

**ST. DOMINIC’S COLLEGE**

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St. Dominic’s College

OUR SELF-EVALUATION REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-2023

In the last year, we have looked at teaching and learning in our school to find out what we are doing well. This is what we discovered:

***Teachers were surveyed to analyse their opinion of the new 1 hour classes***. Teachers are very happy with the new timetable with 94 % wanting to continue with them. According to the teachers the 1 hour classes allow for more active learning, there is more time to practice skills and more time for teachers to ask deeper questions. The one hour helps with planning and provides for more assessment opportunities. Teachers can provide more recap and teachers can give more individual attention.

All students interviewed with the SVF (student voice forum) were happy with the new 1-hour class. There were lots of in house and external training provided by the school to help teachers use tools to split up the hour class to make it more varied and interesting.

***We also looked at the area of Wellbeing.*** We surveyed students, teachers and parents to see how good the school is at catering to wellbeing of the school community.

There is a strong sense from students at the Student Voice Forum that Wellbeing is being nurtured in the school and is well supported with structures such as the Year Head structure, the Management structure, the student support team, guidance department, tutors and all other structures the school has in place. Students feel safe in the school, the school is good at encouraging students to respect and accept people. The school is strong in extracurricular areas and the school encourages students to engage in physical activity. Student voice is well catered for through the SVF and student council. Students feel they matter in our school, that feel they belong and that they can succeed. Students are knowledgeable about whom to contact if they are being bullied and recognise that they are taught about bullying including cyber bullying,

A lot of the Anti-Bullying initiatives that the school has put in place such as Safer Internet Day and the Fuse programme as examples are valued by the students and they would recommend them for next year. Parents value our newsletters, the website and the school twitter so they can see what goes on in the school. The school is strong on measures such as DEAR time, - drop everything and relax/reflect/record/read. The school grounds are well maintained. The school is good at celebrating student achievements and displaying their work. The school has a good SNA system to help students with additional needs. The school is strong on school trips and celebrating events such as Intercultural Day which were well received by students. The school is good at encouraging staff to access a range of continuing professional development courses and involvement in professional networks as appropriate. There is mentoring support for newly qualified teachers and staff are informed about school policies such as child protection, Anti-Bullying etc.

 After the October Wellbeing surveys were analysed the school put in place further wellbeing measures such as increasing the number of trips out, increasing our extracurricular activities and after school clubs, coffee and cake wellbeing occasions as well as allowing students to go out more often at lunch times. These are only some of the measures put in place. For a full list see our SIP plan 2023. After putting in place these measures, we saw an increase in wellbeing satisfaction amongst students on nearly every question asked when we carried out the same surveys in May 2022.

**We also looked at our Digital needs**. Surveys were sent out to staff and students. We found that 85% of teachers use technology for teaching and learning. We found that 88% want to learn more about the technology apps so they can use them more often.

**This is what we did to find out what we were doing well, and what we could do better:**

We looked at data sources to find out how we are doing.

The data sources included the following:

Student, Parent and teacher surveys on Wellbeing in Oct 2021 and May 2022

Teacher Surveys on our new one hour classes November 2021

Student Voice Forum focus group discussions and the associated minutes of each meeting, topics included Wellbeing, Digital, one hour classes and effective questioning.

Student surveys on Wellbeing with Student Voice Forum

External feedback from our incidental inspection Feb 2022 and previous data collected by the school on feedback 2019-2020.

The principal and deputy principals requested an advisory meeting with a team of inspectors from the Inspectorate about our SSE. They were very complimentary about the work being done.

Evaluation surveys our Anti-Bullying initiatives.

Digital surveys for teachers and staff.

**Data from the surveys mentioned in the last section show us where our areas of improvement are, these span the 4 key areas of Wellbeing from the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework 2018-2023. The areas of focus will be Wellbeing including anti-bullying, Assessment, Feedback, 1- hour timetable, Literacy & numeracy and Digital learning.**

**During 2022-2023 the school will identify and reflect on the impact of Covid 19 on student’s educational experience, their wellbeing, their motivation to learn and their engagement with learning. The information arising will help the school to plan learning experiences, programmes of work and relevant supports to ensure all students are able to engage with and progress effectively in their learning.**

**This is what we are now going to work on:**

National and International research highlights that the wellbeing of the child is critical to their success in education and in life.

