love. Don Bosco saw himself as a mediator of God’s love. Our school’s concept of Loving Kindness is greater than mere “kindness”. It is not simply a sentimental concept. A true educator is one who is capable of making wise, educative use of every opportunity to reach the heart of young people and help them grow. Loving Kindness has a sincere, mutual respect and a deep richness behind it, which is essential to build a healthy rapport between student and teacher. Loving Kindness is the engine of our school.

“Everything and everyone is won by the sweetness of our words and works.” Don Bosco.

Education and Evangelisation.

Don Bosco accepted the young where they were in their lives and their development and he used their reality as the starting point for his education. He saw beyond the outer poverty of the young people he met on the streets. He saw an inner core, created and known to God, which was hidden under the weight of the young person’s struggle to survive the poverty which gripped them. He placed the young person at the heart of his work, learned to know them and build their self-respect.

“Students are at the heart of everything we do.”

School motto.

We, too, as Salesian educators today are invited to meet young people where they are-not to leave them there or stay there with them, but to lead them forwards, Nowadays, poverty takes many forms; a lack of self-belief, grief, social or emotional poverty, scarcity of time or opportunity, a want of joy or a need for esteem, a lack of meaning, loneliness, loss, one-dimensional living. The image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd seeking out the lost, was at the heart of Bosco’s pastoral approach.

Evangelization is a core part of our educational system. Bosco worked out of a deep understanding of the human person. Life eternal, salvation, redemption are all basic to that understanding. Therefore, values, meaning, spirit, soul, ritual, symbols and celebration are all part of a Salesian education. So also is a strong social ethic where the Gospel value of service is stressed

Values.

“Without confidence and love, there can be no true education. If you want to be loved...you must love yourselves, and make your children feel that you love them.” Don Bosco.

Salesian Secondary College underpins its work with the core virtues of the gospels and of Don Bosco’s philosophy of education. These virtues come from God and are voiced through us as Salesian educators. We hope that when they leave Salesian Secondary College, our young people will be young adults infused with:

- Loving Kindness, decency, spirit, faith, joy, empathy, warmth, compassion, tolerance, motivation, courage, environmental awareness and resilience.

We hope that they will know that they are loved by God. We hope that they will be respectful of others and that their social awareness will make them advocates for the vulnerable and custodians of the planet. We hope that they will be listening people who take on leadership joyfully and willingly and create leadership in others.

Central to our school are the themes of joy and celebration. We celebrate young people and provide opportunities for them to celebrate themselves and each-other. The moment of celebration is joyful. “Joy”, a word indicating something greater and richer than happiness, is the desired outcome of the young person’s journey through our school. In our school, a young person has the right to be joyful and to be celebrated.

When these values resonate through our teaching, we create a wholistic, caring learning environment which can draw out (“e-ducare”) all the latent possibilities of our students, so that all can reach their full potential.

“Education is a matter of the heart.” Don Bosco.

Ethos.

Our school ethos reflects all that has gone before in this document. It is the application of the foregoing principles, values and ideas that creates our ethos on the ground. It is what a person senses when they walk in the doors of our school. Our task is to enable, nurture and tend to it. Ethos, it is said, is what remains in the memories of our students long after informational details are forgotten. Ethos is what is felt and that is why it remains. It is the pulse of the school which resonates in all encounters and relationships. It is the soil from which we grow and the air which sustains us. We stand for our welcoming, listening, learning community. It is our privilege, as Salesian educators, to make that gift possible for our students.

When people tried to articulate the educational success and the life-giving atmosphere of Don Bosco’s flagship work in Valdocco, they were struck by the fact that all facets of the young person’s life were engaged. It was the multidimensional approach that impressed them. It was a school but it was more than a school. So to encapsulate the whole experience they interpreted it through the lens of four metaphors: HOME, SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND, PARISH. Each incorporates the touchstones of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.

HOME: The experience of ‘home’ creates an environment of confidence and familiarity, where young people are not only welcome but feel welcomed and ‘at home’ in an atmosphere of cheerfulness. It is a place of empathy and friendly welcome.....

- Where values can be shared

- Where young people are treated with respect
- Where young people are treated with reason rather than 'force'
- Where young people are protected from bullying
- Where the weak or fragile are seen, protected and enabled
- Where young people feel listened to and understood
- Where young people live in an atmosphere permeated by kindness
- Where young people can "belong" and feel that sense of belonging
- Where forgiveness is always offered
- Where our exceptional, farmland environment can be a unique character in our school story
- Where a structure of pastoral care underpins the work of every member of the staff.

SCHOOL: *The experience of "school" creates an environment where the young person can feel confident in their learning opportunities. A school is a place.....*

- Where every young person develops the skills and attitudes essential for life in society
- Where young people are considered in a wholistic manner
- Where young people are prized independently of their intellectual capacity
- Where academic excellence is pursued
- Where children are explicitly encouraged to respect each other and all members of the school community and where there are high behavioural expectations
- Where young people are protected from bullying and learn to manage conflict and understand authority
- Where the general atmosphere is one of cheerfulness and affirmation and talents are identified and nurtured
- Where there is respect for property and general cleanliness
- Where students are at the heart of everything we do.

