



ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Year 2- Published in September 2026

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St. Mary's Secondary School

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

1. Introduction

This strategic plan was developed through extensive consultation involving all of the key stakeholders who are part of the community in St. Mary's Secondary School. This includes the Board of Management, Parents/Guardians, Staff and Students.

The consultation period took place during the 2024/25 school year, and set out to gather feedback about current practices in St. Mary's Secondary School, and to develop a framework for school development for the second half of this decade. The strategic plan also sets out to ensure that the school is responsive to the rapidly changing needs of its students and the community it serves, but to also ensure that the school continues to develop into the future through developing a shared vision by all who study, work and engage with the school community.

2. Mission Statement

St. Mary's is a Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education An Irish Schools Trust). It is a Christian Community seeking to promote Gospel values, especially love and freedom in a dynamic partnership of students, staff, parents, trustees, management and the wider community. Respect for self, for others and for the environment is a core value. In a spirit of loving care and with a commitment to breadth, balance and excellence in education, we seek to develop the full potential of every student: academic, spiritual, moral, physical, cultural, social, emotional, aesthetic and vocational.

Aims

1. An environment shall be provided in which each student can live out her Christian commitment with opportunities for prayer, worship and a deeper understanding of the Christian way of life.
2. Quality teaching and learning shall ensure strong academic achievement.
3. A warm, friendly, cooperative climate, with mutual respect and a team approach to problem solving, shall be present.
4. St. Mary's Secondary School supports respect for diversity of traditions, values, beliefs, languages and ways of life in society. Special care shall be given to weak or marginalized.
5. Students shall be prepared for life and for relationships, learning respect for others and for the environment. Talents for the creative use of leisure shall be cultivated.

6. A comprehensive Careers Guidance Service shall facilitate the formation of life goals and career plans.
7. Involvement of all partners in the education process, shall be welcomed and encouraged.
8. Opportunities shall be provided for the personal/professional development of staff and for the affirmation of their commitment and dedication

3. St. Mary's Secondary School – Ethos

St. Mary's is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls. It was founded as a Mercy Secondary School and as such supports the religious and educational philosophy of its founder Catherine McAuley. St. Mary's now operates under the Trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish School Trust). CEIST advises and supports the school and as a CEIST school St. Mary's is guided by the following core values.

1. Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
2. Commitment to excellence and continually improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning
3. Showing Respect for each Individual
4. Creating a sense of Community with a special welcome for those most in need.
5. Being Just and Responsible in our Relationships.

While St. Mary's Secondary School is rooted in the ethos of the Mercy sisters it warmly welcomes applications from students of other faiths. We offer each student the opportunity to develop her abilities and talents and so reach her full potential in a caring and happy environment.

4. School Structure

The school was run by the Mercy Order until 2007, when it came under the trusteeship of CEIST. CEIST are the patron of the school, and a Faith, Leadership and Governance (FLG) Co-ordinator from CEIST engages with the school on a regular basis to ensure effective communication and governance. Some of the key school structures are set out below:

4.1 BOM

The school's Board of Management consists of eight nominees as follows: Four trust nominees who are nominated by CEIST, two teacher nominees who are nominated by the staff in the school and two parent nominees who are nominated by the parent body of the school. All nominees are appointed to their role by CEIST. Each board serves a term of three years. The current board's term commenced on 16th October 2024 and is scheduled to conclude on the 15th October 2027.

A board member may serve a maximum of three terms, while a member can only serve a maximum of two terms as Chairperson. The Principal acts as the Secretary to the Board, but does not have any vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson has the deciding vote.

Parent nominees are required to step down from the Board when their child concludes their education in St. Mary's Secondary School.

4.2 Senior Management Team

The senior management consist of the Principal and Deputy Principal of the school. As part of their role, the Principal assumes the role of Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Relevant Person under the school's Child Safeguarding Statement. The Deputy Principal assumes the role of Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) under the Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Principal and Deputy Principal oversee the day-to-day running of the school, in line with the Education Act 1998. In the Principal's absence, the Deputy Principal assumes the role of Principal.

4.3 Assistant Principals

The school has a team of Assistant Principals who are appointed at the Assistant Principal I or Assistant Principal II levels. In addition to this, the school has a teacher appointed to the role of Programme Co-ordinator, who verses the Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The Programme Co-Ordinator operates outside of the scope of the post structure, as set out in Circular 0003/2018. A biannual review of the needs and priorities, initiated by the BOM, is used to identify the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to each Assistant Principal.

4.4 Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for teaching and learning in their subject area(s). They are also responsible for assessment and reporting to their students and their parents/guardians throughout the school year.

4.5 Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) support the care needs of students as set out in Circular Letter 0030/2014. They provide support to students who have complex needs.

4.6 Support Staff

The support staff in the school consist of the secretarial staff, caretaker and cleaning staff. They provide essential supports to ensure the smooth running of the school in a safe and clean manner.

4.7 Student Representative Council (SRC)

The Student Representative Council is the body who represents all students in the school. Each class group elects students to the SRC, and the SRC serves a one-year term.

4.8 Parents Association

The Parents Association is a very active body that supports the work of the school. They are involved in many activities during the school year including fundraising activities, organising guest speakers and assisting with school activities such as Open Night, graduations and other events.

5. School Committees and Working Groups

The following committees and groups are established in the school:

- Additional Education Needs (AEN) Team
- Assessment Committee
- Attendance Committee
- Cothú Committee
- Digital Learning Committee
- Health & Safety Committee
- Mobile Phone Committee
- School Self-Evaluation Team
- Senior Cycle Curriculum Review Group
- Student Support Team
- Wellbeing Committee
- Whole School Guidance Committee

6. Consultative Process in developing this strategic Plan

The process to develop this strategic plan is divided into a series of stages as set out below:

- Stage 1- November & December 2024
This involved surveys being disseminated to students, parents and staff in term 1 of the 2024/25 school year.
- Stage 2- January-April 2025
A Working Group of ten people was established, consisting of the following:
 - Two parent nominees
 - Two student nominees
 - Two staff nominees
 - Two BOM nominees
 - Both members of senior managementThe Working Group analysed the feedback from the surveys in stage 1.
- Stage 3- April & May 2025
Feedback was presented to the Parents Association, Student Representative Council and staff for final feedback. The BOM discussed and approved the plan at its May board meeting.
- Stage 4- September 2025
The plan was launched

- Stage 5- Term 3, 2025/26
The plan was reviewed in Term 3 of the 2025/26 school year. Students, staff and parents/guardians were invited to contribute to the review.
- Stage 6- September 2026
Year 2 of the plan is launched for the 2026/27 school year.

7. Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed at least annually and targets will be set/updated each year based on the review.

For the 2026/27 school year, three progress reports will be reported to the school community at the end of term 1 (Christmas), the end of term 2 (Easter) and at the end of June 2027.

7.1 Teaching and Learning

Aspect: Teaching and Learning			
Link to Looking at Our School 2022: • <u>Learning and Teaching</u>- Students reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning. (D2, S3) • <u>Leadership and Management</u>- Promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment. (D1, S1)			
School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To facilitate an online information session for 5 th and 6 th Year students and their parents/guardians re senior cycle AAC's and LC Coursework	Principal	Term 1 2026/27
	To facilitate an online information session for 2 nd and 3 rd Year students and their parents/guardians re Junior Cycle CBAs.	Principal	Term 1 2026/27
	To create a planning document detailing the links in the schools Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme, which incorporates CSPE, SPHE, PE and other Units of Learning	Wellbeing Committee with input from subject departments and senior management oversight	Terms 1 and 2 2026/27
	To commence the process of using the SSE process to use learning intentions and success criteria to design effective assessment tasks	SSE Committee with senior management and BOM oversight	Terms 2 and 3 2026/27
2027-28	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2026/27 school year</i>		
2028-29	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2027/28 school year</i>		
2029-30	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2028/29 school year</i>		

Review Points:

- 2025/26:
 - Area was implicitly incorporated into other priority areas- introduced as a standalone priority area for 2026/27.

