



## **Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College**

### **Curriculum Statement of Intent 2025**

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College, inspired by the Christian tradition, holds at the centre of our ethos the dignity and uniqueness of each person. As a Catholic Sixth Form College, our intent is to be a centre of educational excellence for the community built on faith, love and hope. We celebrate diversity amongst all our students and staff, and we seek to nurture the gifts of each individual through high quality teaching, learning and provision of extensive individual support to enable each student to achieve their full potential. We are committed to developing the 'whole person' and 'good character' of each student through access to experiences that enable them to progress and succeed and to be the 'best they can be'. We want to challenge and motivate our students to build their skills and level of commitment so that they feel confident and able to compete with the very best in any sector. By providing students with opportunities to develop their skills, increase their confidence and resilience, raise their aspirations and broaden their awareness of careers and employability skills, we are able to motivate and inspire our students to be ambitious and to have an ethos of high aspiration to help each of them reach their potential.

Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College provides an innovative curriculum with a focus on key skills development such as project management, collaboration and communication, informed by employers and representatives from higher education. The College has a prominent cross city role through collaboration with employers, local council and both FE and HE providers.

All students develop life skills such as confidence, motivation, resilience and determination through the curriculum, of which our Stella Maris Leadership Award is integral. The College actively seeks out employers and stakeholders who understand and support the local skills needs and the local employment trends of Leeds which in turn helps to inform the responsive curriculum at Notre Dame.

Notre Dame is committed to developing the skills<sup>1</sup> required to meet the needs of the local Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan 2016-2036<sup>2</sup>; the regional<sup>3</sup> West Yorkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan and the national Skills for Jobs<sup>4</sup> through the range of programmes taught, the content and planning of the curriculum and the engagement and collaboration with employers

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.notredamecoll.ac.uk/storage/app/media/1.%20About%20Us/0.%20Key%20Documents%20and%20Policies/Documents/Accountability%20Statement%202025-2026.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lepnetwork.net/media/1119/leeds-city-region-sep.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> West Yorkshire Combined Authority Employment and Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) – Progress report, June 2024: <https://wnychamber.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/DFE-APPROVED-WY-LSIP-Annual-Report-v2-EDIT.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/601980f2e90e07128a353aa3/Skills\\_for\\_jobs\\_lifelong\\_learning\\_for\\_opportunity\\_and\\_growth\\_web\\_version\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/601980f2e90e07128a353aa3/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth_web_version_.pdf)

and stakeholders. Life skills development through the nurture of 'good character virtues' underpins the curriculum, ensuring that all students when they leave Notre Dame have the knowledge, skills and behaviour ready for life and ready for work.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and at least annually, in response to developments in local environment, government educational strategy, student and industry need. We aim to develop skills relevant to students' learning programme, their everyday lives and their plans for their next steps.

1. **All study programmes** are designed to ensure students develop an awareness of the skills and qualities needed for employment in their specific field. Students are offered extensive CIAG from pre-application through to completion of their programme of study to equip students with the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed to progress onto positive destinations. The emphasis is on ensuring the study programme meets the needs and aspirations of each student, therefore there is a great deal of flexibility when putting together a study programme.

Notre Dame is predominantly a provider of Advanced Level and T -Levels with some Applied General Qualifications at Level 3. All students study at least three level 3 subjects. The Curriculum has been designed to develop students' skills and 'good character' helping to prepare students for life beyond Notre Dame. The flexibility of the curriculum enables students a breadth of choice from A Level subjects, T-Level and BTEC/CTEC subjects, with the option to mix programmes. The College provides a one-year Level 2 Programme of Study for those students who have not quite met the entry for a level 3 Programme of Study. The L2 curriculum is designed to provide students with a fresh start, offering an Applied General qualification with English Language or Maths GCSE providing the skills to progress to either level 3 study or employment. All students who are yet to achieve a grade 4 in GCSE English Language or GCSE Maths are required to study these until they secure the required grade.

All students study Philosophy, Theology & Ethics (PTE), have a weekly tutorial in which employability skills, Prevent and British Values are embedded and are required to complete up to 3 hours of Notre Dame Plus (ND+) weekly. All students can choose to study EPQ as an addition to their core programme.