PLAYGROUND: The "playground" is a natural environment where young people can form and deepen friendship and trust. The playground is not seen as a separate 'irritant' from the rest of the educational project. Rather it is seen as an unstructured educational opportunity. For Bosco the quiet 'word in the ear' was seen as a very important friendly disciplinary technique or way of encouraging. The playground can often be the place to get to know the 'real' person. The playground is the environment.....

- Where physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is promoted
- Where young people learn the importance of fairness, sportswoman/manship, resilience to cope with defeat, failure and the vagaries of luck
- Where opportunities to feel a sense of "belonging" to the school can take hold
- Where joyful expression and celebration can occur
- Where adults and young people can share talents
- Where connections between people are formed and friendship can develop
- Where conflict can be resolved.

PARISH: The experience of "parish" must be understood as a metaphor for the whole enterprise. This experience is built on two main pillars; (1) that every young person has in his or her heart the desire for God and the desire for a full life and (2) a series of interventions suitable for young people, with the goal of helping them to discover and follow their vocation. School as "parish" means school is a place.....

- Where the emphasis is placed on the awakening and development of the spiritual self in the young person

- Where the Salesian approach evokes the young person's collaboration, which is crucial to the educational process, because of the possibilities, choices and personal experiences it creates
- Where the search for underlying motivations for living is encouraged
- Where young people receive the prescribed religious education time for Catholic Voluntary Schools
- Where practical Christianity ("Love God and Love your Neighbour") is encouraged through awareness of the Church's social teaching on justice, leading to action eg fundraising, raising awareness of issues of social justice
- Where "Loving Kindness" has an evangelizing component
- Where the liturgical year, ritual and symbol are significant eg Christmas, Lent, Easter, November, para-liturgy, the sacraments, prayer, iconography
- Where a Chaplaincy team is available for students.

Roles and Responsibilities.

With our wide catchment area and our diverse student body, we are uniquely placed to learn from and with each other. Each of the education partners is called to embrace our Mission and to contemplate the Philosophy and Value Set of Salesian Education. In doing so, we come together and nurture our Characteristic Spirit and ethos.

- Board of Management.
- The Principal and Deputy Principals
- Students
- Teaching and support staff
- The Chaplaincy Team
- Parents / Guardians

Communication with the Education Partners.

This policy was written with the collaboration of students, staff, parents / guardians, the Board of Management and past pupils through the Parents Council, student focus groups and a school wide survey in 2020.

The messages in this Statement are delivered through school policy and through all school activity. A copy of this Statement is sent to all staff and parents / guardians and is available from the school on request and through our official social media. A simplified version is available also.

Review of this Statement.

This Statement will be developed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and ratified by the Board of Management.

School Management will accept feedback from staff, students and Parents / Guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels i.e. staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by Management.

This policy will be reviewed again in 5 years. This policy was written in May 2020.

This policy is incorporated into the body of School Policy from the date of review.

Proposed date of further review: 2025

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix.

The Voices of Salesian Secondary College.

As part of the process leading to the writing of this Statement, students, staff, parents / guardians and past pupils were asked a number of questions. There follows some of the comments which were returned, which have informed this Statement.

Which “corner stone” of Don Bosco's "Reason / Religion / Loving Kindness" triangle appeals to you?

“I find that the "Loving Kindness" corner of the triangle appeals to me most. Loving Kindness is the foundation of strong relationships which in turn are the foundation of teaching, learning and indeed, the entirety of the school experience.”

Neil, Teacher and Past Pupil.

“A great teacher shows kindness and love to students. It creates a positive environment in the school / classroom and being a kind teacher helps students feel welcomed, loved and cared for. Students who know you're invested in them confide in you, show respect and get involved in the loving learning atmosphere around them.”

Sandra, Teacher.

“I think at this moment in time, given the current circumstances (closure due to Covid-19 crisis), 'Loving Kindness' is what both us as staff and the students need. It is what the random acts of kindness, checks on others and wellbeing is showing and what should be spread within all our communities.”

Chloe, Teacher.

“Loving Kindness appeals to me as the staff in Salesian Secondary College are inclusive in every approach which makes me feel connected to the staff, students and wider community and therefore have a sense of belonging. If students think we don't care, why should they trust our response to their questions? My hope for each student leaving Salesian Secondary College, is that we have instilled enough confidence in the students to be truly themselves.”

Marion, Teacher.

“Don Bosco gave a voice to those who felt they had none. It has been my experience in the fourteen years that I have been in Copsewood that some of the most challenging students are often the kindest. They generally feel deeply frustrated and misunderstood so they especially deserve our compassion, kindness and forgiveness. All students deserve this. Therefore the corner of Don Bosco's triangle that appeals to me is 'Loving Kindness'.”

Aisling, Teacher.

"Loving Kindness appeals to me because, as a cohort of teachers and on a personal level, I really do think we all show great care for our students as well as great care for each other. Furthermore, we are all very approachable. This is obvious at small break and at lunchtime, when a student gives a gentle or sometimes loud knock on the staffroom door looking for one of us! In recent times the knock on the door appears as an email in our inbox."

Alan, Teacher.

"Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness...these highlight the qualities we value and the pathway we follow".

Marie, Teacher.

"Loving Kindness as one of the three essential principles of Salesian education appeals to me. It is central to the Salesian method of education and is reflected in practice throughout the school. Creating a loving and kind environment of praise, encouragement, support, acceptance, understanding, interest, joy and fun, within a structured learning environment will allow students to grow, reach personal goals and set new ones. Offering students the experience of Loving Kindness will nurture, foster and cultivate them to be the best they can be as a whole person and ultimately support them on their journey towards self fulfilment."

Niamh, Teacher.

"I like the following three lines from Don Bosco's Teacher Prayer:

'I believe that my job is actually a mission, a ministry; That you have chosen me in this time and in this place. To be there for these kids.'

Don Bosco is always looking down on us in Pallaskenry and things happen for a reason!"

John, Teacher.

"The word 'reason' (appeals to me). More than ever, there needs to be an educative relationship built on trust and reasonableness. Due to the current situation (Covid-19 crisis), there is a two way trust process between student and teacher. We trust our students to engage...and our students trust us as teachers to steer them in the right direction."

Ross, Teacher and Assistant Principal.

"St. Francis de Sales used a simple metaphor to sum up his work when he said: '

'You catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than a barrel full of vinegar'.

We have no idea what's happening in our students' lives, no concept of what some have witnessed or are living through. So if we can be anything, we need to kind. It may be the only kind word they hear today."

Jennifer, Teacher.

"Religion in Salesian Schools is so uniquely embedded in and strengthened by Reason and Loving Kindness, that it is difficult to single it out from them."

Caitriona, Teacher.

"Using reason can set teachers and students on an equal footing. By using reason, teachers and management provide clarity around decisions. This opens up meaningful conversations that affect the whole school community, allowing all stakeholders to feel part of any decisions made, thereby providing ownership and belonging to the school community."

David, Deputy Principal.

"I think the Don Bosco principle of Loving-Kindness appeals to me most. I feel that this creates a mutual respect between staff and students. While Loving-Kindness is about being kind, it also means that everything we do is guided by this.

'Without confidence and love, there can be no true education.'

St. John Bosco.

For me, the students need to know that everything we do, whether they realise it or not, is for their wholistic development. Rita Pearsons said 'Every Child Needs A Champion' and I believe that this is what Loving-Kindness is.... They know that, even if it is only in one place, they are loved and valued as a person. This will allow our students to gain the confidence to become who they truly are. I think that this is in practice every day in our school. We spend time with the students, in classrooms, on the yard, during activities, during trips and through simple interactions by wishing them happy birthday, congratulating them on a match and by taking an interest in their lives we develop our students in the way that Don Bosco wanted us to. The students in our care feel from the moment they walk through our door that they are important, they are cared for and they are loved. I think that is why it is so hard for our students to leave in 6th year and why lockdown is so difficult for our students."

Tara, Teacher.

"Salesian Secondary College is like a large extended blended family unit. Everyone cares about everyone and everyone looks out for everyone. There is as much learning done on the playground as there is in the classroom. No one is left behind if there is any way to help them."

Louise, Teacher.

"I've chosen 'Reason.' Reason is the ability to develop a relationship with people which respects the dignity and uniqueness of the person. I think that listening to, allowing the person to express their views and working with them to see things from other perspectives is the key to Reason. It involves the creation of a trusting environment where the person sees education as an opportunity to give due importance to their studies, recreation and spirituality and strive for excellence in all that they undertake."

James, Board of Management.

"Loving Kindness always appeals to me. Kindness makes you happy and really makes a difference to others. It's also free!"

Rachel, Teacher, Assistant Principal and Chaplain.

"Creating an atmosphere in which all members of the school community exist in an environment which is safe, healthy and happy (appeals to me). Ensuring that everyone understands the right of all members to experience this Loving Kindness (is important to me.)"

Thomas, Teacher.

"I like (the idea of) Reason because you can take it on different levels. I believe that if you act with reason (why you do something), in a reasonable fashion, you will be able to reason with people and get a reasonable outcome! It comes back to fairness and the belief that if you treat others the way you would like to be treated yourself, outcomes can be reached, within reason!"

Ciara, Teacher, Assistant Principal and Parent.

"From my experience this year, the 'Loving Kindness' corner of the Don Bosco triangle appeals to me, as this is what I have witnessed with regard to how the staff treat their students in the school and the standard of care which I would most like to uphold while working as part of the staff."

Fergal, Teacher.

"Loving Kindness can be all encompassing!"

Maeve, Teacher.

How do any of the elements of the Salesian "School / Playground / Family / Parish" metaphor appeal to you?

"I like the wholistic opportunities that are afforded all members of the Salesian Family."

Pat, Teacher and Assistant Principal.

"All four elements of the Salesian metaphor appeal to me, in a particular family. Having grown up close to the school, educated and having taught there, I get an overwhelming homely feeling when in the school and do see both colleagues and students as a large family."

Colin , Teacher and Past Pupil.

"I like the family metaphor as that is how I see us, the staff and students. At the moment (during Covid-19 closure) when we are all at home with our immediate families, we are definitely missing our extended family, our colleagues and our students."

