

Intermediate School Killorglin:

Our School Self-Evaluation Report 2023-2024



Introduction / Rationale

School self-evaluation (SSE) is a collaborative, inclusive, reflective process of internal school review. The school:

- Reflects on its aims,
- Considers criteria for success within the
- School's context and ethos.
- Determines methods for judging the quality of educational provision in the school.

School self-evaluation is about ensuring an improvement in the teaching and learning processes.

Using DES guidelines and *"Looking at Our Schools" (LAOS) 2022* document, Schools:

1. Identify a focus:
2. Gather evidence
3. Analyse and make judgements
4. Write and share improvement plan
5. Put plan in action
6. Monitor and evaluate:



FOCUS:

Take Stock
Review (incl. COVID-19)
Initiate Wellbeing plan

Context-specific school priorities related to teaching, learning, equity and inclusion
National wellbeing goals
National curriculum goals
Other national strategies

We undertook self-evaluation of teaching and learning during the period *September 2023* to May 2024.

Feedback methodologies and strategies from 2024 were again shared with staff in September 2023. However, in consultation with management and teachers, based on a number of evidences, it was decided that there was a greater requirement to focus on Literacy for 2023-2024 including:

- Exam Command words
- Paired reading
- Spelling bee
- Keywords

With the continued focus on wellbeing as per SSE 2022-2026.

- The wellbeing team focused on organising a wellbeing week and to reapply for the Amber flag.
- It was also decided to focus on maximising the use of the cubbie
- To consider the introduction of the School Therapy Dog.

EVIDENCE:

How well are we doing (September -October 2023)

It was reported by staff and management that much of the feedback given to students centered around how they often struggle to understand the exact meaning of words, both in everyday conversations and reading.

Most importantly, it was also noted that students regularly did not necessarily understand the exact meaning 'exam command' words in exams.

This was the basis of a survey of the student population on Literacy skills.

This aligns with LAOS "Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools Domain 3"

"that teachers integrate relevant literacy and numeracy skills into the lesson"

Paired reading:

Currently the SEN department use student's pupil passport from primary school as evidence of the student's literacy scores. STEN scores are the main evidence for all first-year students when looking at literacy scores. Students in the SEN register have additional evidence in the form of a psychological assessment whereby diagnostic literacy testing was performed. This gives us a much clearer indication of these student's literacy scores. This evidence is invaluable as it allows us to target these students and try to improve their literacy.

ANALYSE AND MAKE JUDGEMENTS:

This is how we know

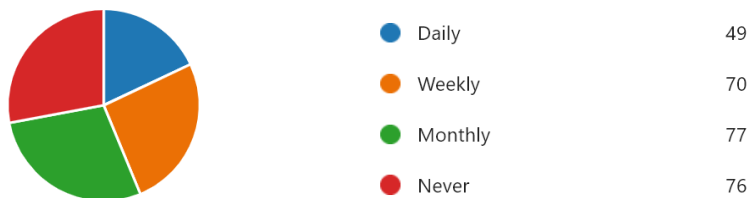
- Feedback and discussion with staff.
- Discussion with management.
- Feedback from student's surveys.
- Survey data shared with staff in November 2023.
- General class discussions with students.
- General observations in class.
- Analysis of STEN scores for literacy.

Key Survey Responses (273 Student responses):

Q: Do you consider yourself a fluent reader?



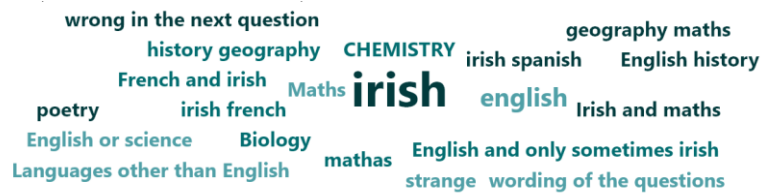
Q: How often do you read for enjoyment or for fun?



