



Teaching and Learning Policy

for

Student-Centred Teaching and Learning

Contents

1. Introduction and Rationale	3
2. Aims of the Policy	4

3. Teaching and Learning in Ballymakenny College.....	5
3.1 LAOS Dimension: Teaching and Learning	6
4. School Structures and Processes supporting Teaching and Learning.....	8
4.1 Timetable Design.....	8
4.2 SSE Initiatives.....	8
4.3 Athena	9
4.4 Support for Learning Department	9
Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools	10
4.5 Psychometric Testing.....	11
4.6 Literacy and Numeracy Interventions	11
4.7 Cú Chulainn	11
4.8 Treoir	12
4.9 The Code of Behaviour and School Ethos.....	12
4.10 Guidance and Counselling and Student Support Teams	12
4.11 Extra-Curricular and Other Learning Experiences	13
5. Expectations of Stakeholders	14
5.1 Expectations of All	14
5.2 Students	14
5.3 Expectations of Class Teachers.....	15
5.4 Expectations of In-Class Support Teachers.....	19
5.5 Expectations of Learning Support Teachers	19
5.6 Expectations of Special Needs Assistants.....	19
5.7 Expectations of Senior Management	20
5.8 Expectations of the Board of Management	24
5.9 Expectations of Parents and Guardians.....	24
Appendix: Teaching and Learning Whole-School Strategy Document	26
1. Current and Active SSE Strategies and Initiatives.....	26
1.1 Literacy: Key Words.....	26
1.2 Numeracy: Whole-School Fractional Computation and Problem-Solving Using Fractions	26
1.3 Learning to Learn: Convert, Plot, Comment and Learning Reflections	26
2. Acronyms/Definitions	

1. Introduction and Rationale

Ballymakenny College is committed to providing high-quality teaching, learning and assessment to enable all learners to achieve their full potential. We strive to meet this commitment through the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, thereby ensuring that our school and the processes at work therein combine to create a warm and encouraging environment in which high-quality teaching and learning opportunities are sought and offered, and each student's individual learning experience is recognised and supported.

This Teaching and Learning Policy is intrinsically linked to the ethos of Ballymakenny College, being both informed by and informing in turn the characteristic spirit and values of the school. The policy delineates and informs our Teaching and Learning Identity in Ballymakenny College, and relates to all stakeholders – all staff engaged in facilitating, supporting, and managing learning, as well as managing bodies, students registered in the school and their parents and/or guardians – and their roles in the provision of high-quality teaching and learning in a supportive environment to which we strive. It applies to all learning offered through the school: Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate, Transition Year, L2LPs, NALA qualifications etc.

The Teaching and Learning Policy documents current, past, and proposed school strategies and procedures, and as such, is subject to regular review. Stakeholders are urged to ensure they are always familiar with the policy version for the current academic year.

The Teaching and Learning Policy should always be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour; all other policies should be read with reference to these two documents, which underpin the day-to-day practice of Ballymakenny College and our identity as a school.

This policy is guided by our student community, the relevant curricula and key external policy drivers (*Continuum of Support Framework, Looking at Our School* etc.), and by our agreed best practices for teaching and learning.

2. Aims of the Policy

This Teaching and Learning Policy aims to:

- outline our Teaching and Learning identity in Ballymakenny College, the approach we take to Teaching and Learning, the importance we place on quality Teaching and Learning, and what we aim to achieve in enacting our agreed best practices in the school;
- offer an overview of the structures and processes that support the effective delivery of teaching and learning across the wide range of learning opportunities and courses in the school;
- delineate the expectations of all stakeholders in the learning community;
- clarify what we see as best practice;
- provide an effective framework for the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning;
- describe current whole-school strategies and initiatives that have been adopted to benefit the student body; and
- provide an overview of the school's Teaching and Learning journey, including information about practices piloted or discontinued, as well as strategies in the planning stages, to enable reflection on how our practices evolve to meet the changing needs of our students.

This policy is both descriptive and prescriptive in its relationship to Teaching and Learning in Ballymakenny College.

3. Teaching and Learning in Ballymakenny College

At the centre of our purpose in Ballymakenny College is our commitment to the provision of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, to enable all learners to develop holistically and to achieve their full potential.

This Teaching and Learning purpose encompasses various aspects of Teaching and Learning life in Ballymakenny College, which are outlined below with their respective aims. These areas are complementary rather than discrete; some aims, while primarily concerning one area, may relate to multiple.

We take a student-centred approach to the development of all student needs, abilities, and skills, including their academic journey, social skills, interpersonal skills, and wellbeing. This means that we prioritise and are guided by the individual needs of each student, their learning and personal contexts, the relevant curricula, and key external policy drivers (*Continuum of Support Framework, LAOS* etc.), best practice for teaching and learning, active, relevant, and emerging circulars, innovative teaching and learning ideologies and strategies, and by our Teaching and Learning Identity, as laid out in this policy. We are a student-led institution, meaning that we attend to what our students notice and enjoy, and pay attention to their feelings, experiences and interests. Where appropriate, we allow these observations to guide us in our decisions regarding the content or structure of lessons and other aspects of school life, providing opportunities for students to learn independently or to take roles as leaders.

In Ballymakenny College, we believe in excellence and expect that all members of the Ballymakenny Community understand that striving for excellence is central to our purpose here, be that academic excellence, excellence in self-development or academic growth, the achievement of one's potential, or excellence in teaching. The commitment that we ask, both of students and of education staff, in continually endeavouring to engage in teaching and learning to the best of their ability, reflects the school's investment in fostering the growth of both our student and teaching bodies.