Annie, Teacher.

"The 'family' aspect is the element that I feel resonates closest with both staff and students, as it represents the sense of belonging that we as staff feel and that we strive (successfully) for all students to feel."

David, Teacher.

" I admire the strong catholic ethos our school has held onto. We haven't forgotten our roots! I like that student progress is celebrated as much as high academic achievement. We promote progress at many levels."

Anna, Teacher.

"The metaphor of the Salesian family appeals to me, as I think it explains how much we really care about our students. We watch them grow up and develop from children to young adults in their time in our school and I feel lucky to be a part of that journey."

Sherona, Teacher.

"The metaphor of school / family/ playground / church resonate with me as I believe school is not supposed to be 100% academic. Students learn so much about themselves while they are in our school setting including building and maintaining relationships and resolving conflicts within those relationships. Church is a huge part of what we provide in a Salesian setting. It gives the students an opportunity to reflect on their choices and relationships."

Michelle, Teacher and Assistant Principal.

"I like the 'Playground' metaphor, which I see as meaning happiness, freedom, togetherness and friendship."

Eilís, Teacher, Assistant Principal and Parent.

"The Family metaphor appeals to me as I think that the idea of what family is supposed to represent fits very well with the ethos of our school. The main purpose of a family is to look after the well-being of its members and in turn prepare them to contribute to society."

Ed, Teacher.

"Family is one word I would choose from the Salesian metaphor. As a past pupil, I always felt like I was part of something bigger than just school and would hope all students now feel this also."

Ciara, Teacher and Past Pupil.

"For me the four elements are equally important. The 'Family' represents the sense of belonging of all the students and staff. The 'School' represents the teaching and learning for life. The 'Church' incorporates spirituality and morality. The 'Playground' brings in the elements of fun and happiness."

Orla, Special Needs Assistant and Parent.

"I like the metaphor of the playground. It conjures sentiments of joy and light-heartedness."

Ann, Teacher.

"The Salesian metaphor of 'playground' appeals to me as it encompasses more than the teaching and learning that takes place inside the classroom. It highlights the teaching, learning, growth and experiences that take place outside and beyond the classroom, through extra-curricular activities, interaction on the corridors and on the pitches and in our communities."

Therese, Teacher.

What makes Salesian Secondary College different from other schools?

"I like the way the school is on a farm and we get to see the animals and machinery. The teachers are young, nice, and funny and they understand the students. The teachers take the time to get to know each and every student for who they are and what they like to do."

Tim, 1st Year

"There is such a sense of community in our school and that is what makes it so different from other schools. Everyone is so positive, helpful and caring towards one another."

Erin, 6th Year

"For me what makes our school different is I feel comfortable coming to talk to the teachers about something and I know they will help to make sure you are ok."

Kate, 3rd Year

"I think something that sets our school aside is, while our teachers care about our education and push us to always do the best we can, the most important thing is our wellbeing. I feel like I am cared about more than my results by the teachers and staff in school."

Saidhbh, Transition Year

"What I think makes Salesians Secondary College different from other schools is, everyone is friendly and kind. The teachers are very approachable and go out of their way to benefit the students. There is a lovely atmosphere around the school."

Calum, 2nd Year

"The staff make the school a comfortable, friendly learning environment. As well as this the location is unique and peaceful."

Cian, Transition Year

"Salesian Secondary College is different from others because teachers and students get along better and there is more of a relaxed atmosphere."

Ciarán, 6th Year

"I like how our school ethos includes not only the students but also their family and the community working together in harmony. As I feel that this brings out the best in each individual student and benefits both the families and the wider community."

Josh, Transition Year

"I think it is the school ethos that makes our school different. As a student I know the teachers and staff are always approachable and helpful."

Anna, Transition Year

"Salesian Secondary College sets itself apart from other schools by providing an atmosphere that personally accounts for every student. No one is left in the dark and it is an outstanding facilitative environment that all schools should adopt."

Bayan, 6th Year

"There is a wider support network that not only our principal /vice principals offer but also from our teachers. It is a safe environment."

Aoife, 5th Year

"Salesian Secondary College is more than a school, it is like an extended family."

Lauren, 6th Year

"I feel what makes our school different to others is gathering every month or so in a religious capacity brings everyone together but when it is not in a religious capacity there is still a happy, friendly and inclusive atmosphere."

Emma-Kate, 6thYear

"Our school has a close relationship between students and teachers. We all look out for each other, our teachers want us all to do our best and will help us in any way they can."

Kitty-Mae, 6thYear

"I believe our Salesian school is different because it is more inviting, inclusive and accepting of all personalities than other schools. There is a great relationship between students and teachers. Our teachers are enthusiastic, helpful, approachable and very understanding."

Hannah, 3rd Year

"I think that Salesian Secondary College is different because of the sense of belonging when you walk in the front door of the school."

Billy, 2ndYear

"Salesian Secondary College is so much more different than the other secondary schools in Ireland because of how inclusive it is. The reason I say this is because most schools focus on only one aspect. Some focus only on academics while some only focus on athletics. However, this school has to be the best because there is something for everyone. For the sports enthusiasts there are various teams depending on your skill level. For the choir fans there is the school choir. For the students who are determined to make a difference there is the student council. Any bullying gets nipped in the bud almost instantly as I have seen time and time again due to my autism. There are people from different walks of life from different countries If you have special needs or disabilities (though I try not to put the "dis in my "ability") the support staff out there are warm and accepting. On a personal note this school and community is like one big family and I am lucky to be a student here."

