



## **Agreed Report: Board of Management Meeting 6th March 2023**

A meeting of the Board of Management of the school took place on Monday, 6th March 2023. The following items were discussed at the meeting:

### ***‘Living Our Ethos’***

Johnny Watson as Religious Education Coordinator reported to the Board of Management on this heading:

- Mass was attended by the whole school community for the Feast of the Epiphany, Grandparents’ Day and Ash Wednesday;
- A Sacred Space has been created inside the front door of the school;
- Catholic Schools Week was celebrated at the end of January;
- A very successful Grandparents’ Day was held as part of Catholic School’s Week. The school was delighted to welcome the pupils grandparents to visit;
- Different pupils read at the mass in Raheen Church to celebrate St. Fintan’s Day on 17th February;
- The Religious Education Policy has been reviewed in line with diocesan guidelines (ratified at this meeting of the Board of Management).

### **Treasurer’s Report to the Board of Management**

- The Treasurer’s Report was given by Mrs. Agnes Kerwin;
- A statement of monthly income and expenditure is now being prepared for each calendar month. Each Board of Management member was provided with a copy of same for January and February 2023;
- The Annual Accounts for the school year 2021-2022 have been audited by McMahon and Co. Accountants in Kildare town and have been forwarded to to the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU).

### **Principal’s Report to the Board of Management**

The Principal’s Report to the Board of Management was organised under the following headings:

1. Child Safeguarding;

2. Anti-Bullying;
3. Active Schools

The following Active Schools updates were provided by Johnny Watson (Active Schools Coordinator);

- Playground leaders have been given the role of organising games and activities for the infant room during small break each day. This is to encourage the children to play together and practise social skills being taught in the classroom. They are also in charge of giving out and tidying equipment during break times. Playground leaders wear a blue Hi-Vis vest during break times which makes them easily identifiable;
- The Active Flag Committee have organised ‘*Feel Good Fridays*’ for the last Friday of every Month. There has been a skipping challenge and a whole school soccer world cup in recent months. We will be opening the school walkway for this month’s ‘*Feel Good Friday*’ and there will be a table tennis tournament for April’s *Feel Good Friday*. There will also be a ‘*Run Around Ireland*’ Challenge which will lead on from the couch to 1k/2k;
- The Active Flag Committee have cleaned and organised both the PE Store Room and PE Shed. The PE storeroom is only for PE equipment while the shed contains equipment and resources that can be used during break times. Equipment lists have been updated and are on the doors in both areas;
- ‘*Funky Friday*’ is held every Friday where music is played in the yard during break times. Pupils have really enjoyed it and are to be praised for taking part. Pupils have been given the opportunity to pick songs for the ‘*Funky Friday*’ playlist;
- Couch to 1k/2k: Children are engaging in the programme three days per week for six weeks. Laois Partnership is to come to the school on Friday, 10th March to officially organise the run and give out certificates of participation;
- Dancing lessons are taking place with Aisling Walsh each Tuesday for six weeks in Shanahoe Community Hall;
- Hurling Lessons are taking place for all classes with Colt/Shanahoe GAA every Thursday for a minimum of twelve weeks.
- The Cumann na mBunscoil hurling competition is beginning on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

#### Moving Forward

- Swimming lessons will take place for six Mondays beginning on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April in Portlaoise Leisure Centre.

- A Water Safety Workshop is taking place for 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class on March 9<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with Water Safety Ireland. Theory and Practical Activities will be offered to both the middle and senior room.
- Children from 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> have been engaging in a lunch time soccer league during big lunch. A team of eight children will be participating in the FAI 5 a side soccer blitz in Portlaoise tomorrow 7<sup>th</sup> March.

#### 4. Green Schools

The following updates relating to Green Schools have been provided by Kris Cahill (Green Schools Coordinator):

- The Green Schools committee held an art competition to choose a mural for the wall behind their future bee garden. Congratulations to Julie Rohan whose mural was chosen;
- To avoid waste and cost, the Green Schools committee intend to ask parents to donate any open/half used tins of outdoor paint for the painting of the mural;
- Work with the ‘*Picker Pals*’ initiative is continuing, to encourage the children to look after our local environment. Every Friday, two children/families take our picker-pal packs home and choose an area to clear of litter. Their pictures and information about their litter picking are on the Green schools notice board. This is part of the renewal process for our Litter and Waste flag;
- The Green Schools committee have recently taken part in a poster competition run by Green schools and Irish Water. The theme of this competition is ‘*Local Water Actions for Global Change*’. Ten entries will be chosen for the Junior category, (JuniorInfants-2<sup>nd</sup>) and ten for the Senior category(3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>t</sup>). Teachers have been asked to teach lessons on Water, including conservation and protection of water as part of the renewal process for our water flag.

Green School Plans going forward:

- Mid-late March – Continue work on the bee garden, begin painting the mural and replant our school garden (Weather permitting);
- Continue ongoing maintenance of plants/flowers already planted;
- Move the bug hotel to our pollinator area and try to encourage more ‘activity’ in terms of biodiversity;
- Teachers will continue to develop awareness on what biodiversity is, and will revise elements of litter and recycling.

## 5. Student Council

Our new Student Council have been involved in the following activities in recent weeks:

- Consultation in terms of our re-engagement with the SSE Process i.e through the medium of focus groups;
- Work on applying for an Amber Flag for positive mental health and wellbeing;
- Organisation of a poster competition across the school in conjunction with ‘*Safer Internet Day*’ which took place on 8th February. The winners were Caedan Walsh from the Junior Room, Emily Rohan from the Middle Room and Síona Lalor from the Senior Room. Congratulations to them all;
- Organisation of a ‘*No Uniform Day*’ for the Ugandan Orphan Appeal on 14th February. €255.70 was raised as a result of same.