Part of our goal is to ensure students are equipped to apply their skills and knowledge to new and different situations, to achieve well in school and beyond. We aim to make links in our timetabled subjects with the learning that pupils do outside the classroom. We strive to ensure that pupils are highly literate, numerate, and digitally competent, and support their literacy, numeracy, and digital competence with both monitoring of progress and with whole-school initiatives designed and tailored to meet our students' needs and enhance these lifetime skills.

We are also concerned with the consolidation of sustainable and climate-conscious habits and practices that will benefit the students after their graduation and contribute positively to sustainability practices to protect and benefit the planet and future generations. Education for Sustainable Development is part of the culture of the school, to which our Teaching and Learning practices should contribute. Further to this, the Teaching and Learning practices in our classrooms should be part of creating a classroom culture in which diversity and equality of opportunity are promoted, positive relationships and interactions are prioritised, successes are celebrated, and student voice is valued.

Our Teaching and Learning Aims arise from the domains of Learner Outcomes and Learner Experiences in the Teaching and Learning Dimension of *Looking at Our Schools 2022*, designed to meet the standards therein.

3.1 LAOS Dimension: Teaching and Learning

LAOS Domain: Learner Outcomes	Our overarching aims LAOS STANDARDS Students:	To this end, in Ballymakenny College, we aim*: (*aims relating to more than one standard in this or other tables are not repeated and are listed beside the standard to which they most closely or frequently align)
	enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn, and expect to achieve as learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To commit to the planning and delivery of lessons that will stimulate critical thinking and creativity • To incorporate key life and learning skills such as collaboration into schemes of work • To facilitate opportunities for social learning as well as individual achievement • To inspire and motivate students and staff • To consult the student body about learning practices and to empower students and recognise their voice by placing them at the centre of a student-led experience and acting on any appropriate feedback received • To have high expectations for and of all staff and learners, and for them to have high expectations of themselves • To maintain a centrality of purpose in which both teachers and students are encouraged to strive for excellence
	have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand themselves and their relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote, through the classroom practices, the self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of our students • To foster, through dedicated, timetabled class contact time, students' understanding of wellbeing, physical and emotional, and to promote its importance • To have an active and resourced G&C department and Wellbeing Committee
	demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum attain the stated learning outcomes for each subject, course and programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a personalised learning experience for every student, taking a student-centred approach to the development of all student needs, abilities and skills, including their academic journey, social skills, interpersonal skills and wellbeing, and being guided by the individual needs of each student, their learning and personal contexts, their interests, and their aspirations

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote a culture of academic challenge and scholarly activity • To focus upon continually-high standards of teaching and learning in the school • To provide formative and summative assessments that will guide and assist students on their learning journeys • To prioritising full House Exams
LAOS DOMAIN: Learner Experiences	engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider desired outcomes and objectives when planning learning and assessment activities
	grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that our pupils are active and independent learners who strive to achieve their best in every learning situation • To foster our learners' growth as reflective learners
	reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give all learners the opportunity to succeed and to be empowered to fulfil their potential • To introduce, maintain or promote practices as appropriate designed to foster student ownership over their learning, and transparency in their learning journeys (e.g., CPC, Athena)
	experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide extra-curricular opportunities for students to extend their learning and areas of learning beyond the classroom and the potential limits of subject curricula, through the provision of sporting, interest and hobby groups, thereby further promoting physical and emotional wellbeing • To facilitate excellent progression opportunities, to employment, apprenticeships, or further and higher learning • To develop employability skills as part of the curriculum • To position our students to continue to engage in active, independent learning and to strive to achieve their potential throughout their lives

4. School Structures and Processes supporting Teaching and Learning

The following structures and processes are designed and implemented to support teaching and learning in Ballymakenny College.

4.1 Timetable Design

The **school timetable** is based on one-hour classes in order to maximise the learning potential in one session. This more readily facilitates the incorporation of practical skills or application with theoretical work across many subjects, inclusion of both social and individual learning, movement between various learning or subject skills etc. This timetabling is in line with Department of Education Circular 0059/2021, which states that “To facilitate [...] learning and the implementation of good formative assessment practices, a minimum class period of 40 minutes is required [...] Some schools may find the use of longer class periods of up to 60 minutes (rather than 40 minutes) more suited to the learning needs of their students and the subjects they study.”

For **House Exams** in winter and summer, the timetable is fully collapsed to facilitate a full-time exam block for all year groups not preparing for a state examination in the coming June. This is in line with our aim to provide, as part of best practice, full and proper formative and summative assessment opportunities to our students and to allow them to gain experience of the type of terminal exams that will conclude each learning cycle, that they might better manage nerves and time, and gain experience and an understanding of formal exam conditions and conventions etc.

For year groups preparing for a state examination in the coming June, **October Assessments and Mock Assessments** are held instead of House Exams, so that opportunities for assessment and reporting are integrated in preparation for the State Exams at appropriate intervals. During House Assessments in December, continued teaching and learning is facilitated in the form of timetabled two-hour **tutorials** with their regular teachers so that the time for teaching and learning available in the term is maximised.

House Exams, Mock Examinations and October Assessments are reported on according to school reporting criteria, by which standards grades attained are provided alongside descriptions of learning behaviours and preparedness for learning, and recommendations for progress, in order that summative assessments are also learning opportunities.