Q: When I do not understand the meaning of words, this prevents me from learning.



Q: Please state which subjects happens most often in:



Q: In exams I do not understand what the question is asking me to do (I know the material but I am not sure what the question is actually asking.) This happens:



Reading:

Only 44% of students report reading for fun on a daily (18%) or weekly (26%) basis, with 27% reporting that not understanding the meaning of words prevents them from reading for fun.

Study and exams:

51% of students report that not understanding the meaning of words prevents them from learning, often(5%), sometimes(31%), or in some subjects only (15%) but this is reported over a broad range of subjects.

56% of students reported that they do not understand what the question is asking in an exam; Very often(6%) Often (17%) and Sometimes (33%)

Based on the data staff were invited to join a literacy team and the team was established from across a number of departments.

Keywords:

Nearly half of students (45%) reported difficulty in understanding or remembering subject specific keywords in their lessons.



WRITE AND SHARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Staff were invited to join a literacy team to examine these concerns, As a result, a team from a number of departments was established.

Our improvement plan / Overall Aim: LITERACY:

Noting the large percentage reporting they do not regularly read for fun and that not understanding the meaning of words reading for fun:

1. To establish a **'Paired Reading programme'** established for 1st years with TY students.

As we are a highly inclusive school, we plan to offer paired reading to all first-year students and include this as part of the TY programme. As the LAOS document informs us of the importance of engaging in quality learning and providing teaching that is student centered and inclusive, so we keep this in mind at all times.

2. **Upon analysis, students with low STENs may be offered more sittings but all first-year students will participate.**
3. To hold a **'Spelling Bee competition'** to encourage interest and fun in words and reading.

Noting the number of students having in concerns about not understanding the meaning of key words in learning and in exams:

4. Reexamine and draft a new list of exam command to include student's diary. (Most 3rd year students reported that they did not know such a list existed in their diary).

Design a poster for each class room with some of the key exam command words.

5. The Science department agreed as part of their department plan, to generate a list of Subject specific Keywords and meaning.

While some of these may be targeted at certain groups initially, these can be expanded to all students in future years.

PUT PLAN IN ACTION

PAIRED READING:

Paired reading will be a wonderful way to encourage reading for pleasure as well as helping to improve literacy. The students who do not have additional literacy needs will also participate in order to fall in love with reading for pleasure

The focus of the paired reading initiative is to improve literacy for all first-year students. It is open to all first years, not just those with low STEN and poor literacy scores (but these students may be offered additional time)

It is envisioned this initiative will be rolled out this year and subsequently will run every year. Having read the LAOS document it is important we as teachers develop initiatives which add value to the curriculum in particular literacy. In doing paired reading students benefit and teacher are engaging in the most effective practices as mentioned in the LAOS document.

A schedule was put in place with the TY coordinator for this so all first-year classes were involved. Paired reading takes place on a Monday in the library with TY students being the reading partner. Training these TY students took place whereby they know how to do paired reading properly. A message was put on teams to inform all staff of this initiative

This schedule was given to TY students who worked together to do the paired reading. This works very well as the plan and schedule was explained to this at a brief meeting. Each first year is given a survey to perform at the end of the session to fill out to explain if they liked it or not.

There is a bank of words they can choose from to explain how the session went. This gives a very good indication if the book chosen was not to their reading capability. If the student finds the session hard then the TY student will then encourage them to pick a book that is more suitable to their reading capability.

SPELLING BEE:

While the importance of correct spelling will be as always encouraged and be an integral part of all curriculum throughout the year, towards the end of the year English teachers will hold an informal written spelling competition for their classes.

Ten students from each 1st year class will be then invited to take part in a typical spelling bee competition to be held in the well in front of the entire 1st year group.

The winner will be awarded a trophy. The aim is to encourage the fun aspect of learning yet encourage the importance of word recognition and spelling in a public forum.