The Wellbeing Framework 2018-2023 outlines how Wellbeing can be improved in the 4 key areas of Wellbeing promotion. The 4 areas are Culture & Environment, Curriculum (teaching & learning), Relationships & Partnerships and Policy & Planning

 **Area1. Relationships & Partnerships**

In the area of Wellbeing including Anti –Bullying, the school will focus on improving relationships between peer to peer, teaching students how to talk and behave in a caring and respectful manner to each other. Empathy workshops will be put in place.

The school will work on improving communication between the different teams in our school such as the student support team, the year heads, Guidance Dept. etc.

The school will continue to work on communication with all Parents as well as the Parents Association. We are aiming to upload a screencastify video on Anti-bullying to our parent’s section of our website and we aim to make a similar video on child protection procedures and upload this also.

The school will aim to bring back physical staff meetings (Covid pending) and to explore a digital calendar idea for Management and staff.

The school will increase awareness amongst staff of the “One good adult “idea and the benefits of this concept

Resume physical parent teacher meetings.

**Area 2/3.Curriculm- Teaching and Learning including classroom climate & Culture and Environment.**

**Curriculum-Teaching and Learning is our key area for the school to promote wellbeing.**

To ensure our students experience high quality teaching the school will focus on ***improving the questions*** teachers ask to make sure they are challenging for students. Specific research based tools via Professor Paul Black and the NCCA booklet will be communicated to staff.

We will also focus on positive language when a student gets an answer wrong and aim for a comfortable classroom environment. More praise to be given to students when they work hard.

In the area of **assessment**, we will promote among teachers the use of peer, self-assessment and collaborative learning.

In the area of ***feedback,*** the school will aim to give good high quality feedback, showing students what a good piece of work looks like and what they need to improve to get to this level, we will use research from Black & William 1998 and NCCA booklet 3 and this will be communicated to staff.

 We will keep evaluating our 1 hour classes to see if any further training is required for teachers so that the hour long class has lots of activities.

In relation to ***literacy and numeracy*** the school will continue to encourage awareness of the definition of literacy and numeracy and to embed this awareness into good teacher practice and teacher planning. We will continue to invest in our library and literacy initiatives to promote the love of reading. A reading proficiency will be performed in first year at the start and the end of the year to assess increased proficiency.

**In the area of Wellbeing** we will improve staff awareness of the definition of Wellbeing, the indicators of Wellbeing and the content of the Wellbeing Framework. Teachers will be able to promote wellbeing across the curriculum. We will give teachers training on how to incorporate student voice about their learning in the classroom, and ensure learning approaches and assessment of learning are differentiated to ensure success for all our students.

 We will also work on new Wellbeing Initiatives such as reintroducing a sports day, reviewing our rewards system at end of year, having non-competitive extracurricular sports, introducing after school non sporting clubs and making a booklet on “what to expect “to ease the transition from sixth class to first year and continuing to provide mental health workshops. In the areas of extracurricular the school will continue to link with community based clubs and organisations to ensure the service is broad, accessible and inclusive.

We will continue to refurbish corridors and classrooms so they are bright and welcoming places for our students to learn.

**In the area of Digital technology**

Our school has Wi-Fi installed since January 2021 and the school has 90 google chrome books, purchased in the last 12 months, 4 computer rooms as well as IT hubs in the library, Halla Lydia and some classrooms. This placement of extra PCs in classrooms will continue to be rolled out. A lot of teachers use digital technology in their classrooms.

This yearthe school will provide staff with in house training on Google Drive and the G suite of Apps including Google forms, which can be used as an assessment tool. The school will provide training for staff on Adobe Scan which can aid the marking and feedback process. The school will provide training to staff on adobe spark, Kahoot and other similar engaging assessment apps. The school will pilot e- portfolios with certain groups. The teachers will collaborate on Google docs to bring examples of good questions together to improve our questioning in class.

 The school will enter the Digital Schools Awards and the SELFIE programme. The school will build on the IBM skills build and the MOS programme as part of the TY programme.

 The school will develop a Digital Charter and implement Safer Internet Day so that students can protect themselves online. The school will do an assessment of further digital needs going forward. The school will amend the first year IT curriculum to incorporate more G suite knowledge for first year students.

The school will work to incorporate more usage of our google chrome books with all students. The school aims to advance proficiency amongst all students on the use of google classroom so students can upload work and assignments including homework on this platform.

**Area 4. Policy & Planning**

The school will review their attendance policy as attendance is key indicator of poor wellbeing. The school will also review its Assessment policy to see how screening and intervention tools are used to assess social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. We will update our SPHE policy and design a new Teaching and Learning policy. The school will conduct its annual review of our Anti Bullying policy and will also put in place further measures that will promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. The school will promote student leadership to promote this culture so that it becomes embedded.