Furthermore, our **First Year and Transition Year timetables** are designed to afford all students the opportunity to **sample option subjects** before making their choices for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate. Additionally, our timetables are structured such that all Junior Cycle students study science and all students have access to the study of a Modern Foreign Language, safeguarding study paths for which this is a prerequisite while students may still be uncertain of which study or career path they would like to pursue.

4.2 SSE Initiatives

Ballymakenny College is committed to a continual process of self-evaluation and growth. As such, we engage actively in School-Self Evaluation, maintaining a focus on three active strands per SSE cycle. Time is allocated to SSE at staff meetings and our SSE Committee has three sub-committees, one for each

active strand, each of which works throughout the year. Details of the current active strands can be found in the appendix of this policy.

4.3 Athena

The school has invested in Athena software, which collates the results for all reported exams for each student on an individual profile and analyses these results in comparison to one another, previous results, and the results of psychometric testing. The software can then indicate whether it is likely that a student is reaching his/her/their potential in each subject. This gives teachers and SNAs a fuller picture of each student's educational profile, thereby aiding differentiation and strategic supports, and is a tool that is utilised by the Guidance Department to provide a personalised approach to target setting and encourage students to take ownership over their learning journeys.

4.4 Support for Learning Department

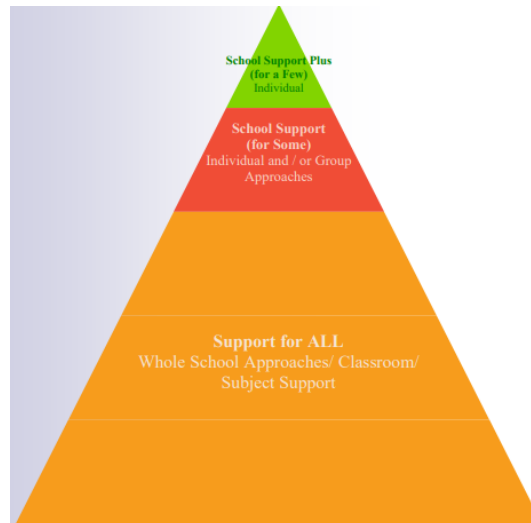
- The Support for Learning Department facilitates provision of additional support, where needed to meet the needs of the students accessing of the curriculum.
- Every year, teachers are made aware of incoming students who may have additional needs, to allow for differentiation and awareness of these needs to be incorporated into planning, teaching and assessment.
- As we take a personalised approach to our students and their needs, team teachers, in-class support teachers and/or SNAs are timetabled to meet the needs of the current student body on an evolving basis.
- Students in receipt of Learning Support attend classes with a member of the SfL department.
- Known and documented needs as well as emerging and identified needs are considered, according to NEPS guidelines and best practice. Emerging needs may come to light in a number of ways, including empirical evidence, class tests, contact with students or their parents/guardians, psychometric testing etc.
- The Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools informs the SfL department in their allocation of resources and personnel.
- Dedicated SfL classes are planned according to the needs of the student(s) registered and literacy, numeracy and curricular content are considered in planning.
- In-Class Support Teachers submit bi-weekly plans centred on fostering the abilities of the students they are supporting.

Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools

Support for ALL is a process of prevention, effective mainstream teaching and early identification. These systems are available to all students and effectively meet the needs of most students.

School Support (for Some) is an assessment and intervention process which is directed to **some** students, or groups of students who require some additional input.

School Support Plus (for a Few) is generally characterised by more intensive and individualised supports. This level of intervention is for students with complex and/or enduring needs and relatively **few** students will need this level of support.



Support for ALL Students

Intervention at the whole-school level is intended to be proactive. It is focused on the main student body, and this phase of intervention should effectively meet the needs of about 80-90% of the school population. It aims to support and promote positive student behaviour and learning for all.

An integral part of this level of support is effective whole-school screening for learning and behavioural needs, so that there is early identification of 'at risk' students.

School Support (for Some Students)

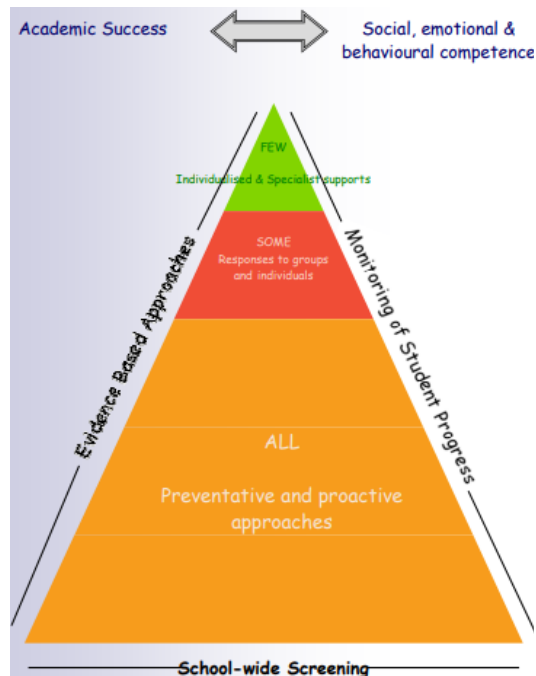
Intervention at this level is for those students, typically around 10-20% of the school population, who do not respond to the whole-school strategies sufficiently and who need more support. A range of approaches and interventions may be used, some of which may be short-term, while others may be longer term. These may include:

