

Literacy Policy

Scope

This policy applies to the whole school community.

Vision

We have a vision that each person in our School Community feels secure and fulfilled: enjoying a positive educational experience.

We envisage the development of well-adjusted individuals, who will succeed in life and actively contribute to the betterment of the greater community.

Mission Statement

In our mission statement we acknowledge the uniqueness of students in our care: each with individual needs and potentialities. The realisation of each student's potential is our mission.

We recognise the importance of self-esteem. It is our mission to engender, foster and protect a positive self-image for each person in our care.

Our mission is to create an effective educational environment, where our school community will thrive. This environment, managed with fairness and firmness, will allow each person in our care to develop personally, educationally, socially and spiritually.

Our School Motto – 'BCS is committed to quality education'. Our main mission is to conduct that search towards quality & excellence in every area of school life.

Rationale

The rationale behind this policy is based on the Education Act (1998), the Education Welfare Act (2000) and the Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall, as far as resources permit, ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, are identified and provided for, establish and maintain an Admissions Policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school
(Education Act 1998)

This document is drawn up the context of this legislation.

- a) Each area of learning has its own particular literacy, its own specialized language and ways of using language to describe, reflect on and analyse the world.
- b) This is also necessary as a response to our national inadequacy re literacy as highlighted by PISA.

Definition of Literacy

Literacy is a basic human right which can enable our students to achieve full personal development and fulfilment.

Literacy is a term used to show how language is shaped, enriched and enjoyed.

The three inter-related modes of language are

- a) Talking and listening through which students develop communicative, social and cognitive skills.
- b) Reading through which students develop the ability to engage with various types of text for enjoyment and learning. Reading requires students to interact personally, critically and meaningfully with text.
- c) Writing through which students develop the ability to make and structure text to communicate meaning, knowledge and opinion, in a variety of forms.

Aims

- To develop children's confidence as users of language. To develop children's key skills in all areas of language. To develop children's knowledge of a wide range of literature both fiction and non-fiction.
- To develop skills of comprehension and understanding. To develop skills of presentation.
- To develop children's ability to use information texts or to locate relevant information.
- To enable children to generalise beyond English in all areas of the curriculum in order to apply and develop their language skills for a range of purposes and audiences, using spelling, punctuation and syntax appropriately and with confidence.
- To assist in the promotion of I.C.T. and digital literacy as a medium for further development of language both in English and across the curriculum.
- To enable children to communicate clearly and with assurance in appropriate forms of speech.
- To counter current cultural threats to literacy i.e. texting, social media, etc.,
- To broaden our policy to ensure individual subject areas outline their own subject specific strategies.

- To create the environment in class in which children will feel safe and confident so that they will express their thoughts, feelings and concerns honestly and genuinely.
- To create a buoyant atmosphere within the school in which literacy is seen to be important and enjoyable.
- To ensure that measurement of improvement or otherwise takes place with effective instruments.

Identification of students with Literacy Difficulties

Students' literacy difficulties are identified by:

- Primary school records and consultation with Primary Principals/Learning Support/Resource teachers.
- Results of assessment tests e.g. Cat3, GRT 2, NRIT, WRAT4.
- Information from parents.
- Information from Year Heads, Class Tutors and subject teachers.
- Tests recommended by the Dept. of Education and Science as above.
- Psychological reports and other professional reports. These are passed on to the school with the permission of the parents/guardians.

Study, Revision and Homework

- Reinforcement of the homework journal to be checked by the class tutor and year head, students expected to have their diary signed each night by parents/guardians
- Participation of parents encouraged.
- Regular assignments given and corrected.
- Provision of good study techniques/study skills as per PR book.
- Homework encouraged, students made to realise that oral homework is as important as written homework.
- Material revised prior to all tests and examinations.
- Provision of supervised Study and Homework Club – reinforcement through the mentoring scheme.

Motivation and Rewards

- Supportive positive learning environment
- Teachers take an interest in each student and are sensitive to their needs.
- Positive reinforcement of effort.
- Praise and acknowledgement of good effort and good work.
- End of year school awards/Positive Discipline.
- Linked with Merit system with Junior Cert modified.
- School activities and trips for students who are well-behaved and work hard.
- Given positions of responsibility.

Whole School Support

Blackwater Community School recognises that it is the responsibility of each subject teacher to provide work in a class at a level suitable to their students' ability and to seek to address students' learning difficulties consistent with differentiated learning.