KEYWORDS:

1. The Science department displayed a number of posters on the walls of the science building to help demonstrate the root meaning (with examples of use) of some key Scientific words (e.g CHLOR: root meaning = "Green"; examples = Chloroplast, Chlorophyll, Chlorine, Chloroform). While initially these are for general pursuit by student while waiting for class, these are incorporated when appropriate in class throughout each year group.
2. To highlight the importance and help in learning and understanding the meaning of subject specific terms, A bank of Keywords for 1st Year Science classes was prepared and uploaded to a shared Quizlet. Students could then use this platform to learn, test themselves generate flashcards. Quizlet live games can also be played during classes as appropriate. These can also be uploaded and shared on various different online platforms such as Blooket. The aim is to expand this list for 2nd and 3rd years going forward. (Senior Science classes have previously prepared their own material).

EXAM COMMAND WORDS:

A large body of work was carried out by the team to establish a bank of typical command words used in exams over the range of all exam subjects offered in the school.

These 'exam command words' also cover the range within Blooms taxonomy of critical thinking and learning which is used by the SEC (State Exams Commission).

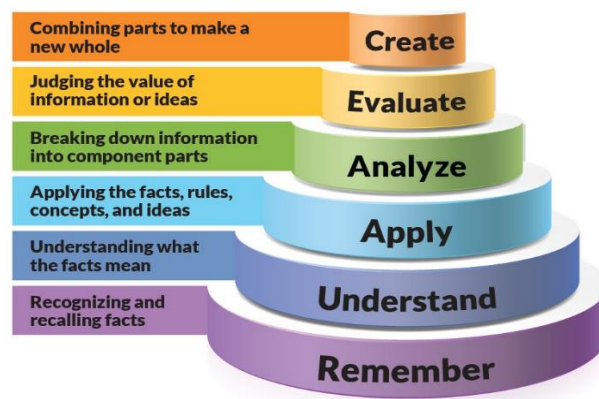
A 'student friendly' explanation and example of its use was then devised for each 'exam command word' or group of words, again using examples from across the range of subjects.

These were checked and agreed on with a number of staff members that also work as examiners and advising examiners with the SEC.

The reading age of this list was checked to be in the 12-16 age category.

This list was provided to all staff to be used as a common template when giving feedback on the pre-exams and in preparing all classes for future class tests and state exams.

Eight of the most common terms were chosen to create a poster which was placed in each classroom to make student more aware of these on a daily basis and also aid the teacher when working with homework or exam questions.



Blooms taxonomy

EXAM COMMAND WORDS (to appear in student diary)

1. Analyse/ Examine/ Investigate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study the topic closely, show that you understand all its parts and how they work together. <i>Analyse how young people benefit from participating in leisure activities.</i>
2. Describe/ Write an account of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down clear details and information about the topic. Keep 'What', 'How', 'When' and 'Where' in mind. <i>Describe two methods of home food preservation.</i> <i>Write an account of the religious reformer you studied.</i>
3. Explain:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down clear details and information about the topic, giving reasons Why and How. <i>Explain what you find interesting about the language used by the poet in the poem you have chosen.</i>
4. Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write about the topic, giving several different views on the topic (similarities and differences, pros and cons). Give conclusions where possible. <i>Discuss two reasons why all construction sites must have a safety statement.</i>
5. Compare:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down the similarities (and sometimes differences) between two items. <i>Compare the mass of the proton with the mass of an electron.</i>
6. Contrast/ Distinguish:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write down the differences between two items. <i>Distinguish between two types of meetings which are common in a business.</i>
7. Identify:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point out or recognize something, by giving a name or describing it. <i>Identify three types of insurance a family might purchase.</i>
8. Justify:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write the reason(s) or evidence to support your answer or given statement. <i>Justify why the European Central Bank (ECB) raised interest rates ten time in 2022-2023.</i>
9. Evaluate/ Assess:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write the strengths (advantages) and weaknesses (disadvantages) of the topic and give your opinion. <i>Evaluate one method of cooking meat.</i> <i>Assess two benefits of effective communication between family members.</i>
10. Write a note on:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a short paragraph to give the key information about the topic. <i>Write a note on the role of the kidneys in the human body.</i>
11. Illustrate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly explain the meaning of the topic using examples, drawings, or numbers to help. <i>Illustrate the importance of recycling in reducing waste.</i>
12. State/ List/ Name/ Give:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simply write down the facts. <i>List three sources of renewable energy.</i> <i>Give two functions of the skeleton.</i>