- A process of consultation and planned intervention
- Group and/ or individual plans and interventions
- Subject goals
- Accommodations to support learning and social interaction

School Support Plus (for a Few Students)

These students, typically about 2-5% of the school population, have significant difficulties and may require intensive, individualised interventions. Interventions at this stage are likely to include

- Individual Educational Plans (including behavioural plans)
- Involvement of additional professional input, such as from psychologists/ speech and language therapists etc.
- Specialist interventions



(Images from *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers*, p.4, 5, 11, 18. Full document can be accessed here: [A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers](#))

4.5 Psychometric Testing

Standardised tests for reading/literacy (NGRT/Star Reader), maths/numeracy (PTM), and students' attitudes to school and self (PASS) are carried out with all first-year students, as well as CAT4 tests, which are run for incoming first years. The data from these tests is shared with teachers in order that it may inform their lesson planning, teaching and assessment practices. The data may also highlight students who could benefit from additional support to meet the demands of the curriculum or who might benefit from some more challenging learning opportunities.

From 2023, reading age data for our first years will be shared with parents/guardians to encourage collaboration between the home and school in supporting students, meeting them at their current ability and supporting learning and growth as indicated. This practice will be evaluated and, if found helpful and effective, extended to the PTM and PASS test results.

Students attending SfL and/or taking part in Literacy Intervention and/or Numeracy Intervention can be retested and the current supports for those students evaluated and, if necessary, amended.

4.6 Literacy and Numeracy Interventions

Ballymakenny College runs Literacy Intervention and Numeracy Intervention Support Programmes for first-year students whose current level of literacy and/or numeracy may restrict their access to the curriculum and act as a barrier to their reaching their full potential. These provisions have been put in place to help protect against low literacy or numeracy limiting potential learning and attainment opportunities across all subject areas.

Literacy Intervention is run using strategies in line with NEPS Psychologists' CPD on Effective Interventions for Struggling Readers. The aim is to provide support for students to increase their reading age and vocabulary to at least at the level at which their textbooks, resources and class language would be pitched. As English is the language of instruction in all classes other than Gaeilge and MFL, low English literacy can be a barrier to comprehension, progress and success in all subject areas. Students who are invited to partake in this intervention are identified through both NGRT results and liaising with first year teachers.

Numeracy Intervention is run for pupils identified as needing extra support by their first year Maths teacher. The aim is to go back to basics and reintroduce concepts such as place value, even and odd numbers and the four operators which are the building blocks of the Junior Cycle Curriculum. Numeracy related concepts arise to varying degrees across all subjects, and as such, in addressing low levels of numeracy, it is hoped that students will be better able to grapple with learning not just in their maths classes but across the curriculum, especially in classes in the STEM category.

4.7 Cú Chulainn

Cú Chulainn is the name of our dedicated autism classes and specially-designed and fitted out wing of the school. Cú Chulainn comprises two class groups and is equipped specifically for students with autism whose educational needs are better suited to being in a specially-designed environment within a mainstream school, rather than in a mainstream class at all times. The personalised approach to all students in Ballymakenny College is evident in the programmes of learning and timetables available for the students in Cú Chulainn, some of whom partake in some mainstream classes, all of whom complete

their own programmes of educational achievement such as L2LPs, and all of whom also learn life skills in an explicit way to meet their needs and equip them for life after school.

4.8 Treoir

All students are timetabled for the first twelve minutes of every day for class contact with their base class and tutor. This is part of how Ballymakenny College addresses the wellbeing needs of our students. This approach is intended to contribute to students' sense of belonging and to their familiarity with their tutors, as well as allowing dedicated timetabled sessions for material related to student wellbeing. It also allows tutors to be cognisant of and in place to deal with any arising issues within the class or for students in that group in a very timely manner. As such, many issues that might distract students from the learning process are identified and can be acted upon with due speed. Furthermore, any pattern of behaviour arising in subject classes that indicates an issue with engagement or that disrupt the learning of other students comes to light for the tutor, who has an overview of their students' behaviour in all classes, and interventions or support plans can be put in place as necessary. Our school journal is a bespoke design created to cater specifically to our students and help meet their needs as learners, in terms of academia and wellbeing, and acts as a learning log for students, parents and teachers. In these ways, Treoir supports the teaching and learning happening in all timetabled classes.

4.9 The Code of Behaviour and School Ethos

Ballymakenny College's Code of Behaviour and Ladder of Referral have been designed to be a strong, transparent, fair, supportive behaviour structure, which benefits all stakeholders. We are dedicated to creating systems promoting and supporting positive behaviour in the school, so that classroom behaviour is conducive to supporting teaching and learning. Where a student may demonstrate difficulty behaving in a way that reflects an effort to engage with teaching and learning, reflective and restorative interventions have been implemented to encourage students to grow as learners, reengage with the learning process, and be more responsible members of the school community. This focus on reflective and restorative sanctions and/or responses to behaviour that may interrupt, distract from or diminish the learning process/experience is also supported by our focus on positive behaviour with systems such as Rang agus Dalta na Míosa (Sraith Shóisearach agus Sraith Shinsearach). By making these systems a priority, promoting consistency, and supporting positive behaviour across the school, classroom distractions are minimised, and teaching and learning is supported.

4.10 Guidance and Counselling and Student Support Teams

Career Guidance is available for students in both scheduled classes and by appointment, which supports the learning of our students as it helps give them direction and also assists them in finding purpose, particularly if they are struggling with intrinsic motivation.

