

# Update on Teaching & Learning Initiatives in St Aidan's Comprehensive School



# INFORMATION UPDATE

#### **Attendance**

"the best gift that anybody can give to a child is to offer a child the opportunity to fulfill his or her full potential"000

Eibhlin Byrne, Director Education Welfare Services

St Aidan's has a School
Attendance Policy in
place because we want to
foster an appreciation of
learning among students
and encourage regular
and punctual attendance
at school. It is essential
that students attend
school every day and for
the whole day.

Non-attendance means vital elements of a topic are missed and when students return to school there are serious gaps in their learning. Topics will never again be covered with the same deliberation as on the first time it is taught.

Non-attendance then impacts on students' performance in those subjects missed. This will be reflected in student attainment in in-house and state examinations. In the Senior Cycle non-

attendance is the single largest cause of poor performance and attainment.

Other activities that impact may be a student's involvement in extracurricular activities eg. Sport. Students must ensure that they are doing assigned homework for classes missed due to their attendance at games etc.

We are tracking nonattendance and where appropriate text messages are sent home. Tutors and Year Heads will speak to students with high levels of absenteeism. It is school policy that the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) will be informed where students have a high level of unexplained absenteeism.

We would ask that you as parents work with us in ensuring that your son/daughter attends school all day every day.

#### **New Junior Cycle Update**

St Aidan's was nominated as a Pilot School (one of

48) for the new Junior Cycle (JC) in 2012.

Mr Andrew Mayne - was the designated school coordinator and a working party was set up. Mr Mayne attended the external continuing professional development training (CPD) and then led inhouse CPD with all staff.

In 2012 / 2013
Ms Denise Kelly-New JC
Framework Coordinator
did an in-service with the
whole staff, giving an
overview of the vision
behind the new JC,
Statements of Learning
and Key Skills. (attached).
Subject Departments
worked on incorporating
Key Skills and Statements
of Learning into subject
plans.

During 2013 /2014 the working party looked at the implications for the whole school of the new JC in terms of time-table / resources / planning / assessment and ongoing CPD as new subjects were introduced. A curriculum review group was set up to specifically look at changes to curriculum and timetabling.

For 2014/2015 the staff worked on possible short courses that could be offered and we began a module on Healthy Lifestyle, an Arts & Crafts module and Internet Safety module in 1st Year. Subject Departments incorporated the Statements of Learning & Key Skills in their planning for the classroom.

# Arrangements for the New JC - 2017/18

Revised specifications for subject areas were introduced on a phased basis from

2014 English
2016/17 Science,
Business
2017/18 Irish,
Modern Languages
(French,
German,
Spanish)
Visual Art
Well-being

2018/19 Maths,
Home Economics,
Music,
History,
Geography.
Assessment will be partly school based and there will be a final examination. The time allocation for subjects will also alter and the length of state exams will be shorter. A new subject area Well-being

began in 2017 Well-being covers SPHE, CSPE, PE and other areas of learning that relate to mental health and well-being covered in school. All students must take the well-being courses.

Having completed three years of study, each subject will then be reported on using the new Certificate. The Junior Certificate Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

#### Assessment

#### <u>Classroom Based</u> Assessments (CBA'S)

Generally one in 2<sup>nd</sup> and one in 3rd year

These are to be written and completed in class to a national timetable. Teachers assess using descriptors as follows:

Exceptional
Above Expectation
In-line with
Expectations
Yet to meet
Expectations.

## Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLAR's)

Meetings are held with other teachers in the subject to discuss assessment of CBA's. These meeting will help to ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment of students learning.

#### Assessment Task (AT)

These tasks are issued by the State Exams Commission (SEC) and completed under the teacher's supervision within a given time frame They will be related to the 2nd CBA and based on activities to be completed by students as part of their study of a particular subject specification. The State Exams Commission (SEC) will mark this and the results will be included as part of the final exam. A separate assessment task will not be required in practical subjects where there is a practical exam already.

#### **Final Exam**

This is marked by the SEC, and will be no longer than 2 hours, in June of 3rd Year. Exams will be at common level except for Irish, English, Maths where there will be two levels, Higher and Ordinary. The results will be included on a new certificate called the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) to be issued from the school within the calendar year of the examination

#### Grades used are

Distinction 90-100
Merit 55-75
Partially Achieved 20-40
Achieved 40-55
Not graded 0-20

Reasonable Accommodations still apply.

#### What is on the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

 The SEC final Exam Grade this includes the Assessment TASK (AT)

- The Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) x2
- Level 2 learning programmes where appropriate (SEN)
- Well-Being from 2020
- Other areas of learning may also be included.
- A copy of what the new certification (JCPA) may look like is attached.

 Schools will be closed for a number of inservice days over the next few months.

To date, we know that we will be closed for inservice on

Monday 29th January 2018 and Wednesday 31st January 2018.

