



**Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey**

## **Literacy Policy**

*'Our school is a caring Christian Community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.'*

### **1. Rationale:**

1.1 Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood Implementation Plan to 2028 emphasises the necessity of continuing to equip students with essential literacy skills in order to meaningfully participate in society.

1.2 Our school continues to strive for high standards of literacy, numeracy and digital skills to enable students to achieve their full potential during their six years of second level education. In equipping our students to become thoughtful and discerning users of language we equip them for the world.

1.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Whole School Inclusion Policy, Assessment Policy, Homework Policy, Digital Strategy, Acceptable Use Policy and Communications Policy.

### **2. Aims**

2.1 To create a reading culture in our school.

2.2 To foster a love of language and an appreciation of its power and role in our lives.

2.3 To enable all students to reach their potential in the key literacy skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking across all taught languages and subject areas.

2.4 To raise staff awareness of and participation in key literacy strategies and to support and encourage staff in the development of literacy-conscious planning within subject areas.

### **3. Definition of Literacy**

3.1 Literacy refers to the ability to read, write, comprehend and critically interpret various forms of communication including oral, written language and digital media.

### **4. A Whole School Approach to Literacy**

4.1 Every subject department has responsibility for adopting and promoting the Literacy Policy.

4.2 The whole school approach to literacy includes the following:

- Literacy is a consideration in all subject department plans.
- A variety of teaching methodologies have been incorporated in order to improve literacy levels such as:
  - An emphasis on keywords
  - Building on prior knowledge
  - Activity based learning
  - Clear learning outcomes at the outset of lessons
  - Revision, discussion and assessment
  - The creation of print rich learning environments in every classroom
  - One to one iPad school to increase digital literacy
  - Dedicated weeks such as 'World Book Week', 'Maths Week'
  - Every teacher has a Google Classroom where work can be submitted and information is accessible
- The Principal and Deputy Principals facilitate continuous professional development for staff in relation to literacy.
- The Principal and Deputy Principals reinforce the commitment of the school to literacy at each available opportunity including staff meetings, Parent Association meetings, Parent Information evenings, Open Evenings and other student meetings.
- School communications regularly emphasise the significance of literacy via the website, the Unique school app, the weekly newsletter and the annual.
- The Librarian, Ms Emily Manning liaises with the English Department, the Principal and the Deputy Principals to develop, promote and monitor literacy in the school library through a variety of initiatives.

- The School Self Evaluation (SSE) Coordinator, Ms Kate Mulcahy, promotes, sets targets and evaluates literacy and numeracy which form key aspects of the third cycle of SSE.
- The Additional Educational Needs Coordinator, Ms Roisin Conlon, identifies students in need of support in literacy through testing.
- Coordinators of the co curricular programme also play a key role in promoting literacy in the areas of debating such as Loreto Debates and Gael Linn, public speaking such as Model United Nations and creative writing.
- The Library Prefects liaise with the Librarian to promote literacy initiatives within the student body.

## **5. Literacy and Wellbeing**

5.1 Loreto Abbey recognises that the promotion of literacy and reading for pleasure plays a crucial role in student wellbeing. Reading for pleasure provides an escape from daily stress, offering moments of calm and enjoyment that support positive mental health.

5.2 Strong literacy skills empower students with confidence in their ability to express themselves, participate in discussions, and navigate the world around them. By cultivating a love of reading, we not only enhance academic achievement but also support the overall mental and emotional wellbeing of our students.

## **6. Transition from Primary School**

6.1 Primary schools forward a copy of each incoming pupils' Education Passport the year before entry to Loreto Abbey Secondary School. This includes information from the New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test which is a curriculum based standardised assessment of reading achievement.

6.2 First Year students engage in the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) upon entry, the results of which are logged on Athena Tracker. This data enables teachers to examine students' literacy attainment, set realistic targets and evaluate the students' progress.

## **7. Additional Educational Needs Department**

7.1 The AEN Department identifies students who require literacy support from the CAT4 tests or from additional assessments conducted by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or other qualified Educational Psychologists.

7.2 Subject teachers and Year Heads may refer students to the AEN Department whom they have identified as requiring additional literacy support. Appropriate literacy targets will be set in a Student Support Plan (SSP) and reviewed accordingly.

7.3 Teaching and learning support strategies will be organised for students in the form of:

- In class support teaching
- Small group teaching classes
- One to one support
- ANA Support

## **8. The Library**

8.1 The Library offers 5,000 books for students to read from. It is divided into Junior, Intermediate and Senior Fiction while also providing reference material for specific subject areas. The Koha Library software cataloguing system is in place.

8.2 Every student has a Library account and may borrow and renew books in bi monthly intervals.

8.3 Ms Emily Manning is the school Librarian and oversees the Library during school hours. Ms Lynn Sherry is the Library Assistant and oversees the Library in the evenings in addition to supervising After School Study.

8.4 The Book Drive is an ongoing initiative that encourages parents to donate new or used books to the Library in order to ensure there is an up to date catalogue. This is promoted periodically.

8.5 The Librarian organises a variety of literacy initiatives throughout the year including 'World Book Week', seasonal creative writing competitions and a Literary Festival with guest speakers from the arts. D.E.A.R (Drop Everything and Read) time is also organised at different points in the year.

8.6 There is a Library Instagram page and a termly Library newsletter which provides details of recommended reads and upcoming events in the Library.

## **9. Junior Literacy**

9.1 The Accelerated Reader Programme was introduced to the Library in 2023. This programme monitors and manages students' independent reading practice and comprehension. Students are assessed after each novel they read to ascertain their comprehension of plot and characters but also to test their acquisition of vocabulary.

9.2 Students undertake 'Star Reading' tests each term in order to gauge their reading level and to set personalised targets. Detailed reports are generated for each English

teacher which enables them to plan literacy activities tailored to their students' reading levels.

9.3 The system generates rewards in recognition of literacy achievements such as the 'Word Millionaire' certificate, when a student has read extensively.

9.4 The Junior Student Journal contains a 'Recommended Reading List' from which students are encouraged to read. Parents are also provided with 'Recommended Reading' lists at different points during the year.

## **10. Senior Literacy**

10.1 Reading classes take place on a weekly basis for Transition Year students during which they are encouraged to read from the Intermediate or Senior Fiction sections.

10.2 The Transition Year and Senior Cycle Journals also contain 'Recommended Reading' lists which are also disseminated to parents.

10.3 Transition Year students take part in a 'Write a Book' interschool literacy project with Loreto Primary School whereby they are paired with a pupil from First or Second Class, read with them, interview them and then edit and publish a short 'book' about the pupil.

This policy will be reviewed in 2027/'28.

Signed: 

Dr. Eilis Humphreys

Chairperson

Date: 31/3/'25

