

St. Ailbe's School

School Self Evaluation Report 2020/21

Introduction:

The 2020/21 school year was dominated by planning and preparation for a possible school closure and the implementation of this plan in response to the second school closure beginning in January 2021. Nationally, the SSE process was paused to allow schools to evaluate their responses to the first school closure (March to June 2020) and to engage in the planning for the eventuality of a second school closure. This evaluating and planning occurred concurrently with the implementation of the 'safe return to school' plan. This included the provision of base classrooms for all class groups, introduction of split lunches, delivery of food to base rooms, installation of hand sanitizing stations, wearing of facemasks and a new ventilation system was installed in a number of classrooms.

Preparation for school closure:

- All year groups to be trained in the use of Microsoft teams and associated software packages
- Plan for SEN teaching prepared (see later)
- All SNAs were trained in the use of Microsoft teams
- Teachers were encouraged to issue at least one piece of homework every week via Microsoft teams
- Training was provided for teachers on the use of Microsoft apps provided
- A virtual timetable prepared and issued to students in early October after consultation with teachers. Subject department teachers collaborated to ensure that online teaching would be a blend of live classes and asynchronous teaching. This was encouraged so as not to have students in front of a screen all day. Classes would run between 9.30 and 2.30 each day.

Implementation of this plan:

- Students followed the virtual timetable from January 11th.
- A team of four teachers was put in place to provide technical assistance to students, parents and staff as and when the need arose.
- SNAs attended live classes to keep themselves informed as to what classwork & homework their students were doing and linking in live with their individual students where needed.
- SEN, AP1, Pastoral care and SNA team meetings held via 'teams' every week.
- Weekly engagement reports were published via VShare to parents every Friday evening. Teachers were asked to rate the student's engagement for the week as 'excellent', 'some' or 'none'. Any issues arising for parents were dealt with at earliest opportunity. Year group reports were sent to Year Heads, SENCO and School Completion Programme (SCP) Coordinator and students who were not engaging well were contacted.

- As well as live subject specific classes, all classes had a weekly 'class tutor' live class where issues they were having could be addressed by the tutor. Year heads were added to these class tutorials and periodically dropped in to maintain contact with the students as well.
- 6th year head and careers teacher organized weekly 'check ins' with the 6th years.
- SCP is organized delivery of food boxes to over 100 families.
- SCP and HSCL also delivered learning packs to students who could not engage in in online learning.
- SCP ran live homework club via 'teams' for their usual clients twice a week.
- All teaching staff undertook JCT training via Zoom and all staff (teaching, SNA etc.) attended TETB training on 28th January.
- Extensive use of Microsoft forms to gauge parent, student and staff opinions on various issues.

Measuring the effectiveness of our planning and implementation:

During the first school closure we developed a system of timely reporting on the level of student engagement in remote learning to parents. We continued this reporting during the second school closure and as a result we were able to compare levels of engagement for a number of student cohorts between the first and second school closures. The results of this comparison are summarised in the table below:

Comparison of engagement levels: 2020 vs. 2021 school closure

	Closure	Excellent %	Some %	None %
Current years 2 nd	2020	48	21	31
	2021	63 (+15%)	19 (-2%)	18 (-13%)
Current years 3 rd	2020	51	13	36
	2021	58 (+7%)	17 (+4%)	25 (-11%)
Current years 6 th	2020	51	14	35
	2021	56 (+5%)	27 (+13%)	17 (-18%)

This compares level of engagement for the same cohort e.g. comparison of engagement levels for current 2nd years with the level of engagement for same cohort when they were in 1st year

There is an emphatic Increase in the number of 'Excellent Engagements' for all year groups, an increase in the sum of 'Excellent Engagement' and 'Some Engagement' for all year groups and a significant decrease in the number of 'no engagement' returns for both all groups. In conclusion we

can say that the plan prepared and subsequently implemented by St. Ailbe's to cope with the second school closure was indeed successful.

