

School Plan

Rationale

The purpose of devising and maintaining a school plan is to articulate the principles which underpin our work. It is to establish direction, parameters and methods by which we, as a Community, put these principles into action. These principles are guided and informed by relevant legislation, the life and work of our Foundress, Claudine Thevenet, our traditions and culture, and research informed best practice. As the School Plan is a reflective process it is therefore constantly subject to review and change.

Function of the School Plan is to:

- Provide a long-term vision for the school. This vision is articulated through our mission statement and realised through regular review of our practices and policies.
- Provide a structure for reporting on the work of the school through the school self-evaluation process
- Facilitate co-ordinated development of all aspects of the school community.
- Make policies and procedures available to all members of the school community and to review these at regular intervals.
- Identify our strengths and weaknesses and establish priorities for action through the school self-evaluation process
- Enhance the quality of teaching and learning through offering opportunities to reflect on and implement the most effective and engaging teaching and learning processes.
- Enhance the quality of leadership both for existing and prospective leaders

Overall the School Planning Process enables us as a school community, to take ownership of our own development and improvement, in order to achieve excellence in education.

Claudine Thévenet (1774- 1837) Foundress of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary

The primary values transmitted by Claudine are respect, justice and responsibility.

Her life and work focusses our school practice by:

- Encouraging consistent work habits in a spirit of resilience and personal responsibility for all members of the school community.
- Reminding us to continually foster warm familial interpersonal relationships which promote self-esteem, mutual respect, trust and dialogue.
- Challenging each member of the community to consistently strive for excellence.

Mission Statement

Our Lady's Grove Secondary School is a Catholic Community in keeping with the educational philosophy of St. Claudine Thevenet and the stated ethos of the school. We are committed to providing a quality education in pursuit of excellence. We endeavour to provide a teaching and learning environment which encourages the school community to develop to its full potential cognisant of all its talents and skills. We aim to work together in a safe, respectful, caring and just environment. We value the principles of mutual respect, equality and tolerance encouraging positive self-image, confidence and pride in all achievements.

Our Educational Community

The Educational Community which integrates teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and students is the unifying force which brings all educational aims and processes to life. All members are afforded the

opportunity for responsible collaboration and both our Parents' Council and the Students' Council are active in this regard. Students are encouraged to contribute to an environment that is conducive to educational development. Teachers maintain a high standard of professional competence by engaging in CPD which supports lifelong professional learning and improvement. The Community affords to all its members an opportunity for responsible collaboration in the education and personal growth of the student.

Role of the members of our community

The Trustees: Le Chêile Trust

The Le Chêile Trust was founded to ensure the availability of Catholic education into a future with reduced religious Congregations. The aim of the Trust is to carry on the legal, financial and inspirational role of trusteeship that has, up to now, been done by individual Congregations.

The Board of Management:

The Board of Management upholds the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform the conduct of the school. It is responsible for the overall governance and subscribes to and promotes the ethos of the school.

The Board supports the underlying principles of:

- Full participation for all students in the activities of the school
- Respect for diversity while maintaining the stated Catholic ethos of the school, (as evidenced by and in our policies).

Effective education involving a triumvirate relationship between the school, the student and the parents in which all parties support the ethos of the school and the recognition of our cultural values and traditions

Principal/Deputy Principal:

The Principal is responsible for the day to day management of the school, including guidance and direction of the teachers and other school staff, and is accountable to the Board for that management.

The Principal is also the leader of learning in the school and will, together with the teaching staff, articulate a coherent vision for the improvement in teaching and learning in the school.

Finally the Principal is responsible, together with all school community members, for fostering a positive attitude toward collaboration and lifelong improvement and learning among all in the school.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the same school management, and leadership of teaching and learning, under the Principal's direction.

In an event where the Principal is absent the Deputy will act up to the role of the Principal.

Teachers:

The support and participation of the whole teaching staff is crucial to the success of our School Plan. Teachers are consulted on all policy documents. Teachers lead and participate on all Boards of Studies which have a significant impact on the direction of the school.

