



# SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA

## Agreed Report of the Board of Management 24th August 2023

**Living our Ethos:** Johnny Watson as Religious Education co-ordinator supplied a schedule of provisional mass times for the year to coincide with different liturgical celebrations and church feasts. Different class groupings will take responsibility for artwork for each month as outlined. The aim is to foster stronger links between the parish and school communities.

<b>Provisional Date for Mass</b>	<b>Artwork</b>	<b>Theme for Month</b>
13th September	Infants/Sonas	Harvest Mass
4 <sup>th</sup> October	Middle	St. Therese of Lisieux
8 <sup>th</sup> November	Senior	All Souls/Remembrance
6 <sup>th</sup> December	All Classes	Nativity/Advent
10 <sup>th</sup> January	Infant/Sonas	Catholic Schools Week/Grandparents Day
14 <sup>th</sup> February (Ash Wednesday)	Middle	Lent
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Senior	St. Patrick's Day/ Lent

10 <sup>th</sup> April	Infant/Sonas	Prayer
1 <sup>st</sup> May	Middle	Month of Mary/Rosary
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Senior	Feast of the Sacred Heart

The sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation will take place in the school year 2023-2024. Dates to be confirmed in due course.

### **Treasurer's Report to the Board of Management:**

The Treasurer's Report to the Board of Management was provided by Agnes Kerwin. Recent income and expenditure was outlined.

### **Principal's Report to the Board of Management:**

The Principal's Report to the Board of Management was provided by Barry Whelan. Headings on this report included:

#### Child Safeguarding

- The '*Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*' was reviewed from late June onwards and consultation was facilitated with pupils in 3rd to 6th Class in June using an online survey. A draft copy of the revised statement and risk assessment was sent to Board of Management members, all of the parent body and all staff for feedback and input;
- The revised/updated '*Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*' was ratified by the Board of Management and can be accessed here  
<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/child-safeguarding-statement--risk-assessment.html>
- The Annual Review of the '*Child Safeguarding Statement*' was undertaken by the Board of Management at the meeting. Notification that the annual review was undertaken can be accessed here  
<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/child-safeguarding-annual-review.html>
- Parents were reminded in the '*Back to School Updates*' that issued

earlier in the week, to revise the '*Stay Safe Rules*' with their children at home and to reinforce these regularly. These rules will also be revised and reinforced by teachers on return to school next week and regularly thereafter. The '*Stay Safe Rules*' are on display in all classrooms/teaching settings and at different locations throughout the school.

### Anti-Bullying

- The Anti-Bullying Policy is due for annual review in November;
- An Anti-Bullying Week will be held in November. This is a change to policy as previously this week was held in the school in October. The change to November is in line with the national Anti-Bullying Week organised by the Department of Education last year. We have registered to avail of/use the '*Fuse Anti-Bullying Resources*' for 4th to 6th Class which have been made available by the Department of Education in conjunction with the '*Cinéaltas Action Plan on Bullying*':
- Restorative Practices will be rolled out at whole school level this year.

### Croke Park Day

- All staff will attend a Croke Park Day on Monday, 28th August. There will be different meetings taking place on that day.

### Summer Works

- The lights in the corridor were replaced with more efficient LED lighting in an effort to both reduce electricity costs and provide improved lighting. New sockets had to be installed in the staffroom as the sockets there were faulty. New sockets were also installed in Mrs. Cahill's room and Ms. Burnell's room to support the IT infrastructure in these rooms. This work was completed by James Conroy Electrician in Portlaoise at a cost of €590.
- Mick Cahill freshened up some areas that needed painting internally and the school was thoroughly cleaned;
- A basket swing was installed in the soft playground area at a cost of €3,950. A full grant was provided under the Community Support Fund from Laois County Council to provide and install this swing. All of the requisite paperwork for same was submitted in early August and we hope to draw down the grant funding in the coming days.

Abbeyleix Community Employment Scheme very kindly volunteered to do work in the school grounds including:

- Powerwashing of the front yard;
- Painting of the picnic benches at the rear of the building;
- Painting of the birdhouses at the front of the building;
- Upcycling of an existing bench at the rear of the building to create a '*Buddy Bench*' for the pupils for breaktimes.
- Painting of the rail at the entrance to the Sonas Classroom.

### Road Safety Authority Workshop

- A workshop with the Road Safety Authority of Ireland (RSA) has been organised for all pupils and this will take place on Monday, 27th November which was the earliest available date.
- Guidance was sent to parents in '*Back to School Updates*' regarding safe practices for children cycling and/or walking to school;

### Summer Programme

- The Summer Programme which ran from Monday, 26th June to Friday, 7th July was a very positive and worthwhile experience. There were a range of learner experiences connected to the theme of '*Building Confidence and Connections*' planned for both classes and high levels of interest and engagement were evident. Experiences for pupils in attendance including baking, cookery, art, gardening, project work, IT, P.E and numeracy and literacy. Two outings were also organised-one to Castlecomer Discovery Park and a second to Castlevew Open Farm in Cullahill.
- Staff will engage in reflection on the Summer Programme in the near future as a means of planning accordingly for next year's programme.

### New Bus Route and Bus Escort Position

- A new school transport route has been sanctioned by the Department of Education to serve our Sonas ASD Class and the pupils from the class who reside in the Rathdowney and Cullahill areas. An additional bus escort will have to be appointed to cater for the needs of pupils on this route.