Further evaluation of the response to the second school closure:

1. AP1 team feedback

Feedback was sought from our middle management team (AP1 postholders). We asked the AP1 team to tell us, 'what worked well?', 'what could be improved' and 'what we will keep'. The AP is summarized below:

What worked well?

- 'Live Classes' online increased students' engagement and involved in learning.
- Pre prepared virtual timetables of 1 hour classes.
- ICT training as part of option blocks for 1st years, all students trained on teams and staff training.
- Microsoft Teams training for all.
- Weekly engagement reports.
- Phone calls, messages and call outs for non-engagers.
- Adding SNA's to class teams for students with additional needs.
- Weekly online meetings for AP1, Pastoral Care, ASD, SEN and SNA's.

What could be improved?

- Policy of turning off screens to turning on screens, would we have more engagement and interaction with students?
- Setting up a study area/space at home could be something we could do with parents.
- Student's use of school emails.
- Team for all year groups for Year Heads.
- Survey of students: what worked well, what didn't, what they would like to see in place.
- Use same form of communicating for following up level of engagement: Teams
- Split lunches going forward: issue with noise on corridors during lunch with students who have a class. No eating in base rooms.
- Good aspects to base rooms but all classrooms cannot be supervised at break and lunch and teachers need own space for resources.
- Possibility of a feature on VS Ware to mark attendance for statistics.
- Increase options on engagement reports e.g.:
Attended online classes but no homework submitted.
Attended _____ out of _____ classes.

What we will keep

- ICT Training eg. new elements to Teams, One Note etc.
- Keep reduced timetable to encourage student engagement and allow for students to complete classwork and homework.

- Reinforce using one note for exams and class notebook and handing in one piece of homework per week through Teams or One Note while in school in order to maintain and develop skills in using Teams and One Note.

2. Student feedback:

A comprehensive survey was issued to all students following the reopening of the school in April. There were 314 responses which are summarized here:

Question	No. of responses out of 314	
1. In general, were 3 classes per week enough for Irish, English and Maths.	Just Right	282
	Needed More	32
2. In general, was a double class per week enough for option subjects?	Just right	269
	Needed more	45
3. Do you think that if cameras were on, verbal communication would have been easier?	Yes	40
	No	178
	Maybe	96
4. Rate how you feel about talking during online classes	Avoid if possible	119
	Very nervous	80
	No problem	115
5. How did you connect to the internet for online classes?	No connection	5
	Mobile phone	63
	Home Wi-Fi	246
6. What was your connection speed like?	None	5
	Unreliable	61
	Slow	102
	No problem	146
7. Did you have your own device or did you have to share?	My Own	285
	Share	29
	No device	0
8. What type of device did you use?	Mobile phone	116
	iPad	40
	Other type of Tablet	7
	Laptop	130
	PC	20
	Other	1
9. Did you have your own room to work in or did you have to share?	My Own Room	255
	Share	59
10. The pace of the class work was?	Too Slow	37
	Just Right	198
	Too fast	79
11. Amount of Homework	Not enough	5
	Just right	95
	Too much in some subjects	166
	Too much	48
12. Was this experience of online learning better or worse than the March - Summer 2020 lockdown?	Better	131
	Worse	98
	Doesn't apply to me	85

13. Which do you prefer?	Online learning from home 62 Learning in school 186 Don't mind either 66
14. What did you miss most about not being in school?	Getting out of the house 147 Friends 248 Real school 119 Other 50
15. Most reliable means of communication with my Teacher was	email 13 Teams chat / Private messaging 295 Other 6
16. Rate how easy you found it to use Teams	Average rating 4/5
17. Which of these sums up your overall experience of online learning?	Didn't like - couldn't cope 68 Didn't like it - but got on ok 75 Didn't like it - but got on fine 55 Found it ok - got on fine 79 I would prefer it 37