G&C appointments are also available for students who need support for educational, emotional or other reasons. G&C teachers can also point students and/or their parents/guardians in the direction of the right external support if necessary.

Student Support Teams made up of members of the G&C and SfL departments as well as relevant House Leaders and Deputy Principals also meet regularly to ensure that all appropriate supports are in place for students who may need extra assistance.

These supports help students manage issues that while possibly not directly related to learning, distract them from the teaching and learning in which they are entitled and expected to take part.

4.11 Extra-Curricular and Other Learning Experiences

We in Ballymakenny College explore and, where practicable, provide extra-curricular and other learning experiences selected and/or designed to enhance the learning occurring during timetabled hours. School trips, workshops in house or elsewhere, and TY Shared Learning Days are all examples of this type of experience.

These learning experiences may be designed to:

- meet the need for provision of curricular learning in a non-classroom environment, e.g. Geography Field Trip at Senior Cycle which is part of the study and examination process;
- augment curricular learning, e.g. seeing a production of a play being studied for examination to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the work as a dramatic piece of theatre rather than a written work only, thus allowing students to access examination questions about the theatrical aspects of the drama more readily, or trips to the Gaeltacht;
- provide a learning experience to meet an interest or area of learning and/or life experience not provided for by the timetable or Junior Cycle/Leaving Certificate curricula, e.g. trips abroad to European cities, trips to the Dáil, TY Customer Service training etc.

5. Expectations of Stakeholders

This policy relates to all staff engaged in facilitating, supporting and managing learning. It applies to all learning offered through Ballymakenny College: Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate, Transition Year, L2LPs, NALA qualifications etc. It also relates to all other stakeholders in Teaching and Learning in Ballymakenny College, including students, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management.

5.1 Expectations of All

It is the expectation of the college that, as a learning institution, teaching and learning is centred as the issue of utmost importance on a day-to-day basis.

All stakeholders are expected to be aware of this policy and its contents. Stakeholders should be aware of and strive to meet any aims related to their particular role in the teaching and learning process as laid out in this policy. All stakeholders are expected to be cognisant of the standard of excellence to which we aspire in our teaching and learning, and to contribute in a positive manner to that end.

5.2 Students

Students are expected to be ready to learn, respectful of everyone in the school environment, and behave in a way that does not compromise their own safety or the safety of others. Where these three basic tenets are upheld, the teaching and learning of all students can proceed without interruption or without compromising the quality of teaching and learning.

In understanding these three expectations, students should consider the following aspects of each.

Readiness includes the expectations that students will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• attend school and classes punctually;• participate and engage fully in lessons, taking an independent and active part in learning within and beyond the classroom;• use time effectively;• take responsibility for their own learning;• rise to challenges;• work collaboratively and supportively;• respond positively to feedback and strive to improve their work as a result of effective feedback;• complete homework, assignments, projects etc. in a timely manner and produce it in class;• have the necessary equipment ready for their classes;• take responsibility for the management of prior curricular work and materials, catching up on curricular material missed due to absence as appropriate, and keeping books, copies etc. accessible and organised so that work previously covered can be accessed; and• come to class ready to learn, and demonstrate through their attitude and behaviour their readiness to do so.
Respect includes the expectations that students will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• address and interact appropriately with all members of the school community and anyone associated with the school, exhibiting the appropriate courtesy, respect and politeness appropriate to any given situation, including other students, teachers, management, SNAs, ancillary staff, visitors to the school, and event facilitators;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend this respect to people interacted with as part of organised trips, tours etc.; and • ensure that attitudes and behaviours demonstrated in class are appropriate for the learning environment and do not interrupt teaching and learning.
Safety includes the expectations that students will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behave generally in a manner that is safe and does not compromise the safety of anyone in the school campus or community, or contravene any rules that have been put in place for the purpose of safety; • be attentive to fire safety procedures and follow them promptly and diligently should the need arise; • be cognisant and respectful of any additional safety rules or measures related to specific curricular subjects, clubs, rooms, or machinery; and • understand that safety is the priority and desist any behaviour immediately if called upon to do so for reasons of safety.

5.3 Expectations of Class Teachers

Our expectations of class teachers arise from the domains of Teachers’ Individual Practice and Teachers’ Collaborative/Collective Practice in the Teaching and Learning Dimension of *Looking at Our Schools 2022*, designed to meet the standards therein. This applies to all teachers with responsibility for a class group, including PME students.

<u>LAOS Dimension: Teaching and Learning</u>		
LAOS Domain: Teachers’ Individual Practice	Our overarching aims LAOS STANDARD	To this end, we aim*:
	The teacher:	(*aims relating to more than one standard in this or other tables are not repeated and are listed beside the standard to which they most closely or frequently align)
	has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that the subject expertise and pedagogic content knowledge of staff leads to excellent teaching and learning • To create a stimulating environment with displays of learners’ work, research activity, posters and relevant learning materials • To meet all course / programme objectives and requirements • To follow relevant procedures in relation to Health and Safety • To promote, celebrate and demonstrate equality, diversity and inclusion • To promote best practice in terms of sustainability and digital citizenship

