

Principals Report

11th February 2021

Staff Development

Staff have attended CPD in the following areas; JCT Leadership Assessment & Reporting, Procurement Training, Tara 365 Online Classroom, JCT Cluster Day Assessment, JCT Design Hub, JCT Architecture Connects, JCT Whole School - Assessment and Helping Hands.

School Development

An application was made for Emergency works to the heating system following an early school closure prior to Christmas. This was due to a leak in the system which required emergency works to complete. Emergency works were granted, and this work was carried out in January.

ICT support has continued with the technician completing work on school broadband. Work is scheduled over the midterm break to resolve wifi issues (to be confirmed)

Kennedy Construction have completed works to foul water drainage for extension. Tests have been carried out and works completed. Railings have been installed at wheelchair ramp.

Caretaking & cleaning staff have continued to work to allow access to the school building. I would like to thank them for their assistance.

Covid-19

Engagement with remote teaching & learning has been extremely positive. Teachers are using a blended learning approach which allows them to pre-record lessons as well as conduct Live lessons. A focus on maintaining connections with students means that students have regular 'Live' contact with their teachers. This connection is important to keep students connected and engaged with their learning.

A staff meeting is held weekly for teachers to discuss any issues they are having and to identify any students who may need additional support. Realising the importance of teacher wellbeing we are recommending teachers manage their time online and ensure they take a break during the day. We had a virtual staffroom which allowed teachers to come together to have a cup of tea and a chat which was positive.

Providing teachers with a surface pro device and their engagement with Tara 365 training in July 2020, has been a huge benefit.

Teachers continue to monitor engagement of students and update this on VSware. Ms Byrne has added new attendance codes to VSware to assist this work.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the level of commitment shown by our teaching staff and our administration, cleaning and maintenance staff. We can be immensely proud of our school community both students, teachers, and parents in the way they have risen to the challenge of education online during a pandemic.

Engagement

Teachers are continuing to closely monitor engagement. Ms Byrne utilises this information to make contact with students and parents who need support by e mail and telephone calls. Ms Kelly & Ms Byrne have met students and their parents who have continued to have issues with engagement. They have also organised additional teaching supports. The Student support team continues to meet weekly.

We have 95% engagement at present with remote teaching and learning which is extremely positive.

3rd years- 91% (2)

6th years - 96% (1)

LCA 2 - 67% (1)

Ms Byrne has also been in contact with parents of students who have had positive engagement throughout this period of remote learning.

Student Devices

Ms O Shaughnessy supported by Ms Byrne and Mr Kilgannon organised the distribution of 40 laptops to students who needed them. I would like to thank Ms O Shaughnessy for her work on purchasing and the organisation of devices and Ms Byrne & Mr Kilgannon for distribution of devices for students.

HSCL

The Pastoral team identifies, "at risk" learners on a weekly basis. Those who may have struggled in financial terms were identified and assisted with food hampers, those who struggled with technology were provided with a webinar on how to use Microsoft teams. The HSCL telephones target parents on a

weekly basis. Meetings with the principal and HSCL are held with students (accompanied by parents) who are struggling with engagement and online learning. The HSCL has contacted parents via phone and email.

School Completion Programme

SCP project worker continues to make phone calls to parents and speak with students. Messaging students on teams also takes place to encourage and motivate them. SCP regularly liaises with the principal, deputy principal, home school liaison officer, and education welfare officer. SCP aided the identification of families for food parcel deliveries. SCP has sent letters to all the targeted young people with SCP project worker and coordinators phone numbers and email addresses. SCP has sent resource packages to targeted students for wellbeing and positive mental health. An application for funding for assistive technology devices has gone to SCP LMC and awaiting decision on application. SCP has offered support to other students within the school who are not on the target list. There is also ongoing support with student who is out of school, this is continued support a few times a week.

Enrolment - Update

Attendance

3 students with 20+ days absent and have been returned to Tulsa for the reporting period of September – December 2020.

School Activities

Irish Education Residency

Coláiste Iascaigh have two students, currently in 3rd year who have applied for an education residency with GRETB on the Aran Island. If the students are successful, they will spend one year living with families on Inis Mór, Inis Oírr or Inis Meáin. The medium language for the one-year island education residency shall be the Irish language. The students will learn about the culture and heritage of the Island while being fully immersed in the Irish language.

