



# St. Brigid's Senior Girls' National School Board of Management – Report June 2017



## Board of Management

The present Board of Management will run until November 2019, the usual four year term. This report covers the work recently undertaken in St. Brigid's S.G.N.S.

The Board consists of the Chairperson; Treasurer; Teacher Nominee; two Parent Nominees; two Community Nominees and the School Principal.

## School Ethos

St. Brigid's S.G.N.S. is managed under the patronage of Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of the Dublin Diocese. As such, we adhere to the Schedule of Catholic Schools. In St Brigid's SGNS, we are very happy to cater for and celebrate pupils of all faiths and none.

A new crest was designed in school to reflect the heritage and vision of the school, with a traditional St. Brigid's Cross remaining central to a variety of educational pursuits. The new motto, *'Together we live for today and learn for tomorrow'*, indicates the school's goal of providing an education to pupils in the widest sense of the word. We encourage them to bring their own inner resources to meet as adventures the challenges and joys that life brings.

In May, many of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Class pupils made their First Sacrament of Penance and First Communion. They prepared by participating in the Do This in Memory programme at Saturday/Sunday Mass. Most of our 6<sup>th</sup> Class Pupils made their Confirmation this May also. They prepared for their Confirmation by participating in an Enrolment Ceremony, Service of Light and four Ritual Masses.

The whole school celebrated St Brigid's Day in February. Our Fifth Class pupils attended part of the Sixth Class Graduation Ceremony

In recent years we were fortunate to receive pupils of different nationalities to St. Brigid's. We encourage pupils to share their knowledge, skills, culture and awareness with each other and with the whole school community.

## Staffing

The Board recognises that the most important resource in St. Brigid's School is its wonderful staff.

The Board members would like to recognise the huge contribution made by Niamh Cooney, as she moves back to the West. Niamh worked tirelessly for the good of the whole school community, being responsible for mentoring newly qualified teachers, Numeracy, Green School Flag, Religion. We congratulate Ann-Marie Hughes on the birth of her baby boy and wish Aoife McMullen well as she awaits her new arrival.

The BOM expresses its thanks to all Teachers, SNAs and Ancillary Staff for their dedication to the pupils of St. Brigid's. The Board pays tribute in particular to teachers and others who have taken on many and varied voluntary roles, during the current moratorium on Posts of Responsibility.

## Parents' Association/Committee/Volunteers

The Board would like to thank members of the Parents' Committee for their super support and fundraising efforts. Among other things, this included reviewing school policies and plans; arranging Raffles, Calendars, Christmas Fun Days, volunteering for Reading, for organising the Book Fair, the Breakfast Club and for holding a Fundraiser during Sports Day. Well done also to all the Parent Volunteers who joined in the Literacy for Fun and Maths for Fun Groups.

All parents/guardians automatically belong to the Parents' Association and all are welcome to join St. Brigid's Parents' Committee. We are always grateful for volunteers. If any parent/guardian would like to volunteer to help in any area of school life, you will need to be garda vetted. It's a simple process. Please contact the school office at 01 8342416.



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### Policy Development

*During the past few years, the present Board of Management has ratified the following policies. The Board would like to thank all members of the school community who took part in their construction. Policies are available to view in school. A number of these policies is also available to view on our website.*

Absence from School (Teachers & Pupils)  
Acceptable Use ICT Policy  
Administration of Medication Policy  
Anti-Bullying Policy  
Assessment Policy  
Attendance Policy  
CCTV & Data Management Policy  
Child Protection Policy  
Class Allocation Policy  
Class Allocation Policy: Multigrade Classes  
Code of Discipline/ Behaviour Policy  
Commercialisation Policy  
Confidentiality Policy  
Critical Incident Policy  
Custody & Separation Policy  
Data Protection & Records Retention Schedule  
Differentiation Strategy (inc. Special Needs & Exceptional Abilities)  
Dignity in the Workplace Policy  
Dublin Diocesan First Communion & First Reconciliation Policy  
Dublin Diocese Garda Vetting Data Protection Policy  
Enrolment Policy  
Exemption from Irish Policy  
First Aid Draft Policy  
Guidelines for Student Teachers, those on work experience and others working in St. Brigid's School  
Healthy Eating Policy  
Policy re. Hire & Use of School Premises by Outside Groups  
Homework Policy  
I.C.T. & E-Learning Plan  
Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy  
Parent/Guardian Visits to School  
Parents As Partners  
Protected Disclosures Policy  
Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy  
Safety Document  
School Tours  
Special Education Needs Policy  
Special Needs Assistants Policy  
St Brigid's Staff Induction Pack  
Substance Misuse Policy  
Supervision Policy  
Swimming Policy  
Work Experience Policy Guidelines