13. Define:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write the meaning of a word or concept, to clearly explain what it means. Definitions are very precise statements. <p><i>Define the term chemical element.</i></p>
14. Outline/ Summarise:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a or a short version of the main points of the topic. <p><i>Outline two rights of consumers when shopping online.</i> <i>Summarise the main events of the light stage of Photosynthesis.</i></p>
15. Function/ Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down what it does (its job). <p><i>What is the role of the CEO in a business?</i></p>
16. Conclude/ Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write your opinion or decision based on the evidence or information. <p><i>What conclusion can be made about the relationship between voltage and current?</i></p>
17. Predict:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make an educated guess about what might happen based on information. <p><i>Predict what will happen to global temperatures if CO₂ emissions continue to increase.</i></p>
18. Suggest/ Propose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on your knowledge of the topic, write down your reasons, opinions or ideas. <p><i>Suggest a suitable hardwood timber for making a cake stand.</i></p> <p><i>Propose three design considerations when for a new kitchen.</i></p>
19. Account for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down reasons or explanations why and how something is the case. <p><i>Account for the difference in energy released during aerobic and anaerobic respiration.</i></p>
20. Devise:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write out a plan or a solution. <p><i>Devise a healthy lunch menu suitable for teenagers going on a hill walk.</i></p>
21. Consider:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about and take into account certain information when writing down your opinion. <p><i>Consider the location of a business in your local area.</i> <i>Outline two reasons why it is located there.</i></p>

MATHS

Simplify:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underline and put 'like' terms together or cancel down a fraction.
Solve:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work out the answer to a problem.
Expression:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A collection of terms which can contain variables (letters) and numbers that make a mathematical statement.
Factorise:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break down an expression or equation into its smaller, simpler parts. Take out the common factor or break into two brackets if a quadratic.
Hence:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the previous answer to solve to next part.
Calculate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work out a number or result using mathematical operations.
Investigate / Prove:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show that something is correct or true.

Contrast / Distinguish:

Write down the differences between two items.

Explain:

Write down clear details and information about the topic, giving reasons 'Why' and 'How'.

Describe / Write an account of:

Write down clear details and information about the topic. Keep 'What', 'How', 'When' and 'Where' in mind.

Identify:

Point out or recognize something, by giving a name or describing it.

EXAM COMMAND WORDS

Analyse / Examine / Investigate:

Study the topic closely, show that you understand all its parts and how they work together.

Justify:

Write the reason(s) or evidence to support your answer or given statement.

Compare:

Write down the similarities (and sometimes differences) between two items

Discuss:

Write about the topic, giving several different views on the topic (similarities and differences, pros and cons).



MONITOR AND EVALUATE:

PAIRED READING:

1st years participated in between 2 to 7 paired sessions each with TY students on Monday mornings. While TYs were given responsibility, 1st years gained confidence in reading, in understanding words and in spelling.

- 78% of 1st years reported a gained confidence in reading



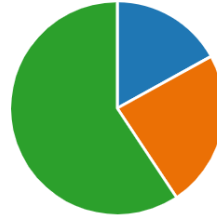
● Yes

46

● No

13

- 76 % reported that they have been encouraged or somewhat encourage to read more.



● Yes

10

● No

14

● Somewhat

35

- About 50% reported that paired reading helped them in spelling and to understand the meaning of words better.
- All first years thought the TYS were fun and encouraging.