### School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Updates

- **Gaeilge:** Barry Whelan formulated the '*SSE Report and School Improvement Plan for Gaeilge*' over the Summer months following consultation with staff prior to the Summer Holidays. The targets for improvement within the plan centre around (a)Teanga ó Bhéal: Speaking with specific emphasis on competence and confidence when speaking Gaeilge and general pronunciation (b)Teanga ó

Bhéal: Listening Skills and (c)Reading Fluency. A bank of resources for teachers has been put together relating to these areas and these will be shared with staff.

Useful tip sheets for parents from the NCCA regarding speaking and using Gaeilge at home were forwarded with '*Back to School Updates*' which issued earlier in the week.

Johnny Watson will assume responsibility for the School Improvement Plan for Gaeilge on return to school as Barry Whelan will be assuming responsibility for Special Educational Needs.

- **English:** Kris Cahill formulated the '*SSE Report and School Improvement Plan for English*' over the Summer months following consultation with staff prior to the Summer holidays. The targets for improvement within the plan centre around (a)Oral Language Development with a specific emphasis on spoken text types (b)Reading Comprehension Strategy Development (c)Reading Fluency and (d) Spelling. Mrs. Cahill will share relevant resources for these areas with staff.
- **Maths:** Barry Whelan will revisit the School Improvement Plan for Maths once the new Primary Maths Curriculum issues on return to school. Some of the targets within the current plan need to be revised and adapted as they weren't achieved last year.
- **Science:** The School Improvement Plan for Science was reviewed by staff in mid to late June. The staff was happy with regard to targets for improvement within the plan and our progress towards achieving same. One of the targets for Science for this year is to achieve a Platinum award for STEM as part of the '*Curious Minds*' initiative and Barry Whelan will make a formal application for this award when the registration portal opens in the weeks ahead..
- **Digital Learning:** A '*Digital Learning Plan*' was formulated by Johnny Watson over the Summer months based on the data gathered from surveys which were undertaken towards the end of the previous academic year and consultation with staff. The plan will outline how we as a school can improve our digital learning practice further. We have chosen five standards from the Digital Learning Framework to focus on and the areas that these entail include:
  - 1.Pupil enjoyment;
  2. Computer/Internet Safety;
  3. Staff Collaboration;

4. Continuous Professional Development;

5. Incorporating digital learning into the curriculum, ensuring a balanced is maintained with books etc.

The plan is a 5 year plan based on the '*Digital Learning Framework*' and will be continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure that we can achieve the targets outlined therein based on the five standards that we have chosen. At the moment we have sixteen laptops and five tablets. Laptops all have Microsoft Office installed, they can print using the school printer and have a Padlet bookmarked which will allow easy access to a whole range of interactive content based on the primary school curriculum. The tablets will be used to take photos and these can be uploaded to a new school photos account which can then be used to update the website or be used for initiatives such as Active Flag or Green Schools.

- **Wellbeing:** Questionnaires relating to wellbeing have been formulated by Johnny Watson and will be distributed to parents/guardians, staff and pupils at the beginning of the school year. Results will then be analysed and reviewed in line with the '*Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*' which will in turn help to create the '*School Improvement Plan for Wellbeing*' in due course. This will also tie in with the work being done by the Student Council with regard to the Amber Flag application.

All of the '*School Improvement Plans*' as aforementioned factored in the views of and feedback received from pupils, parents and staff from the '*Gathering Evidence*' stage of the SSE process. All SSE Reports and School Improvement Plans as referred to above will be shared with the school community on a dedicated section of the school website in the near future.

### **Curricular Policies**

- (a) The '*Whole School Plan/Policy for Gaelge*' was ratified by the Board of Management and can be accessed here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/gaelge-whole-school-planpolicy.html>

- (b) The '*Whole School Plan/Policy for SPHE*' was ratified by the Board of Management and can be accessed here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/sphe-whole-school-planpolicy.html>

## **Organisational and Administrative Policies**

- (a) The school's '*Safety, Health and Welfare Statement and Risk Assessment*' was ratified by the Board of Management and can be accessed here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/safety-health--welfare-statement--risk-assessment.html>

- (b) The school's '*Special Educational Needs Policy*' was ratified by the Board of Management and can be accessed here

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/special-educational-needs-policy.html>

## **AOB**

Under the heading of AOB, the issue of the cost of school buses to transport pupils to Cumann na mBunscol games and other sporting events was raised for discussion. To date, costs were being heavily subsidised by the school and this is something that cannot be sustained going forward as the funds simply aren't available to cover such expenditure, as no such grant funding is received from the Department of Education. The Board of Management gave this matter serious consideration and agreed that issues around Child Safeguarding and Garda Vetting, Safety, Health and Welfare, Insurance and availability of parents/guardians during the school day wouldn't make transporting pupils by car a viable option. Taking these factors into account, the Board of Management decided that continuing to use buses to transport pupils to sporting events was the only viable option going forward and that the costs being incurred by parents/guardians would have to increase accordingly in order to cover the costs of bus travel if they wished for their children to participate in such external sporting events. Home games with/in football will be played on the pitch at the school to remove the need to hire buses.

**ENDS**