In summary the above results suggest that students were happy with the number of online classes available and the pace of the work. This suggests that the reduced nature of the virtual timetable was successful from the students' perspective. This concurs with feedback from the AP1 team also. It is interesting that a majority of students felt that communication would not have been enhanced by asking them to turn on their cameras. A majority of students said they preferred learning in school to learning online and many students said that what they missed most about school was 'friends' and 'getting out of the house'. Just under half of students reported no problems with internet connectivity/speed. The overwhelming majority of students regarded Teams chat & Teams private messaging as the most reliable means of communication with their teachers. This is in contrast to the same question asked following the first school closure where the majority of students regarded email as the most reliable form of communication. Evidently the intensive training on office 365 with particular emphasis on the use of Microsoft Teams provided for students in the first term of 2020 was successful.

Survey of 1st year parents

A survey of 1st year parents was carried out to gauge parental opinion of school systems and procedures and parental perception of student and parent involvement in decision making and policy making. This survey was very comprehensive and the results are available on the school website. Below is a sample of the type of questions asked and the associated responses. A total of 33 parents responded to the survey.

Question	Response out of 33
The school is welcoming and accessible to all students	Yes 33 No 0 Sometimes 0
The school is welcoming and accessible to parents/carers	Yes 30 No 0 Sometimes 3

My child is safe when in school	Yes	32
	No	0
	Sometimes	1
The school is active in preventing and tackling bullying	Yes	29
	No	0
	Sometimes	4
My child reports that the teachers interact with him/her in a calm and respectful manner, even when there are disagreements	Yes	27
	No	0
	Sometimes	6
I am happy with the quality of teaching in the school	Yes	31
	No	0
	Sometimes	2
I know how additional support for students is organized in the school	Yes	20
	No	8
	Sometimes	5
My child's opinion is sought and listened to when deciding upon school policies and plans	Yes	26
	No	1
	Sometimes	6
Parents views are sought and listened to in school planning and policy development e.g. healthy eating policy; anti bullying policy; discipline policy	Yes	27
	No	0
	Sometimes	4

Suspensions & Referrals:

18 suspensions during the 2021 year (target below 20)

12 suspensions during the 1920 year (target below 20)

21 suspensions during the 1819 year (target below 25)

32 suspensions during the 1718 year

38 suspensions during the 1617 year

43 suspensions during the 1516 year

Target for the 2021/22 year: suspensions below 20

Referral forms:

	1st	2nd	3rd	TY,5th&6th	total	% 2015-16
2015-16	80	48	83	74	285	100
2016-17	10	96	21	51	178	62.5%
2017-18	16	21	84	16	137	48.1%
2018-19	11	49	20	26	106	37.2%
2019-20	16	17	28	4	65	22.8%
2020-21	30	18	7	3	58	20.4%

Referrals	Target	Total
2015-16		285
2016-17	200	178
2017-18	150	137
2018-19	120	106
2019-20	100	65
2020-21	80	58
2021-22	60	

SSE in the coming year

Circular 0033/2021: *Arrangements for Inspectorate Engagement with Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education, 2021/2022 School Year* has been published. This circular clarifies the arrangements for SSE for the 2021/22 school year and provides information about the Inspectorate's planned advisory, evaluation and research work in schools for the 2021/22 school year.

Under Circular 0041/2020, the second cycle of SSE was extended until June 2021 and the third cycle was due to commence in September 2021. In light of the additional challenges faced by schools in the pandemic context and to allow consultation on the third cycle of SSE to take place, the Department of Education is extending the second cycle of SSE until June 2022. Consequently, the third cycle of SSE, which had been due to commence in September 2021 will now commence in September 2022.

In the 2021/22 school year, St. Ailbe's will continue with our current plans and priorities for SSE which are broadly in line with the areas addressed within our DEIS plan. In particular we will be focussing on Assessment in Teaching & Learning. A substantial amount of preparatory work had been undertaken in this area before the first school closure.

We will continue to address the challenges that have arisen in the pandemic context. These may include for example, addressing the needs of students whose learning was particularly impacted during the pandemic and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.