#### THE JUNIOR CYCLE KEY SKILLS

#### MANAGING MYSELF

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

#### STAYING WELL

- Being healthy, physical and active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

#### COMMUNICATING

- Listening and expressing myself
- Using language
- Using numbers and data
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

#### BEING CREATIVE

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

#### WORKING WITH OTHERS

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

#### MANAGING INFORMATION AND THINKING

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising, and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content







# Statements of Learning

#### The student

- 1 communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1\*
- 2 listens, speaks, reads and writes in L2\* and one other language at a level of proficiency that is appropriate to her or his ability
- 3 creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
- 4 creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved
- 5 has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making
- 6 appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
- 7 values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
- 8 values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change
- 9 understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
- 10 has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably
- 11 takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others
- 12 is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active
- 13 understands the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices
- 14 makes informed financial decisions and develops good consumer skills
- 15 recognises the potential uses of mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning
- 16 describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships
- 17 devises and evaluates strategies for investigating and solving problems using mathematical knowledge, reasoning and skills
- 18 observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid deductions and conclusions
- 19 values the role and contribution of science and technology to society, and their personal, social and global importance
- 20 uses appropriate technologies in meeting a design challenge
- 21 applies practical skills as she/he develop models and products using a variety of materials and technologies
- 22 takes initiative, is innovative and develops entrepreneurial skills
- 23 brings an idea from conception to realisation
- 24 uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner

'L1 is the language medium of the school (Irish in Irish-medium schools). L2 is the second language (English in Irish-medium schools).

15. All parts of this examination were assessed except for the testing of graphical skills in the written paper.

All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the project element.

- 6. All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and some grammatical elements.
  - All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the reading element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and written punctuation elements.
  - 3. All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the practical element.
    - All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the aural element.

Explansition of the various numeric codes that accompany a grade in any case where an element of the examination was not assessed:

full and accurate reflection of the candidate's performance in the examination.

Inclusiveness and transparency are core principles underprinning the Jurilor Cycle Examination. In certain circumstances it is open to a candidate to choose to have his/her result in a particular subject based upon all except some element of the examination in that subject. The Commission emphasises that in all cases the grade awarded is a

#### Inclusiveness measures in the State Examinations

|  | 01 > bns 0 ≤                   | Not Graded (NG)    |               |                    |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| recorded on the JCPA as 'Achieved'.              | <pre>&gt; 10 and &lt; 25</pre> | 4                  |               |                    |
| Achievement in PLUs and Level 2 short courses is | 2 25 and < 40                  | 3                  |               |                    |
|  | 22 > bns 0₽ ≤                  | a                  | 02 > bns 0 ≤  | Not Graded (NG)    |
| term 'Not Reported' is used.)                    | 07 > bns ≥≥ ≤                  | Э                  | 0₽ > bns 02 ≤ | Partially Achieved |
| Assessment has not been given to a student, the  | 28 > bns 0√ ≤                  | 8                  | 2≥ > bns 04 ≤ | Achieved           |
| (Where a descriptor for a Classroom-Based        | 00f of 28 ≤                    | A                  | 27 > bns 22 s | Merit              |
|  | Percentage                     | Grade Descriptor   | 06 > bns 27 ≤ | Higher Merit       |
| Yet to Meet Expectations                         |                                |                    | 2 90 to 100   | Distinction        |
| In line with Expectations                        | F = Foundation Level           |                    | Percentage    | Grade Descriptor   |
| Above Expectations                               |                                | C = Common Level   |               |                    |
| Exceptional                                      | O = Ordinary level             |                    |               | O = Ordinary level |
|  |                                | H = Higher Level   |               | H = Higher Level   |
| nescubrots tot subjects and snort                | ects                           | For all other subj |               | For English 2017   |

Grading of the Final Examination for subjects at Level 3 of the NFQ

NFQ.

This Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement records student achievement in subjects and short courses broadly aligned to Level 3 of the Mational Framework of Qualifications (MFQ), and Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and short courses broadly aligned to Level 2 of the

Classroom-Based Assessment

UNDERSTANDING YOUR JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT ( JCPA )

#### JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT



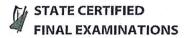
**Anytown Secondary School** 

# **Anytown Secondary School**

This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

# John Kelly

DOB: 21 June 2001



#### **Classroom-Based Assessments - English**

| Evam | insti | on nu | mhar. | 45 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|----|

456985

| English (O)          | Distinction | Oral Communication                      | Exceptional        |
|----------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|
|                      |             | Collection of Texts                     | Exceptional        |
| Irish (O) (2)        | В           | Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Cou | rses               |
| Mathematics (H)      | В           | Coding                                  | Above expectations |
| History (H)          | С           | Physical Education                      | Exceptional        |
| Geography (H)        | D           |   |                    |
| French (O) (2)       | С           |   |                    |
| Business Studies (H) | В           |   |                    |
| Science (H)          | В           |   |                    |
| Technology (H)       | В           |   |                    |
| C.S.P.E. (C)         | Α           | Other Areas of Learning                 |                    |
|                      |             |   |                    |

