



Blackwater Community School

Summer Newsletter

June 2024

A Chairde

Another school year has passed by so quickly; it is time to update everybody on the progress of our school over the past year. This newsletter affords me the opportunity to communicate our developments under a number of key headings that I feel best reflect the past year. Essentially, this newsletter contains the Board of Management's report on the operation and performance of BCS.



School Improvement Plan

Work has continued in ensuring that the desired actions and related targets have been completed relating to our stated SIP. Feedback on the various surveys informed the new SIP Plan for 2024/25. A copy of our most recent plan will be provided on the school website.

Annual School Policy Review:

Over the past year the following policies have been reviewed, updated and ratified by BCS Board of Management. All policies have also been examined by the Department of Education inspectors during our autumn Whole School Evaluation. Please refer to our school website to access all school policies.

September 2023:

- Critical Incident Plan
- Health & Safety Statement
- Risk Assessment for all subject
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- Checklist for review of the Child Protection & Safeguarding Statement
- Notification regarding the BOM review of the Child Protection & Safeguarding Statement
- Anti Bullying Policy & Checklist
- Admissions Notice & Admissions Policy
- School Improvement Plan
- School Self Evaluation Document

October 2023:

- Whole School Policy on Homework
- Additional Educational Needs Whole School Inclusion Policy

January 2024:

- Annual Review of all subject plans.
- Homework policy.
- Dignity in the Workplace.
- Critical Incident Plan
- School Self Evaluation Plan
- School Improvement Plan
- School Vision
- Anti Bullying Statement & Policy
- Smart Device Wellbeing Policy
- Admission policy, LCA Policy
- LCVP Policy
- TY Policy
- Literacy Policy
- AEN & Whole School Inclusion Policy.

February 2024:

- Substance Use Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- ACCS Agreed Dignity in the Workplace Chapter adopted by BCS.
- Non-Statutory leave Policy: (Career Break, Secondment and Job Sharing)

April 2024:

- BCS Protective Disclosure Policy

School Development Planning at BCS

Much work this year has been related to child protection planning and training of staff in the new guidelines as well as preparing for implementation of new data protection legislation (GDPR)

- Assessment for learning
- The Ongoing development and maintenance of the school website.
- The further development and use of our school phone app which has become a crucial way of communicating with our school community.
- Subject Department Planning in all subjects.
- Much work was done in the review and analysis of our JC and LC results in Sept 2023
- Further incorporation of Numeracy & Literacy strategies into all Subject Department areas.
- Much work was done on differentiation in our classrooms with a renewed focus on Differentiated Learning for High Achieving students.
- The creation of an updated School Improvement Plan for the 2024/25 school year.
- Minutes were recorded for all Subject Department meetings and all staff meetings.
- A whole staff presentation took place re sharing of methodologies and Teaching & Learning practices from their classroom.
- A whole staff presentation took place re Junior Cycle Implementation and Blooms Taxonomy.

- Meeting times were allocated for planning of Year Heads and their Tutors, Special Needs Committee, the Special Needs Assistants, the Programmes, Pastoral Care, Committee and Disciplinary Committee.
- Several meetings of Special Duties Teachers.
- Several meetings of Assistant Principals.
- The SDP Team meet regularly to discuss progress on various fronts such as Child Protection and whole school inclusion policy and the areas specified below.
- We had a WSE / MLL in November which received an outstanding report from the DES. Thanks to all staff who ensured all the preparatory work for this inspection was already in place.

Teaching & Learning

Teaching and learning continue to be the priority of all work in BCS. Over the past 4 years staff have worked tirelessly to ensure our students reach their full potential in all aspects of their educational journey despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic and a multi-million building project which required flexibility and adjustments for all stakeholders. We wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their support and patience and we look forward celebrating our 21st year in a state-of-the-art educational campus which will allow us to provide our students with a wide variety of subject options and educational opportunities.

1. **Assessment Proposal** – The staff have undertaken a review of our in-house assessment procedures which will hopefully streamline and standardise assessments throughout the year and enhance our use of our academic Athena Tracker going forward. There has been a whole staff agreement to trial the ARC model for the coming academic year.
2. **Management observations** of new staff and placement teachers commenced from November. A meeting took place with all new members of staff to outline the process involved and provide them with a copy of the feedback report which they received after the observation class. A further meeting took place before Christmas to complete the induction evaluation survey which forms the basis of our induction for the coming year.
3. **Extended tutor time** was facilitated regularly to ensure all students have the following:
 - Correct and full uniform
 - Yondr Pouch
 - PR book – permission to leave class sheet & contact details completed
4. **Erasmus accreditation** has been received which will greatly enhance our ability to provide mobility projects to both staff and students in the coming years.
5. **Teacher Induction Programme** will continue to take place in August 2024 for all newly appointed teaching staff and this has proven invaluable to the quality and consistency of teaching in the classrooms.
6. **6th Year Mentoring** Incoming 6th yr. students will be assigned academic mentors for the coming year in early September. This initiative has been in place for the past 20 years and is a valuable resource for all 6th year students to have a one-one meeting at regular intervals during the academic year to support and advise them to reach their full academic potential.

