



# **ENNISCORTHY COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**

## **LITERACY POLICY**

**A College under the authority of Waterford Wexford Education  
Training Board**

**Ratified by the Board of Management on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2026**

## Mission Statement

ECC recognises that literacy is the key to improving learning and raising educational standards. We believe better literacy skills will enhance the personal, social, moral and educational experience of our students and ultimately leave them fully equipped to take their place in either further education and/or the world of work. Literacy is a whole school initiative.

### Definition

*Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media and digital media.*

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020

DES 2011

## The Literacy Working Group

The Literacy Working Group is made up of

- Literacy Coordinator
- Assistant Coordinator
- Principal
- Vice Principal
- Librarian
- SENCO
- JCSP Coordinator
- English Teacher
- DEIS Coordinator

### Targets of the Literacy Working Group Include:

- To keep staff informed of literacy initiatives and interventions via staff newsletter.
- To set targets for literacy plan.
- To raise awareness of the importance of literacy (using the library, a literacy noticeboard, website, newsletter, literacy news documents, staff email and local newspapers etc.) among the whole school community.
- To foster an enjoyment of reading among the whole school-community.
- To promote whole school strategies in the teaching of literacy skills e.g. explicit teaching of key words in each subject area.
- To run whole school literacy initiatives such as DEAR, Spelling Bee, World Book Day Activities etc.
- To liaise closely with the library in various initiatives e.g. reading wall, Word of the Week etc.

## **Priority Areas for Development.**

- Focus on Junior Cycle students to improve Standardised Reading Scores.
- Foster a love and appreciation of print media.
- Expose students to a wide range of reading materials.
- Encourage the inclusion of literacy targets in Subject Department Plans.
- Analysis of standardised tests results to inform teaching and learning practices.
- Key word approach encouraged in all subject areas.
- Think, pair, share promoted as a teaching strategy to improve oral literacy standards and equip students for Junior Cert CBAs.
- Book in the Bag initiative encouraged and promoted by all staff.
- Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) challenge as a whole school initiative.

## **A Whole School Approach to Actions and Interventions for the Promotion of Literacy.**

It is understood that progress in literacy skills improves a student's ability to access the curriculum. It underpins all areas of the curriculum by developing students' abilities to speak, listen and communicate, to think, explore and organise. This enhances engagement and enables students to achieve their educational potential. Enhanced literacy skills open personal pathways to success and active participation in society. Implementing and supporting the literacy strategy is the responsibility of all staff. Some measures include

- Team Teaching in as far as is practicable
- Use of Microsoft technology including translator and immersive reader functions to support our increasing cohort of international students.
- Introducing new topics using a keyword approach
- Adopting think, pair, share strategy in class to promote confidence and oral literacy skills.
- Classrooms as print rich environments i.e. keyword posters key concepts etc. displayed on walls.
- Class sets of dictionaries available for all rooms.
- Suite of laptops can be booked for use.
- DEAR time.
- Accelerated Reader program available to all.
- Literacy aids-key word posters, bookmarks, teaching aids- available in the library and may be ordered if required.
- Word of the Week competition promoted by all staff.
- Visits and workshops by authors, storytellers, historians etc.

## **Role of Guidance and Additional Educational Needs Department.**

The Guidance Department and AEN Department work collaboratively and in an advisory capacity with the teaching staff and parents of students in Enniscorthy Community College. They provide supports, guidance and additional resources as required.

The AEN Department liaises with primary schools in the transfer of student information e.g. education passports, psychological reports etc. It is responsible for the administration, correction and analysis of results of CAT4 Tests which occur in the February prior to first year enrolment. This information is stored in the SENCO's office and available to relevant staff on request in keeping with Data Protection Regulations.

By analysing the results of standardised tests, transfer data and psychological reports the AEN Department identifies students in need of support with literacy skills. Priority learning targets are then set for these students and shared with their teachers. The IEPs also detail the student's strengths and offer teaching suggestions re strategies that may help the AEN student progress e.g. allowing the use of assistive technology, breaking down instructions and giving them on a step by step basis, suggesting comprehension strategies or providing the student with scaffolds for writing assignments.

The AEN Department also liaises with Senior Management for the arrangement of relevant Continuous Professional Development for teachers to assist them in the implementation of improving literacy outcomes for students.

