



# SCOIL FIONNTÁIN NAOFA

## **Agreed Report: Board of Management Meeting 29th May 2023**

A meeting of the Board of Management of the school took place on Monday, 29th May 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:

- First Holy Communion was held in St. Brigid’s Church, Shanahoe on 29th April and the pupils of 2nd Class were very well prepared by their teacher Mrs. Kris Cahill;
- Pupils in 2nd to 6th Class have been praying the rosary on a weekly basis in St. Brigid’s Church, Shanahoe for the month of May and this was led by Mairéad Malone and Kay Downey. There will be a celebration to mark the end of recitation of the rosary for the month of May in St. Brigid’s Church, Shanahoe on 30th May at 11.am and Parish Priest Fr. Paddy Byrne will pray a blessing on the congregation;
- Fr. Petru plans to celebrate mass once per month with the whole school community in the the school year 2023-2024.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

- The Treasurer’s Report was provided by Agnes Kerwin;
- A full outline of income and expenditure for March and April 2023 was provided for each member of the Board of Management.

### **Principal’s Report**

The Principal’s Report was provided by Barry Whelan. Headings on the report included:

#### Child Safeguarding:

- The S.P.H.E Policy is due for review after two years and Barry Whelan will oversee this review between now and the end of the school year. A copy of the reviewed policy will be forwarded to the Board of

Management for feedback in advance of it going forward to be (re)ratified at the Board of Management meeting at the end of August;

- Barry Whelan will facilitate consultation and discussion with the pupils regarding the Child Safeguarding matters before the end of this school year to inform the annual review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement which is due to be undertaken at the Board of Management meeting at the end of August.

#### Anti-Bullying:

- Johnny Watson attended Restorative Practice training with Marion Flanagan M.Ed PDST Associate in Laois Education and Support Centre in March 2023. This means that Barry Whelan, Johnny Watson and Gillian Burnell have received Restorative Practice training in the school year 2022-2023. Restorative Practices will be rolled out across the school in 2023-2024 in line with our Wellbeing Framework which is being overseen by Deputy Principal Johnny Watson.

#### Active Schools

The following updates relating to Active Schools were provided by Mr. Johnny Watson (Deputy Principal and Active Schools Coordinator):

- Our Active walkway has been officially opened. This walkway was put in place by former Deputy Principal Mrs. Miriam Brickely in advance of her retirement last year. The pupils now walk for ten minutes before school starts every Friday. The pupils will continue to engage in 'wake up shake up' with Mr. Watson on a Friday morning after the walk;
- Swimming has been taking place every Monday morning for the last six weeks in Portlaoise Leisure Centre. Pupils from 1st to 6th class have been attending these lessons and have really enjoyed them. Swimming has now concluded for this school year and pupils will be presented with their swimming certificates at the next whole school assembly. Swimming has been booked for 2024 and lessons will begin after the Easter holidays (2024);
- Dan Butler from Colt/Shanahoe GAA club has been taking the pupils from all classes for hurling sessions every Thursday and will continue to do so until the end of the school year. It has been a fantastic opportunity for the pupils from all classes to develop their hurling skills;
- The Cumann na mBunscol hurling team had a fantastic run in the group stages of the hurling competition winning three out of five games. They eventually made it to the Shield Semi-Final against Ballacolla.

Unfortunately, Ballacolla emerged as the victors on the day but the Scoil Fionntáin Naofa team performed extremely well and should be so proud of their efforts over the last number of weeks;

- Active week took place during the week of the 15th - 19th of May. Pupils from all classes got to experience a wide range of activities including using our Active Walkway every morning along with a ‘*Wake Up Shake Up*’ session, basketball, Tennis, Soccer, Penalty Shootout, Swimming, Hurling, Orienteering, Gymnastics, Playground Games, Dancing during break times, HIIT sessions and Table Tennis. On the final day, the pupils from all classes participated in a marathon relay run where they took turns running a 100m circuit. In total, the pupils from all classes ran the circuit 420 times which added up to a total of 42 km. The final lap was completed by our oldest and youngest pupil who crossed the finish line together. The pupils completed the marathon in 3 hours and 14 minutes which was an excellent achievement. It was a hugely enjoyable week and a huge thanks to all of the staff and pupils who made the week extremely memorable;
- The pupils from all classes have been working on reducing sedentary time with their class teachers over the month of May. They have come up with a variety of activities that will be incorporated into the school day including GoNoodle, Playground Games, using our Active Walkway and Bizzy Breaks;
- Pupils from all classes have been engaging in active homework each week. This will continue for the month of June;
- Sports Day will take place on the 20th June and will involve a wide range of activities for all of the classes in the school. A timetable will be formulated with the Active Flag Committee over the coming weeks.