7.2 Curricular Development

Aspect: **Curricular Development**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- *Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum. (D1, S3)*
- **Leadership and Management**- *Manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum. (D1, S3)*

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To implement the Life Community and Work (LCW- formerly LCVP) specification in 5 th Year 2026/27	LCW teachers	September 2026
	To ensure implementation of the tranche 2 Senior Cycle subjects	SCR Co-Ordinator, subject teachers with senior management oversight	September 2026
	To review the implementation of tranche 1 Senior Cycle Subjects with the relevant subject departments	Senior Management, SCR Co-ordinator & relevant subject teachers	Term 2- 2026/27
	To review the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme	All staff led by Wellbeing Committee	Term 2- 2026/27
	To complete the review of senior cycle SPHE implementation	Curriculum Review Committee with Senior Management & BOM oversight	2026/27
2027-28	To implement SPHE in Leaving Certificate Established	Principal with BOM Oversight	September 2027
	To review the implementation of tranche 1 & 2 subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2027/28
	To oversee the implementation of tranche 3 Senior Cycle subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2027/28

2028-29	To review the implementation of tranche 2 subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2028/29
	To oversee the implementation of tranche 3 Senior Cycle subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2028/29
2029-30	To review the implementation of tranche 3 subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2029/30
	To oversee the implementation of tranche 4 Senior Cycle subjects	Senior Management & relevant subject teachers	2029/30
	To review the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme and Senior Cycle Wellbeing	All staff, led by Wellbeing Committee	2029-30- <i>Term Two and Three</i>

Review Points:

- 2025/26:
 - Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme implemented in full with First Years (2025/26)
 - SPHE implemented in LCA and TY- September 2025
 - Drama, Film and Theatre Studies (DFTS) commenced in September 2025
 - Senior Cycle SPHE review committee established in May 2026
 - Transition Year Programme Statement implemented in 2025/26
 - Tranche 1 senior cycle subjects introduced- September 2025

7.3 School Self Evaluation (SSE)

Aspect: **School Self Evaluation (SSE)**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Students grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive (*D2, S2*)
- **Leadership and Management**- promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment (*D1, S1*)

Link to Statements of Effective Practice in the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019

- **Learning and Teaching** – Teachers’ preparation for teaching and learning explicitly references teaching, learning and assessment approaches that promote collaborative learning, peer and self-assessment and a sense of achievement (*For All*)
- **Culture and Environment** – Indoor and outdoor space is provided to facilitate social interaction and physical activity and quiet time (*For All*).

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To embed the use of active learning methodologies across all subject departments	All staff- led by SSE Committee	2026-27
	To reduce by 10% the students who self-report as being stressed by individual oral communication activities/tasks.	All staff-led by SSE Committee	2026-27
	All subject departments to include active learning methodologies and oral communication activities in their subject plans	All subject departments with senior management oversight	Due by October mid-term break
	To gather data on the use of learning intentions and success criteria to design in-class assessment tasks.	SSE Committee	Terms 2 and 3- 2026/27
2027-28	School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2027/28 will be developed using data and evidence from previous year.	All staff- led by SSE Committee	
2028-29	School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2028/29 will be developed using data and evidence from previous year.	All staff- led by SSE Committee	

2029-30	School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2029/30 will be developed using data and evidence from previous year.	All staff- led by SSE Committee	
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Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - Teacher presentations regarding active learning methodologies were facilitated at staff meetings and Croke Park meetings during the year
 - Teacher presentations regarding the development of students' oral skills in all subjects presented at staff meeting and Croke Park meetings.
 - SSE Committee submitted report to Principal re student social spaces in the school
 - *Hear Me Out* day held on 6th February to emphasise oral communication skills.

7.4 Digital Learning

Aspect: **School Self Evaluation (SSE)**

Link to Digital Learning Framework:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Teachers contribute to building whole- staff capacity by sharing their expertise (4.4)
 - Teachers collaborate in determining how digital technologies can be used effectively for teaching, learning and assessment.
- **Leadership and Management**- Manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation (2.2)
 - The principal and other leaders in the school ensure that processes are in place for the procurement, maintenance, interoperability and security of the digital infrastructure for effective learning, teaching and assessment.
 - The board of management ensures the provision and maintenance of digital teaching aids and equipment to a good standard.

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To procure additional student devices	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 1- 2026/27
	To plan for the introduction of additional student devices	DL Committee	Terms 1 and 2- 2026/27
	To facilitate staff training on the use of Gemini, within the Google platform	DL Committee	2026/27
	To develop a common naming convention for all staff and students using Google Classroom	All Staff- led by digital learning team	2026/27
	To develop an Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)	All Staff led by DL committee	2026/27
2027-28	<i>Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review</i>	<i>Principal with BOM Oversight</i>	<i>Term 3 2026/27</i>
2028-29	<i>Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review</i>	<i>Principal with BOM Oversight</i>	<i>Term 3 2027/28</i>
2029-30	<i>Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review</i>	<i>Principal with BOM Oversight</i>	<i>Term 3 2028/29</i>

Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- The Wi-Fi installation and upgrade were completed in October 2025. There are now three wi-fi networks, including a student specific network.
- The School App was extended to facilitate the payment function, consent forms and medical forms
- The Digital Learning Team presented to staff in October and March regarding the use of AI in digital learning
- Five new devices were procured for five classrooms where the existing computers had become obsolete
- The Ask Ark AI system is being trialled by six staff members in the school
- The common naming convention was not fully developed in 2025/26

7.5 Finance

Aspect: **Finance**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- *Not Applicable*
- **Leadership and Management**- Manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation (D2, S2)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To monitor the 2026/27 budget against cashflow, income and expenditure and analyse FSC reports for each month	Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM	Monthly
	To prepare the financial accounts for 2025/26 and submit to the FSSU	Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM	November 2026-February 2027
	To meet with each subject department to discuss budgetary requirements	Principal	January/February 2027
	To identify financial priorities for the 2027/28 school year	BOM, Principal, Accounts Secretary, BOM sub-finance committee	Term 2- 2026/27
	To prepare the 2027/28 budget	Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM	March-May 2027
	To ensure financial oversight on the science laboratory refurbishment	Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM	2026-27
2027-28	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2026/27 school year</i>	<i>Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM</i>	<i>Term 3- 2026/27</i>
2028-29	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2027/28 school year</i>	<i>Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM</i>	<i>Term 3- 2027/28</i>

2029-30	<i>Targets for this year will be developed upon review of the 2027/28 school year</i>	<i>Accounts Secretary, Principal and BOM</i>	<i>Term 3- 2028/29</i>
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Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- All payments were moved to the online platform.
- The 2024/25 final accounts were submitted to CEIST and the FSSU.
- Monthly FSC reports are presented to the BOM and submitted to CEIST.
- The budget for 2026/27 has been drafted, approved by the BOM and submitted to CEIST. Subject departments and committees were facilitated to make submissions re the 2026/27 school budget.
- The library book grant was used to stock the library with books.