### **Assessment & Testing for Literacy Strategy**

- Primary Transfer, information from primary schools is gathered.
- Standardised literacy testing is carried out on all junior cycle students at the beginning of each academic year under the supervision of the learning support department and Literacy Coordinator. Tests include:
  - CAT 4s on enrolment.
  - NGRTs during term 1.
  - EAL testing in September.

The results of these tests are available to students' teachers and parents on request. They are shared with management, SENCO and BFL teacher once completed. The Literacy Coordinator monitors and tracks the results. The DEIS Literacy plan is updated and targets evaluated annually. This information is shared with staff via staff meeting.

Students joining the school mid-year will be tested.

### **Professional Development and the Literacy Strategy**

- Whole school in-service training is delivered regularly.
- Offsite in-service training opportunities for all staff is facilitated.
- Successful literacy strategies are shared between colleagues.

## **Literacy Plan (DEIS)**

This policy and the results of standardised literacy testing provide the framework within which we set the measurable targets and decide on the strategies of our literacy plan.

### **Time for Reading**

According to the research report entitled *What works in secondary school (1999)* the Basic Skills Agency recommend that students with a reading age of between 8 and 10 years can improve if given 3 x 20 minutes of reading time a week in school. When they are reading at an appropriate level an hour a week is sufficient. It is our policy to facilitate students with this time for reading and consequently all junior classes have at least one library class timetabled per week to improve basic skills and foster a reading for pleasure culture. Team teaching supports this intervention.

Junior Students must always carry a book in their bag and staff are regularly reminded to give students 5-10 minutes reading time when convenient.

### **Resources supporting the Literacy Strategy**

- The school is part of the JCSP Library Project. Besides timetabled classes students have access to the library at lunchtime and before school.
- All staff and students have access to e-books and audio books via the SORA app.
- The library is stocked with appropriate resources including books, magazines, laptops, software and audio-visual equipment.
- Specialised literacy resources include SRA Reading kit, CSI Literacy, Dyslexia friendly resources and “high interest age / low reading age” books, read along CD’s and books.
- All first-year students and some junior cycle classes take part in the Accelerated Reader programme.
- There are class sets of dictionaries in many subject classrooms. Sets are available for any teacher requesting them.
- Dictionaries are available in a variety of languages and distributed to international students.
- All junior cycle students are given a dictionary and a lexicon.
- The whole school should be a literacy rich environment e.g. posters, keyword displays etc.
- Touch Type Read Spell (TTRS) Programme used with Students with Dyslexia

## **Literacy Initiatives**

The initiatives we run regularly include

- Reading Challenge
- Word Millionaire
- Book in the Bag
- Spelling Bee
- SRA Reading
- Accelerated Reading
- Drop Everything and Read
- Word of the Week
- The Writer in Residence programme
- Author visits and workshops
- School show
- Theatre visits
- Penpal Initiative
- A celebration of students' home languages is held annually on ECC Multicultural Day, and students are encouraged to continue developing their literacy in the home language as well as English
- We communicate with parents as regards their child's literacy challenges, the strategies we are using, and we celebrate their achievements e.g. canteen voucher for Word of the Week winner. Winners of Literacy Week competitions are celebrated in school and via social media platforms of ECC.
- The BFL Teacher plays an active role in supporting our more vulnerable students with their literacy needs.

## **JCSP and the Literacy Strategy.**

The JCSP Literacy Strategy (including JCSP initiatives and materials) supports the literacy development of those students experiencing literacy difficulties. The JCSP Literacy Strategy is implemented across the wider school community as appropriate.

## **Abbreviations**

AEN-Additional Educational Need

BFL: Behaviour for Learning

CAT4-Cognitive Ability Tests 4<sup>th</sup> edition

CBA-Classroom Based Assessment

DEAR-Drop Everything and Read

DEIS: Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DES: Department of Education and Science

EAL: English as an Additional Language

EVC: Enniscorthy Vocational College

HSCLO: Home School Community Liaison Officer

IEP-Individual Educational Plan

JCSP: Junior Certificate Schools Programme

LCA: Leaving Certificate Applied

NGRT-New Group Reading Test

SEN: Department: Special Educational Needs Department.

SENCO: Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

TTRS-Touch Type Read Spell