### Whole School Curriculum Plans

**The Board of Management has also ratified the following Whole School Curriculum Plans.**

**The Board would like to thank all teachers who were involved in the completion of these plans. All Curriculum Plans are being updated in turn.**

English Whole School Plan (2014)  
Maths Whole School Plan (2014, 2017)  
Plean Scoile don Ghaeilge (2015)  
History Whole School Plan (2014)  
Music Whole School Plan (2013, 2017)  
P.E. Whole School Plan (2014, 2017)  
S.P.H.E. Whole School Plan (2014)  
Science Whole School Plan (2017)  
R. E. Whole School Plan (2016)  
Geography Whole School Plan under review  
Drama Whole School Plan under review  
Art Whole School Plan under review

### Our School Website [stbrigidsschool.com](http://stbrigidsschool.com)

St. Brigid's School Website was constructed in 2014 and is being updated constantly, in order to communicate more effectively with our school community. Parents and pupils are encouraged to browse the website. Pupils might find the **Links** Section particularly useful, while parents may access the informative areas e.g. School **Policies**. Look at the **Blog** section to see what classes have been working on and the '**Calendar of Events**' for a useful daily diary of school events.

### Inspectorate

The Inspector attached to the school has visited the school on a number of occasions in relation to the probation of recently qualified teachers.



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### Curricular Development

As in all other schools, St. Brigid's has been involved in a **Self-Evaluation Process** for the last number of years.

#### **Problem-Solving in Maths was chosen by teachers as their first area of concern.**

Questionnaires were issued to pupils, parents and teachers. The returned answers, together with other evidence from testing and teacher observation, were used to make a School Improvement Plan.

Teachers continue to encourage pupils to tackle problems, explicitly teaching strategies to assist them. Pupils keep a journal in which they note ways to solve different types of problems. Extra time has been allocated to teaching Maths, Learning Support has been introduced at all class levels in Maths and teachers have received further professional development in the topic. Pupils make and solve maths trails around the school.

Parents/Guardians are reminded in each newsletter of the importance of discussing maths problems and solving simple maths puzzles and working on maths in the environment. This might include working on the clock, reading and calculating times; measuring and calculating weights and volumes in the kitchen, working on distance on car and bus journeys. Pupils might also work on online puzzle and problem-solving.

### Curricular Development cont'd...

#### **Oral Literacy was chosen by teachers as their second area of concern.**

Once again, questionnaires were issued to pupils, parents and teachers. Once again, the returned answers, together with other evidence from testing and teacher observation, were used to make a School Improvement Plan.

Teachers began by teaching pupils how to improve their conversation skills, explicitly teaching strategies such as making eye contact, using turn-taking correctly, asking questions, using gestures, etc... Parents are asked to continue this work at home.

Teachers are working on oral reports with pupils at the moment. In this case, pupils need to make a report on a subject of their or the teacher's choice. Once again, teachers give the pupils strategies to assist them – using props, gestures, eye contact, using correct vocabulary, etc... Pupils have been asked to work on this area for homework.

Over the summer holidays, pupils often lose some of their speaking skills, particularly if they spend time on computers or watching T.V. Parents/guardians play a very important part in encouraging conversation, reminding children how to listen and take turns and promote good use of their words. With younger children, learning nursery rhymes and tongue twisters teaches the children about the richness and enjoyment of language.

### Support

The Board would like to congratulate the pupils who took part in recent initiatives and to thank the volunteers and groups involved.

A number of pupils in Fifth Class enjoyed working on the Quavers to Quadratics initiative with the National Concert Hall.

Members of the local community and former parents of St. Brigid's pupils, also assist with reading in a number of classes.

### Support cont'd...

The Board would also like to congratulate the pupils from both Second Classes, who took part in the Wizards of Words Reading Programme.

We would like to thank the volunteers for their generosity in sharing their time, their professionalism and their enthusiasm.

The number of Physical Education Initiatives is too numerous to mention! The pupils really enjoyed and benefitted from lessons in basketball, cycle skills, cricket, gaelic football, camogie, swimming, etc.



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## Celebrations

The Board would like to congratulate the pupils who took part in school events/initiatives over the past few years. These include...