7.6 Buildings & Facilities

Aspect: **Buildings and Facilities**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- *Not Applicable*
- **Leadership and Management**- *Manage the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation (D2, S2)*

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To complete the Science Laboratory Refurbishment as part of the Summer Works Scheme	Principal with BOM Oversight	Term 1 and 2 2026/27
	To engage the services of an architect to plan for the refurbishment of the Home Economics rooms	Principal with BOM oversight and CEIST oversight	Term 1 2026/27
	To implement the 2026/27 Health & Safety Action Plan	Principal, Health and Safety Committee with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To plan the summer maintenance programme for summer 2027	Principal, Health and Safety Committee with BOM oversight	Term 3 2026/27
2027-28	Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review	SM team, H & S committee with BOM Oversight	Term 3 2026/27
2028-29	Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review	SM team, H & S committee with BOM Oversight	Term 3 2027/28
2029-30	Targets will be set based on emerging needs identified in previous year's review	SM team, H & S committee with BOM Oversight	Term 3 2028/29

Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- Three Fire drills were carried out during the school year (14/10/25, 23/03/2026 and 11/05/2026)
- Quarterly meetings were facilitated with The ARK HQ.
- Annual risk assessments were completed in May 2026.
- The Summer Works Application for the refurbishment of the Science Labs was successful. An architect was appointed and a tender facilitated.
- An application to install two passenger lifts has been made to the Emergency Works unit to secure funding for same.
- A summer maintenance programme was implemented. Key highlights included painting of the external walls, relining of the staff car-park, new flooring in the 1st year locker area, painting of internal classrooms, electrical works to replace lights, annual PAT testing and plumbing work.

7.7 Policy Development

Aspect: **Policy Development**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and *assessment* (D1, S1)
- **Leadership and Management**- Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication. (D2, S1)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To complete the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	September 2026
	To complete the annual review of the BÍ Cineálta anti-bullying policy in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	September 2026
	To review the school's safety statement	APII Postholder, Principal with BOM oversight	September/October 2026
	To develop a policy for Staff Leave in relation to job sharing, career breaks and secondments	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 1 2026/27
	To develop a whole-school assessment policy	Principal, APII Postholders, staff with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To develop a whole-school guidance policy	Principal with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To review the school's RSE policy	Principal with BOM oversight	2026/27

	To develop the AEN Policy	Principal, AEN Team with BOM oversight	2026/27
2027-28	To complete the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	September 2027
	To review the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	March 2027
	To review the school's safety statement	APII Postholder, Principal with BOM oversight	September/October 2027
	Additional targets will be set based on previous year's review	BOM	Term 3- 2026/27
2028-29	To complete the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	March 2027
	To review the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	March 2027
	To review the school's safety statement	APII Postholder (KM), Principal with BOM oversight	September/October 2028
	Additional targets will be set based on previous year's review	BOM	Term 3- 2027/28
2029-30	To complete the annual review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	March 2027
	To review the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy in partnership with the school community	Principal with BOM Oversight	March 2027
	To review the school's safety statement	APII Postholder (KM), Principal with BOM oversight	September/October 2029

Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- The review of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment was completed on 21/08/25.
- The Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy was implemented.
- The school's Safety Statement was reviewed and approved by the BOM on 01/10/2025.
- Other policies developed and ratified during the year: Vetting Policy, Administration of Medicines, Intimate Care Policy, Policy for the use of external facilitators to support the curriculum, review of Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP), Vetting Policy.
- Work to develop an assessment policy commenced, and will progress in 2026/27.
- The work to develop the AEN policy did not commence in 2025/26, but is scheduled to commence in 2026/27

7.8 Child Protection and Safeguarding

Aspect: **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Teachers value and engage in professional learning and professional collaboration (D4, S1)
- **Leadership and Management**- Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication. (D2, S1)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To provide training for all newly appointed staff for the 2026/27 school year	Principal and API (Mentoring)	September 2026 and ongoing
	All BOM members to complete the online training programme that has been developed by the JMB	BOM	September 2026
	All new staff are required to complete the E-Learning Child Protection programmes	Principal	September 2026
	All staff to receive a refresher workshop on Child Protection	Principal	September 2026
	To ensure that the Child Protection Procedures (revised 2025) are implemented in full by 31 st December 2026.	Principal with BOM oversight	December 2026
	To facilitate the annual review with students, parents/guardians, staff and the Board of Management	BOM	April 2027
2027-28	To provide training for all newly appointed staff for the 2027/28 school year	Principal	September 2027
	All new staff are required to complete the E-Learning Child Protection programmes	Principal	September 2027 and ongoing
	All non-teaching staff to be Garda Vetted by the school	Principal	November 2027
2028-29	To provide training for all newly appointed staff for the 2026/27 school year	Principal	September 2028

	All new staff are required to complete the E-Learning Child Protection programmes	Principal	September 2028
	All staff to receive a refresher workshop on Child Protection	Principal	September 2028
2029-30	To provide training for all newly appointed staff for the 2029/30 school year	Principal	September 2029
	All new staff are required to complete the E-Learning Child Protection programmes	Principal	September 2029
	All non-teaching staff to be Garda Vetted by the school	Principal	November 2029

Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- All newly appointed staff completed induction training re Child Safeguarding in August 2025.
- All new staff have completed the E-Learning Child Protection programmes
- All current non-teaching staff have been re-vetted by the school
- DLP and DDLP attended training in October 2025 regarding the revised Child Protection procedures. All staff attended the Oide training day on 24.10.25.
- Feedback re the Child Safeguarding Statement was gathered with students, staff and parents/guardians in April/May 2026.

7.9 Anti-Bullying Development

Aspect: **Anti-Bullying Development**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships (*D1, S2*)
- **Leadership and Management**- Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful, learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication (*D2, S1*)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To review the Bí Cineálta policy with the school community	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3 2026/27
	To facilitate workshops for junior cycle students on online bullying	Senior Management and Year Heads	2026/27
2027-28	To review the Bí Cineálta policy with the school community	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2027/28
	Additional targets will be set based on review of previous year	BOM	2026/27
2028-29	To review the Bí Cineálta policy with the school community	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2028/29
	Additional targets will be set based on review of previous year	BOM	2027/28
2029-30	To review the Bí Cineálta policy with the school community	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2029/30
	Additional targets will be set based on review of previous year	BOM	2028/29

Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - The Bí Cineálta Policy was implemented from September 2025.
 - The BOM were presented with an anti-bullying update at each BOM meeting.
 - Feedback from students, staff and parents/guardians was captured in April/May 2026.
 - The PA and SRC were involved with raising awareness of the Bí Cineálta policy at their meetings.

7.10 Leadership Needs & Priorities

Aspect: **Leadership Needs and Priorities**

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Teachers contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise (*D4, S4*)
- **Leadership and Management**- Empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles (*D4, S2*)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To recruit for Assistant Principal posts as they arise	Principal with BOM oversight	Expected in Term 1 2026/27 and as vacancies arise
	To facilitate the review of leadership needs and priorities with all teaching staff	Initiated by BOM, led by Senior Management Team and working group	Term 2 and 3 2026/27
	To facilitate an end of year review with all API and APII postholders	Principal, API and APII Postholders	Term 3-2026/27
2027-28	Additional targets will be developed as part of the 2026/27 annual review	Senior Management, API and APII Postholders with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2027/28
2028-29	To facilitate the bi-annual review of leadership needs and priorities with all teaching staff	Initiated by BOM, led by Senior Management Team	Term 1- 2028/29
	Additional targets will be developed as part of the 2027/28 annual review	Senior Management, API and APII Postholders with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2028/29

2029-30	Additional targets will be developed as part of the 2028/29 annual review	Senior Management, API and APII Postholders with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2029/30
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Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - One permanent API, Three permanent APII and one acting Programme Co-Ordinator position were filled during the year.
 - Roles and responsibilities were assigned to newly appointed postholders in line with the 2024 review.
 - All Assistant Principals submitted their annual report at the end of April 2026 and the Principal facilitated review meetings in May 2026.