The School will work with the schools NEPS psychologist and have opted to have informative sessions with her about attendance and school refusal.

The school will conduct its annual review of its Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

The school will conduct it’s annual admissions notice which will contain important information for parents regarding the application process, including key dates and the number of places available.

CPD will be given to staff on the definition of Wellbeing and the indicators or Wellbeing as well as references and examples being made to the Wellbeing Framework.

**This is what you can do to help:**

To help us in the further with further action plans we would appreciate you filling in any surveys we send out to you. These surveys are analysed and this information greatly helps us to see what we need to do in the future to continue to improve. It also helps us to gather your input as a valued member of our school community.

We would also appreciate your input into school policy when a policy is being reviewed.

**Here is some information about how we are carrying out our work and about what the Department of Education and Skills requires us to do.**

***School time and holidays***

The Department requires all post-primary schools to have **167 school days** each year, and a **28-hour school week**.

Last year we had 167 school days, from 26th August 2021 to 3rd June 2022.

 Our school week is 28 hours

This year we have 167 days from 25th August 2022 to 2nd June 2023

The Department sets out a **standardised school year and school holidays**.

This year we took all our school holidays within the permitted time. YES / NO

The Department sets out arrangements for **parent/teacher meetings and staff meetings**. This year we had 5 parent/teacher meetings and 5 staff meetings, all in line with the Department’s regulations.

***Looking after the children in our school***

The Department requires schools to follow the *Child Protection Procedures* it has set down. Our board of management has agreed in writing to do this. YES / NO

All teachers know about the *Procedures* and we have told

all parents about them and how we follow them. YES / NO

Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Ms Ann Cameron

and our Deputy DLP is Ms Irene Maher Smyth

***Enrolment and attendance***

The Department requires schools to have and publish an admissions policy, to record and report attendance accurately, and to encourage high attendance and participation.

We have an admissions policy and it is published. YES / NO

We reviewed and updated our admissions policy on: 30 August 2022

We keep accurate attendance records and report them as required. YES / NO

We encourage high attendance in the following ways:

* Rewarding pupils with full attendance at the end of the year by giving them a certificate
* In the case of full attendance parents receive a card at the end of the school year congratulating and thanking them for their support in relation to attendance.
* Through the monitoring and encouragement of the student via the Year Head system.
* By creating a safe and welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Teachers aim to create positive interactions with students through the effective use of praise, asking questions and creating a positive school and class climate.
* Teachers having high expectations of students.
* The school uses a mixed ability system, which helps students to have higher expectations of themselves.
* Random spot checks on student’s attendance from the school journal.
* Teachers requesting an absent note from the student if they have been absent and follow up calls are made to the parent if student does not have an absent note on return to school.
* The student selects a link person to go to in each subject so they find out what work they have missed so they can catch up quickly. This link person is recorded by the student at the back of their journal.
* Psychological approaches for anxiety and non anxiety based absenteeism through the school counselling system.
* The school also provides guidebooks on what to expect when entering 5th year from 3rd or 4th year.
* Alternative educational programmes such as the Leaving Cert Applied programme aimed to help students who may need the structure of an alternative programme to the traditional Leaving Cert.
* The school provides a book rental system for students from first year to third year.
* The teachers differentiate their work in class to meet the needs of individual students, so that all students feel included in the classroom.
* The school enables the voice of the student to be heard via the Student Council and the Student Voice Forum. Student Voice is an important part of Wellbeing promotion in our school.
* The Year Head monitors attendance and emphasises the importance of it for areas such as a reference when the student has graduated from our school.
* The school promotes the “One Good Adult” amongst teachers and tutors.. Among the 12-18 years old surveyed in the My World survey 1 & 2, students who could identify with the presence of at least one good adult were found to have stronger self esteem, optimism they could cope with life’s challenges and a sense of wellbeing. Those who could not identify any such figure in their lives were found to be at high risk of anxiety, depression and self harm.
* Distribution of Tusla’s Education Welfare leaflet entitled “ Don’t let your child miss out. This leaflet is available at Reception.
* The school provides extra curricular sports and clubs so that students can participate in all aspects of school life. We aim to foster a good strong relationship between the student and teacher via classroom activities, extra curricular activities and fun activities.
* The school provides programmes such as Junior Achievement, Student Entreprise Awards to help students who may find it difficult to engage with the formal curriculum, and where a combination of academic and vocational skills may provide a more appropriate skills mix for some students.
* The school provides mental health speakers at various stages of a student’s progress throughout the school. These speakers are age appropriate. Examples include the Key Conversations workshop.
* Students are encourages to participate in events such as the Darkness into Light event organised in aid of Pieta House.
* The school has an Anti Bullying policy and students are made aware of the content of the policy and procedures that underpin it at their student assembly. The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and (is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association.
* The students in second year study the Fuse anti bullying programme.
* The school organises Safer Internet Day each year. The Student Council are currently working on a Digital Charter. The school has resources on its website including a video from and educational psychologist which documents strategies to cope with bullying for those students who may be struggling with this issue. All Junior cycle students received last year a workshop on Anti Bullying from the company Key Conversations. The workshop included information on bullying, cyper bullying, friendship, social media awareness and health life balance.
* Staff engage with CPD on digital citizenship and how to teach it. Modules include online wellbeing, ethics and empathy.
* The Guidance Counsellors complete return to school plans for school refusal circumstances, with input from external agencies such as NEPS and CAHMS (multi-disciplinary teams).

