

ST. AIDAN'S



St. Aidan's Comprehensive School

School Prospectus

Ethos and Philosophy

The aim of St Aidan's is to provide an enriching environment for the academic, moral, spiritual and social education of our students and to nurture the growth and development of all students.

The school ethos is Christian and inclusive where every individual is respected.

The curriculum is designed with the modern world in mind and students are equipped with the necessary life skills.

The school is managed by a Board of Management and offers a Christian environment, fostering the emotional, moral and social development of students.

The school provides:

- academic excellence within a caring environment
- committed, experienced and well-qualified staff
- a student support team
- a Code of Behaviour based on respect and responsibility
- extensive educational facilities
- a broad extra-curricular programme.

First Year Planning

Induction from primary to secondary school is a priority at St Aidan's. Our aim is to make this transition as smooth as possible. All incoming first year student's avail of the following:

- Preliminary visits to the primary school by staff and current 1st year student
- Open/Enrolment Day
- Standard Ability Testing
- Induction meeting for Parents
- First Year Only orientation days in August and September

Subject Sampling is available for all incoming first years.

Big Brother/Big Sister programme – 5th Year students are assigned with the responsibility of ensuring the successful integration of new 1st years into our school.

Outdoor Pursuits and self-esteem days are organised to address issues of confidence building; motivation, study skills; bullying and help students to get to know each other.

Transition Year

Transition Year is a very successful and worthwhile programme in St Aidan's. It provides students with a bridge to enable them to make the transition from Junior to Senior Cycle. TY encourages personal and social development and recognizes the need for students to grow and learn both independently and as part of a team. Transition Year fosters academic achievement as students prepare for the Leaving Certificate Programme, further study and adult and working life. It encourages the development of a wide range of transferable critical thinking and creative problem solving skills. Various activities are undertaken annually in Transition Year such as trips abroad, field trips, leisure activities, ECDL training, mini-enterprises, Young Social Innovator Competition, Guest speakers, Youth for Justice Programme, Let's Look at the Law Programme, Chess competitions, Work Experience and various other training and certification activities are held both within and outside school.

School Tours

School Tours have a strong tradition at St Aidan's. The tours offer students the opportunity to travel abroad to such places as Italy, Spain, France, Prague, Austria and many other destinations. Students can avail of many opportunities to go on subject related field trips, both at home and abroad.



Whole School Academic Mentoring Programme

St Aidans operates an exciting and innovative 'Academic Student Mentoring' programme which focuses on those students in the final year of their Junior and Leaving Certificate course with the primary aim of ensuring that every student achieves their own individual academic potential in the state examinations. Its design and implementation reflects a real and proactive attempt to further improve the high standards of academic achievement that exists in St Aidans.

Purpose and aims

- To provide support, guidance and practical advice ensuring students achieve their academic potential in the state examinations.
- To give Parents greater involvement in their son/daughters learning so that they in turn can provide more focused support and guidance.
- To strengthen and enhance the partnership between parents and the school.
- To empower students and their parents through the setting of individual academic targets.
- To ensure that the importance of the state examinations is to the forefront of student thoughts throughout their 3rd and 6th year.
- To identify and address problems and concerns quickly and in a non-confrontational way.
- To allow all students to experience success through the achieving of their own targets.
- To remind students that the school and the teachers really care about them and want them to do their best.
- To ensure that all students achieve their full potential.

A substantial body of research exists in support of such a target setting approach and similar programmes in other educational jurisdictions have proven highly successful in raising student achievement.

The programme operates as follows:-

- Each 3rd and 6th year student has been assigned a Teacher Mentor with whom they meet formally throughout the school year.
- Parents are formally invited (encouraged) to attend the meeting.
- At the first Mentoring meeting, the students set their own individual academic targets and identify steps/actions required to achieve them.
(This will be done with the support, advice and guidance of their Teacher Mentor and Parent)
- In subsequent Mentoring meetings, these targets are reviewed and the student will decide whether to continue with or amend the existing targets, or to set new ones where the original targets have been fully achieved.
- There are a number of meetings scheduled at specific times throughout the school year.
- In advance of each Mentoring meeting, teachers convene, outside of school hours, to discuss the individual needs of each student, determine the success or otherwise of previous targets and suggest practical and realistic ways for the students to improve their grades.

Positive and constructive feedback from this meeting will be given to the student which can then assist and inform the target setting process that follows.

St Aidan's deeply values the involvement of parents in this process and in all other aspects of their son/daughters educational experience. As our partners in education we view their contribution as fundamental to the impact and effectiveness of the programme.

Code of Behaviour

Respect is the principle at the heart of school life in St Aidan's Comprehensive School. Respect for self, others, and the school community is the key to building a school community where all feel secure and have a sense of belonging. All who come to school at St Aidan's have the right to learn and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Good discipline practices create the conditions for effective learning and help to develop student's responsible attitudes and values for life. The Code of Behaviour at St Aidan's states that all have a responsibility to uphold this very important principle.

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team monitors the academic and personal development of individual students. A Tutor is assigned to each class. The Tutors look after daily registration and take a particular interest in the well-being and progress of our students in their tutor group.

The Year heads have responsibility for a year group, monitoring behaviour, well-being and student welfare. They liaise with the Special Needs Educational Team, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal. All are available to assist parents and students to make the most of their time at school. Prefects and mentors also play an important role in supporting students and work closely with Tutors and Year Heads.

The Student Support Team, comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor and SEN Team, meet weekly to discuss and promote student wellbeing and care.

Career Guidance and Special Needs Education

The individual needs of our students are paramount in drawing up a programme of learning specific to each student.

A well-staffed student support team, including special educational needs personnel, provide a variety support to students.