William, 5th Year

"We all stick together as a community. We all look out for each other, even outside school."

Emma, 3rd Year

I think our school is different from other schools because there is never a negative atmosphere. I feel safe at school and I am with all my friends. All my teachers are really nice. There is not one class I dread going into because I enjoy every 40 minutes

Hollie, 2nd Year

"The religious aspect, the masses and the good relationships teachers have with students."

Katelyn, 5th Year

"Salesian Secondary College is different from other schools because it is in the countryside. I like nature and trees."

Jack, 1st Year

"Coming from a student who moved to Salesian Secondary College in 2017, Salesian Secondary College is different compared to other schools because I feel that I enjoy my time learning in school while having fun at the same time. "

Abbie, 5th Year

"I think the main difference is that the majority of all teachers caring about a student's mood and health as well as exam results and the students' friendly equal relationships with the teachers. "

Jack, 1st Year

"I think that our school is different to many other schools as our school has a shop in which many other schools may not have. I also think that we have better facilities than other schools as we have quite a few pitches and a back and front quad. "

Evan, 4th Year

"I think our friendship between each other, the different classes and years makes us a brilliant school because we are all friendly with each other and with the teachers"

Bobby, 2nd Year

"Salesian Secondary College is different to other schools because it is situated in the countryside and for us students I find that we get a lot more opportunities to learn about nature and wildlife as opposed to attending a school in the city. "

Sam, 3rd Year

"There is one clear thing I have seen that makes Salesian Secondary College different from other schools and that is the relationship between staff and students. Many schools have strict rules for small things but in our school, teachers understand and listen to students and see us as people rather than numbers on the roll. "

Adam, 6th Year

"All my friends go here. Also, everyone is sound including the priests and the teachers. "

Ciarán, 2nd Year

"I think Salesian Secondary College is different from other schools because I think the teachers interact with the students more than other school and we have a better relationship with our teachers. "

Keith, 5th Year

"I think Salesian Secondary college is different to other schools because it isn't just a school, it's a family. Sometimes you wish that you weren't part of this family, but then you realise that you couldn't live without it! Like a family the staff here will always support you and help you as much as they can. That is why our school is unique. "

Alannah, 1st Year

"Salesian Secondary College is different to other schools because of a more chilled setting with a family-like relationship. "

Jack, 5th Year

"I believe the main difference comes down to the people that are working and attending the school, this sets it aside from other schools. "

Rory, 1st Year

"What makes our school different to all the other schools is that the teachers are exceptional and they build an environment where students are not afraid to express themselves. When I first arrived at Salesian Secondary College, I was amazed at how the teachers were so nice and supportive and easy to talk to, nothing like in primary school. In primary school you would fear your principal and teachers if you messed something up or handed in an assignment late. Teachers here take into account the circumstances and are more understanding. From day one all the teachers made a huge effort to build an environment where the students are not afraid to express themselves, to create a happy and supportive environment and they all succeeded!!! This is what Salesian Secondary College is different from other schools without a doubt. "

Julianne, 2nd Year

"I think that what makes our Salesian School different from others is we all have our Don Bosco to look after us. Also, our teachers are very good to us and are always there when we need to talk. "

Lauren, 2nd Year

"In my opinion in a Salesian school it is easier to make friends that will last a lifetime than other schools. "

Michael, 2nd Year

"What makes Salesian Secondary College different from other schools is the way you can enjoy yourself while learning and having a laugh with the teachers and other people around you to make the time fly".

Ethan, 6th Year

"Salesian Secondary College is different to other schools because everyone works together to achieve something".

Lucy, 1st Year

"To me Salesian Secondary College is different because it is such a community and the second you walk in the doors you feel like you are walking into this big family. "

Andrea, 1st Year

"The atmosphere around the school is second to none, never a dull day in Pallaskenry. "

Colm, 6th Year

"I think there is a very happy and friendly atmosphere between the teachers and students. The teachers make us feel special and safe. I cannot wait to be back; I miss the fun everyone has together."

Ellen, 5th Year

"Salesian secondary college is different to other schools because we have better classes and better activities that are brilliant and fun to do."

Kevin, Transition Year

"I have been to two secondary schools and I can say for definite that what makes our school different is the friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The teachers are approachable, and they have a friendly relationship with us which makes our school special."

Mary, 6th Year

"It is different because you feel like you have a family. The teachers are really nice and supportive and help you with problems."

Sarah-Josephine, 1st Year

"Salesians secondary college is different from other schools because there is great staff and they care about everyone's wellbeing."

Sarah, 1st Year

"The positive relationship between staff and students."

Megan, 6th Year

"The fact that it feels less like a school and more like a community."

Seán, 6th Year

"What makes it different is that everyone in the school will work together or do anything for the better of the school."

Jack, 1st Year

"Our school is different from others because there is always great spirit around the school."