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal promptly with discipline issues with the appropriate reporting procedures followed • To undertake appropriate CPD relating to improving teaching, learning and assessment • To promote positive behaviour for learning strategies with a classroom ethos of praise and encouragement • To have high expectations for the level, quality and quantity of work, including presentation • To be familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy, Code of Behaviour, Health and Safety Policy, any other relevant policies to the work or enterprises with which they are involved, Staff Handbook, and ICT systems and platforms used for staff and student communication, collaboration and record keeping.
	selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use assessment to provide effective learning opportunities through feedback • To improve levels of achievement and attainment as a consequence of the above • To show clear evidence of planning with learning outcomes appropriate to the level and used to monitor student/learner progress. • To build on learners' prior knowledge and understanding, using formative assessment to monitor progress and inform future learning • To use findings from learner feedback to improve planning and delivery • To share learning objective and success criteria with pupils.
	selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intention and to students' learning needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide high quality, dynamic and engaging lessons • To be guided by the relevant curricula and key external policy drivers (<i>Continuum of Support Framework, LAOS, Teacher Professional Code of Conduct</i> etc.), best practice for teaching and learning, active, relevant and emerging circulars,

		<p>innovative teaching and learning ideologies and strategies, and by our Teaching and Learning Identity, as laid out in this policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage independent learning • To facilitate curriculum delivery that provides interaction, flexibility and encourages a wide range of teaching and learning activities, • To use learning methods that inspire and challenge learners • To promote the use of the ICT and other learning resources such as the library in the support of learning and the provision of additional learning opportunities • To encourage individual, small group and whole class activities
	<p>responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For staff and learners to work together to develop high levels of achievement and success • To support and challenge pupils to achieve their best • To create a welcoming environment for all learners promoting equal opportunities • To encourage students to reflect on their learning and progress and to take ownership of their learning and plan ahead based on the same • To build differentiation into learning activities or success criteria as necessary to best foster learning and growth in the particular students in the class
<p>LAOS DOMAIN: Teachers’ Collaborative /Collective Practice</p>	<p>Our overreaching aims</p> <p>LAOS STANDARD</p> <p>Teachers:</p>	<p>To this end, we aim*:</p> <p>(*aims relating to more than one standard in this or other tables are not repeated and are listed beside the standard to which they most closely or frequently align)</p>
	<p>value and engage in professional learning and professional collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote habits of reflective practice • To commit to the continual development and renewal or raising of standards

	<p>work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage in initiatives designed to enrich and enhance the Teaching and Learning practices and experiences of staff and learners in the school, and to meet the strategic goals of the school, including SSE, T&L and Wellbeing pilots and whole-school practices • To maximise the potential benefits of the aforementioned initiatives and practices, and to provide consistency for staff and especially for learners, by taking a whole-school approach and engaging fully across all departments
	<p>collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote adherence to Common Testing Policies for summative assessments and House Exams within departments
	<p>contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and share good practice in teaching and learning across all curriculum areas

5.4 Expectations of In-Class Support Teachers

The in-class support teacher is allocated to a class to support the lead teacher and the learners in the room in a variety of ways, e.g. helping with student organisation, checking student understanding, offering behaviour and emotional support for students, and especially supporting the work of specific, individual students.

The in-class support teacher plans how to help identified students within the group while they are in the mainstream classroom, so their planning may be contingent on the lead teacher's planning; in this sense, some co-planning may occur, as well as individual planning. The in-class support teacher supports the learning of students with additional needs of any description while the lead teacher teaches; this support teacher's work enhances the lead teacher's work and supports the students who may need help reaching the lead teacher's learning intentions.

In-class support teachers are expected to be fully cognisant of the various needs or issues that may impact students' learning which have been brought to light by the SfL department and/or class teacher, and to plan and to position themselves within the class periods accordingly. They should set student-specific targets, goals and areas of focus that will help enhance the student's learning but may be additional or different from the main learning intention (e.g. a focus on organisation) and should monitor progress in these areas. They are expected to keep up to date bi-weekly plans tracking student targets, concerns and progress, in line with the SfL department policy and conventions. They are expected to be engaged in a long-term dialogue with the lead teacher about the evolving needs of the students and how best to address the same.

5.5 Expectations of Learning Support Teachers

Learning Support Teachers are responsible for direct teaching of students with learning difficulties in specially designated, timetabled classes. Learning Support Teachers, as part of the SfL department, are expected to manage their work in line with SfL department and school procedures for record keeping etc. It is expected that all Learning Support Teachers are fully up to date on the role and function of the Learning Support Teacher, as delineated in Ballymakenny College's most recent SEN Policy at any given time.

Expectations of the Learning Support Teacher include the following:

- profiling and planning for how to best support the academic growth of students in their classes, in line also with the SEN Policy;
- consulting with teachers, students, parents/guardians, and the Learning Support Coordinator in the planning process;
- keeping records of the student's progress and share this information with relevant persons, including the Learning Support Coordinator and/or class teachers and parents;
- setting targets and review these targets; and
- preparing students for the examination process, whether school-based or state.

5.6 Expectations of Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants provide the necessary care to students with assessed special educational needs or difficulties in accessing the curriculum. The duties of the SNA have been delineated by the principal on

behalf of the Board of Management. Their duties are assigned and supervised by the SEN Coordinator and Special Class Coordinator. The SNAs are part of the SfL team.

It is expected that all SNAs are fully up to date on the role and function of the SNA, as delineated in Ballymakenny College’s most recent SEN Policy and relevant appendix at any given time. SNAs are also expected to manage their work in line with SfL department and school procedures for record keeping etc. SNA duties can be found in the appendix to the SEN Policy and, in respect of teaching and learning, include:

- assisting the pupils assigned to them in accessing as much of the normal curriculum as possible;
- assisting the class teacher in implementing the curriculum;
- helping pupils carry out assigned tasks;
- helping pupils learn and adopt new skills
- praising, supporting and encouraging pupils and to be a positive influence in the class;
- facilitating periods of time-out for pupils where appropriate;
- encouraging and supporting pupils to be as independent as possible;
- fostering co-operative learning and facilitate development of friendships; and
- liaising with teachers to enable students to access the curriculum.