SPELLING BEE:

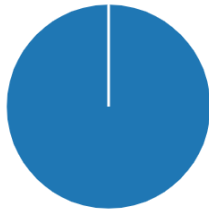
The spelling bee was held in May in the well. Fifty 1st years qualified to participate in the final in front of their peers. With the number being whittled to nine and the two after a number of rounds as the words got increasingly difficult.

These two served up an epic tension filled battle lasting another eight rounds before the winner was declared. This added drama and excitement added to the enjoyment of the crowd which further embedded the message of the importance of spelling 'and that learning can be fun.

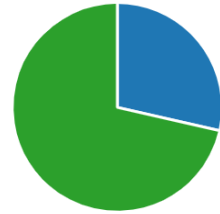
It is planned to hold the spelling bee competition again every year.

KEYWORDS:

- All students who used Quizlet in last enjoyed using it and learned from it
- All student either do or would consider using a tool such as Quizlet at home.



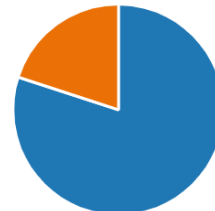
- Yes
- No
- Maybe



EXAM COMMAND WORDS:

Students have reported that the list of exam command words give them a clear explanation of the meaning of the exam command word and find them helpful in preparing for exams. A mix of the list and poster are being used by teachers in class.

- 90% of third year students find the new list of exam terms helpful
- 80% find the poster on the wall and find it helpful



Students have reported that teachers have used a mix of the poster and the list of words in class with students.

- Poster
- List
- Both



Conclusion/ steps for next Year.

There focus this year did shift to embedding Literacy skills amongst the school community. The paired reading initiative was a huge success with 1st years and TY students alike we will continue to embed this programme and will continue next year.

The Spelling Bee competition was help over a short (two week) period, it did stimulate interest and excitement in a novel way and we will continue to hold this event annually.

The teaching, learning and assessment of updated Subject specific keywords in Science, using online platforms such as Quizlet was both enjoyable and a useful learning tool for students. The use of keyword posters allowed for informal learning and will be further explored next year with more keyword posters.

Most of the time and focus was spent on creating the list and poster of Exam Key words. Students reported that this were of great help in preparing for all exams. These posters in the class rooms and the list in the student Diary as well as teacher awareness will allow for these to be further embedded as necessary throughout classes of all year groups in future years.

Targets for next year:

- We will continue to embed and expand the paired reading programme.
- The PPAD test results of this year's 1st years (and next years) will provide invaluable information on word reading, spelling reading, speed reading, reading comprehension and writing samples. This will allow us to analyse our own diagnostic test results and necessary literacy supports and interventions on group or individual basis can be put in place.
- The spelling bee will continue to be held annually.
- Each department will be encouraged to share subject specific Keywords and to explore different online methods of teaching, learning and fun assessment in a more collaborative approach.
- Teachers and students now have more awareness of an updated and more visible list of exam command words to use which can be more easily and readily embedded into day to day teaching and learning, not just in exam years but in every year group as appropriate.
- We will continue to monitor feedback and reflection and investigate

These goals and attainments are in keeping with Statements of highly effective practice LAOS (2022-2026)

- Teachers integrate relevant literacy and numeracy skills into the lesson.
- Teachers enable students to make meaningful links between lesson material and their learning in other subjects, and to transfer their learning to new experiences.
- Teachers recognise and affirm professional learning and collaboration as intrinsic to their work.
- Teachers approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour to support students' learning and to measure their attainment.
- Teachers and school management endeavour to enable all students to become active and motivated learners.
- As a community, the Intermediate school Killorglin continue to focus on improving learning, teaching and assessment.