Lauren, 5th Year

"The thing that makes the school different from the others is that it has a big campus for the students to walk around and talk and have fun."

Scott, 2nd Year

"Salesian Secondary College is like a community where every teacher and student are there and care for each other, it is a home away from home."

Shona, 5th Year

"What makes Salesian Secondary College different to other schools is the enjoyment of learning here and the kind people that you can make friends with."

Paul, 2nd Year

"Salesian Secondary College has a very positive environment, from both students and staff, which I think is a rare quality for schools to have both."

Cathal, 5th Year

"Teachers and staff care about students and make sure they are happy and become all round better people."

Joe, 5th Year

"What I think makes Salesian Secondary College different from others is the fact that the Teachers are the friendliest you will get, and they do an excellent job at teaching me."

Rio, 1st Year

"I think that Salesian Secondary College is different from other schools because there is a great bond between students and teachers and there's always a very positive atmosphere in the school."

Kerry, 5th Year

"I think our school is different from other schools by the way teachers can interact well with all our students and they create a relatively relaxed environment for us which I think helps a lot and also I just love the freedom of having the school in the countryside. It is way more refreshing."

Eoghan, 5th Year

"Salesian Secondary College differs from many other schools (but not all) in how they engage with the students in a meaningful and personal way. Oftentimes they go above and beyond what is expected of them."

Sionna, Transition Year

What does a Salesian Education mean to me?

"Since I came here in September this school has been nothing but good to me. I have enjoyed every moment this year in Pallaskenry and I enjoy coming in everyday to my friends, definitely a change but the best change I ever made."

Liam, 5th Year

"For me it is the unique environment we spend every day in as it is calming and peaceful and makes learning that bit easier."

Jake, 3rd Year

"A laid-back atmosphere with good student-teacher relationships."

Lena, 5th Year

"As we are part of the Salesian community the morale is normally a good one. There is always a good vibe around the school."

Josh, 2nd Year

"School is the start of my journey for life and life friends that I meet along the way."

Hazel, 4th Year

"Our School communicates to the students brilliantly."

Seán, 2nd year

"When I first started Salesian Secondary school, I started to worry that I would never pass all my tests or that I would make friends. But the teachers are brilliant because the times I felt down I got help from them and the friends that I made are nice and honest. What makes a good school to work is the environment."

Evan, 4th Year

"A Salesian education helps me acquire new skills and knowledge to achieve better possibilities in career and personal development."

Niall, 3rd Year

"A Salesian education means a lot to me. But mainly it's the fact that I look forward to going to school every day so I can have a laugh and bond with my friends through every aspect of the Salesian life including in class, sport, trips abroad, lunchtime and much more!"

Ethan, 3rd Year

"Having a good education and good grades so I can be someone good in the future. Doing good in school so when I am older, I can say I went to Salesian secondary College."

Amy, 2nd Year

"A lot more room to play outside. More activity during PE classes. Easy access to the canteen. Nice separate room with lockers."

Elroy, 1st Year

"A Salesian education to me is a place where I can grow and learn as a person."

Oran 1st Year

"Salesian education means a lot to me because it has allowed me to learn a lot of life skills as well as academic skills."

Seán, Transition Year

"To me it means being able to learn and progress my learning and skills to my future career which to me means the world and I am very grateful for that."

Clodagh, 5th Year

School for me is a home away from home and a break from everything

Michael, 1st Year

"A Salesian education means that I get to learn in an environment where I am surrounded by my friends. All my teachers will help me achieve the most that I can and encourage me to work to the best of my ability."

Amy, Transition Year

"School to me is more than just exams and studying. It is about making friends and having fun!"

Owen, 6th Year

"A Salesian education is one in which we learn not only from our books and teachers but from each other and the experiences in our school careers."

Hazel, 3rd Year

"I am very grateful to be getting an education here as it is an amazing school and all the teachers and staff are so kind and helpful!"

Kirsty, 1st Year

"It's a place where I can make memories with my friends and teachers as I learn, it also makes the time much more enjoyable."

Laurnyn, 3rd Year

"School is very good to be at to socialise with others and to learn about new things."

Saoirse, 1st Year

"School means a lot to me. It is where you can learn and have fun with your friends but meet new people."

Kathlyn, 3rd Year

"A Salesian education means being part of a family where you feel like you belong."

Alice-Rose, 1st Year

"Salesian college education gives me a great opportunity of going forward in life whatever it may be that I want to achieve in life."

Tyrique, 1st Year

"I know that the school's education will help me learn and assist me in my future. The education the school supplies will teach me many subjects needed to live and work."

Lily, 2nd Year

"I think the school is such a happy place and it is very easy to be yourself. The teachers always want the best for us. I can't wait to be back; I miss the fun at break and in the mornings. I enjoy going to school because it is a very positive environment and I truly believe I blossom when I'm there."

Tara, 5th Year

"To me a Salesian education is an all rounded education. In our school every single member of staff puts 110% into caring for, supporting and educating all students. Our school is the happiest, friendliest, most loving and inclusive place anyone could imagine, filled with wonderful people. Every student is celebrated for who they are and encouraged to learn from their mistakes to fulfil their potential."