7.11 Additional Education Needs/Inclusion (AEN)

Aspect: Additional Education Needs/Inclusion (AEN)			
Link to Looking at Our School 2022: • <u>Learning and Teaching</u>- responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary (<i>D1, S4</i>) • <u>Leadership and Management</u>- foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student (<i>D1, S2</i>)			
School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To increase the provision of co-teaching to support students with additional education needs	AEN team with senior management oversight	2026-27
	To use the <i>Indicators of Effective Practice for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with special Educational needs in Mainstream Classes</i> to identify specific focus areas for AEN practice development	AEN team with senior management oversight	2026-27
	To develop an AEN policy	AEN team with senior management oversight	2026-27
2027-28	Additional Targets will be developed based on the previous year's review	All Staff with BOM oversight	
2028-29	Additional Targets will be developed based on the previous year's review	All Staff with BOM oversight	
2029-30	Additional Targets will be developed based on the previous year's review	All Staff with BOM oversight	

Review Points:

- **2025/26**

- The AS class was established in September 2025.
- The school's provision plan was set out and is available.
- The school continues to engage with the Department of Education and Youth regarding permanent accommodation for the current AS class and for additional future classes.
- The AEN team commenced using the *Indicators of Effective Practice for Post Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with special Educational needs in Mainstream Classes* to assist with reviewing current practices- this will develop further in 2026/27.

7.12 Whole School Guidance

Aspect: Whole School Guidance			
Link to Looking at Our School 2022: • <u>Learning and Teaching</u>- experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning (<i>D2, S4</i>) • <u>Leadership and Management</u>- manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum (<i>D1, S3</i>)			
School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To develop a whole school guidance plan	Senior Management, Guidance Committee with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To ensure that all subject departments incorporate the whole school guidance plan into their subject department plans.	Subject departments	Term 3- 2026/27
2027-28	Targets for 2027-28 will be set following a review of the previous year's targets	Principal with BOM oversight	
2028-29	Targets for 2028-29 will be set following a review of the previous year's targets	Principal with BOM oversight	
2029-30	Targets for 2028-29 will be set following a review of the previous year's targets	Principal with BOM oversight	

Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - A committee was formed at the end of Term 3 in 2025/26. This committee will commence reviewing practice in 2026/27.

7.13 Staff Development

Aspect: Staff Development			
Link to Looking at Our School 2022: • <u>Learning and Teaching</u>- Teachers value and engage in professional learning and professional collaboration (<i>D4, S1</i>) • <u>Leadership and Management</u>- Foster teacher professional learning that enriches teachers' and students' learning (<i>D1, S4</i>)			
School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	CPD in the area of AI and Digital Learning will be facilitated by the Digital Learning committee	DL committee	Term 1- 2026/27
	To facilitate a review of the Child Protection procedures with all staff	Principal with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To survey staff to identify priorities for staff development for 2026/27	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2026/27
2027-28	To ensure all newly appointed staff engage with Child protection training provided by the school and the E-Learning programmes		
	To survey staff to identify priorities for staff development for 2026/27		
	Additional targets will be developed following the staff review in Term 3 of 2026/27		
2028-29	Targets will be developed following the staff review in Term 3 of 2027/28		
2029-30	Targets will be developed following the staff review in Term 3 of 2028/29		

Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - Staff were upskilled in the use of fire extinguishers.
 - Regular teach meets are facilitated during Croke Park hours- including topics for digital learning, active learning methodologies and oral communication skills (SSE).
 - Additional staff attended SPHE CPD with Oide.
 - New staff are required to complete the online child protection e- learning programmes.

7.14 Ethos

Aspect: Ethos			
Link to Looking at Our School 2022:			
• <u>Learning and Teaching</u>- Students experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning (<i>D2, S4</i>) • <u>Leadership and Management</u>- Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student (<i>D1, S2</i>)			
School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	To continue engagement with the CEIST Cothú initiative	Senior Management, Cothú committee with BOM oversight	2026/27
	To establish a committee to review the school's ethos	Principal with BOM oversight	Term 3- 2026/27
2027-28	Targets will be developed based on the review from 2026/27	BOM	
2028-29	Targets will be developed based on the review from 2027/28	BOM	
2029-30	Targets will be developed based on the review from 2028/29	BOM	

Review Points:

- **2025/26**
 - St. Mary's commenced its involvement in the CEIST Cothú process
 - The school celebrated many liturgical events, including opening year mass and Mercy Day mass. The school choir collaborated with the parish to perform at weekday masses during the year.
 - Ethos was a focus area in all fourteen recruitment processes in the summer of 2026.

7.15 Partnership with School Community

Aspect: Partnership with School Community

Link to Looking at Our School 2022:

- **Learning and Teaching**- Students have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships (*D1, S2*)
- **Leadership and Management**- Create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful, learning environment, and sustain it through effective communication (*D2, S1*)

School Year	Targets	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline
2026-27	Online information sessions to be facilitated for AACs and Leaving Certificate coursework and LC coursework and Junior Cycle CBAs.	Principal	Term 1- 2026/27
	The SRC will use the comment box to identify focus areas for the year ahead	SRC	September 2026
	The PA and senior management will identify a joint focus area for 2026/27	PA & senior management with BOM oversight	September 2026
	Senior Management will collaborate with the SRC and the PA to identify areas where fundraising should be focused	Senior Management, PA, SRC with BOM oversight	2026-27
2027-28	Targets will be set based on the review of 2026/27		
2028-29	Targets will be set based on the review of 2027/28		
2029-30	Targets will be set based on the review of 2028/29		

Review Points:

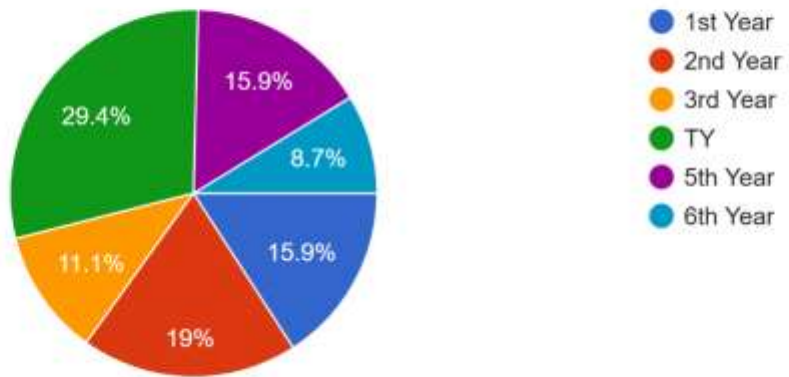
- **2025/26**
 - The school app engagement is very high, with over 99% of parents/guardians using the app.
 - The SRC has set up a comment box.
 - The SRC, PA and a group of other fifth year students collaborated to organise the introduction of picnic benches in the school.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Student Survey Responses (May 2026)

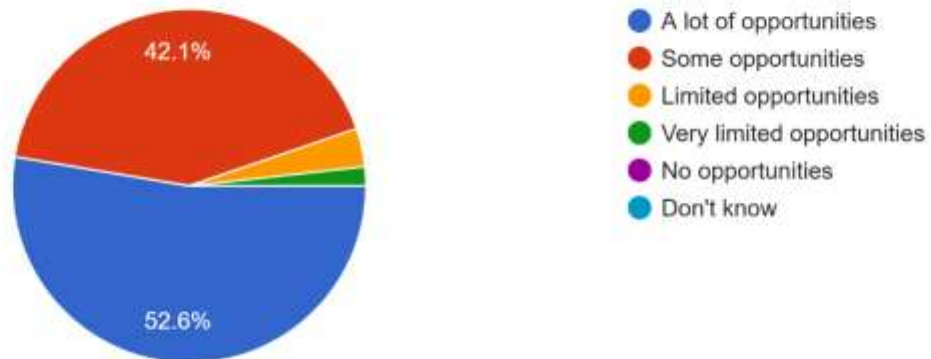
1. Please indicate the year group you you are in?

