

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS

Board of Management Meeting

9th March 2022, 19.00

Present: Paul Adams (chairperson and patron nominee), Maggie Hall (patron nominee), Louise Shields (community nominee), Elaine Keane (community nominee), Aneil Rawat (male parent nominee), Liz Daly (female parent nominee), Vivienne Kelly (teacher nominee) and Matt Wallen (principal and secretary)

Paul chaired the meeting.

January Minutes

The minutes from the January meeting were approved.

Principal's Report

Enrolment

- There are currently 211 pupils enrolled in eight classes.
- 24 places have been accepted for Junior Infants. The last two places are yet to be filled, but they should be filled soon. We have begun offering places to fill any known vacancies in other classes. The predicted enrolment for next year is 212-214.

Staffing

- Nora will be going on maternity leave at the end of next week. Caoilfhionn De Bhaldraithe will be her substitute for the balance of the school year. Claire Stone will be completing the remaining additional support-teaching hours. She will be the first Droichead (in-school probation) candidate in our school. Áine and Matt are completing training to support this process. Both Caoilfhionn and Claire have worked in the school in the past as incidental substitutes.

Attendance

- Attendance remains low but steady. This has been due to a combination of illness and some children abroad. The attendance percentage to date has been 87.7%.

Health and Safety

- The remain a number of COVID-19 cases among pupils in the school as reported by parents in a number of classes across the school.
- Under the direction of the Department, the procedures that were established in the school's COVID-19 Response Plan are slowly being removed. We anticipate that after the two-week Spring Break, very few of the procedures will be maintained. Of note, classes are now mixing in the yard. Tables have been pushed together in all classes. Children are no longer required to wear face coverings. Singing is now taking place in all classes. After St Patrick's Day, drop-off and collection procedures will change, including entering and exiting the building through the purple doors and a change to morning supervision procedures.

Curriculum Development

- Teachers will have an in-service session regarding the Primary Language Curriculum on 16th March.
- Work continues related to our school self-evaluation process related to maths.

Policies

- The Dignity in the Workplace Policy has been reviewed by the staff and is ready for review by the Board.
- A process of gathering the perspectives of pupils regarding their experiences with homework was completed. The Homework Policy was also discussed at an online Parent-Teacher Association meeting. Based on this information, the policy was adapted and reviewed again by the staff.

Building

- A very limited number of tenders was received for the roof works. Unfortunately, the lowest tender was much higher than the grant amount. A tender report will be drafted and sent to the Department to request a change in the grant amount.

Misc. Events/Information

- As the additional Bank Holiday after St Patrick's Day had already been chosen as a school closure, an additional school closure will take place on Wednesday, 8th June.
- A number of afterschool clubs are going to be offered after St Patrick's Day including superhero training, athletics, music, yoga/mindfulness and evasion games.
- The school is going to have two new Music Generation programmes. Small group violin lessons will be offered. Parents will need to pay a subsidised fee. In addition, children in 3rd and 4th Class this year (and 4th and 5th classes subsequent school years) will all have the opportunity for weekly ukulele lessons. Instruments will be provided by Music Generation.

- 1st to 5th Class will be going swimming for 8 sessions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the final term.
- 6th Class visited the library and St Nicholas Church as part of their local studies and history unit.
- Teachers are beginning to make plans for school tours.
- The PTA is looking at how to organise a Spring Fair as a fundraiser and community event, most likely in May.
- Engineering students from NUI, Galway visited Senior Infants and 1st Class to do a workshop with the children as part of Engineers Week. Other events have also taken place in other classes.
- 5th Class is participating in an inter-school debating project.
- Events are planned to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge including table quizzes, a silent disco, a special virtual assembly and other fun events.

Financial Report

Financial targets are being met. It was agreed that we would send out a request for voluntary contributions again until late in the final term as we will be requesting payment for swimming now. The request for school expenses will be delayed until the autumn.

Dignity in the Workplace Policy

The Board reviewed the policy and ratified the new version with only minor changes.

Homework Policy

After some discussion and learning more about the review process involving staff, pupils and parents, the Board ratified the newly revised policy.

Update on COVID-19 Measures

The Board agreed to continue to gradually wind down the various mitigation procedures that were in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in line with public health recommendations.