Maggie, 6th Year

"I think the school is different from other schools because it is a friendly and positive place and the teachers want the best for us."

Abbie, 3rd Year

"All the teachers are friendly and supportive and I feel like I am doing better at this school than any other school."

Caitlin, 1st Year

"The Salesian education helps a lot to prepare students for the future. The school even gives us driving lessons and very cool and interesting trips too. Teachers help us to learn new things."

Seán, Transition Year

"Salesian education for me means mutual respect and continuous help, working in a group to make sure that no one is left behind. To enhance the personal abilities of every pupil and always encourage them to give their best by always supporting them"

Salesian secondary college is an environment where everyone can express themselves as they wish, you have a lot of attention to the students and their psychological well-being. It is also a very large school where you can meet many people and make new friends."

Riccardo, Transition Year

"Salesian education means a lot to me, this is because I feel that I have learned more in the first month than I have in the previous 8 years."

Shane, 1st Year

What values is Salesian Secondary College developing in your child?

"To be hard working and honest."

Anthony, Parent.

"Our son is receiving a balanced education in SSC, taught in a caring way by teachers who are invested in the pupils' education and future. He has pride in his school through sporting teams that are open to all the students and not just exceptional athletes and many different cultural and charitable groups."

Kevin, Parent.

"I think the values that Salesian College promote are: caring for others (through a strong emphasis on charity work), being respectful of the environment, being aware of their individuality and differences."

Catherine, Parent

"My son has come out of himself so much and just loves getting up in the morning going to school helping a lot more at home and not having to ask him. I find he is thriving in all his work at school. I have a very happy young man which is everything."

Tina, Parent.

"This secondary has the values our family needs to influence our children the right way. Community, helping people to belong. Having a place in school to take a minute of their busy day, to reflect and know that even if they are alone at the time, God is with them. I don't go to church but I teach my children to pray and God is love. God is a friend who's there if you need to talk. If you have a problem, offer it up."

Burke Family.

"The values instilled in our children at Salesian Secondary College are that they have a deep caring and concern for those who have a difference of any nature. They aim to protect and advocate for these young people at all times."

Maeve and James, Parents.

"My daughters have developed so much from the friendships of other students and their teachers. They have gained so many happy positive experiences from all aspects of their time there. They have realised that teachers show so much care and will support them in everyday life. Going to school in Pallaskenry is rewarding and brings out my daughters' true personalities and they are both shining academically and socially! They both feel very much at home in Pallaskenry!"

Jessica, Parent.

"Values the school encourages would be to respect others and be mindful of others and this would be very much encouraged at home also."

Evelyn, Parent.

"Salesian Secondary College has educated, nurtured and guided my son to become a well-rounded future adult. It will be a sad day to say goodbye."

Jennifer, Parent.

"Pupils get the benefit of learning to their best ability and finding themselves in school life."

Jeannette, Parent.

"Loving Kindness embodies the wholistic approach to education that is key to Salesian Secondary College; engaging and nurturing all aspects of students including mind, body and spirit."

John, Parent and Board of Management.

"I believe my daughters are developing a good work ethic in the school."

Frank, Parent.

"Salesian Secondary College is giving my child life skills that will prepare him for college life and thereafter. He is being taught how to be independent, responsible for his actions, taking ownership, respect for his teachers and fellow students, and how hard work pays off in the long run"

Kerry, Parent.

"My son's confidence has developed with the help of staff and friends."

Sharon, Parent.

"Our children feel truly respected and accepted in Salesian Secondary College and because of this they feel valued, safe to learn, express themselves and stay true to themselves. They belong to a wonderful school community, whose ethos has taught them the importance of respect and acceptance for themselves and for others."

Grainne and Eddie, Parents.

"Both children have developed more awareness of the world around them, not just in their local area but around the globe. They are mindful of how fortunate they are to have a home and to live on this part of the world"

Colette, Parent.

"I feel my children have developed the values of friendship, teamwork, honesty of endeavour, respect, thoughtfulness, discipline and time management in Salesian Secondary College."

Patricia, Parent.

"I love how a sense of belonging and community are as important as academic achievement as is getting the best from our son. At my first experience of secondary school parent teacher meetings, I was delighted to find that all teachers were interested in how happy and settled he was in the school. This has continued this year and makes me feel that he is well looked after on all levels."

Breda, Parent

"Students are encouraged to develop all aspects of their personality / character. They are encouraged to respect themselves and to treat others with respect and kindness. They are taught to value their friendships and to watch out for each other's welfare."

Mary, Parent.

"As all the teaching staff take a wholistic approach to each student's development, their sense of self-worth is established. By supporting the student to listen and recognise their own needs, this supports us as parents and encourages the students, in their own time, to become well rounded individuals, ready to face the next steps in adulthood."

Catherine, Parent.

"Salesian Secondary College works with my child and guides him through Secondary Education in an atmosphere of mutual respect to help him achieve his full potential both academically and non-academically."

Bernadette, Parent.

"My daughter has developed as a very caring and respectful young woman. This comes from family and her many influential teachers through the years."

Sharon & John, Parents.

