

## **School Self Evaluation 2022-2023**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of C.E.I ST. (Catholic Schools, An Irish Schools Trust). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills, and is a co-educational school.

**School Management:** The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School is a statutory Board, appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

### **Mission Statement:**

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport operates as a Catholic co-educational Secondary School, to provide teaching and learning of the highest quality for the benefit of the community which it serves.

### **In pursuing this mission we aim:**

- To provide a quality educational experience that caters for the full range of academic aptitude and abilities.
- To foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral and religious development of our students.
- To enable pupils to achieve their full potential academically.
- To promote the Catholic ethos and faith.
- To cater for the needs of the local community in so far as ethos, resources and facilities permit.

**Ethos:** As a CEIST school, St. Mary's seeks to promote the five key elements of the CEIST charter.

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person.

Creating Community. Being Just and Responsible.

## **Process**

School self-evaluation empowers a school community to identify and affirm good practice, and to identify and take action on areas that merit improvement. School self-evaluation here at St. Mary's Secondary School is primarily about our school taking ownership of its own development and improvement.

## **Focus**

Further to School Self Evaluation: Next Steps September 2022 – June 2023 (Circular 0056/2022), during the academic year 2022-2023, we are required to use the SSE process to identify and reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on our students' educational experiences and outcomes, their wellbeing, their motivation to learn, and their engagement in learning.

We will use the information arising to plan learning experiences, programmes of work, and, as needed, relevant supports to ensure that all young people in St. Mary's, including those with special educational needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage, are enabled to engage with and progress effectively in their own learning.

We also aim to further an SSE process that is collaborative, inclusive and impactful.

## **Evidence gathering**

In order to gather evidence regarding what is working well, and what can be improved upon, we spoke to and gathered written and oral evidence from the following stakeholders: Students, teachers, parents, school counsellors (AM, JB, SM) and management.

## **Analysis**

While the purpose of this process is to progress and stimulate development and improvement at St. Mary's, the evidence gathered highlighted a number of strengths, and areas that the stakeholders feel we are doing well. Parents in particular felt that the school has made assiduous efforts to negate the deleterious impact of COVID 19.

<b>Summary of main strengths identified</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team teaching</li> <li>• The Wellbeing programme is having a positive effect on the students' understanding of themselves, and their wellbeing and mental health.</li> <li>• The fact that management provided a second counsellor following the pandemic</li> <li>• The increase in withdrawal of smaller groups for extra tuition,</li> <li>• The return to teacher based classrooms following the pandemic</li> <li>• The continued use of google classroom for students who are absent either due to Covid or other reasons.</li> </ul>
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While many adverse impacts of COVID 19 were identified, the following were mentioned most often, and therefore are areas that St. Mary's wishes to prioritise.

<b>Educational experiences and outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of exam experience for a proportion of the student body,</li> <li>• less knowledge than previous cohorts,</li> <li>• Students find it more difficult to engage in collaborative learning, or any activity that involves a person to person approach.</li> </ul>
<b>Our pupils' wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low or lacking in self-confidence and self-esteem, a fear of being judged.</li> <li>• less able to socially interact with their peers in a "real life" situation, as opposed to virtually.</li> <li>• Counsellors are seeing more girls than boys regarding anxiety, and particularly girls who are not involved in sport. However, this could be due to the fact that boys are less inclined to seek help in general.</li> <li>• A lot more anxiety and other mental health issues appear to have manifested themselves in better able students during COVID and immediately upon our return to school, whereas COVID seems to have a more educational impact on less able students</li> <li>• Previous wellbeing issues have been exacerbated by COVID19</li> </ul>

<b>Motivation to learn and engagement with learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in the number of Junior cycle students who are reluctant to engage with the CBA process.</li> <li>• There seems to be confusion between the concept of nervousness and anxiety.</li> <li>• Covid/anxiety used as an excuse for a lack of motivation that always existed.</li> <li>• Difficulties with attendance.</li> <li>• Attention span has shortened, and consequently students need to be kept on task more.</li> <li>• More problems with organisational skills</li> <li>• Some introverted students felt less pressure while learning from home, enjoyed it and find it difficult being back at school.</li> </ul>
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## Improvement Targets

Targets	Required Action	Person(s) responsible	Outcome/success criteria	Timeframe
<b>Target 1</b> For more collaborative learning to take place in the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in practice regarding group/pair work by beginning with pair work in an effort to encourage effective interaction between students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All subject teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That students become more at ease with pair/group work and that this leads to more confident learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous.</li> <li>To be reviewed in May 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>Target 2</b> To normalise nervousness, and disassociate it from 'anxiety', especially to normalise nervousness associated with CBAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin practice on CBAs from 1<sup>st</sup> year onwards e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> year students do very small presentations of 4/5 sentences to begin with in front of their peers.</li> <li>Possibly giving them a different name, rather than presentations.</li> <li>Reassuring students that nervousness is a positive feeling re. CBAs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All teachers</li> <li>All staff</li> <li>Parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That students become more engaged with the CBA process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous.</li> <li>To be reviewed by each subject department at subject department meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Target 3</b> To monitor and improve attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rewards for attendance.</li> <li>Rewards procedures put in place.</li> <li>Review and evaluate School Attendance Policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year heads</li> <li>Policy Co-ordinator and team.</li> <li>Management</li> <li>Board of Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved overall attendance</li> <li>Poor attenders to be identified by Year Head, and prompt intervention, with parent/guardian to improve attendance patterns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be decided by relevant year head.</li> <li>For April B.O.M. meeting.</li> </ul>

<b>Target 4</b> To embed further the concepts of peer assessment and success criteria for Junior Cycle students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation to all students and reinforced in the class.</li> <li>• An older student to give their experience of the process, and how they found it useful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenter</li> <li>• Year Head</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• All subject teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved descriptors in the CBA</li> <li>• Positive references in the Assessment Task (where relevant)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous.</li> <li>• CBA deadlines</li> <li>• Assessment Task exams in May</li> <li>• To be reviewed in May 2023.</li> </ul>
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