### Green Schools

The following updates relating to Green Schools were provided by Mrs. Kris Cahill (Assistant Principal 2 and Green Schools Coordinator):

- Our Bee Garden has been planted and is growing well. Our thanks must go to parent Tony Walsh, who took charge of beginning this work over the Easter Holidays. The pupils are maintaining the garden by watering it and watching for flower growth;
- Our vegetable garden has also been planted by a group consisting of teachers, parents, members of the community and pupils. We have planted carrots, peas, red and white onions, cabbages and potatoes. The

pupils are maintaining the vegetable garden by watering it and watching for signs of growth and/or problems/issues affecting growth;

- Maintenance of plants/flowers already planted is continuing;
- Our bug hotel has been moved by Tony Walsh to our pollinator area to try to encourage more “visitors”;
- Work on our ‘bee mural’ has begun and will continue over the month of June. Sarah-Lou Malone has undertaken to sketch the winning mural, and the children will paint it afterwards. Our thanks to Sarah-Lou for her help with this. To this end, we have received some donations of paint, but we are short some colours;
- Congratulations must go to Julia Kirwan, a Senior Infant pupil who won an award in the Irish Water poster competition, held in conjunction with Green Schools. She was one of the regional winners. As a reward for her efforts, she represented the school in Dublin at an awards ceremony, where she was presented with her poster, (professionally framed) and a €250 voucher for The Art and Hobby Shop;
- Our picker-pals work is continuing, to encourage the pupils to look after our local environment. Every Friday, two pupils/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 our Green schools notice board. This is part of the renewal process for our Litter and Waste flag;
- Teachers will continue to develop awareness of what biodiversity is, and will revise elements of litter and recycling and conservation of water.

Green School plans going forward:

- Next year we want to work on developing a rockery in our biodiversity area. We hope to place it to the side of our shelter, facing our Bee Garden.
- We also want to further our development of our dead leaf and wood areas. These are natural habitats for insects and mini-beasts.
- We also want to continue with our renewal of other flags already gained – namely, energy and travel.

We have had a very productive year. We hope our efforts will continue to pay off, with the help of the staff, pupils and wider community next year, and that we will earn our 5<sup>th</sup> Green Schools Flag.

### Student Council

Our new Student Council have been involved in the following activities in

recent weeks:

- Continuing their work on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing i.e through the fortnightly wellbeing focus and working towards achieving an Amber Flag in the school year 2023-2024;
- Organising a ‘*Rock Your Socks*’ fundraiser for the Laois Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland on 21st March as a result of which €214.80 was raised for the Laois Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland. Laois Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland forwarded a thank you card and receipt via parent Myra Drennan;
- Contributing to the ‘*Gathering Evidence*’ stage of the SSE Process for Gaeilge as a subject area;
- Presentation by our Student Council Chairperson Evan Burke of a copy of our local history and folklore collection ‘*Tracing our Past: Scoil Fionntáin Naofa, Shanahoe*’ to local T.D and Minister Seán Fleming who is Minister for State in the Department of Foreign Affairs during his visit to the school for Europe Day on May 9th.

Student Council plans going forward:

- To formally apply for an Amber Flag for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing when applications for same reopen in the Autumn.

### Primary Curriculum Framework

- All teaching staff have been provided with a copy of the new Primary Curriculum Framework and they engaged with the webinar on same on Tuesday, 2nd May. We will review the framework further at our next In School Management and Staff Meetings over the coming weeks.

### Gaeilge

- We celebrated a successful Seachtain na Gaeilge in the school in March this year which included a ‘*Lá Glas*’ & ‘*Céilí Mór*’ for the whole school outdoors;
- Work on the whole school plan for Gaeilge is continuing with Barry Whelan overseeing same and it will be in place for the return to school in 2023-2024;
- The PDST was unable to offer support for Gaeilge in this term as planned due to lack of availability of advisors;
- At whole school level, we are changing to the new version of ‘*Abair*

*Liom*’ as the version that we are currently using is not in line with the the Primary Language Curriculum for Gaeilge particularly in terms of planning and preparation. Rang 3 to Rang 6 will also use the new version of ‘*Léigh sa Bhaile*’;

- Rang 3 to Rang 6 will also follow a formalised Gaeilge spelling in the new school year (2023-2024);
- Drumcondra Standardised Gaeilge Tests have been undertaken in Rang 5 agus Rang 6 for the first time. Results for Léamh/Reading and Éisteacht/Listening will be shared with parents/guardians of Rang 5 agus 6 in end of year reports;
- We (a)Identified the focus for SSE in Gaeilge namely Oral Language including confidence and competence when speaking Gaeilge and Reading Fluency and (b)Gathered the Evidence pertaining to these areas. We are now in the process of analysing and making judgements with regard to the evidence that was gathered. Barry Whelan (in consultation with the In School Management Team and staff) will formulate the SSE Report and School Improvement Plan for Gaeilge and this will be in place for return to school at the end of August;