Active Week  
Ballymun Rediscovery Centre Outreach Lessons  
Barnardos Cyber-Bullying Programmes  
Camogie Programme and Inter-School Blitz  
Chess Programme  
Christmas Concerts  
Comhairle na nÓg  
Cricket Programme and Inter-School Blitz  
Cycling Skills Course  
Discovery Science and Maths Programmes  
Dublin Bus Safety Initiatives  
Dublin Fire Brigade Safety Launches  
Dublin Zoo Outreach Programme  
Engineers' Week  
Finglas Credit Union Art Competitions  
Finglas Credit Union General Knowledge Quizzes  
Food Dudes  
Friends for Life Programmes  
Gaelic Programme and Inter-School Blitz  
Graduation Ceremonies  
Green Schools' Committee  
Library Visits  
Maths Week  
Peace Proms Concerts  
Sacraments of Penance, Communion and Confirmation  
School Tours  
Science Week  
Scoil Drámaíocht Competitions  
Seachtain na Gaeilge  
Student Council  
Swimming Programme  
Visiting Local Sites of Historic Interest  
World Book Day  
We will include more school events and Home School Initiatives on our website this summer

## School Gardens and Yard

Following the vandalism of St. Brigid's little school wildflower garden in the summer of 2015, it was decided to begin again in the area between the school yards. With bird tables and a bug hotel, it's looking great. Charlie, our school caretaker, has also been very busy, working on the raised beds in the garden to the side of the school. Some seating has been purchased for that area, to be installed over the holidays.

## Teaching Materials and Equipment

**Approximately 97% of books/ workbooks/ novels/ readers for book rental have been replaced during the past four years!** The school's model of book rental was also changed in 2016 at the request of parents, to include stationery, workbooks, etc... A system of early payment was introduced, to allow payment in installments for the next academic year. This has already proven extremely popular and allows the school to purchase books at better discount rates and will continue into the future.

New teaching materials have been accessed for all curricular areas. A large number of books/materials has been purchased for Literacy, Numeracy, Gaeilge, Music, P.E., Art, Geography Maps/Globes, Science Equipment, kits and storage containers, etc., as have display cases for pupils' work. Keyboards were purchased, as were a considerable number of new books, both for the School Library and for classroom libraries. The school also subscribes to eLeathanach and Primary Planet, to keep the pupils up to date in current affairs. Kits have been created for Literacy and Numeracy in each of the classrooms. Kits for S.E.S.E (History / Geography / Science) have been developed to further support the revised curriculum.

## Changes in Delivery of Curriculum

St. Brigid's introduced a Multi-Grade Class for the first time a few years ago. Each year, the parents/guardians are invited to an Information Meeting, where the theory and practice of Multi-Grade classes are explained. The school has found the initiative to be very successful, and has had very positive feedback at the end of each year since its introduction. Enrolment figures for the coming academic year mean that we will not have a Multi-Grade Class for the academic year 2017-2018.

The school has also changed its provision of Learning Support, in line with best educational practice. St. Brigid's now provides a mixture of in-class support, withdrawal of small groups and individuals. Each of these models has its place, so there are timetabled in blocks for each class level. In this way, all pupils are catered for, whether they are experiencing difficulties or are exceptionally able. Support is now provided throughout the school in both Literacy and Maths.



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## Board of Management – Report June 2017



### Buildings/Systems

#### Recent Systems:

Our new Intercom System, which was installed in all classrooms and common areas, allows for better communication throughout the school. The much-needed CCTV System was also installed in common areas and a new Security System at the Front Entrance. The alarm system was upgraded and thermostats replaced in all rooms for the heating system (which has also been serviced). Minor electrical work has been undertaken. The footpath and gate at the pupils' entrance were repaired.

All corridors, adults' toilets and children's toilets were painted. All classrooms and ancillary rooms were also painted. The walls in the school yard are to be painted this summer. Hand-dryers were installed in the adults' and pupils' toilets. Some pupils' toilets were replaced. Paper towel dispensers were installed in classrooms and all other 'wet areas'. The Parents' Room was completely refurbished, with new furniture, utensils and a dishwasher. One disused cloakroom was converted into a P.E. Equipment Room and another disused cloakroom into a Teachers' Resource Room for storage of teaching materials.

Damaged walls and ceilings were repaired, water tanks replaced and thermostats fixed to nine water heaters. St. Brigid's was allocated funding through emergency works to replace the four water tanks on the roof. Water heaters were also replaced. Leaks in the roof were repaired in a number of areas. Notice-boards were made for all the corridors and the school hall and a new mural painted at the back of the stage. Signage was installed re. fire safety in the building and personal liability and a speed limit in the grounds.

### Furniture

**A large volume of furniture was purchased during recent years.** This included chairs for two classrooms; adults' lockers for staff members; classroom shelves; new whiteboards; bookshelves for the Staffroom and the new Curriculum Resource Room; shelving and storage for the new P.E. Equipment Room; Parents' Room furniture; cupboards for classrooms; some tables; new noticeboards and large lockable storage units for the new area required under Data Protection Circular 0017/2014. These purchases were possible by sourcing furniture during sales and by buying some used furniture in good condition, e.g. second-hand lockers and tables... The school has also installed a second photocopier and updated school systems in general.

