

Meánscoil na mBráithre Críostaí, Cill Chainnigh
Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny.

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LITERACY POLICY March 2018

School Name:	Christian Brothers Secondary School, Kilkenny
School Address:	James's Street, Kilkenny
School Details:	CBS Kilkenny is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.
School Management:	The Board of Management of CBS Kilkenny is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement

Inspired by its founder, CBS Kilkenny aims to provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition. The school endeavours to be a caring Christian Community which promotes to the best of its ability the personal, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of its students.

Ethos

As an Edmund Rice School, CBS Kilkenny seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Aims:

- To adopt a whole school approach to literacy across the curriculum.
- To create a reading culture in our school.
- To foster a love of language and an appreciation of its power and role in our lives.
- To enable all students to reach their potential in the key literacy skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- To raise staff awareness of and participation in key literacy strategies.
- To support and encourage staff in the development of literacy conscious planning within subject areas.
- To create, resource and support the necessary structures in the school to ensure the success of the literacy plan, while identifying specific roles and responsibilities within these structures.
- To establish procedures for monitoring and assessing the success of the Literacy Plan and resource them accordingly.

Rationale

We believe that literacy is the key to improving learning and that poor levels of literacy impact negatively on a student's ability to engage with their subjects, the world around them and on their perceptions of themselves as learners.

Literacy in the modern world is a multi-dimensional term and the desire to increase literacy levels does not simply apply to the accurate application of the mechanics of written language, but involves equipping our students with the skills required to engage with, comprehend and navigate through the modern world. The literacies involved are manifold and include such specific competencies as: functional literacy, academic literacy, digital literacy, emotional literacy and financial literacy. The unifying factor of these seemingly divergent demands is language. Language is our tool in understanding our subjects, our society, our technology, our relationships and ourselves. In equipping our students to become thoughtful and discerning users of language we equip them for the world.

We believe that the key to a successful literacy policy is cultural change. While structural, academic and pedagogical alterations are of value and of immediate importance, it is our belief that it is the long term reshaping of values among the entire school population that is integral to success. To this end we have resolved to create a reading culture within our school. This culture will help further foster our students' love of language and their appreciation of its power, while at every level in our school communicating in the strongest possible terms the simple message: words matter!

Definition of Literacy

“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 strategy)

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope ... Acquiring literacy is an empowering process, enabling millions to enjoy access to knowledge and information which broadens horizons, increases opportunities and creates alternatives for building a better life.” (Kofi Annan)

Key Players

In C.B.S Kilkenny five main partners are involved in the enhancement of literacy within the school. Their roles and responsibilities are detailed below.

- Management
- Non-language teachers
- Language Teachers
- Learning Support team and SNAs
- Students and Parents.

Role of Management

Management in C.B.S Kilkenny has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of all school policies. As an integral driver of literacy in the school, the role of management encompasses the following:

- Facilitate C.P.D for staff within the limitations of timetabling and budgets. The training of key staff members to deliver internal in-service training to all staff members will be prioritised.
- Set aside financial resources to support literacy initiatives, e.g. in-service training for staff, funding for literacy resources etc.
- Support literacy within timetabling where practicable.
- Reiterate the commitment of the school to literacy at each available opportunity: staff meetings, Parent Council meetings, Parent Information evenings, Open Night and other student meetings. Use the school Newsletter and other media, such as the school website, to support literacy initiatives in C.B.S Kilkenny.
- Request that the Board of Management ratifies the Literacy Policy and subsequent School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report and Plan, and keep the Board informed of the progress of literacy initiatives under the T&L item on the agenda.
- Support links with outside agencies which will underpin the Literacy Policy: N.A.L.A, N.B.S.S, N.C.C.A, J.C.T., J.C.S.P, Adlit, Briary Gap National T.Y Drama Festival, Barnstorm Theatre Company, Scoilnet Digital Literacy and National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy
- Literacy is a whole school responsibility and all students' needs must be catered for. Management will support a diverse range of methodologies to promote literacy in the school.
- Support student wellbeing by promoting literacy as a means of connecting students to their school, their friends, community and the wider world.

Role of non-language Teachers

Non-language teachers play an important role in integrating literacy into their lessons, raising awareness of the widespread presence and application of literacy concepts in our everyday lives.

The responsibilities of non-language teachers include the following:

- Ensure that literacy is included in subject planning and reviewed annually as a subject department.
- Ensure that the agreed actions of the literacy plan 2014- 2017 are implemented in teachers' practice.
- Generate a bank of resources and share them within the department
- Have a print rich environment in their classroom
- Avail of literacy focused C.P.D where possible and disseminate good practice within the department

Table 1 below summarises some suggested approaches.