126 responses



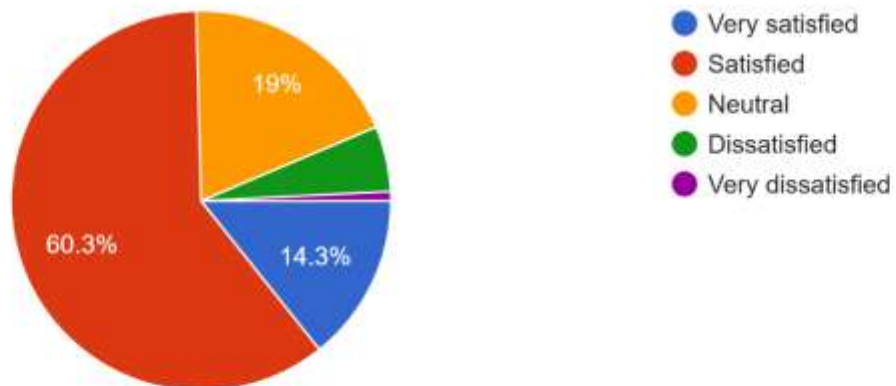
2. Have you had the opportunity to explore different subjects this year? (1st Year and TY only)

57 responses



3. Are you satisfied with the range of subjects available to you?

126 responses

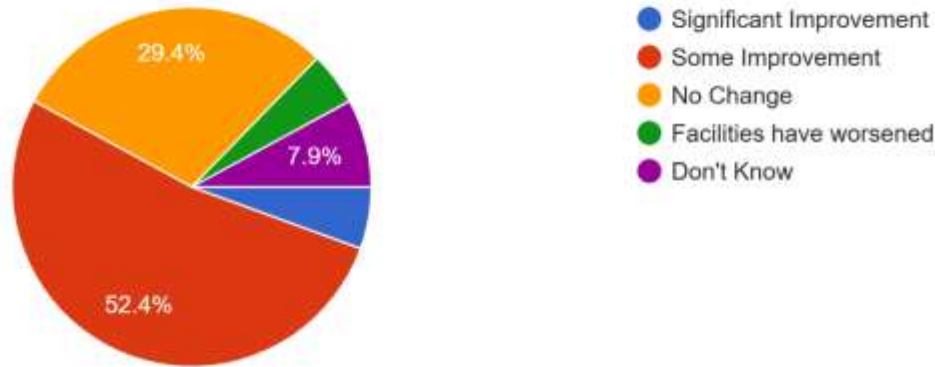


4. Please include any comments on the curriculum:

- 📌 **Overall satisfaction with subject choice** – Most students are happy with the range and variety of subjects available, describing it as broad and catering to different interests.
- 📌 **Demand for practical subjects** – Many students would like practical subjects such as **Woodwork, Metalwork, Engineering, and Construction Studies** to be offered.
- 📌 **More language options** – Students requested additional language choices, with **Chinese** specifically mentioned as a desired Leaving Certificate subject.
- 📌 **Politics as a subject** – Several students expressed interest in having **Politics** available as a senior cycle subject.
- 📌 **More outdoor and practical learning** – Students would like more outdoor lessons and more hands-on, activity-based learning rather than classroom-based work.
- 📌 **Improve subject taster programme** – Some felt they did not get enough time or meaningful experience to properly explore subjects before making choices, with too much focus on posters and PowerPoint presentations.
- 📌 **Keep low-demand subjects available** – Students would like subjects such as **Physics, Economics, Agricultural Science, and Politics** to run even when uptake is lower.
- 📌 **Balance practical and academic learning** – Students appreciate having a mix of practical and academic subjects but would like practical learning opportunities expanded.
- 📌 **Maintain learning during TY** – Some students suggested continuing light, engaging work in core subjects (especially languages) during TY to avoid forgetting key skills before fifth year.
- 📌 **More active learning in certain subjects** – Students would like classes such as **SPHE** and **PE** to include more practical activities and less writing, with suggestions for both practical PE and written PE lessons.

5. Have you noticed improvements to school facilities this year?

126 responses



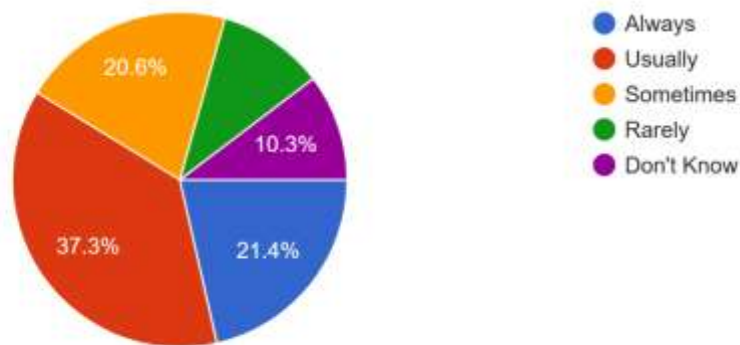
6. Please include any comments on the facilities below.

- 📌 **Cleanliness needs improvement** – Students would like the school to be cleaner overall, with some suggesting more cleaning staff due to the large number of students.
- 📌 **Positive feedback on sanitary products** – Students appreciated the increased availability of female sanitary products in the bathrooms.
- 📌 **Canteen improvements are valued** – The new canteen layout and additional self-checkout were seen as positive changes, making the space easier to use.
- 📌 **Need for more lunch space** – Many students feel the canteen is overcrowded and would like an additional eating area or another space similar to the canteen.
- 📌 **Mixed views on cleanliness improvements** – Some students noticed the school has become cleaner, while others felt there has been little or no improvement.

- 🔍 **Home Economics facilities** – Feedback was mixed, with some students saying the Home Economics rooms are outdated, while others welcomed new equipment.
- 🔍 **Positive additions to school facilities** – Students highlighted improvements such as the water fountain, library, and new clubs as beneficial.
- 🔍 **Maintenance issues need attention** – Broken toilet seats are a concern that was highlighted by multiple students.
- 🔍 **Some students noticed little change** – A number of students either did not notice any changes to the school environment or had no additional comments.

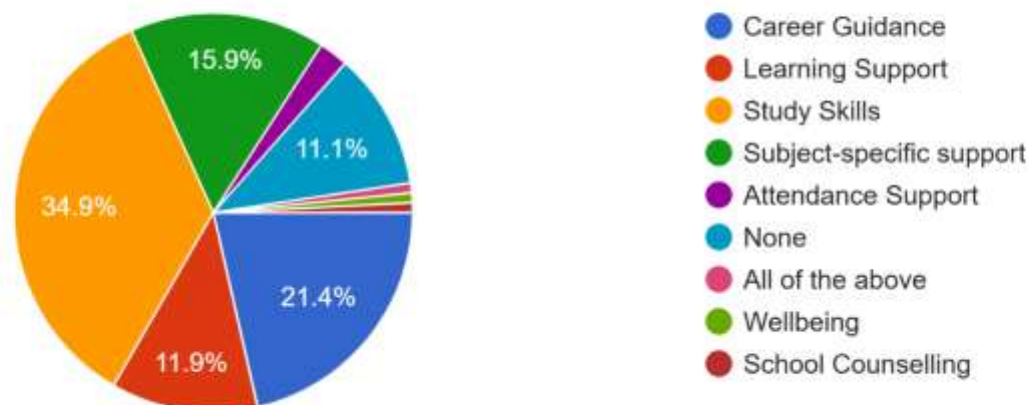
7. Does you have access to the supports that you need, such as academic supports, wellbeing supports and/or guidance supports?