5.7 Expectations of Senior Management

Our expectations of Senior Management arise from the Leading Teaching and Learning and Managing the Organisation Domains within the Leadership and Management Dimension of *Looking at Our Schools 2022*, and are designed to meet the standards therein.

<u>LAOS Dimension: Teaching and Learning</u>		
LAOS Domain: Leading teaching and learning	Our overarching aims LAOS STANDARD School leaders:	To this end, we aim*: (*aims relating to more than one standard in this or other tables are not repeated and are listed beside the standard to which they most closely or frequently align)
	promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prioritise Teaching, Learning and SSE as cornerstones of the school, reflected in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the responsibilities of named postholders who will be liaised with and supported in their commitment to goals designed to support and enhance T&L and SSE in the school; 2. time allocated to T&L and SSE at staff meetings, staff days etc.; 3. visible top-down support for T&L and SSE committee initiatives, projects and goals;

		<p>4. provision and support of opportunities for quality teaching and learning to be discussed and promoted with good practice and techniques being shared, such as in-house Teach Meets; and</p> <p>5. provision of, access to and promotion of digital technology, with support for the same in the responsibilities of named postholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide guidelines for teaching and learning and establish clear criteria for best practice and consistency, provided in a whole-school Teaching and Learning Policy which is available to all
	foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build and support practices and initiatives to sustain a welcoming environment for all learners, promoting equal opportunities, e.g. Dalta/Rang na Míosa, Wellbeing Committee, SfL Department, Amber Flag Committee, Pride Week, L2LPs, Friends for Life, Prefects etc. • To consider, and implement with full resources and commitment if appropriate, alternative programmes of learning aside from the mainstream cycles, e.g. TY, L2LPs, NALA, LCVP, LCA.
	manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that timetabling will reflect at least the minimum class contact hours designated for each subject in the specifications and Junior and Senior Cycles
	foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' practice and students' learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be open to applying for inclusion in pilot programmes and new initiatives from within or outside the school, where any of the aforementioned would potentially enhance the teaching and learning opportunities or practice in the school, and where the relevant resources to manage the same are available • To support NQTS through the PST • To create provision to support PME students

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support appropriate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teaching staff
<p>LAOS Domain: Managing the organisation</p>	<p>create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment and sustain it through effective communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a safe environment following health and safety procedures To promote positivity and wellbeing through curricular and extra-curricular programmes such as Treoir, Dalta/Rang na Míosa, Amber Flag etc. To commit to centrality of purpose as a learning organisation and to maintain clarity of direction through aligned Department goals, SSE and Whole-School initiatives etc
	<p>manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To give students access to the widest possible curriculum To manage personnel to best facilitate the teaching and learning of our students, with subject knowledge and expertise prioritised in the designation of teachers to class groups To retain continuity as an important concern in assigning teachers to class groups when the timetable is being drawn up To commit to the continuation of timetabling for assessments in a manner best suited to allow for standardised assessments of each subject level in each year group, and encouragement of subject departments to form assessments in line with best practice school policy (standardised, and weighted in a manner reflective of terminal exams). To make every effort to facilitate students' placement in classes at subjects and levels most appropriate to meet students' teaching and learning needs and the needs of the department To provide leadership opportunities for staff where appropriate and beneficial for the staff and supporting the teaching and learning in the school To ensure a clean, tidy and well-maintained environment is provided

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate an induction for all learners and staff who deliver teaching and learning • To provide access to resources that enable effective teaching, learning and assessment to take place and appropriate learning outcomes to be achieved
	manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that fair concerns and feedback are listened to, and staff receive a considered response to serious T&L questions or queries that are raised through in-person meetings or forwarded for inclusion in the staff matters segment of general staff meetings
	develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insofar as possible, to ensure consistency across departments in relation to department meeting agendas and decision-making in line with overall school policies and ethos, to ensure that school-wide standards are being upheld and school-wide priorities being considered in every subject area. • To encourage and facilitate restorative practice within student groups and should conflict between a student and teacher arise. Where possible, to focus on moving forward, empowering the teacher and student to recalibrate the relationship themselves, with support as needed.

5.8 Expectations of the Board of Management

It is expected that the Board of Management are aware of and strive to meet the Statements of Highly Effective Practice delineated in LAOS 2022.

In meeting these standards, the following expectations also apply:

- That the principal is supported in addressing staffing or resourcing issues in order that the school is enabled to operate as a learning organisation at the highest level of efficacy possible.
- That the principal and any relevant students are supported in addressing any serious issues such as official reports of bullying that may arise and impact the learning experience of some students.
- That the board works with the principal to cater for any arising needs for students and the learning available as and when they occur.
- That the board supports the management of any serious disciplinary or application issues that may impact teaching and learning.
- That staff members undertaking CPD in areas of benefit to the school may be supported in arrangements regarding class allocation or timetabling insofar as possible, and may be supported financially according to the provisions made by the BOM for the same, if meeting the criteria set out by the board.
- That due consideration of all applications for career breaks, secondments and job-sharing arrangements will be afforded on a case-by-case basis, in which the needs of the school and staffing concerns around continuity and subject expertise are discussed on balance with any professional growth and expertise that the staff member will gain, as well as circumstances and wellbeing of the staff member.