**Principal** 

Year Head

**Roll Number:** 

60090Q

Ms Mary Ryan

Religion (H)

Mr. Jack Quigley

Anytown Secondary School Anytown, Co. Anytown

V94 HXW5







#### Well-Being

In 2017, the Department of Education and Skills introduced the subject area, Well-being. Well-being "is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical well-being, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community"

St Aidan's have always placed student welfare and happiness at the core of its mission and ethos. The school has a very strong Pastoral Care structure of Tutors / Year Heads that care for our students.

With this new initiative the Department plans to streamline and create a clear framework on the many initiatives schools are involved in which aim to care for and improve students mental health and wellbeing.

Well-Being encompasses Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) Civic Social Political Education (CSPE) and Physical Education (PE).

All students must study the above subjects. Also included in Well-being are various initiatives / structures / procedures designed to look after the health and well-being of students, these include Study Skills, Internet Safety, Big Brother / Big Sister, Friends First Programme, Registration class. Mental Health Awareness and Anti**bullying Awareness** weeks, Guest speakers, Project Work etc. The Department has developed what they call indicators of well-being i.e. how students determine their wellbeing. These indicators are:

- Active
- Responsible
- Connected
- Resilient
- Respected
- Aware

A diagram to explain the indicators is attached. Well-Being will be assessed for the first time in 2020.

# School Development Planning (SDP)

This planning process has been on-going in schools for the past fifteen years.

With the need for schools to have policies and procedures in place for legislative and Health and Safety reasons. Our school developed an SDP team who are leading the planning process with staff.

Working parties of staff developed a variety of

policies using templates. Once a policy was developed by a working party, it then went through a consultation process where staff, parents and students were asked to review.

The policy was reviewed in light of the feedback and then sent to the Board of Management for their review. When satisfied with the policy the Board of Management formally approved it. Policies are reviewed on an ongoing basis. A list of school policies may be found on the school website.

# School Self-Evaluation (SSE)

Schools have been involved in a process of evaluation through the review of curriculum, procedures and policies on an on-going basis.

However in 2012, the Department of Education and Skills introduced School Self-Evaluation (SSE) on a formal basis into the Irish School system. What is SSE? "A collaborative, reflective process of internal school review, focused on school improvement. It further develops the school's development planning process and puts the



#### ACTIVE

- Am I a confident and skilled participant in physical activity?
- How physically active am !?

## INDICATORS OF WELLBEING



### RESPONSIBLE

- Do I take action to protect and promote my wellbeing and that of others?
- Do I make healthy eating choices?
- Do I know where my safety is at risk and do I make right choices?



#### CONNECTED

- Do I feel connected to my school, my friends, my community and the wider world?
- Do I appreciate that my actions and interactions impact on my own wellbeing and that of others, in local and global contexts?



## RESILIENT

- Do I believe that I have the coping skills to deal with life's challenges?
- Do I know where I can go for help?
- Do I believe that with effort I can achieve?



## RESPECTED

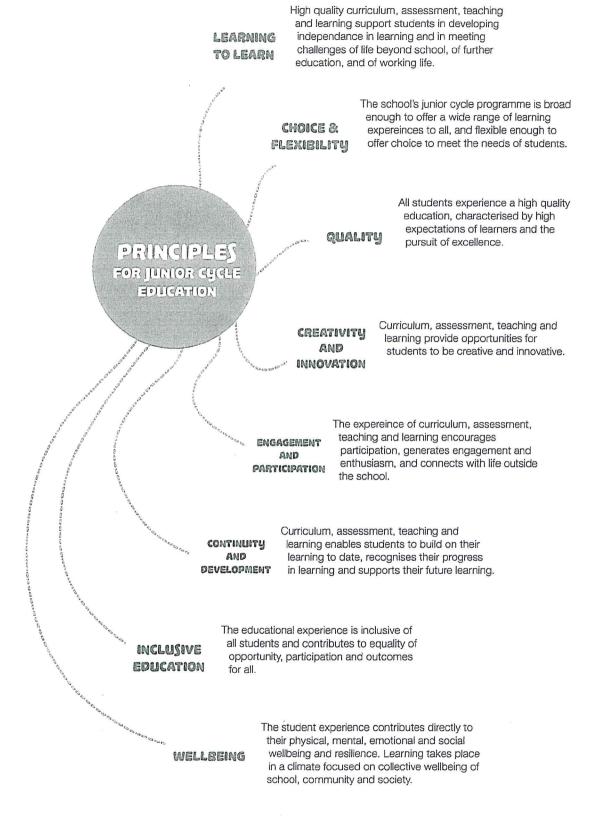
- Do I feel that I am listened to and valued?
- Do I have positive relationships with my friends, my peers and my teachers?
- Do I show care and respect for others?