In such return to school plans recommendations such as reduced timetables (in accordance with the guidelines), movement breaks, personal counselling supports would be made. Student School refusal must now be diagnosed by CAHMS. Guidance Counsellors regularly link in with Year Heads also. The school consults with the Education Welfare Officer (EW0) regarding referrals.

* The school displays student’s work and celebrates student’s achievements both inside and outside of class and places emphasis on our built environment and campus.
* The school has supportive structures to aid attendance such as the Guidance & Counselling Dept, the Student Support team, Year Head and tutor system, Chaplain Dept, Principal and Deputy Principal as well as structures such as Big sister little sister, prefect system. The school has leadership opportunities for students in the form of Head Girl, Deputy head girl as well as class captains and deputy class captains.
* The school conducts DEAR time each term. This is an initiative which means drop everything and relax/relax/reflect/record. This initiative is called out over the intercom and students must drop everything and relax for 10-15 minutes.
* The new one hour class structure enables teachers to give more individual attention to students who may extra time. It also allows students to practice what they have learnt.
* The school works with the school’s NEPS psychologists. The school has opted to have informative sessions with our local NEPS psychologist about areas such as attendance and school refusal. Teachers attend CPD on current issues that are affecting school attendance nationwide.
* As part of the new curriculum a well being class consisting of 3 modules is taught to Junior

Cycle students. In first year each student completes an eight to ten week programme in first

aid, chess, learning to learn, mindfulness/ personal development. The year begins with a

new module “transitioning to secondary school”. This programme designed by

members of the team in collaboration with staff, students and the PDST includes areas such

as orientation, transition, friendship, growth mindset, homework and study and school

ethos. This programme aims to support the student further and ease any unnecessary

anxiety at this huge time of change. The school has also a new homework/learning club for

first year students. There is no fee for this club.

The well being programme also encompasses CSPE, PE, SPHE, Guidance, extra Curricular and

co- curricular learning. This wellbeing class carries on into 2nd and 3rd year.

* Wellbeing initiatives such as trips out, coffee and cake mornings, treats at end of term as well as celebrating various special days and weeks in the school calendar. For a full list of our wellbeing initiatives please see our full school improvement plan 2023.
* The parent voice is welcomed and invited into the school by means of night time events and other such measures.
* Talks organised by the Parents Association, from various organisations including Jigsaw, supports parents to navigate the daily pressures that their child could meet on their journey through school.
* The school has a dedicated Special Needs Department and a special Autism class. The Special Needs Department identify those students who need extra support and allocate this support in conjunction with the senior management team.
* The school has a student support team who meet on a weekly basis. The student support team is a team made up of the Principal, Deputy principals, Guidance Counsellors, SEN team, Chaplain and Pastoral Care team. They work together in a supportive way to address the social, emotional, behavioural and academic needs of all students. Other teachers such as the Wellbeing Co-ordinator visits on occasions.
* This list is not exhaustive and proposed measures outlined in the first part of this document will aid good attendance also.

This is how you can help:

* Ensure your child attends school, and try to ensure that appointments if possible, are made outside of school time
* Communicate an early stage to the school if your child is finding it difficult to attend, so that the school can put the necessary interventions in place at an early stage and prevent the problem escalating.
* Check in on the school journal and on Vs ware to become familiar with notifications around your child’s progress.
* Become involved in the Parent’s Association and or the Board of Management.

***Positive behaviour for a happy school***

The Department requires schools to have a code of behaviour, and asks us to consult parents and students about it. We do this. YES / NO

Our code of behaviour describes and supports positive behaviour. YES / NO

We have a very clear and high-profile anti-bullying policy in our school. YES / NO