WorldWise Global Schools

This Year our LCAS have been working hard on their global schools project, They have chosen a topic that they are interested in and would like to educate

the school cohort about, "gender equality". They organised a guest speaker from "shout out" a non-governmental organisation, where 5th, Leaving certs and LCAs participated in an online workshop on the LGBTQ community. This provided students with knowledge about the importance of being themselves.

To fulfil our global passport this year, we have decided to participate in one of the United Nations International days "happiness day" on the 20th of March. As students and Staff along with so many others are experiencing testing times and miss our school. We have decided to focus on what makes us happy about school and in general.

Student Enterprise

The Ty's have been busy creating their final aspects of their student enterprise, where they create their business/innovation plans through creating PowerPoints. The high level and intricate work that has been put into these projects is outstanding. There have been 6 groups brought forward for the NFTE regional finals. The groups were extremely fortunate to get some Christmas sales in before the school closed. We have many exciting new companies on the go from personalised water bottles to ideas for wired jewellery. I can safely say the TY'S have shown great leadership and teamwork and I wish them all the success in the finals.

VPG LCA's

Before Christmas the LCA's were working on producing facemasks. This project was an innovative pitch that was so relevant into today's climate. The students are now working on their plans and PowerPoints on presenting their final data from creating such a thriving business. These plans include, selling, making and profit of this project along with why they chose this plan and how they worked and carried out different tasks.

Art & Design

1st year, 5th year and TY - These classes are taking part in the Generation Apprenticeship Schools and Centres Competition 2021. This is a creative competition that explores apprenticeship and climate issues.

Outside of school Ms Stevens has been chosen as an artist for the Take A Walk For Me project. This project is run by Sligo Arts Service and is funded by Healthy Ireland. She will be sharing her process and work made in this project with her students.

Fantasy Football

The fantasy football league continues with students from 1st to 5th year participating. There is healthy competition with approximately 8 weeks left in the competition there are only 3 point between the top two students teams.

Business in the Community link with Aurivo:

2nd Years are continuing their partnership with Aurivo through the Business in the Community link. The students are due to take part in an online session with the HR department and some employees to have a questions and answer session. This will allow the students to explore what career options available to them. It is a fantastic way for them to use their communication skills and to become confident with engaging a professional/adult .

Programmes

Transition Year

Students recently took part in an online virtual event Healthfest they attended demonstrations and talks from experts in the area of fitness, nutrition and mental wellbeing.

Students have also been asked to register for the RCSI mini med programme coming up the end of February. This programme will encompass elements of the three schools of Medicine, Pharmacy & Physiotherapy.

Online courses completed, Work experience Health & Safety, Concussion course, Make that course – they design their own online course, they are continuing with their preparation for the Food Safety Hassp. Tys will also complete the CPR course with Ms Connolly and train first years in CPR when school returns.

Ms OShaughnassy is organizing for the TYs to set their own bedding plants in their gardens. This is a great initiative and should get the TYs busy with their own gardens.

Ms Casey is busy with the Nifty enterprise.

LCA

Leaving Cert Applied students are busy with task work and trying to complete them remotely is a challenge. The girls are also preparing for the food safety Hassp exam and working through the modules.

JCSP

Second year students will begin their Word Millionaire challenge after the mid-term break. Profiling of third year students will begin by the JCSP team.

Sport & PE

Sligo sport and Rec partnership organised a feel good 5k competition through Strava with schools in Sligo. It is a 6 week programme which encourages students to do a minimum of three walks/runs a week with the final goal being a 5km run in your fastest time. They also provided a selection of training plans from easy intermediate and hard so it will challenge all participants. We currently have 25 students engaged and the total number of students participating in the challenge has increased weekly which is great to see. The previous two weeks we have come in second place. We are currently on week three of six. The prize at the end of the 6 weeks is €500 for the sport/ pe dept in the winning school. I am not worried about the prize just the student engagement and it has been absolutely amazing for such a small school. We have a talented bunch of students.

I am setting weekly challenges for all students and they are all off screen challenges for example the spell your name challenge where each letter represents a different exercise and Irelands fittest family wall sit challenge where students try to beat Ms Connolly's score. I also did a roll the dice challenge where each number represented a different activity. also developed a Padlet with a range of resources for both students and staff. It has resources from dance and yoga to GAA and basketball and also has sections on healthy eating and healthy habits.

I would like to thank all staff for their continued hard work and engagement.