"I would say that respect and kindness are the values that come to mind first. Respect for teachers, as I know that the relationship between teachers and students in our school, is like no other, and this was evident from the Open Night, way back then. Companionship, kindness and self-belief are also values I can see in him."

Ann-Marie, Parent.

"My son has come a long way since attending Salesian Secondary College. He is encouraged in his weakness and his strengths."

Yvonne, Parent

"Friendship and family values are very important and play a vital role in his everyday life."

Maria, Parent

"My daughter's determination, commitment and persistence to follow through on each new challenge that comes her way shows me every day just how strong she really is. These are some of the core values which she has learned throughout her years in Salesian Secondary College."

Jackie, Parent.

"The values I feel that Salesian Secondary College in Copsewood has shared with my child are inclusion, value of individuality, kindness, community, respect, a strong awareness of health and wellness and a good sense of achievement in line with each child's level of ability."

Evelyn, Parent.

"I think the college shows empathy and understanding on a day to day basis and I think it instills those values in the children."

Catherine, Parent

"The values that Salesian Secondary College is developing in my children are broadening horizons with a wholistic approach to education and achieving ambitions."

Keith and Stephanie, Parents.

"The ethos of the school that teaches the individual, as opposed to thinking that every pupil is on the same level and has the same abilities, has greatly developed the confidence of my child."

Avril, Parent

"The values developing in my child are self-discipline, self-motivation, responsibility and creativity."

Ellen, Parent.

"Respect for others and self-confidence."

Eileen, Parent

"I believe the school is helping my daughter to understand that helping out the school and others is a positive thing."

Sorcha, Parent.

"Salesian Secondary College is developing truthfulness – to tell the truth and be responsible for their actions. Also, respect - to respect themselves and others and their belongings."

Jean, Parent.

"My child has shown the development of the following values: kindness, maturity, ability to work on her own initiative, responsibility and independence."

Kay, Parent.

"The school has developed confidence, independence, the importance of developing friendships and enjoying learning in a calm relaxed friendly school."

Sharon, Parent.

"I believe that the values my daughter is developing from Salesian Secondary College are kindness, integrity and honesty. The school is also guiding her to develop into the person she is by looking after her wellbeing while providing her with the ability to know that each person is different and that there is a place for everyone in society."

Natalie, Parent.

"I'm happy with my child's progress in school, academically as well as socially and spiritually. She understands bullying is wrong at any level and shows more empathy and kindness."

Jazreen, Parent.

"I like to think Salesian Secondary College is developing in my children: respect for themselves and others, self-worth; honesty and confidence."

Ann, Parent.

"SSC is developing a positive, inclusive, open minded and respectful mindset in my child which in turn has allowed him the freedom to be a more authentic person."

Orla, Parent.

"Salesian Secondary College has instilled in my three sons - respect, pride and what is especially apparent at the moment is resilience, determination and compassion."

Melissa, Parent.

In what way has our status as a catholic school influenced your child's school days? (This question applies equally to families of all faiths, developing or lapsed faith, or families of no faith.)

"My son likes religion class. He mentions religious topics when he watches TV. We go to Mass every Sunday, so he is aware of the bible stories. He receives Communion so is interacting with our Christian beliefs. This is due to his parents' commitment to Catholicism but also to having time in school to interact with his peers. At school, he has the environment to hear and speak about religion with young people, with topics relative to his generation and hopefully this will keep religion alive in his life. We as parents wanted a school with Catholic ethos and the school provides that."

Judy, Parent.

“Salesian Secondary College’s catholic values promote mental well-being, equality and kindness to my sons. If they are secure, safe and happy at school, this enhances their grades.”

Tina, Parent.

“His Salesian education has given my son the ability to encourage his faith and catholic values and use these and join groups like Muintearas Íosa without embarrassment. He has been encouraged to have great self-belief and be always kind and thoughtful of others.”

Anne, Parent.

“By far the most important thing for Erin was getting to take part in this wonderful Anois programme. It, and the new friends she has made through the programme have helped sustain her through this difficult, lonely (Covid-19) time.”

Jacqueline, Parent.

“My son is not ‘religious’ at all but has his own beliefs which I encourage. I still talk about God with him. I do believe the school has taught him to be more kind and understanding and to be more compassionate with people. He is a very caring person by nature, and he has blossomed so much since joining Salesian Secondary College.”

Melissa, Parent.

“I think the various services / celebrations during the school year help to copper fasten the sense of belonging to a family and has helped my children to cope in hard times and celebrate in good times, knowing that their school family is there for them.”

Catherine, Board of Management and Parent.

“Young people are valued, are precious and loved, in keeping with Don Bosco’s ethos. There is a culture of faith that is respectful and inclusive and non-judgmental.”

Mairead and Juan Carlos, Parents.

“As Muslim believers, we try our best to raise our children with the same belief. I think my daughter has a good idea of our religion. Though the Catholic and Islam faiths practice different beliefs, we definitely have similar values. As a parent, the element she learned in school helps to open her mind and be more accepting of other people regardless of their beliefs and background.”

Jazreen, Parent.

What influence does Don Bosco have in my life now, having left Salesian Secondary College?

Responses pending

As it commences its second 100 years of educating young people, what can Salesian Secondary College stand for in our community and our society?

Responses pending