Subject	Literacy Strategies
Gaeilge & Modern Foreign Languages	Posters, translated words, posters of tenses, days of week, months, seasons, newspaper wall, word lists.
English	Word of the week with definition, book review bookworm, spelling bee, famous quotes, punctuation/ grammar posters.
Maths	Words from exam questions explained, words describing mathematical symbols (e.g. Percent, %)
Geography	Posters, key words, exam language, world news wall, picture walls with key words below (field trips).
History	Posters, key words-, famous quotes etc.
Music	Pictures of note and words below, key words, instruments and pictures.
Religion	Posters, key words, famous quotes.
Physical Education	Name of sports and games around the walls, newspaper wall containing reports of various sporting events
Art	Key words for historical periods and art/ craft/ design techniques.
Computers	Posters, key words with pictures, names of equipment and different programs.
Science	Posters, key words, pictures of each step of experiments, exam language
Home Economics	Posters, key words, story boards of cooking classes.
Business	Posters, key words.
Technologies	Pictures of equipment and word below, key words, exam language.

Table 1

: Literacy Strategies for non-language teachers

Role of language teachers

Language teachers play a pivotal role in raising awareness of the widespread presence and application of literacy concepts in our everyday lives. It is equally important that the language teachers assume a guidance role with regard to non-language teachers. This involves supporting them in integrating literacy into their subjects. The language departments recognise their role in promoting and advocating a positive approach to the CBS Literacy Policy.

In addition, the Language Departments further promote a culture of literacy by:

- (a) Being aware of literacy techniques/processes/skills which overlap in other subject areas and by supporting non–Language teachers in their objective of promoting literacy in their specific subject area.
- (b) Availing of and providing opportunities for C.P.D within the various Language Departments and staff wide.
- (c) Being aware of the approaches to literacy being adopted by non–language teachers and to adopt and implement such approaches into language classes. To promote a culture of sharing between departments.
- (d) To promote the value of achievement at both Higher and Ordinary Level in state examinations.
- (e) To promote literacy through many co-curricular activities, e.g. Literacy Week, visual displays, Literacy Noticeboard, National Quizzes, excursions etc.
- (f) Informing non-language teachers of the range of topics being taught in first year.
- (g) Advising non-language teachers on simple effective strategies to increase the emphasis on literacy in their lessons.
- (h) Adopting consistency of approach in several key areas.
- (i) Identifying problems and difficulties of students and devising strategies for improvement.
- (j) Deploy mainstream English teachers, where possible, in the Special Education Needs (S.E.N) department
- (k) Have a print rich environment in classrooms which displays both student and commercial literacy resources.

Role of the Learning Support Department

The Learning Support (LS) Department endeavours to ensure that every student leaving school has an understanding and appreciation for literacy in a broad context.

The L.S Department will arrange for the administration, correction and analysis of results of standardised testing in Literacy and Numeracy in September of first year.

By analysing the results of standardised test results/transfer data/psychological reports etc., the Learning Support Team/Guidance Department will identify students in need of literacy support and facilitate the development of their literacy skills, in smaller classroom settings. The Learning Support Department prioritises students with a low percentile and low reading age. The Learning Support Department will place significant importance on the development of literacy skills when drafting these students' Individual Educational Plans (I.E.Ps). The Learning Support Department will also set targets for these students in relation to improving literacy.

The Learning Support Department will share this information in a collaborative manner with subject teachers so that each teacher will be in an informed position to encourage and help students to develop their literacy levels.

Role of Students and Parents

Children with good literacy skills are more likely to:

- Stay in education longer
- Be in work as adults
- Earn more throughout their lives

Even if they find English and literacy difficult, parents can support their children using the following guidelines:

- **Don't** say things like 'I can't spell' or 'I hated English at school'... your son might start to think like that themselves...
- **Do** talk about literacy in everyday life.
- **Do** praise your son for effort, rather than talent.
- **Do** encourage your son to read and develop vocabulary.

In turn, each student has a responsibility to enhance his own literacy by:

- Being familiar with the literacy strategies outlined in their school diaries
- Following the above tips provided for parents
- Partaking fully in classwork, homework, fieldwork and project work to the best of his ability.
- Fostering a love of reading in their own lives.
- Adopting a positive attitude and willingness to learn.

Approval

This policy has been approved by CBS Kilkenny Board of Management.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____