126 responses



8. What supports would you like to see strengthened?

126 responses



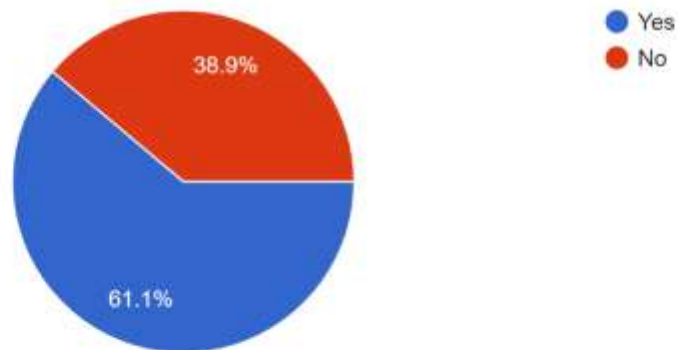
9. Please include any comments on school supports in the space below:

- 🔍 **Career guidance is highly valued** – Students praised the career guidance programme, particularly the one-to-one meetings, and would like these to continue or increase.
- 🔍 **More support with study skills** – Many students want more guidance on effective study techniques, study planning, and discovering the learning methods that work best for them.
- 🔍 **Introduce dedicated study time** – Some students suggested having a weekly supervised study class to help develop good study habits.
- 🔍 **Greater support for students with learning difficulties** – Students highlighted the need for better support for those with dyslexia and for students who struggle academically without a diagnosed learning need.

- ❓ **Improve learning support provision** – Feedback indicated that learning support classes should provide more targeted teaching rather than simply supervised homework, with consistent teacher attendance.
- ❓ **More guidance on future planning** – Students want additional support in preparing for their future, including career planning and making informed subject choices.
- ❓ **Increase active learning opportunities** – Some students feel they learn better through practical, interactive activities rather than traditional teaching methods.
- ❓ **Continue providing accessible student support** – Students appreciate knowing there is always someone available to talk to and would like this supportive environment to continue.

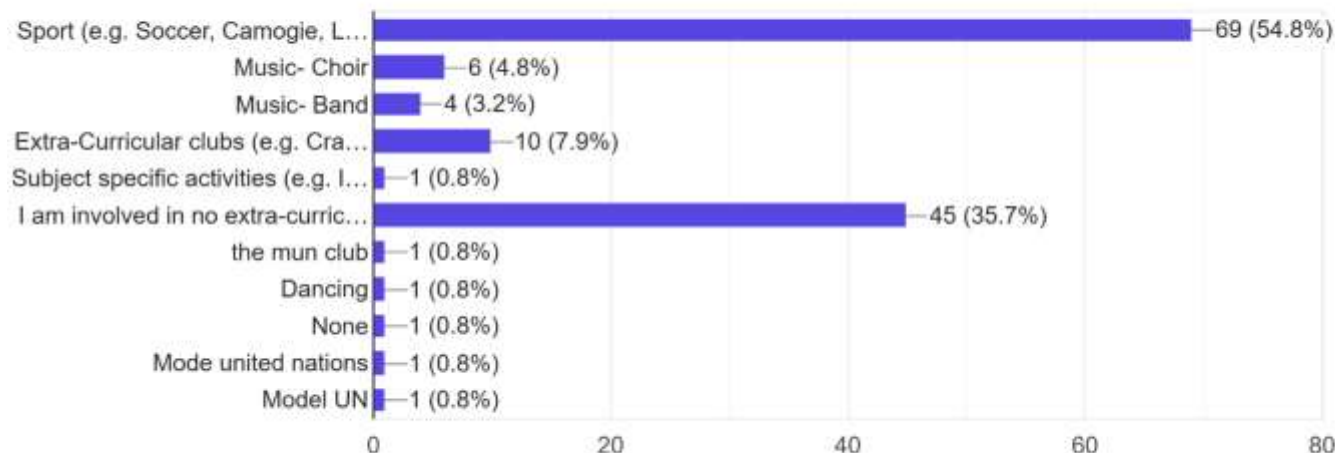
10. Are you involved in extra-curricular activities?

126 responses



11. What extra-curricular activities are you involved in? (You may select more than one option).

126 responses



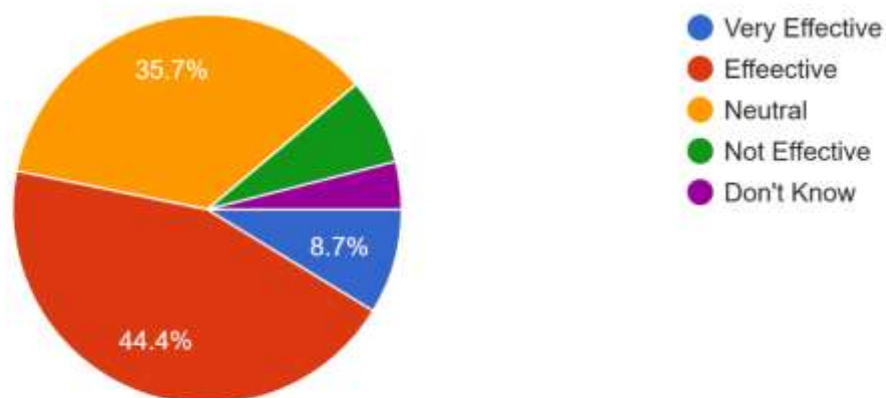
12. Please include any comments on extra-curricular activities in the space below.

- 📌 **Students value the wide range of extracurricular activities** – Many students feel there is a good variety of sports, clubs, and activities available.
- 📌 **Expand sports options** – Students would like additional sports such as **hockey** and more opportunities to participate in activities like **robotics**.
- 📌 **Improve support for the tennis team** – Multiple students highlighted concerns that the tennis team receives less support than other sports, particularly regarding transport, equipment, and school recognition.
- 📌 **Better outdoor sports facilities** – Students suggested improving outdoor sporting facilities to support greater participation.
- 📌 **Increase PE opportunities** – Some students would like more PE classes and additional sports training sessions or practice matches.

- ☐ **Offer more non-sport clubs** – Students requested more clubs for those who are not interested in sports, including suggestions such as an **Irish club for Junior Cycle**.
- ☐ **Extracurricular activities build confidence and wellbeing** – Clubs such as **MUN** were praised for developing confidence, social skills, and providing a positive break from academic work.
- ☐ **Participation is high and appreciated** – Students enjoy being involved in activities such as camogie, soccer, football, athletics, choir, and other sports.
- ☐ **Variety has improved but could increase further** – Some students acknowledged that the range of clubs is better than last year but would still like even more choice.
- ☐ **Not all students wish to participate** – A small number of students indicated they are not interested in extracurricular activities, highlighting the importance of offering diverse options to appeal to different interests