The teaching staff, of Our Lady's Grove, aim to guide, facilitate, and encourage each student on their journey of academic and personal growth during their time in secondary school. They aim to foster a curiosity and enjoyment for each student in the process of their learning. Classes are learner centred and are focused on creating and sustaining environments that are conducive to good learning.

Students:

Students have an important role in planning within Our Lady's Grove. The Student Council are consulted on relevant policies. The prefects are a significant point of contact between the student body and the teaching staff and management. They are regularly consulted through feedback questionnaires.

The students' role is to engage consistently in the learning process. We expect them to respond to the modelled professionalism, enthusiasm, and organisation of our teaching staff by taking responsibility for continuously improving their own standard of work.

Parents

Our Parents are valued members of our school community. They are consulted and informed about policy and curricular changes and are actively informed and involved in the process of their child's education. The Parents Council are encouraged to take a leading role in informing all parents about pending changes in academic and non-academic activities in the school.

It is expected that all parents wholeheartedly support the school in its Mission Statement, ethos, and all of its academic and behavioural policies.

Facilities:

Our facilities, in addition to general classrooms, include two science laboratories, one dry lab, one Home Economics room, a computer lab, a sports hall, a Music room, an Art room, tennis courts and a hockey pitch. We have recently upgraded our top floor and are consistently seeking opportunities for future upgrades.

In the past year we have upgraded our sports facilities with a complete renovation of our sports hall. Currently a national standard all weather hockey pitch is in the process of being installed. We are in the final stages of submitting planning for a new dual purpose changing facility/common room.

Digital Learning

Our digital vision is to integrate learning and teaching technologies and specifically iPads to promote inquiring, inspired and involved learners.

To facilitate this, we are committed to policies and practices which ensure that students of Our Lady's Grove:

- engage in authentic learning experiences through the purposeful use of the iPad/technology
- are inspired to use the iPad/technology to inquire, invent and problem solve
- are supported in becoming responsible, self-directed and reflective users of technology
- are empowered to become digitally fluent through safe, balanced and discerning use of learning technologies
- employ technology constructively in collaborative learning
- can avail of and create material for differentiated learning
- have a single location in which to safely store class, homework and portfolio generated material.

Our digital vision recognises the need to provide continuing professional development for staff by providing in house support and external support where necessary and by constantly working towards improving hardware capability and reliability.

Our digital vision has at its foundation a spirit of collaboration and cooperation with parents to ensure that students use technology in a way that is safe, secure and educationally beneficial.

Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

School Improvement Plan Staff Wellbeing 23/24

These improvement ideas are as a result of the analysis of the Wellbeing Staff Survey and were discussed and agreed at the Wellbeing Board of Studies Meeting 29/05/23

The areas below are areas we identified as areas of need and that are actionable in the short term

Area: Improving Communication and access to information

Action: We will remodel the use of Croke Park hours and timetable 3 of the discretionary 10 hours. This means six 30 minute staff meetings in addition to the currently timetabled Croke Park hours. Below is the suggested timetable. It was agreed that to ensure the meetings be purposeful they need to be structured. Each 30 minute slot could begin with a brief (5 minute) housekeeping update from management followed by a brief (2 minute) update from YHs and a brief (2 minute) focus on whole school guidance/student support. Note: There is no expectation that YHs would give updates at every meeting rather the time is to be used when needed and purposefully.

Midterm and Christmas:

- September 13th
- October 25th
- December 13th

Review: An anonymous survey will be distributed in December to establish if the meetings address the area of need and based on the outcome of that review, a decision will be taken as to whether to continue with the meetings in the second half of the year.

- Suggested January 24th
- Suggested Feb 28th
- Suggested April 24th

To further improve communication streams, the following areas need agreement at staff meeting at the start of the new academic year.

- How we use compass calendar etc?
- Whether we could email admin/Grace to upload to calendar?
- Establish what communication streams are used for what information e.g. Teams, Email, Compass
- Old teams and old information re examinations etc. to be deleted as each session ends.

Area: Supports for New Staff

Action: Principal will survey retained new staff to establish how best to improve support for new staff. An anonymous survey is suggested using three questions and the results to be shared with and analysed by Senior Management, the Droichead coordinator and Wellbeing Board. Time Frame: End of August, start of September.

