

# St. Aidan's National School

Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

Tel / Fax (053) 9244441

E-Mail: [clonrochens.ias@eircom.net](mailto:clonrochens.ias@eircom.net)

Website: <http://www.clonrochens.ie>

## **1. Introduction**

St. Aidan's National School is a co-educational primary school in the parish of Cloughbawn under the patronage of the Diocese of Ferns. The ethos of our school is inclusive and all children are equally welcome. The school's mission statement promotes the all-round development of the child, fosters a shared vision of excellence and espouses a partnership approach in its achievement. There is a high level of engagement with curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the school, and this positively is reflected in the overall atmosphere in our school.

We have four mainstream class teachers, each teaching in a dual class setting: Junior and Senior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class.

There are currently 104 students, four mainstream class teachers, two full time and one shared learning support and two full time SNAs.

## **2. The focus of this evaluation**

In line with DES requirements at national level, school self-evaluation has been underway in our school in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy for a number of years. This year, in line with DES guidelines, St. Aidan's National School has chosen the additional subject areas of S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) and P.E. on which to focus. This is a report on the findings of the S.P.H.E. evaluation. The report summarises the strengths that were identified and the areas that require further development and growth.

## **3. Current School Initiatives**

- Walk Tall
- Stay Safe (Revised edition 2016)
- RSE manuals
- Busy Bodies
- Grow in Love
- WebWise
- Friends for Life (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Safer Internet Day (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class)
- Be Safe
- Whole School Assembly twice weekly (Monday and Friday)
- Do Your Talking While You're Walking and Train on Thursday.

#### **4. Summary of school self- evaluation findings**

Information was gathered from a variety of sources, with the use of questionnaires and focus groups. Questionnaires were distributed to all parents, staff and to students from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. Focus groups were formed in school and observations and suggestions were recorded. We also used staff meetings, ISM meetings, SCOT analysis and incidental observations to aid evaluation. St. Aidan's National School places a high emphasis on the all- round development of our students S.P.H.E. is a curricular area in its own right and is a key aspect of school life that is emphasised in a cross- curricular way through broad activities and interactions that are fundamental to school life. This is reflected in the students all- round development, in the level of satisfaction expressed by parents, teachers and students, in positive feedback received, and also the level of engagement of children in school life.

#### **5. Summary of school self- evaluation findings**

##### **5.1 Our school has strengths in the following areas:**

- Positive school climate/ atmosphere with attention directed to the all- round development of the pupils
- A mission statement that promotes S.P.H.E.
- Regular acknowledgement of achievement, progress and endeavours (weekly at assembly)
- Participation in a wide range of initiatives that support S.P.H.E. including: Active Flag, Green Schools, Digital Schools of Distinction, Junior Entrepreneurs Programme, School Lunch Scheme, Health Promoting Schools.
- Core policies supporting pupils wellbeing have been developed and are being adopted. (see attached list)
- We have very supportive school community.

##### **5.2 The following are areas identified for growth and development**

- Review and update SPHE policy, RSE and Healthy Eating Policy.
- Updating of S.P.H.E. whole school plan and streamlining of teacher planning and assessment.
- Teaching strategies to highlight the importance of mental health and wellbeing, including mindfulness, resilience, anti- bullying education and education around healthy eating and obesity.
- Upgrading of the school playground/ yard and creation of school garden.

**Appendix to Primary School Self-Evaluation Report:**

**legislative and regulatory checklist – reporting to the school community**

Rules and regulations for schools are set out in a number of Education Acts, and in Circulars issued to schools from time to time by the Department of Education and Skills. The list below deals with important areas of school life and tells you what rules and regulations apply to them. You will find the Acts and Circulars mentioned on the Department's website, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