The school has a full-time Career Guidance Counsellor who advises and guides students on a range of further education or career options. The Careers Library is a research resource available to students. Confidential, professional counselling is also available to students where appropriate.

Parental Involvement

There is an active Parents' Association in the school. The school enjoys a close working relationship with parents. Parents organise many activities in support of the school. Ongoing parent-teacher contact is maintained through the School Journal System and Parent – Teacher meetings and individual appointments.

Written Progress Reports are sent home at the end of each term.

There is also a first year parents' induction evening.

Prior to the Junior Certificate examinations, there is an information evening for parents and students from third year to discuss Senior Cycle options.

A number of information evenings for parents of Leaving Certificate students are arranged to present the necessary information regarding third level options, study skills, completing CAO and European University applications and various means of financial support.

A meeting with Year Heads can be arranged by contacting the general office.



Student Council

The Student Council is a representative body within the school. It consists of 14 elected members, representing each year group. The role of the Student Council is an important one as it provides a voice for students and enables them to become involved in the affairs of the school. The Council works in partnership with school management, staff and parents. It works by promoting greater school spirit and identifying ways to enable students become more involved in school life.

Supervised Study

All students may avail of after-school study for two hours each evening. Study is strictly supervised by teachers.

Student Support Services

Special Education Support
 Team Teaching (A co-operating teacher present in many lessons)
 Dedicated Wellbeing Team
 Student Support Team
 Guidance Counsellor
 Chaplain
 School Prefects (Senior and class)
 Bus Prefects
 Sports' Council
 Students' Council
 Academic Mentor Programme
 Friends First programme
 Big Brother/Big Sister
 School Meals Programme: Breakfast Club/Lunch Club
 Workshops – Self Esteem, Anti-bullying, Study, Personal Awareness
 Supervised evening study

Information Technology

With three fully equipped computer suites, all students have an opportunity to develop their ICT skills. Laboratories are equipped with laser printers, scanners and multimedia computers.

Other facilities at St Aidan's include:

- Technical Graphics room equipped with PC's and TG software.
- E-portal linking Parents with the school.
- Interactive whiteboards in many of the classrooms.
- Broadband available throughout the school.
- Teachers' computer in each classroom.

All students in Transitions Year are offered the ECDL course, an internationally recognised qualification in computing. The school library has a fully computerised cataloguing system. Students have their own barcode for the library and their own e-mail address.

The school website is updated regularly.

Awards

Academic Awards are presented to students in Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate who have attained excellence in various subject areas.

Merit System

St Aidan's values the importance of rewarding positive behaviour and the achievement of success. Pupils are therefore awarded bronze, silver or gold merits throughout the year according to their levels of achievement. There are substantive prizes awarded at the end of the academic year for pupils who have accumulated the most merits.

COURSES

Junior Cycle
Transition Year
Leaving Certificate

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)
ECDL

Junior Cycle Subjects

Gaeilge
English
Mathematics
French
German
Spanish
Science
History
Geography
Art
Business Studies
Home Economics
Music
Technical Graphics
Materials Technology [Wood]
Metalwork
Religious Education

Well-being
- SPHE
- CSPE
- PE

Short Courses:
- Digital Literacy
- Coding

Leaving Certificate Subjects

Gaeilge
English
Mathematics
French
Spanish
German
Biology
Chemistry
Physics
Agricultural Science
History
Geography
Art
Business
Accounting
Home Economics Social & Scientific

Music

Design & Communication
Computer Science
Graphics
Construction Studies
Engineering
Physical Education
Religious Education
Guidance

Programmes
- LCA
- LCVP

Extra Curricular Activities

St Aidan's endeavours to help all student to develop both academically and personally. To this end, the school encourages participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

A sample of these activities are as follows:

- Gaelic Football
- Cross Country
- Foreign Language Exchange
- Fund raising for Charity
- Soccer
- Mini-Enterprises
- Debating: Irish and English
- Gaisce – President's Awards
- Hurling
- Badminton
- Young scientist

- Chess Club
- Racquet Ball
- Public Speaking
- Traditional Music
- Basketball
- ECDL
- European Tour
- Drama Workshops
- Table Tennis
- Squash
- Quizzes
- Field Trips
- Art Exhibitions

- Athletics
- Outdoor Pursuits
- Health Promoting School project
- School choir
- Computer Club
- Photography
- Volleyball
- Green Flag Campaign
- Stars in Your Eyes
- Drive for Life
- European Studies
- First Aid
- Christian Union





Our Crest

While St. Aidan's is relatively modern in inception, it still pursues ideals that have their roots far back in the history of education, through both the European classical tradition and also in the Irish context which can proudly be traced back to the scholars of the pre-Christian era in this country. The School Crest of St Aidan's was designed with some of these concepts in mind.

The elements of the logo are contained within a circular structure, the circle itself representing continuation – within the circle the main motifs used are the key, which readily suggests that education is a key which has the potential to unlock the unknown and thereby become the key to life itself.

To enhance this notion it overlaps and connects with an open book, a symbol of learning. Combined with these two symbols are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – Alpha and Omega- from first to last. To complete the classical reference Roman numerals have been used to denote the year 1966 – the year in which the school opened its doors for the first time.

The School Crest was designed by Mr David Gallagher, Art Teacher.

History of St Aidan's

St Aidan's was officially opened in September 1966 by the then Minister for Education, Mr Donagh O'Malley. It replaced the two existing schools in the town at the time – the local Vocational School and a private Secondary School, St Michael's. It was intended to service the community in the Cavan- Monaghan border area and its hinterland and was built to accommodate about 400 pupils.

However, almost twice as many enrolled in the first year and the enrolment has remained consistent. It is a co-educational, post primary school, providing a wide range of educational experiences and opportunities.

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