WELLBEING

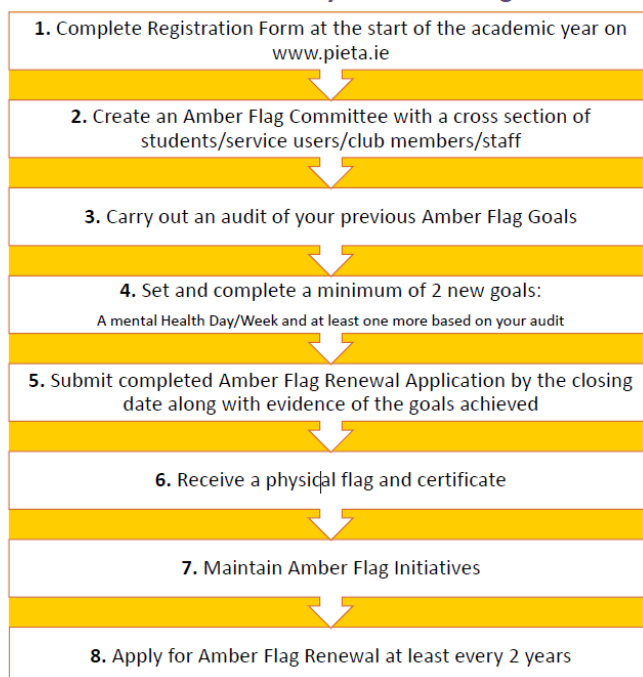
With wellbeing programmes initiated for every year group, the focus in 2023-2024 was to renew the amber flag for Promoting Positive Mental Health in Our Communities.

One key component was the organizing and running of a very successful ‘wellbeing week’ in November’.

While a review of the use for the ‘cubbie’ was part of the amber flag renewal. The introduction of the companion dog ‘Venus’ was also successfully carried out.

AMBER FLAG

How to Renew your Amber Flag



Past and Current Amber Flag Activities

Previous Goals	Briefly describe how you have maintained this achievement
Example: Feel Good Fridays	Lunchtime recitals have continued in the well every Friday. All students are encouraged to perform – singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, poetry recitations, group performances. All different standards, each treated with respect by the student/teacher audience.
Sea swim	This was a huge success the last time. We will continue to do that with the 1 st Years in the last few weeks of the school year.
Guest Speakers	We had a guest speaker that spoke to students and parents. We would like to invite another speaker to talk to students on resilience, coping with problems etc.

Goals and Objectives

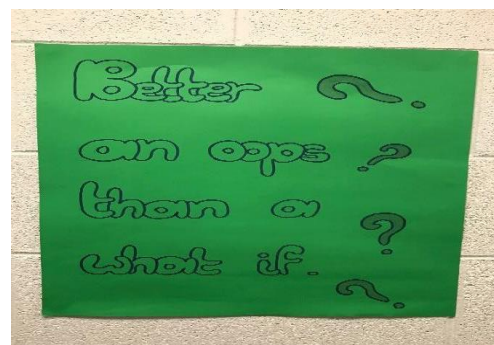
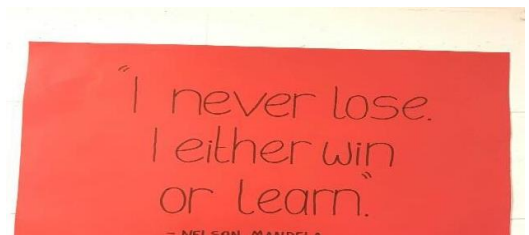
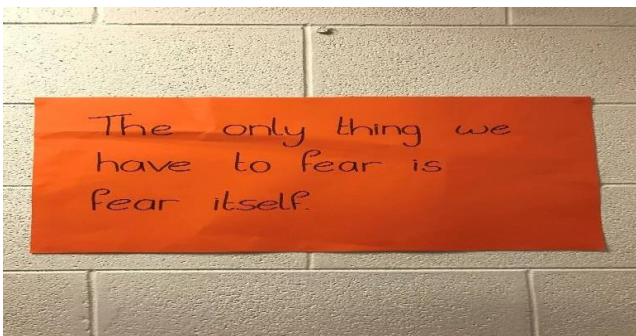
Goal 1:	Mental Health Week
Date Achieved:	13/11/2023 – 17/11/2023

The theme of our wellbeing week was: 'Mood & Mindset Matter'



Every day began with a student reciting an inspirational quote over the intercom.