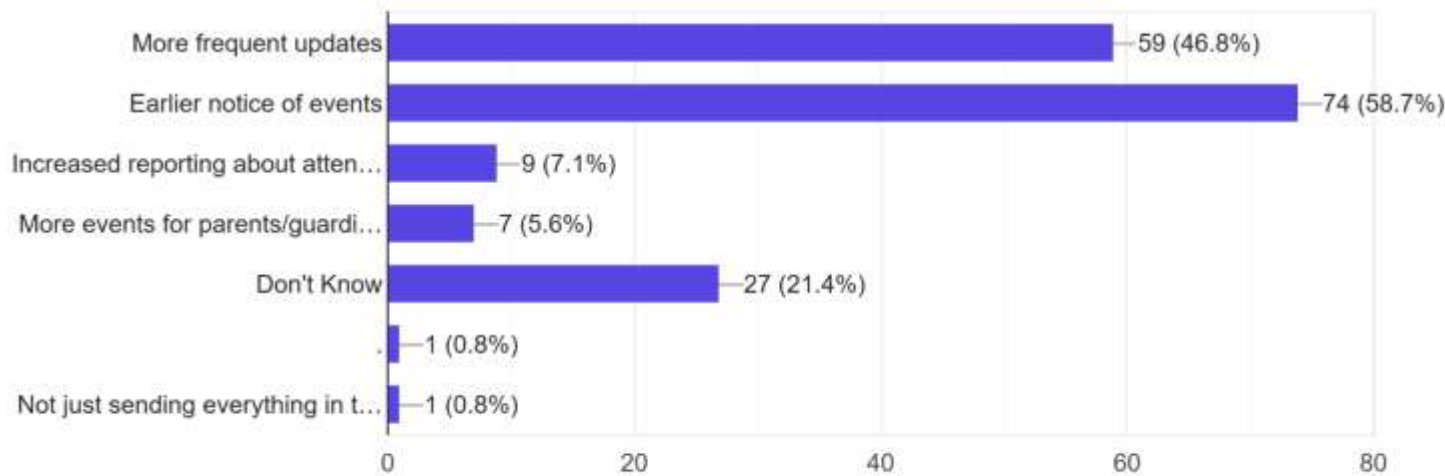
13. How effective is communication to and from the school and students?

126 responses



14. What would improve communication with students? (You may select more than one option)

126 responses



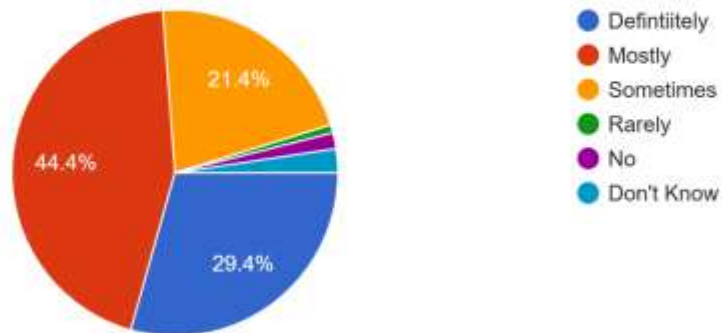
16. Please include any comments on communication in the space below.

- 📌 **Improve communication about homework** – Students reported that homework is sometimes assigned but not uploaded to Google Classroom, causing confusion.
- 📌 **Provide weekly school updates** – Many students would like a **weekly Monday announcement** outlining key events, activities, and reminders for the week.
- 📌 **Give more advance notice of events** – Students requested earlier communication about charity events, bake sales, trips, and other school activities.
- 📌 **Improve use of the school app** – Students suggested allowing them direct access to the school app so they can receive timely updates and reminders.
- 📌 **Reduce the number of emails** – Some students feel they receive too many emails, many of which are not relevant to them, making important information harder to find.

- 🔍 **Improve organisation of school communications** – Students would like announcements and event information to be more organised and communicated earlier.
- 🔍 **Check in with students academically** – One suggestion was for the school to regularly ensure students are coping well with particular subjects and provide support where needed.
- 🔍 **Overall communication is generally good** – While several improvements were suggested, many students felt communication is effective overall and does not require major changes.

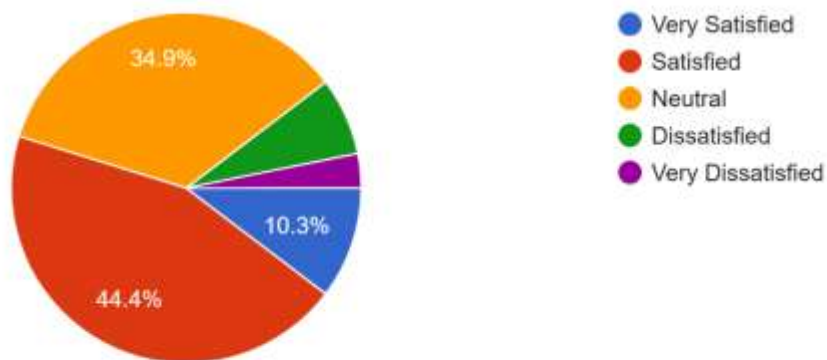
17. Do you feel safe, supported and included in the school?

126 responses



18. Are you satisfied with how the school promotes student wellbeing?

126 responses



19. Please include any comments on student wellbeing in the space below.

☐ **Increase wellbeing provision for senior students** – Many students want a dedicated weekly wellbeing or study period for **5th and 6th Years**, as they feel their timetables leave little time for wellbeing.

☐ **More focus on mental health** – Students believe the school should place greater emphasis on supporting student mental health, particularly during the senior cycle.

☐ **Wellbeing should be ongoing** – Students noted that wellbeing is mainly taught in **1st Year** and would like it to continue throughout all year groups.

☐ **Provide practical wellbeing activities** – Students suggested more meaningful wellbeing initiatives, such as walks, relaxation activities, and practical strategies, rather than presentations or slideshows.

☐ **Offer more mental health education** – Students would like more classes that teach coping skills, resilience, stress management, and ways to improve personal wellbeing.

☐ **SPHE is positively viewed** – Students appreciate SPHE as a relaxed, discussion-based class that supports wellbeing.

🔍 **Study support could enhance wellbeing** – Several students suggested replacing one Religion class each week in senior cycle with supervised study or homework time to help reduce stress.

20. What should the school's top three priorities for 2026/27 be?

🔍 **Prioritise student wellbeing and mental health** – The most common request was for a stronger focus on student wellbeing through wellbeing classes, stress reduction, fun activities, safe spaces, and balancing academic pressure with mental health.

🔍 **Improve school facilities**– Students consistently called for better toilet maintenance, more seating at lunch and upgraded classrooms (e.g. Home Economics and computers)

🔍 **Provide more academic and study support** – Students want greater support with study skills, learning support, exam preparation, project work (especially Leaving Certificate AACs), and help for students who are struggling academically.

🔍 **Increase student support and inclusion** – Students emphasised ensuring every student feels supported, including those with additional educational needs, disabilities, autism, or those who may be struggling but do not always ask for help.

🔍 **Improve communication and listen to student voice** – Students want the school to listen more to their opinions, communicate events earlier, and provide more opportunities for students to share ideas and influence school decisions.

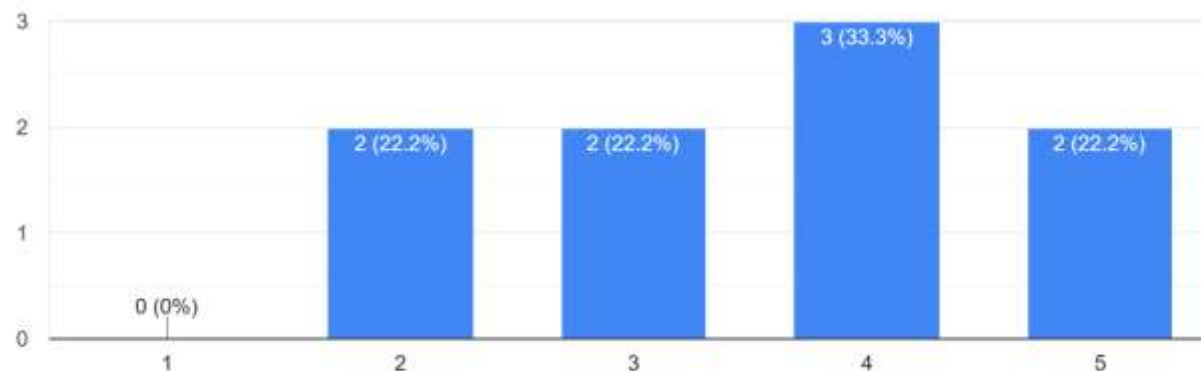
🔍 **Expand opportunities and extracurricular activities** – Students would like a wider range of clubs, sports teams, competitions, outdoor learning, educational trips, fundraising events, and creative opportunities.