Cross Circular Issues

Literacy across the Curriculum offers opportunities for the following:

- The development of good practice; the sharing of good practice.
- Consistency across the curriculum in the delivery and monitoring of the basic skills.
- Support and reinforcement.
- Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of all our classes; development of thinking through language.
- Collaborative activities in class.
- Exposure to different reading strategies appropriate to texts and purposes; working independently.
- Development of research study skills.
- Further practice in the surface skills of punctuation, spelling, grammar and general presentation of work.
- Differentiated learning.
- Overall school coherence.
- Shared reinforcement by all staff re mechanics of literacy through weekly staff newsletter.
- Assessment for learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- Oversee development of the Literacy Policy

Principal and Deputy Principal

- Overall responsibility for Literacy policy
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of a school plan for Literacy.
- Monitor implementation.
- Oversee assessment and screening programmes.
- Keep teachers informed of services available and provide staff development to increase teachers knowledge of appropriate teaching methodologies and encourage teachers to avail of relevant in-career development.
- Keep weekly reinforcement of literary strategies through staff newsletter.

Subject Departments

- The subject teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/her classes.
- They should promote the regular use of dictionaries/apps for class and homework.
- Teachers should record the subject specific vocabulary reinforced by homework board and keyword journals.
- They should differentiate the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all students with learning difficulties. Group teaching, modifying presentation and questioning techniques, emphasis on oral language development, providing opportunities to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy.
- Provide learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which ensure success and progress.
- They should explore ways in which they can use ICT resources for literacy development within their subject areas.
- Use of peer tutoring systems e.g. paired reading.

The Class Tutor and Year Head provide support to students and an over view of progress.

The Special Needs Department

- Dual role in providing supplementary teaching and supporting and consulting with colleagues.
- High quality interaction with students through teaching.
- Interaction with Principal, Subject Teachers, Year Heads, Class Tutors and Parents in the development and implementation of the literacy policy.
- Consultative role
- Acquisition of teaching and learning resources e.g. arrows/Kurzwell

Guidance/Pastoral Care Team

- To monitor the effects of the policy and to identify students experiencing difficulty.
- To provide support and guidance, especially for those experiencing difficulty.
- To liaise with subject teachers, especially in relation to consideration for students with literacy difficulties.

Parents

- Parents are encouraged to support school literacy policy.
- Parents will be urged to reinforce to their child the benefits of using a dictionary during homework.

- To provide suitable conditions for learning and to encourage reading for pleasure.

Students

- To co-operate with the staff in the implementation of the literacy policy.
- To work to the best of their ability at all times.
- Strive to improve by building on success.

Expected outcomes

- Improved learning by students with learning difficulties.
- Enhancement in basic skills and learning strategies which enables participation in the full curriculum.
- Application of individual learning strategies by pupils resulting in commitment to and involvement in their own learning, positive attitudes to school and high levels of self-esteem.
- Achievement of adequate levels of competency in English and all subjects.
- Partnership between class teachers, learning support teachers and parents in planning and implementing supplementary teaching programmes.
- The implementation of a tracking system at whole school level through a combination of regular school reports and IEP updates at frequent meetings and to monitor the progress of pupils.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be revised and evaluated every two years and updated as required.

Conclusion

This document is consistent with the school's mission statement. It aims to give all students the opportunity to achieve their full learning and social potential. The document sets out our long-term development plan for the future to provide a more comprehensive Literacy Support Structure in the school. A whole school approach has been adopted to meet the needs of all pupils and to provide an equality of education in a changing society and there should be continuous re-appraisal of what we are doing as a school in relation to literacy.

As a school we must adopt a pro-active approach to change by continually reviewing and evaluation the situation and adopting as necessary.

Date of discussion with whole staff _____

Date of discussion and adoption by BOM _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

BCS School Improvement Plan

Literacy Targets (2017-2018)

Literacy is taking a three strand approach:

- Oral Competence
- Writing Skills Opportunities
- Reading Skill Promotion

Oral Competence

Aim: To develop oral competence in students school wide to enhance public speaking skills in public and post school life.

| Action | Target Group |
|--|---|
| Public Speaking | Whole school approach where appropriate Articulation- 2 nd Years & TYs |
| Cairde duties with 1 st Years & parents | 5 th Year students who are assigned Cairde duties |
| Preparation for interviews (LVCP/LCA/TY) | TY & LCA students 5 th & 6 th Year LCVP students |
| Assistance with Orals (German, French, Irish) | All students studying each of these languages |
| Classroom Presentations | Whole school approach where appropriate Particular emphasis on Junior Cycle English students as part of CBA1 |
| Student Council | Class Representative for each class group |

Writing Skills

Aim: To enhance each student's capacity to write skilfully.

| Action | Target Group |
|--|---|
| Encouraging basic language skills, e.g. Capital Letters, Punctuation, Spellings, | Whole school approach where appropriate |
| Creative Writing Opportunities | Whole school approach |
| Spelling Bee | 1 st & 2 nd Year students |
| Immrama Festival | TY, 5 th & 6 th Year students |
| Exam Keyword definitions | 3 rd , 6 th & LCA students |

Reading Skills

Aim: To foster an appreciation of reading among the school community.

| Action | Target Group |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Lyrics on the Lap | Whole school approach |
| Reading Room | Whole school approach |
| iRead Locker Display | 1 st & 2 nd Years |
| World Book Promotion | Whole school approach |
| DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) | 1 st & 2 nd Years |