5.9 Expectations of Parents and Guardians

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators for their children. As such, it is expected that parents are active in their children's educational journeys, inclusive of academic, social and emotional learning. Parents/Guardians are expected to collaborate with the school to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students.

As such, parents and guardians are expected to:

- Provide any relevant information in the form of psychological assessments and primary school reports in a timely manner such that resources may be engaged.
- Be aware of and sign relevant policies, and support their enactment.
- Ensure students have any required materials for school, including books, copies, subject-specific materials etc. and communicate any arising issues to the school or relevant teacher such that classroom learning is not unnecessarily disrupted.
- Be aware of the current academic and behavioural records of the student(s), keeping up to date on VSWare reporting and behaviour records.
- Collaborate with subject teachers by supporting the student in the completion of schoolwork if possible and by communicating any issues with subject teachers through phone call, Parent/Teacher/Student Meeting etc.
- Communicate any issues that may be negatively affecting a student's learning experience or ability with the school by contacting the tutor, House Leader etc.
- In the case where the school is collaborating to address a student's academic, behavioural, social or emotional need, to implement any agreed strategies at home

- Ensure that students attend school regularly and punctually.
- To help the student engage as fully as possible in their mainstream and support classes.
- Be available to take phone calls or meet within a reasonable time frame if requested by the school.
- To check and sign their child's journal on a weekly basis.

6. Success Criteria & Monitoring

The Teaching & Learning Policy was devised in consultation with the students, parents, staff, management and Board of Management of Ballymakenny College.

This policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the normal Whole School Development Planning review cycle. If necessary, it may be reviewed at any time considering changing circumstances and/or changing legislation. Any amendments which need to be made will be in keeping with the general philosophy of the school. Any suggested amendments/improvements will be communicated to the Principal or Deputy Principals who will consult with all partners.

Approved by the BOM of Ballymakenny College on September 2023

Signed by Chairperson:

Maire Ní Bhroíthe

Appendix: Teaching and Learning Whole-School Strategy Document

1. Current and Active SSE Strategies and Initiatives

2022-2023

1.1 Literacy: Key Words

Ballymakenny College is committed to the use of key words in each curricular subject and additional action verbs across the curriculum, to allow students to gain, at a minimum, the basic literacy needed to access the subject knowledge and partake in subject classes without a lack of understanding of these key words acting as a barrier to learning or progress, and perhaps therefore impacting self-esteem, engagement and learning behaviours.

Full class tests are administered with a dedicated 10% to key words across all subjects.

Key words are displayed on classroom walls.

Action verbs are highlighted on a monthly basis, through school awareness campaigns and use of a dedicated action verb calendar in the journal.

First- and second-year students are tested on their key words across all subjects in a dedicated literacy session during House Exams. This data is shared with teachers and SfL staff so that it can inform practice and supports as appropriate.

1.2 Numeracy: Whole-School Fractional Computation and Problem-Solving Using Fractions

All classrooms in the school have a poster outlining how to do basic fractional computation and conversion to percentages.

All class tests across all subjects are returned with the result in the form of a fraction, and class time is dedicated to the conversion of this fraction to a percentage, to consolidate the knowledge of how to do this conversion for the students.

All first- and second-year students have a numeracy-focused lesson in every curricular subject they study (e.g. probability, problem solving using fractions, and conversion to percentages based on scenarios from *The Hunger Games* as a studied novel in English).

1.3 Learning to Learn: Convert, Plot, Comment and Learning Reflections

All students have a dedicated graph in their student journal for each subject they study. Class teachers are encouraged to dedicate lesson time to plotting the result (once converted to a percentage by the student – see 4.2.2 above) on the graph and then reflecting on this result and commenting on it in a dedicated section below the graph. The graph then offers a visual representation of the assessment aspect of each student's learning journey in each subject.

The school journal also has a dedicated page for every week whereon students are encouraged to reflect on their learning that week.

2. Acronyms/Definitions

CPC	Convert, Plot, Comment (an SSE Numeracy and Learning to Learn initiative in which all student results are returned as fractions and students gain numeracy practise converting the fraction to a percentage before being encouraged to reflect on their result and what they can learn from it)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development (for staff)
Dalta na Míosa	Student of the Month
Keywords	The terms most needed for any subject for a student to be able to access the learning and curriculum in that subject
L2LP	Level 2 Learning Programme (may be suited to students with a general learning disability in the first to third years)
LAOS	<i>Looking at our Schools</i> , a framework document for schools
LMT	Leadership and Management Team (Senior Leadership and Assistant Principals 1)
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NEPS	National Educational Psychologist Service
NGRT	New Group Reading Test (a measure of reading ability, comprehension and confidence)
NQT	Newly-Qualified Teacher
PASS	Pupil Attitude to Self and School assessment

PME	Professional Masters in Education
PMT	Progress Test in Maths (a measure of numeracy and mathematical ability)
PST	Professional Support Team (trained mentor teachers who offer professional support through the period of induction known as <i>Droichead</i> to NQTs)
Rang na Míosa	Class of the Month
SEN	Special Educational Need(s)
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SfL	Support for Learning
SLT	Senior Leadership Team (Principal and Deputy Principals)
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
Sraith Shinsearach	Senior Cycle
Sraith Shóisearach	Junior Cycle
SSE	School Self-Evaluation