We wish to thank all teaching staff for their support of this initiative by volunteering their time and expertise.

7. **Orals, Practical's & Projects** After school preparation time was devoted to the preparation of students for their oral Irish, German and French exams along with the various practical's in Home Economics, Art, Construction, Engineering. Much work was done to ensure that students have completed their respective projects in Geography, History, and CSPE.

School App

Thanks to the IT Committee and all involved in ensuring that the school phone app continues to develop and expand as a school communications resource. It acts as our main form of communication to all school stakeholders, includes general notifications, attendance administration system, student personal notifications. All parents/guardians are required to be registered on the app and we continue to receive extremely positive feedback on its use throughout the school year.

Literacy & Numeracy – School Development Plan

Both respective committees have been working in ensuring that relevant initiatives have been engaged in with the student body and we will be assessing our meeting of targets at the end of term.

Health & Safety

The H&S officer and staff reps have ensured that the fire hydrants have been updated and maintained. The assembly points have been reassigned to ensure that clear signs are visible for classes to assemble on foot of a fire alarm evacuation. Frequent Health & Safety meetings take place during the year with plans being continually reviewed and acted upon.

Cairde

The Cairde acted as a support for our 1st year group throughout the year. They were also supportive with lunchtime leagues and the organisation of Parent/Teacher meetings. Interviews for next year's group have taken place in advance of the new Academic Year and the incoming group are looking forward to their engagement and support with the incoming 1st year cohort and their year head Mr Sean Murphy.

DES Related

- All Subject Departments have been reflecting on the implications of all Inspection Reports over the years and their respective implications on their subjects. Our recently published WSE report acknowledges the hard work and professionalism evident in the classroom inspections which took place across all subjects in November 2023.
- 4 members of our staff have delivered Inservice for the DES during the year.
- We have a provisional school calendar prepared for the 2024/25 year including the 33 Croke Park hours.



Online Reports

All parents/guardians are reminded to keep up to date regarding their son's/daughter's progress by using the School App and accessing their student profile on our administrative system VS Ware.

Easy Payments Service

Our online payment system works well making it easier for parents/guardians to make the appropriate payments regarding student expenses etc.

Local Community

We would like to thank the local community for their help & support throughout the 2023/24 year by:

- Providing work experience options
- Supporting our Awards Scheme
- Supporting our Parents' Council fundraising efforts
- Child Protection.
- Our 2 trained counsellors within the staff provided counselling throughout the year to students, we also acquired the services of 2 outside Counsellors to provide additional support. Where necessary contact will have been made with the HSE during the year regarding any vulnerable students.
- Our Pastoral Care committee has met weekly throughout the year and worked hard to ensure students needs were responded to.
- Parents' Committee / Parental Input at BCS
- Sincere thanks to our outgoing Parents' Council for all their help & support during the year.

BCS Student Voice

The work of the Student Voice has been assisted through the appointment of Class Reps for each class in the school for each year. The role and duties of these have been worked on with the students to enhance further the student voice in the school. The Student Voice under the guidance of Ms Geraldine O'Flynn had an active role throughout the past year, assisting on all formal school occasions, organising novelty events for Easter and through their involvement in policy making discussions. This year their membership of subcommittees regarding the review of our substance use policy and our school skirt, their contribution and insightfulness has been invaluable and very much appreciated.

School Achievements 2023/2024 Academic Year

Our Students have had a very successful year in a variety of Events and Activities. The following are a few of the achievements from this year. Congratulations to all involved.

- Junior Camogie: Junior C Cork Colleges Final Winners
- Senior Hurling: Munster Senior B Champions & All Ireland Finalists: Pictured Below



- Ladies Football: Munster Junior C Plate Final winners
- Our First Year Camogie team won the Cork Colleges First Year Blitz
- Si Fest: Conor O'Brien, 5th Year, won the Life Sciences Award
- Badminton: BCS were represented in the Munster Finals in UL in January and the U19 Boys and Girls progressed to the All Irelands
- Four students represented BCS in the BT Young Scientist in January 2024. 2nd Year students Saoirse Duffy, Kate Fletcher O'Connor and Shauna Deery and 5th year Student Conor O'Brien.
- Cathal Barry (3rd Year) who won an Excellence in STEM Award at the Scifest4STEM Final

- Our TY Students competed in the All-Ireland Schools' Drama Finals in Cork Opera House and They won most entertaining performance and Tim, Prince Charming won Best Actor in a Supporting Role
- John Paul II Award Gold Medals were presented to Andrea Hornibrook and Eimear Lenehan and Silver medals to Kate Coughlan and Julie Anne Daly. Pictured Below:



Parents' Council

Sincere thanks to the Parents' Council for all their hard work during the year. Their regular meeting with school management, fundraising initiatives and continual support of staff, students and all stakeholders of BCS.

Tá súil agam go mbainfidh gach éinne tairbhe agus taitneamh as laethanta saoire an tsamhraidh. Beir bua agus beannacht go mbuailfimid le chéile arís.

Donnchadh Uas. Ó Rinn