### English

- Michelle Ní Fhaoláin from the PDST who supported us under the sustained support model in 2021-2022 for the Primary Language Curriculum English will visit the school on 13th June to provide a follow up visit and to review progress made to date;
- The Scholastic Book Fair was held in March and there were high levels of interest and engagement among pupils. As a result of the profits raised, each of our four classrooms was allocated €82 each to spend on books. We have already booked in the Book Fair for next March (2024);
- The focus has been identified for SSE for English to include (a)Oral Language (b)Reading Fluency and (c)Comprehension Strategy Development. Kris Cahill is currently in the process of Gathering Evidence relating to these areas. The School Self-Evaluation Report and School Improvement Plan for English will be in place for return to school in August;
- The teaching staff have now engaged with seven out of eight of the Primary Language Curriculum webinars with the last/seventh webinar on Disciplinary Literacy having been engaged with on Tuesday, 2nd May.

## Maths

- We are monitoring the targets and associated actions for improvement in our School Improvement Plan for Maths as a subject area.
- Barry Whelan and Johnny Watson engaged with the Lesson Study based on the New Primary Maths Curriculum this year. Barry Whelan will present findings of the Lesson Study at a shared learning Lesson Study Day in Athlone on May 30th.

## 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 had two full day workshops which were fully funded by the Pushkin Trust. 5th & 6th class worked with 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 then had a process Drama workshop with dramatist and playwright Frances Harney M.Ed M.St on 19th May. Both were very worthwhile experiences.

## The Blue Star Project

- 5th & 6th Class participated again in the Blue Star Project on the E.U this year. As part of their participation in the project, Local T.D and Minister for State in the Department of Foreign Affairs Seán Fleming visited the school on Europe Day May 9th to address the pupils in 1st to 6th Classes. We have submitted our Blue Star Report for 2022-2023 to the powers that be in the Blue Star organisation.

## Free Book Scheme

- Our Secretary Isobel Magner has done a great deal of work on the Free Book Scheme within the school. All textbooks, workbooks and copybooks will be provided free of charge for all pupils this year. Isobel followed the procurement process in seeking quotations from four different bookshops. The quotation from AllBooks in Portlaoise was the most favourable so we have placed our order with them. The books and copies will be delivered to the school in the last week of June for distribution to pupils at the start of the new school year. Booklists will still issue to parents in June. The total cost of the books is €4,494.64.

### **Fees for Photocopying and Arts and Crafts**

The Board of Management approved the following fees for Photocopying and Arts and Crafts for 2023-2024:

<b>Number of children in a family</b>	<b>Amount Payable</b>
One child	€30.
Two children	€55.
Three children	€80.
Four children	€95.

Payment links for same will be forwarded to parents/guardians via Aladdin in the near future.

### **Manual Handling Training**

- The school engaged the services of Ann Murphy to provide bespoke manual handling training for all of the staff as part of Croke Park hours at the start of May. Ann provided three hours of high quality training for both teachers and SNAs and all who availed of same found it to be most beneficial.

### **Fire Alarm/Security**

The services of Oxley Security and Electrical Limited have been engaged to

- Install a new fire alarm panel as the current one is not working properly nor can it be monitored remotely;
- Provide monitoring on the fire alarm system;
- Check all of the fire alarm sensors in the school;
- Reconnect a CCTV camera that was disconnected during the building works on the Sonas Class in recent months;

### **Summer Works with the Abbeyleix Community Employment Scheme**

The services of Abbeyleix Community Employment Scheme have been engaged to do Summer Works in the school grounds to include:

- 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 break-times.

### Playground Markings

Topline Markings from Roscommon have to redo the playground markings in the school yard as they faded when salt and grit was applied to the yard over the Winter months. They will do this free of charge and have given a commitment to complete the works in the coming weeks.

### Grounds Maintenance

Many thanks must go to Chairperson of the Board of Management Micheál Delaney for his ongoing work in maintaining the school grounds by cutting the grass on a regular basis.

### **Standardised Test Results**

- The aggregated results of the Standardised Tests for 2022-2023 for Gaeilge (Drumcondra Gaeilge 5th & 6th Class) and English Spelling (Drumcondra Spelling 1st to 6th Classes) were presented to the Board of Management and compared with national norms.

### **Summer Programme for Pupils with SEN**

- Johnny Watson as SEN coordinator informed the Board of Management that 13 children are availing of the Summer Programme in the school which will run from Monday, 26th June to Friday, 7th July inclusive;

### **Organisational and Administrative Policies**

The following organisational and administrative policies were ratified by the Board of Management:

1. Protected Disclosures Policy;
2. Data Protection Policy;

The Protected Disclosures Policy can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/protected-disclosures-policy.html>

The Data Protection Policy can be accessed here:

<https://shanahoens.weebly.com/data-protection-policy.html>

### **Next meeting of the Board of Management**

- The next meeting of the Board of Management of the school has been scheduled to take place on Monday, 26th June.

ENDS