At Notre Dame we recognise the importance of supporting students throughout their studies including through times of difficulty. Our fundamental belief in Christian virtues is lived through this support which is both pastoral and academic, to reflect the students' needs throughout their study with us. Students with a learning need or disability have a bespoke learning support programme to support their studies. All students undertake a learning support diagnostic at the beginning of their programme of study to ensure any learning needs can be quickly identified and support put into place.

All T-Level students, as part of their initial assessment to the programme, complete an online psychometric skills assessment which evaluates their soft skills on entry and provides both staff and students with an overview of their starting point results. This enables staff and students to identify key areas for development from the outset, and for staff to be able to personalise the employability sessions to help further develop the students' skills. These psychometric tests are taken 3 times throughout the students' study programme, to allow

staff to monitor the impact of the employability sessions and to ensure that each student makes progress.

The learning support department also offers cross college support throughout the academic year which staff can either refer students to or students can self-refer, as and when it is needed. This includes bespoke study skills and subject specific workshops. Student support is also through the pastoral system which supports students on a daily basis, through a designated Achievement Tutor, a Wellbeing Officer, a bespoke student wellbeing hub on the website and access to a College Counsellor. At every stage we work with students to develop their resilience, courage and perseverance to help each student to fully access their education.

Through the classroom, students studying a T-Level or Applied General qualification gain the theory and through dedicated work experience or industry placement of two weeks or more, students will gain the skills employers are looking for. All students are provided with work experience opportunities which they record in their ILP on Cedar.

## 2. Personal Development

Personal development, including enrichment and employability skills are embedded throughout each subject curriculum area. The college is committed to providing for students' broader development, enabling them to discover their interests and talents.

**ND240:** Each student will have ND240 on their timetables which is at least one block of ND+ where students are actively involved or working independently. ND240 includes subject specific support to ensure students are acquiring and developing high-quality skills to produce work of a consistently high standard. Each subject will also offer subject linked enrichment to develop each students' 'love of learning' but to also further develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners need in order to take advantage of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences that prepare them for their next stage in education, training or employment. Within ND240 there are numerous opportunities to enrich learning including: visiting speakers from industry and Higher Education, preparation for entrance exams to Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry and Law, external visits to industry and participation in many subject specific enrichment activities for example Maths Challenge, Royal Society of Biology Olympiad. There are also many opportunities for students to experience enrichment outside of their subject area including various societies, clubs and both national and international trips.

**Philosophy, Theology & Ethics:** Notre Dame is not just about gaining qualifications and passing exams. We also believe in the importance of encouraging moral and spiritual growth, and developing important core skills and knowledge which add to the breadth of education. In our Catholic college, PTE (Philosophy, Theology and Ethics) is a key part of the core curriculum and all students, in both lower sixth (L6) and upper sixth (U6), are expected to attend a one-hour weekly session.

PTE stands for Philosophy, Theology and Ethics. It is an exploration of faith programme that aims to give post-16 students an opportunity to reflect on the deeper questions of life, such as who we are, why we are here, and how we want to live our lives and conduct our relationships. The emphasis in the lessons is on active participation and learning from each other, and, on occasion, visiting speakers. The importance of PTE lies in two main areas. The first is that it augments and supports the distinctive ethos of the College; that we are a

community which puts the human being at the centre of all we do, helping to develop values, attitudes and character separately from the main examination subjects. The second is that PTE is the only lesson where the students can meet people outside their chosen subjects, thus allowing them to develop wider relationships and encouraging inclusivity and understanding among our diverse student population.

To lay the foundation of a good character we believe we need to create an arena in which students gain virtue literacy through both the teaching of virtues such as respect, perseverance and responsibility and also the opportunities to practice and apply these skills in college, at home and in the community. PTE is one way that the college will do this.

**The Stella Maris Leadership Award** is based upon the Intellectual, Moral, Civic and Performance virtues, it reflects a Character Education which 'strives to enable students and all staff to grasp what is important in situations and how to act for the right reasons, such as that, they become more autonomous and reflective in the practice of virtue. Each student through the teachings in PTE, tutorial and subjects will learn about the virtues and how these can be acquired through deliberate acts. This will be enhanced further through a whole college approach.