Inspirational Quotes were posted on walls around the school.



A positivity station was placed in the main recreational area, where students placed 'post its' on what made them feel good:



Pat Falvey, the renowned explorer and motivational speaker addressed both the Senior and Junior school (2 sessions). He spoke to them about his own life, on overcoming problems, resilience, aiming high, dealing with 'knock backs', working as a team, working as a community, helping and mentoring each other



TY students travelled to Fota Island for a fun day of Ice Skating



On the final day the students organised a 'Wellbeing Quiz' for all 1st Year students. The TY students were the score keepers.



A 'Wellbeing booklet' containing tools to practice wellbeing at home was shared with all pupils and parents on our school website.

Our Plan to Maintain the Benefits of this Achievement:

We hope to have this as a yearly event in our school calendar.

Goal 2: Fundraiser for Pieta (Optional)

Date Achieved:	15/11/2023
Amount Raised:	€535
Details of Activities/Events to Achieve Goal:	2 nd and 3 rd Year students organised and ran this event. 2 nd Year students did the baking, brought in 'goodies' for the sale. 3 rd set up the hall on the day and took charge of selling the food to the rest of the student body during breaktime. Any goods left over were brought around to the classes after break and sold at a reduced rate!
Our Plan to Maintain the Benefits of this Achievement:	The students enjoyed having the responsibility of running the event. Students who are often quiet in class were delighted to step up to the challenge and help manage this event. We hope to see more volunteering like this in the school.

Goal 3:	To use the new sensory Cubbie (gifted to the school) more effectively.
Date Achieved:	October / November 2023
Details of Activities/Events to Achieve Goal:	The students were surveyed to find out how much they knew about the cubbie, why or why they didn't use it, where in the school should it be placed. The cubbie was moved from the library to a quieter room. The students were made aware of the benefits of the cubbie and reminded that it was for all students, if at any stage they needed time-out. Students were encouraged to 'try it out', and if they found it beneficial they might continue to use it. Certainly there has been a big increase in the number of students making use of this wonderful resource.
Our Plan to Maintain the Benefits of this Achievement:	Students will be reminded every now and again at assemblies about the benefits of the cubbie. 1 st Year students in particular will be given time to use it, so that they will see it as a place to go right throughout their time in the school.

Goal 4:	Bonding Day for Leaving Certs
Date Achieved:	04/10/2023
Details of Activities/Events to Achieve Goal:	Day of fun and learning in the magnificent setting of Inch Beach – Surfing lessons, volleyball and other games played on the beach. As Leaving cert students were facing into a difficult year, the committee decided that it would be nice if all students in that Year group could start off the year with a fun activity, in order to boost the mood for the year ahead.
Our Plan to Maintain the Benefits of this Achievement:	This is going to be a yearly event in our school calendar.

Amber Flag Committee Reflection

What we learned from taking part in the Amber Flag:	Working on the different activities during the year was a most enjoyable experience to all involved. It really lifted the mood and spirit in the school.
What we enjoyed most about taking part in the Amber Flag:	While organising the Wellbeing week seemed to be a daunting task initially, it was certainly worth the effort. Many students and staff expressed their gratitude at the end of the week, and look forward to next years events.
If we could change one thing:	For a change we will include a variety of different events next year.



PIETA AMBER FLAG AWARD

This certificate is presented to

The Intermediate School

for demonstrating excellence in
promoting positive mental health during
2023—2024



Eileen Cunningham
Pieta Education and Training Manager

Sensory cubbie :

Focus:

- To optimise usage of the Cubbie as a wellness tool amongst the student population.
- To investigate whether the current location of the Cubbie is the best one and if not, find a better location.
- To increase awareness and familiarity of the Cubbie amongst students and staff.