- What supports worked?
- What would you change?
- Any suggestions?

Area: Opportunities for Staff Connections

Action: The aim is to improve integration of staff groups through the following actions.

- Staff School Social activities groups will be organised based on random selection (names from a hat) and groupings will be changed for each activity.
- The budget for wellbeing activities needs to be determined and then some of it used on weekly staff coffee/lunch breaks for the month of September. This will be reviewed depending on the budget and the effectiveness of it.
- The wellbeing board will change the furniture and layout in tea room.
- The wellbeing board will in September survey to staff to establish how best to use the spaces available for staff e.g. bigger social space and two small work spaces.

Area: Provision of Milk in the staffroom fridge.

- Colm will bring the milk up every day. If there is no milk in the Fridge, please inform him.

Section 2: Inter Staff Relationships

The analysis of the survey revealed a need to address a number of areas in the domain of inter staff relationships. The board acknowledge that many issues arose in the survey that may necessitate deeper group processing work and is open to exploring what this might involve external facilitation. However we feel the awareness brought about through the completion and sharing of the survey results with the whole staff may already have lead to improvements. We would like to start the new academic year with the simple actions below to see if improvement occurs. Perhaps a revamped professional space and enhanced self and group awareness may lead to improved inter staff relationships.

Area: Welcoming new members and creating a positive staff dynamic

Actions/Suggestions/opportunities

- Cakes every Friday for September wellbeing budget
- On site staff activity: Rounders at start of year
- Off-site optional suggested staff activity such as Coffee and Pizza nearby.
- Staff Meetings in a classroom rather than the work room with staff sitting in a U
- Change the furniture in the tea room and add art work that encourages positivity.
- Social Calendar Birthday Roll

Overall Review: February 2024 (During the mock examinations).

The SSE coordinator(s) together with the Wellbeing Board of Studies will survey staff regarding the implemented changes.

May 2022 Introduction

This document records the SSE work undertaken from September 2021 to May 2022. It outlines the areas evaluated, the findings of this self-evaluation and our current improvement targets and plan.

1.1 Areas of evaluation

Wellbeing

After staff discussion on the framework and policy document for Wellbeing the staff selected the following areas for review this year:

Key Area 1: Culture and Environment

- The relationship between academic achievement and a child/young person's wellbeing is understood by all children and young people and staff in the school.

Key Area Two: Curriculum Teaching and Learning

- Teachers design and prepare for differentiated teaching methods and assessment of learning outcomes for children and young people at risk or with additional and/or complex needs so that they experience a sense of achievement.

Key Area Three: Policy and Planning

- School leaders and management recognise the importance of staff wellbeing and the particular challenges that can occur in a school environment and have systems in place to support all members of staff.

Key Area Four: Relationships and Partnerships

- School leaders and management acknowledge the importance of staff wellbeing and promote this in a variety of ways including recognition of the value of staff contribution and their work.
- Relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of agreed formal and informal structures, such as student councils, prefect systems, buddy systems, mentoring systems, assemblies, newsletters, student journals and through teaching and learning

1.2 Process

The Wellbeing board together with the SSE coordinators facilitated two planning sessions on these chosen areas. The purpose was to create evaluative material to include in a survey for students, the aim being to allow us to identify the areas where our practice is effective or highly effective together with areas for improvement (see attached survey). The areas relating to Staff will be addressed sept 2022

This survey was completed during school time in May 2022 which ensured a very high response rate. The SSE coordinators analysed the data (please see attached findings).