**Tutorial Programme.** Each student has one hour per week of tutorial where they meet with their Achievement Tutor who will monitor their attendance, punctuality and achievement. The College delivers bespoke tutorial programmes for Level 2, Lower 6 and U6 students. Each programme is designed to offer our students the best and most appropriate support at the different stages in College and to ensure safeguarding and RSHE are embedded throughout the programme. The Tutorial Programme is carefully planned in conjunction with the Assembly Programme to ensure that breath of content in addition to depth of content. A dedicated part of each tutorial is the opportunity for students to spend some time in quiet reflection which is delivered through a Prayer Focus. Additionally, there is time built into each tutorial for students to reflect on their achievements, to set personal goals and to discuss these with their Achievement Tutors. The relationships between the Achievement Tutor and student are a key component of the students' support at College.

**T Level Tutorial Programme.** All T-Level students follow both the core tutorial programme and a dedicated Industry Placement Preparation programme aimed at preparing each student for their extensive assessed placement and the world of work. The programme begins with an introduction to the key staff who will be responsible for sourcing, matching, and monitoring their placements. Following this, the focus switches to key interview skills and CVs, with all students completing several online Industry programmes, as well as being supported by staff and external companies to produce a CV which will be sent to the placement companies. All T Level students prepare and undertake mock interviews with numerous employers to ensure best match of placement. Students also receive constructive mock interview feedback to inform any future interviews. The final stages of the programme switch to focus on networking, use of LinkedIn and positive career progression which are also led staff and external company providers.

**Level 2 Tutorial Programme** is designed to enable our students to progress to either a Level 3 programme, apprenticeships or employment. Works skills are delivered through bespoke sessions devised by our Careers Department, which are embedded into the Tutorial Programme. Each student is offered a work placement reinforcing the works skills

programme. Students also have a specialist revision programme to provide as much supportive preparation for their Level 2 examinations as possible, enabling successful progression on to Level 3 programmes and other progression destination. This runs alongside the core tutorial programme which includes British Values, celebrating Diversity and Prevent. A key focus on literacy is embedded throughout the programme to give extra support to access the overall curriculum and there is regular delivery from visiting Inspirational speakers who provide another source of aspiration.

**The Lower 6 Tutorial Programme** has the common core themes of the Tutorial Programme described for Level 2 with a key focus on areas essential for this stage of student's education. The Tutorial Programme starts with an induction programme where the key features are revisited throughout the year. From this there is a focus on growth mindset, positive mental health for resilience and healthy relationships. The final term focuses on HE and positive progression. The Careers Department have devised a specialist programme called CANDI – Careers after Notre Dame. This is co-ordinated with key College Events such as Higher Education Days and the Careers Fair.

**The Upper 6 Tutorial Programme** continues to deliver the core features of the Tutorial Programme. Its initial focus is progression and supporting students with their progression choices including early application to Oxbridge, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Law, all UCAS course, apprenticeships and employment. This is followed by practical financial education and planning to prepare for life after Notre Dame. Additionally, each student is actively encouraged to take up one of the numerous work placement offers from the careers department. The final stage of the Tutorial Programme is study skills which are delivered alongside a complimentary programme looking at coping with stress and mindfulness.

**The Assembly Programme** is part of each student's programme of study and is in addition to the Tutorial Programme and PTE. The assemblies are one hour and take place at key points across each academic year, timed to coincide with key needs of each year group and the catholic liturgical year. The programme is cross-curricular in design with contributions to content from SLT, Head of Students, individual departments and students, ensuring relevance and appropriateness. The Programme is evaluated every year and hence updated to ensure it continually meet the needs of our students. Key dates throughout the year are remembered including, Holocaust Memorial, Black History Month as well as key Christian Feasts including Easter and Corpus Christi.

Speakers from the community are invited to talk to students to further enrich the programme, these include charity fund raising for Leeds based charities such as St George's Crypt, Zarach and Homeless Angels.

**Individual Learning Plan.** Each student will record their personal development onto their Cedar ILP. Each student is required to regularly update their ILP and this will be a regularly discussed with their Achievement Tutor, who will also make suggestions for further development using the opportunities in and out of college.

For further information please see the College website: <https://www.notredamecoll.ac.uk/>