Evidence:

- Data received from Cubbie headquarters have indicated that it could be used more.
- Anecdotal evidence from teachers and SNAs have shown that the location is one of the reasons for not using it more.
- Reports from teachers of Wellbeing, RE, SPHE and the school counsellor indicate that students need more tools to manage wellbeing and levels of anxiety.

Analyse:

- Discussions with Cubbie and two other schools who use Cubbie showed ways in which we could improve student access to the Cubbie.
- Discussions were had with the school counsellor on whether a Cubbie Pass system would work in our school environment.
- Are there other locations within the school that would better house Cubbie

Write and share plan:

- All First year classes will have been introduced to Cubbie by the week ending Sept 22 2023.
- Any Religion teachers that require training will have received it.
- A system for all First Years to use Cubbie during Religion class will be implemented from the week beginning 25 Sept 2023.
- A meeting with an engineer investigating the possibilities of moving it will be booked in ASAP.
- A Cubbie Pass system will be introduced in conjunction with the school counsellor, Year Heads and management.
- All staff will be informed of these plans.

Plan in action:

- All first year RE classes were introduced to the Cubbie in the week ending 22 Sept 2023.
- First Year RE teachers agreed to create a rota for students to use before Midterm 2023.
- An visit from an engineer from the company confirmed which potential sites would be suitable for the move.
- A Cubbie Pass system was introduced week of 02 Oct 2023.
- An information email was shared with all ISK staff regarding the new system and offering training on Cubbie.
- A date was booked for the moving of Cubbie, 31 Oct 2023.

Monitor and evaluate:

There has certainly there has been a big increase in the number of students making use of this wonderful resource with the Cubbie pass being used successfully.

School Therapy Dog: 'VENUS'

Focus

- To investigate if a School Therapy Dog would work within the context of the ISK and what benefits, if any, there would be to the school population.
- To discover what requirements the charity My Canine Companion have for School Therapy Dog programmes.
- To examine if any staff members would volunteer to be a handler and if so, how many is optimal.

Evidence

- Attendance at a MCC (My Canine Companion) information session provided practical information on the operation of the programme.
- Anecdotal evidence from teachers at the session showed the impact of a Therapy Dog on students.
- Anecdotal evidence from teachers in nearby schools with Therapy Dogs reiterated the positive impacts on student and interestingly, staff wellbeing.

Analyse

- Discussion with management in the ISK showed that there was willingness to invest both financially and in terms of cover time for training etc.
- An in-school visit from the charity revealed the suitability of the environment for a Therapy Dog.
- Discussion amongst interested members of staff showed the viability of having a staff committee for the programme;
2 handlers plus other staff to provide cover for care of the dog and focus on fundraising duties.

Write and share plan

- The puppy will be collected on 10Dec2023 and begin coming to school on 11Dec 2023.
- Two staff members (one teacher, one SNA) will be the handlers.
- The handlers will attend training at MCC headquarters beginning 08Jan2024. This training programme is of 2-year duration. Cover will be provided by the school for this training.
- The puppy will be introduced to as many classes as possible and to the whole school population at an assembly.
- The conditions and rules of the puppy's training will be made clear to students and staff.
- The puppy will attend those school events that are deemed suitable by the handlers.
- The school will organise a fundraising event before the end of the school year.

Plan in action

- The handlers and puppy (called Venus) have attended training regularly since 08Jan2024.
- They have carried out daily, additional training at school.
- A whole school assembly was held on 30Jan2024 and the puppy and the rules were introduced to the school population.
- The puppy has attended classes, spent time in Rm209 with specific students and spent time adjusting to the staff room.
- A fundraising event, a Blue Day was held on 24April2024. €1,500 was raised and sent to MCC.

Monitor and evaluate

- Students regularly request to spend time with the Venus, the School Therapy Dog. The feedback from both students and staff has been very positive.
- A more complete and accurate appreciation of the value of Venus to the community will become apparent next term and in the years ahead.