### Summer Camps

This Summer, three teachers have invited 36 pupils from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Classes to take part each of the Summer Camps. The Campa Gaeilge will take place in the first week of the holidays, followed by the Pathways to Literacy and Numeracy Camp the following week. The Board hopes that these will be as successful as previous years.

### I.C.T.

Our new website [stbrigidsschool.com](http://stbrigidsschool.com) We have been using the Aladdin database since April 2012. This keeps staff members up to date regarding pupils' details and most areas of school life. It also allows for better communication both in school and with parents and guardians, through texts, etc.

We would welcome further funding for interactive whiteboards in mainstream classrooms in the next year or two. All ICT equipment will be replaced on a phased basis, as available funding allows. The school's ICT consultant has been kept busy maintaining and updating the computer room.

### Uniform

The Board welcomed the feedback from Parents' Questionnaires regarding St. Brigid's school uniform. Since September 2015, the uniform for St. Brigid's consisted of a white shirt, plain navy jumper/cardigan (with school crest attached), the school skirt/pinafore and school tie. Tracksuits are worn on P.E. days only, with non-slip runners. These are plain navy with the school crest attached.

The Board specifies that the school crest be attached to both items of clothing. Crests are given to pupils as part of their book rental pack and are also available to buy from Miriam, school secretary.

Skirts, pinafores and ties are available in McAloons Uniform Shop in Finglas Village.

**The school will reopen on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017**





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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

### Friends For Life Programme

Our school has implemented the Friends For Life Programme in a number of classes over the past two years. A number of our teachers have been trained to implement it. What is this programme?

“Friends for Life is a social skills and resilience building program that is recognised by the World Health Organisation for over 12 years of comprehensive research and as an effective means to prevent anxiety for children aged 8-11.

Anxiety is a common disorder, affecting over 20% of children in this age group. If left unattended anxiety can severely impact a child's development, which then created problems later in life. Anxiety can cause constant worry about things close to a child such as homework, attending school camp and even non-local events that appear on the news such as natural disasters or pandemics. This anxiety can detract from learning and have a severe impact on development.

Friends for Life is proven to reduce anxiety and give participants the tools they need to cope in these stressful and challenging situations. Further to anxiety treatment, Friends for Life also improves a participant's social skills, ability to focus, confidence, and the ability to relax and regulate emotions.

Friends for Life uses the FRIENDS acronym to help children remember the concepts they learn throughout the program.

**F**eelings (talk about your feelings and care about other people's feelings)

**R**elax (do “milkshake” breathing, have some quiet time)

**I** can try! (we can all try our best)

**E**ncourage (step plans to happy home)

**N**urture (quality time together doing fun activities)

**D**on't forget – be brave! (practise skills everyday with friends /family)

**S**tay happy

Friends for Life teaches participants to cope with their feelings and the feelings of other by training them to think more positively and to relax and regulate their bodies. Friends for life also teaches confidence and ways to tackle problems which helps build self esteem as participants start to solve problems they would have previously shied away from. Most important Friends for Life enables participants to be happy, smile ...which helps them easily transition to their teenage years....”

We have found the programme to be very useful and worthwhile for the pupils of St. Brigid's, both for themselves and in their interactions with others. We hope to extend this to Second Class pupils this year, with “Fun Friends for Life”, which is aimed at this younger age group.

### The School Completion Programme

“The School Completion Programme (SCP) was set up as part of Department of Education and Skills (DES) DEIS Strategy – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools. Its aim is to increase the numbers of young people staying in primary and second level school and in doing so improve the numbers of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle, or the equivalent.”

St. Brigid's SGNS is part of a cluster group of Finglas Schools, who benefit from the School Completion Programme Project. During the past year, a number of our pupils participated in the following:

- After School Club for all pupils on two afternoons a week
- Dramatherapy for a number of our pupils
- Attendance monitoring
- School Holiday Camps
- Mindfulness Classes

We extend thanks to our local SCP coordinator and look forward to working with the project during the coming year, to identify ways that can best support our schools' needs.

### Contacting the School

We have a super Home School Community Coordinator (HSCL), Niamh Forristal, who is available to answer any questions about school that you might have.

**Contact Niamh at  
0868887693**

**Any free time to spare? Volunteers always needed...**

Feel free to offer your services to St. Brigid's, whether it's once-off, for an hour, or more often, for longer...

**Contact the school at 01 8342416 or email  
[stbrigidssenior@eircom.net](mailto:stbrigidssenior@eircom.net)**