Going forward the Student Council will

1. Continue their work on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing i.e through the fortnightly wellbeing focus and working towards achieving an Amber Flag;
2. Organise a seanfhocail competition for Seachtain na Gaeilge to promote the use of Gaeilge across the school;
3. Organise a ‘*Rock Your Socks*’ fundraiser for the Laois Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland on 21st March;
4. Organise an Easter egg hunt on the day of the Easter holidays;
5. Contribute to the ‘*Gathering Evidence*’ stage of the SSE Process for Wellbeing i.e through the medium of focus groups (pupil voice).

## 6.Gaeilge

- Barry Whelan has commenced the review of the Whole School Plan for Gaeilge;
- A ‘*Lá Glas and Céilí Mór*’ will be held on Tuesday, 14th March as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge;
- The ‘*Gathering Evidence*’ stage of the School Self-Evaluation process for Gaeilge will be commenced after Easter by Barry Whelan.

## 7.Curious Minds (formerly Discover Primary Science and Maths)

- We are applying for a Gold award as part of the ‘*Curious Minds*’ formerly ‘*Discover Primary Science and Maths*’ initiative this year;

- Staff are in receipt of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with ‘*Curious Minds*’ in conjunction with Science Foundation Ireland as part of our engagement with the initiative Maura O’Dwyer M.Sc has provided two 2 hour workshops to date on Biodiversity (November 2022) and Gravity and Air Resistance (February 2023) for all staff;
- We will have our third and final workshop on the theme of ‘*Journey into Space*’ at the end of March.

### 8.STEM-Engineers Week

This week is ‘*Engineer’s Week*’ and different experiences have been planned across different classes. Barry Whelan has ordered Vex Robotics Kits and BeeBots on loan from Laois Education and Support Centre for use during the week.

### 9.Lesson Study in Maths

Following an application that was submitted to the PDST, the school has been selected to participate in a Lesson Study project in Maths. Lesson study is a model of professional development which supports teacher learning through collaboration. It consists of a cycle of phases, where a group of teachers work together to plan, conduct, observe and reflect on a research lesson. Through these phases, teachers share their knowledge and experience and have the opportunity to collaboratively identify, trial and reflect on new practices.

Teachers who have participated in lesson study have noted positive changes in their classroom practices and in their collaborations with colleagues. Participation in lesson study has the potential to positively impact pupil learning, develop teacher knowledge and build teacher community. Barry Whelan and Johnny Watson are engaging with the lesson study project at school level and their focus is going to be on developing the pupils’ skills with regard to problem solving and on fostering more positive dispositions towards problem solving as an area among the pupils. This aligns well with our targets for improvement in our Maths Improvement Plan. We are being supported by Aoife McCluskey from the STEM team in the PDST in undertaking this work.

### 10.IZAK 9 Cubes

Barry Whelan is involved in/with a project with Laois Education and Support Centre to roll out the use of the IZAK9 Cubes resource to develop pupils’ conceptual understanding of different Maths topics and concepts. The plan is to collaborate with different local primary schools and secondary schools i.e

Mountrath Community School and Portlaoise College to use the IZAK9 Cubes as a transition resource between primary and secondary.

### 11. Sonas Class & July Programme

- All of the staff will have a full day inservice on Monday, 20th March with the NCSE in relation to the Sonas Class. This is an exceptional closure;
- The school will be running the July Programme for pupils in our Sonas Class and those on School Support Plus of the Continuum of Support. The programme will run from Monday 26th June to Friday 7th July.

### 12. The Pushkin Trust

As part of their engagement with/in '*The Pushkin Trust*' this year and its theme of '*Reforestation of the Imagination*', 5th & 6th Class will have two full day workshops after the Easter holidays to further explore the aforementioned theme. These workshops are fully funded by the Pushkin Trust. 5th & 6th Class will work with environmentalist Dr. Paddy Madden of the '*Heritage in Schools*' scheme and formerly of Marino Institute of Education to have a Forest Schools workshop in Dunmore Woods in Durrow on 5th May. They will then work with Laois based dramatist, playwright and former primary school teacher Frances Harney M.Ed to explore the aforementioned theme further using a process drama approach. The date of the drama workshop is to be confirmed.

### 13. Readers' Theatre Project

The aforementioned Frances Harney will work with 5th and 6th Class after Easter to develop their skills within the domain of playwriting/scriptwriting. Frances's work with the school is being funded by Laois Education and Support Centre.

### 14. Fire Drill

An unannounced fire drill was held on 6th March and the school premises was evacuated in 2 minutes 3 seconds.

### **School Self-Evaluation (SSE)**

- School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report and School Improvement Plans for Maths and Science as subject areas are in place within the school. We are working towards achieving the targets outlined within same by implementing the associated actions for improvement;
- Barry Whelan will begin the 'Gathering Evidence' stage of the SSE process for Gaeilge after the Easter Holidays and Kris Cahill will begin the 'Gathering Evidence' stage for English as a subject area.

- Johnny Watson will begin the ‘Gathering Evidence’ stage of the SSE process for Wellbeing after Easter.

### **School Calendar for 2023-2024**

The school calendar for 2023-2024 was ratified by the Board of Management.

### **Curricular Policies for Ratification**

The Religious Education Policy was ratified by the Board of Management. The policy can be viewed and downloaded here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/religious-education-policy.html>

### **Organisational and Administrative Policy for Ratification**

The Dignity in the Workplace and Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy was ratified by the Board of Management. The policy can be viewed and downloaded here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/dignity-at-work-and-anti-bullying--anti-harassment-policy.html>

### **Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Management of the school will take place in May-date to be confirmed.

ENDS