Which area of school life is involved, and what are the regulations?	Is the school following the regulations fully?
<p><b>The school calendar and the school timetable</b></p> <p>Circular 0011/1995 sets down the length of the school year - minimum of 183 days</p> <p>Circular 0011/1995 sets down the length of the school day</p> <p>4 hours 40 minutes (infants);</p> <p>5 hours 40 minutes (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> classes)</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Parent/ teacher meetings and staff meetings</b></p> <p>Circular 0014/2004 sets out the arrangements for these meetings</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Implementation of agreement regarding additional time in school for teachers</b></p> <p>Circular 0008/2011 requires teachers to do an additional 36 hours of out-of-class work each year, so as not to reduce teaching time</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Standardisation of school year</b></p> <p>Circular 034/2011 gives the dates for school holidays</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Valid enrolment of pupils</b></p> <p>Sections of the Education Act 1998 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the Rules for National Schools set out the conditions for pupils to be validly enrolled in a school</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Pupils repeating a year</b></p> <p>The circumstances in which pupils may repeat a year are set out in Rules for National Schools, and circulars 0011/2001 and 0032/2003</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Development of school plan</b></p> <p>Section 21, Education Act 1998 requires all schools to have a school plan</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Engagement with SSE process</b></p> <p>Circular 0039/2012 and 0016/2018 outlines the school self-evaluation process and what it requires of schools</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Time for literacy and numeracy - assessing and reporting literacy and numeracy achievement</b></p> <p>Circular 0056/2011 sets out initial actions required in the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Exemption from Irish</b></p> <p>Circular 0012/1996 sets out the circumstances in which children are exempt from studying Irish</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

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Which area of school life is involved, and what are the regulations?	Is the school following the regulations fully?
<p><b>Implementation of child protection procedures</b></p> <p>Circulars 0065/2011 and 0081/2017 and Children First/ Child Protection Guidelines oblige schools to ensure that: liaison persons have been appointed; the procedures have been communicated to the whole school community; and the procedures are being followed</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Implementation of complaints procedure as appropriate</b></p> <p>Section 28 Education Act 1998 provides for procedures to address complaints about a school.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Complaints have been resolved or are being resolved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>
<p><b>Appeals in the case of refusal to enrol students, suspension and expulsion (permanent exclusion)</b></p> <p>Section 29 Education Act 1998 provides for appeals procedures in these cases, which are dealt with first of all by the school. Where cases are not resolved at school level, an external appeals committee hears the appeal and makes a decision.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Appeals have been dealt with or are being dealt with</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

**Appendix to Primary School Self-Evaluation Report:**

**policy checklist – reporting to the school community**

Schools are required to have certain policies in place as part of their permanent school plan. It is good practice for schools to consult with the school community in forming and reviewing many of these policies. The school board of management has to approve and ratify policies, and should ensure that they are reviewed on a regular basis.	
What area of school life does the policy deal with and what is the aim of the policy?	Has policy been approved by the board of management?
<b>Enrolment policy</b> Section (15)(2)(d) Education Act 1998 obliges schools to have and publish an enrolment policy that respects the principles of equality and parental choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Code of behaviour</b> Section 23, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the 2008 National Educational Welfare Board Guidelines set out regulations and good practice for schools to follow in drawing up and implementing a code of behaviour	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Anti-bullying policy</b> <i>Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools, 2013</i> sets out regulations and good practice for schools to follow in drawing up and implementing an anti-bullying policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Attendance and participation strategy</b> Section 22 Education Welfare Act 2000 requires schools to develop a strategy to support high levels of pupil attendance and participation in school life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Health and safety statement</b> All schools should have a health and safety statement that is regularly reviewed (see Section 20 Health and Safety Act 2005)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Data protection</b> School procedures relating to gathering, storing and sharing data on pupils should comply with data protection legislation - Data Protection Act 1988  Data Protection (Amendment Act) 2003	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Internet acceptable use policy</b> Schools should have and implement a policy to instruct pupils on safe and responsible use of the internet. See <a href="http://www.webwise.ie">www.webwise.ie</a> for guidelines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Special education needs policy</b> Various pieces of equality and education legislation, especially the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, require schools to be inclusive of pupils with special educational needs and to provide for them appropriately using the resources available	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) policy</b> Schools are required to have an RSE policy and to implement it in line with Relationships and Sexuality Education: Policy Guidelines (1997)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Substance use policy</b> The National Drugs Strategy and Department Guidelines require schools to develop and implement a policy on substance use, in partnership with parents and other agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

<p><b>Child protection policy/ Child Safeguarding Statement</b></p> <p>Circulars 0065/2011 and 0081/2017 set out requirements (see above for details of policy and implementation)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Parents as partners</b></p> <p>Circular 0024/1991 requests schools to set up a parents association, and promotes partnership between home and school</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Deployment of special needs assistants</b></p> <p>Circular 0071/2011 allows for SNAs to be deployed flexibly to respond to the needs of the school</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>Other</b></p>	