#### AWARE

- Am I aware of my thoughts, feelings and behaviours and can I make sense of them?
- Am I aware of what my personal values are and do I think through my decisions?
- Do I understand what helps me to learn and how I can improve?

#### : Principles for junior cycle education



focus firmly on teaching and learning" School Self-Evaluation is a 6 step process

- Identify / focus on an area
- 2. Gather evidence
- 3. Analyse & make judgements
- Write and share a report and implement a plan
- 5. Put the School Improvement Plan (SIP) into action
- 6. Monitor actions

The first three steps identify an area, gather evidence and analyse and make judgements are the investigative phase of the process and generally is completed over a timeframe of one year.

Step 4 involves the school preparing a report based on its evaluation and a plan of action for improvement. This report and school improvement plan (SIP) is shared with the staff, parents and Board of Management.

Step 5 involves the school putting the plan into action at individual, subject and whole school level.

Step 6 Here the plan is monitored and evaluated over the course of its implementation until the actions are embedded.

The Report and School Improvement Plan to date have focused on two areas

- Strand 1 Literacy began in 2011/12 and is ongoing.
- Strand 2
   numeracy began
   in 2014/15 and is on-going

Both the Reports and School Improvement Plans for these areas have been published on the school website. Currently the school is focusing on:

Strand 3 – Teaching and Learning and improving student engagement in their learning. When the Report and School Improvement Plans (SIP) for this 3<sup>rd</sup> strand is completed, it will be published on our website.

This strand will see a variety of new strategies being used by teachers within the classroom to help students engage more effectively and to improve their learning.

#### Literacy

In 2010/11 the
Department of Education
& Skills introduced a

Literacy & Numeracy initiative. This initiative asked schools to focus on improving standards of Literacy & Numeracy.

In St Aidan's, we focused initially on improving Literacy skills, setting up a working party that reviewed literacy skills in first year surveying students, parents and teachers. We identified a need to improve the reading age of our 1st years and set a target "to improve the reading age of our 1st year cohort by at least 6 months. "A variety of strategies were introduced to keep improving the reading age including a spelling notebook, key words for students listed in the students journal, word of the week (wow), book in bag, proofreading of homework in class time, individual reading programmes and the purchase of more books in the library to encourage students to read.

A report was drawn up and a school improvement plan put in place. This has been published on our school website.

The plan was reviewed after a year and 72% of our 1st years had improved their reading age by 6 months or more,

improved their reading age by 6 months or more, The strategies are continuing in all classes and we are actively encouraging all students to read more.

The literacy team are now involved in setting new targets for our literacy programme.
When the new report and School Improvement Plan (SIP) is ready it will be published on our school website.

Meanwhile we would ask that you encourage your son/daughter to read books, magazines, newspapers, Farmers Journal, Motoring / Sports supplements in order to improve reading and spelling.

Our school library is open at lunch time and

We are also involved this year in the Well Read initiative, which tries to encourage students to read more.

students may borrow

books.



Growing a Reading Culture in Schools



This year St Aidan's
Comprehensive are
taking part in the
'Wellread Award. The
'Wellread National
Award' is an initiative by
the Professional
Development Service for
Teachers (PDST). It aims

to create heightened awareness about the importance of creating a culture of reading in school communities for our young people as part of their personal and academic development. It is a whole school initiative involving students, parents, staff and the wider community in a range of reading and associated activities. The school has formed a 'Wellread Committee' involving representatives from all the partners. It is envisaged that the national award will explicitly foster and nurture a reading culture in our school and will bring about an overall improvement in students' literacy skills in a fun and engaging way. As the planning process progresses we will update the school website with details. We would ask parents to encourage our young people to take time to read. It is a wonderful pastime and really benefits students' vocabulary, spelling and

#### **Numeracy**

writing skills.

In 2014 the school set up a working party to focus on improving standards in Numeracy. Parents, students and staff of 1st years were surveyed. We identified

that students lacked confidence / competency in dealing with fractions in maths and in real life situations. Strategies used to improve the above included signage around the school, in classrooms and corridors, percentage calculations displayed in classrooms, agreement on one method of using fractions by all staff, students had to calculate their own percentages for tests / homework. A Report and School Improvement Plan (SIP) was drawn up and is on our website. Following a review, it was found that in excess of more than 60% of students were more comfortable in dealing with fractions. The work in this area is ongoing.

The Numeracy Team are now involved in setting new targets for our Numeracy Programme. When the Report and School Improvement Plan (SIP) is ready it will be published on our school website.