The Delbarton School Advisory Program Handbook

2026-2027

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Mission Statement

The Delbarton School Advisory Program seeks to facilitate the successful transition of students into and through the upper school by fostering meaningful interpersonal connection and a sense of belonging to the Delbarton community. Working through the lens of the *Hallmarks of a Benedictine School*, the grade 9 advisory program aims to build connection with the School through social and emotional skill development and strengthening of relationships with community members. In the grade 10 advisory program the theme shifts to a connection with oneself with a focus on development of personal identity, integrity, values, and purpose. The grade 11 advisory program brings together previous themes of connection to self and school and encourages integration of personal and community values and reflection on the student's journey toward graduation. During senior year the focus shifts to preparing students for life beyond Delbarton

Program Design

In accordance with the program mission, advisors are charged with developing a personal and nurturing relationship with and between the advisees. The primary catalyst for growth in these relationships comes through conversation, the focus with which may be personal, family, or school community issues. While not charged with the delivery of content, supplementary instruction, or academic skill work, advisors monitor academic progression as it relates to the transition of students into and through the upper grade levels. Advisors provide encouragement, direction, and wise counsel to advisees and liaison with guidance counselors and the parents of advisees as it pertains to student growth. In all interactions with advisees emphasis is placed on making the advisee feel seen, heard, and ultimately remembered.

The Advisory Program delivers the program's mission through two modalities: individual and group advising. Advisors, who are selected from the faculty and staff, meet twice a month with their advisee group, typically on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Advisors are also expected to have regular and ongoing individual communication with their advisees, the focus of which may include the social, emotional, behavioral, or academic life of the student. Communication with parents of advisees occurs at least once per term and on an as needed basis.

Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Dean of Guidance</u>

The Dean of Guidance oversees and evaluates the structure, personnel, and effectiveness of the advisory program. The Dean of Guidance's responsibilities include:

- Lead advisor orientation program and attend grade level advisor meetings
- Collaborate with advisory heads to make decisions about the program
- Approve program purchases
- Provide feedback and support to advisor heads and advisors
- Promote the program to current and prospective families
- Provide resources and recommendations for professional development to advisor heads and advisors
- Arrange advisories as necessary
- Evaluate faculty and staff applications to be an advisor and make selections of new advisors

<u>Advisory Heads</u>

Grade level guidance counselors serve as advisory heads and are directly responsible for advisors within their grade level. Advisory Head responsibilities include:

- Ensure adherence to program mission
- Develop advisory program curriculum and activities
- Participate in selection of advisors
- Make recommendations for advisory group composition and advisor-advisee matches

- Plan, implement, and evaluate new advisor orientation and trainings
- Serve as a mentor for advisors
- Schedule advisory group meetings and disseminate necessary materials
- Update administrative and other relevant departments regarding advisory program
- Inform parents about program themes and activities
- Lead periodic meetings of grade level advisors to discuss advisee engagement in program and overall well-being
- Communicate with Dean of Guidance about significant student, advisor, or program needs or concerns
- Maintain *Youth Mental Health First Aid* certification

<u>Advisors</u>

Advisors are selected from the faculty and staff. They are assigned to and are directly responsible for one group of approximately 12-13 students in a single grade level. Advisors remain with their assigned cohort of advisees from grade 9 through grade 11. After junior year and having completed a three-year cycle with one cohort, advisors may be invited to advise a new cohort of students in grade 9. Advisor responsibilities include:

- Support
    - Act as mentor, advocate, and role model to advisees
    - Hold periodic one-on-one meetings with advisees
- Build Community
    - Facilitate monthly advisory group meetings
    - Encourage advisees to participate in the brotherhood of the student body and the life of the school
    - Provide an environment for the advisory group that will facilitate a cohesive, supportive, peer group
    - Sit with advisees during School Masses
- Learn and Guide
    - Establish a personal relationship with each advisee
    - Learn about advisees' experiences, aspirations, and concerns
    - Identify student needs and guide them through decision-making processes
- Collaborate
    - Liaison with advisory heads and teachers
    - Attend mid-semester and end-of-semester grade level meetings
    - Facilitate mid-year and end-of-year evaluation of advisory group
- Engage Families
    - Initiate and maintain contact with parents of advisees, including one meeting per semester. (Advisors meet with their advisee's parents as a group at Back to School Night in September, fulfilling the requirement for parent contact in the fall semester..)
    - Refer parents to subject teacher, guidance counselor, moderator, or administrator, as appropriate
    - Complete Students in Need of Support reports as needed
- Advocate
    - Follow up with advisees after involvement in disciplinary matters
    - Attend disciplinary meetings as requested
- Continue Professional Development
    - Attend advisor orientation in August and periodic trainings and preparation sessions in advance of group meetings
    - Attend grade 9 class field day
    - Maintain *Youth Mental Health First Aid* certification

Procedures for Addressing Concerns with Advisees

Advisers are expected to attend to emerging issues that affect the happiness, well-being, and success of their advisees. Signs of potential problems may include difficult life events, such as death of a loved one or experiences of bullying, and changes in student's affect, family dynamics, housing status, social life, sleeping and eating patterns, and school attendance. It is the advisor's responsibility to connect with their advisee about emerging issues in a timely manner and follow-up as needed to ensure that the advisee knows support and guidance is available. In the event that the advisor becomes aware of a potential safety concern for their advisee, the advisor should immediately contact the Dean of Guidance, Headmaster, and/or other senior administrators.

Advisory Program Scope and Sequence by Grade Level

Grade Level	9
Essential Question(s)	*How do I incorporate the Hallmarks of a Benedictine School into my life?*

Themes	**Skill/Activity**
Hospitality	Goal setting; Welcoming others
Community & Stability	Interview community member
Work	Frozen penny exercise
Listening	Back-to-back exercise
Humility	Apologizing
Discipline	Munchkin exercise; Decision making
Stewardship	Gratitude exercise; Food awareness
Moral & Spiritual Development	Risky behaviors
Conversatio	Personal reflection

Grade Level	10
Essential Question(s)	*Who am I?*

Themes	**Skill/Activity**
Building Successful Habits	Goal setting; Make your bed challenge
Teamwork	NASA moon landing exercise
Dangers of Stereotyping	Secret identity exercise
Acceptance	Living your values
Learning from Failure	Marshmallow build
Risk-taking	Safe risk taking
Courage	Bystander behavior scale; Getting to know you bingo
Being Your Best	Bounce back scale; resilience
Inspiration & Resolve	Personal reflection

Grade Level	11
Essential Question(s)	*Who do I hope to become? What do I have to offer the world?*

Themes	**Skill/Activity**
Reconnecting	My Ten
Living with Purpose	My purpose diagram; types of motivation
Gratitude	How to write a thank you card/email; exploration of values
Nurturing Relationships; Creating meaningful change in the world	Words of affirmation; Challenge Card assessment
Challenges, problems and opportunities that inspire careers	Challenge Card assessment; Naviance

Grade Level	12
Essential Question(s)	*How do I transition to life after Delbarton?*

Themes	**Skill/Activity**
College applications Tolerating the unknown while applying and waiting for decisions Managing relationship with parents during the application process	Presentations from College Counselors & Dean of Guidance
Investigating majors and career paths	Complete *My Career Sketch*
Applying for scholarships	Presentation by College Counselors
Mental health and academic support on college campuses	Presentation by Dean of Guidance
Orientation to college	Presentation: Tips for a successful freshman year in college Presentation: Substance Use, Depression, and Consent Issues in college Small group discussion with first year college alums
Personal safety on college campus	Presentation by Director of Campus Security