1.3 Summary Findings of the Quantative Analysis

- 80% of our students reported an understanding of the relationship between wellbeing and academic achievement
- 80% reported an awareness that their feelings/emotions impact how they perform in class, and they feel good about themselves when they perform well in schoolwork
- 60% reported that they feel able to manage challenges in academic work, 20% were unsure and 20% feel unable to manage challenge
- 70% of students agree strongly that the school caters for their academic needs while 15% disagree
- 50% of students feel that the teaching methods uses are designed to meet individual needs while 60% feel that assessment practices are designed to meet individual student needs
- 60% feel that the teaching methods use meet the needs of all levels of ability in the class and because of same enjoy the class.
- 65% have reported that they have experienced teachers adjust their styles to ensure that all students are supported
- 70% report being engaged and motivated in lessons while 10% are not and 20% are unsure
- 70% reported that teaching and learning supports relationships and partnerships in the school
- 85% of students reported awareness of the formal and informal structures in the school that support their wellbeing and relationships e.g., student council, prefect, buddy/mentor system, green council, assemblies, newsletters etc. and 70% have participated and contributed to the above structures.
- 75% reported that they feel the above structures support relationships and partnerships in the school

Summary findings of the qualitative analysis are attached. This yielded very rich insight into the areas evaluated. It was particularly revealing in the context of the disruption to school and home life experienced by the students due to the pandemic. The consequences on wellbeing were evident and varied. Therefore our summary findings (see attached) are recorded by year group.

A planning session was facilitated by the SSE coordinators with the Wellbeing Board and Principal and improvement areas identified. Based on the findings Sixth, Transition and Second year were identified as priorities. See below. The findings regarding other year groups can be revisited as part of the ongoing SSE cycle.

1.4 Plan for improvement

Sixth Years 2022/23 (This cohort reported feeling significant academic and personal stress and strain.)

- Summer reporting 2022. This group will need detailed advice on where they are on their senior cycle academic journey together with feedback on how to reach their personal potential. The aim here is to address the uncertainty they feel due to the huge step up in content difficulty for senior cycle bearing in mind that they did not sit the Junior Cycle Exam and missed out on the natural maturity which occurs in TY.
- Groupings. Students suggested that smaller class sizes and similar ability groups would enhance their learning. Management to review same.
- Study skills/Time Management. The possibility of engaging an outside body to deliver a session on same was discussed. The principal and the Wellbeing Coordinator will explore this further aiming for September 2022.
- Mentoring. In response to students feeling ill-equipped for Senior Cycle a mentoring system was proposed whereby students self-select to participate and teachers who volunteer would assist them

Transition Year

Improvements to Transition Year are also the remit of the TY team and are currently subject to national review. Therefore, our improvement planning, while focused on wellbeing is undertaken in this context.

- The principal will communicate by letter to parents outlining our changes/improvements when these are finalised.
- Due to the pandemic and lost learning time, the TY programme needs a rebalancing in order to address the academic shortfalls and prevent possible consequential stress when faced with Senior Cycle material.
- Subject departments are undertaking a review and an update of planning material to attempt to close the learning gaps between Junior and Senior Cycles.
- As students reported that their wellbeing was enhanced by the varied extracurricular and sporting opportunities experienced, every effort will be made to protect and enhance these experiences and to ensure a balanced programme

Second Year

The surveys revealed that this year group experienced significant/overwhelming work overload which resulted in stress and uncertainty. Following discussion, changes are planned to the assessment aspect of this year. The summative element of the assessment programme in Second Year will be reduced by 50% to allow for CBAs to be scheduled evenly throughout the year. The aim is to avoid over assessment and prevent the negative effects of same on students' wellbeing.

2.1 SSE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Update and Plan

The focus for next year is as follows:-

- Continue to embed Learning Outcomes to Learning Intentions process in planning and teaching
- Focus on assessment and on linking success criteria and assessment directly to learning intentions.
- If students know what they are going to learn, why they should learn it and how they will recognise when they have succeeded, they will be in a position to take more responsibility for their learning and achieve greater learning independence.

One of the SSE Coordinators prepared, designed, and presented a First-Year English sample module of work. The purpose of this was to promote professional dialogue amongst the Teaching and Learning Board members. The aim was then that the board members would adapt for their subject department areas. In a planning session, they in turn explained and developed the methodology as appropriate to their area.

2.2 Improvement Planning for 2023/24

Subject departments led by coordinators will continue this process and the target is to see this evidenced in the subject department folders.

The development of this will be movement towards improved student autonomy and independence in their learning journey.