🔍 **Enhance teaching and learning experiences** – Suggestions included more engaging and interactive teaching methods, greater teacher enthusiasm, fewer missed classes, a better spread of assessments, and more exam-focused preparation where appropriate.

Appendix 2- Staff Survey Responses (May 2026)

1. Does the school's strategic plan impact your work.

9 responses

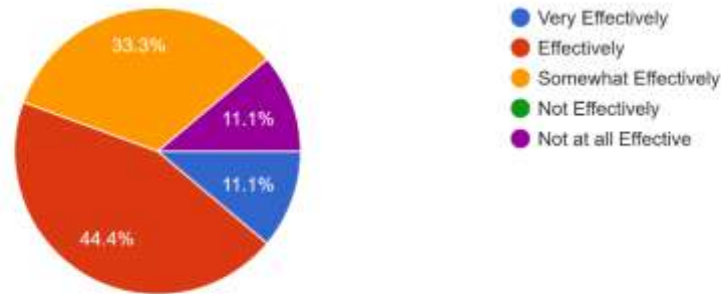


2. Please indicate why you chose this response to the previous question

- It's positive to have a written plan that can be referred to and not just unofficial or ad hoc arrangements.
- As teachers we need a structure and plan to follow and to implement. We also need to reflect on what is working in our school and change what is not.
- As a new member of staff this year, my main focus has been to fully assimilate into the ethos and culture of the school, while learning from and collaborating with experienced and established colleagues.
- My classroom teaching aligns with curriculum needs
- When I am planning schemes / lessons, I have some of the targets of the SSP in mind.
- Transition year program statement and tranche 1 subjects as targets have changed my teaching practices slightly
- More likely to be motivated as part of an evolving, responsive entity that has clear goals and targets
- yes for overall effectiveness of teaching and learning standards

3. How well do you feel active learning methodologies are being integrated into your subject area?

9 responses



4. Please add additional information regarding active learning methodologies if you wish.

- I have definitely used many more active leaning methodologies compared to previous years.
- I would like to include more active learning methodologies into my theory classes.
- Feel they have been shown to be valuable and all stakeholders have been made aware of their positive impacts
- Can be too easy to resort to the tried and trusted when pace of school life quickens
- As a department we have implemented new strategies in turn we have shared resources and strategies which we felt worked well therefore reducing workload, and effectively using active methodologies in classes and also have a bank of resources and strategies for the department as a whole

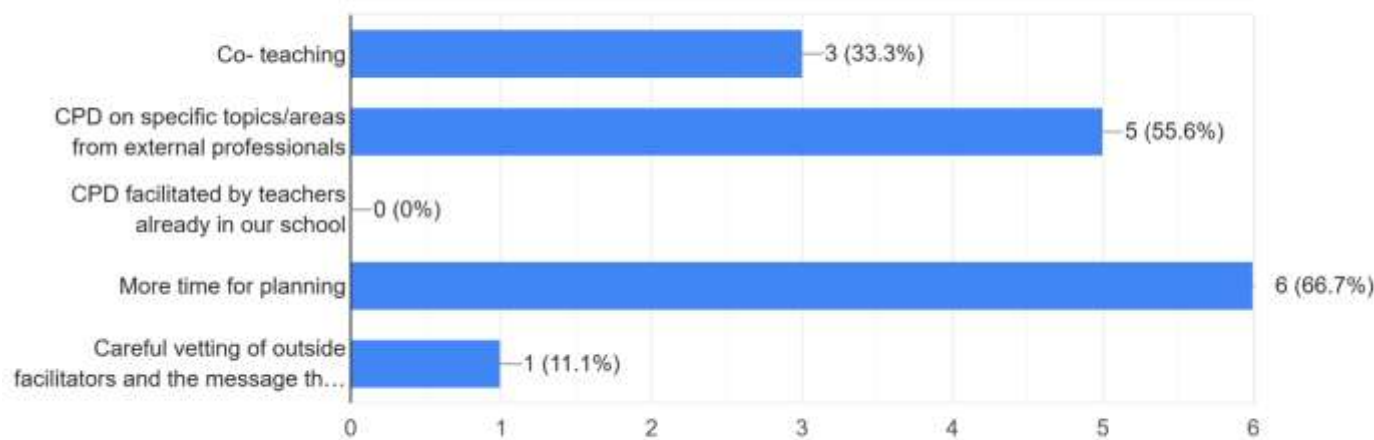
5. What challenges, if any, exist with the integration of oral communication skills in your subject area?

- Finding a way to make it part of the assessment process.
- Students feel nervous speaking in front of their peers, especially Junior Cycle students.

- There is a noticeable lack of confidence among students, with many displaying self-consciousness when speaking or presenting. In addition, there are limited opportunities for students to engage in debating, both within the school and in competitive settings with other schools, which restricts their development of communication and critical thinking skills.
- My subject provides ample opportunities
- Ensuring that it includes challenging tasks for all students as there is a huge variety in confidence levels in students.
- Few challenges as oral communication fits in well with subject area and there has always been oral elements
- Mainly student personal preference, oral communication is usually very effective in RE & Irish due to the group work, oral aspect and presentation component from CBA

6. What additional AEN/inclusion supports would assist students in your classes?

9 responses



7. What, if any, are the concerns you have for your subject area(s) over the next twelve months?

- Delighted to be launching 5th year Politics. Not concerned, just aware of the beaurocratic work of setting up the departmental documentation.

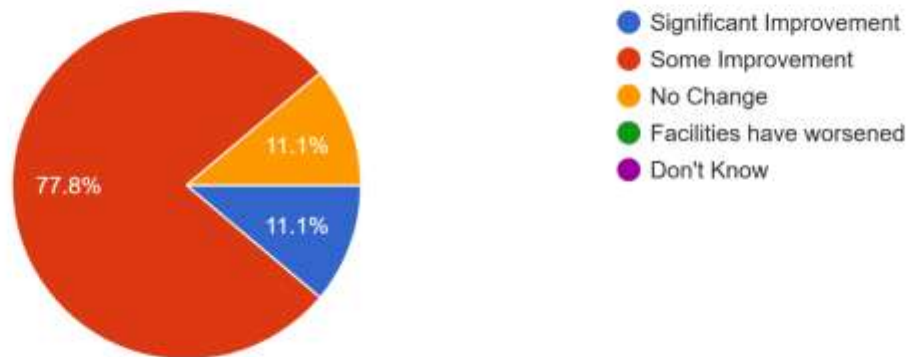
- There is a new literature course in Irish which the present 5th years are completing. The stories and poems are a little bit abstract/ difficult to grasp for teenagers.
- The integration of SPHE into the LC TT and the impact this may have on RE senior cycle classes.
- Senior cycle reform
- Projects for new leaving cert. Difficult to allocate time to it with limited access to technology and computers which are an essential resource in completing the projects.
- Decline in student's ability to recognise, use and create through language - impact of social media on traditional writing skills.

8. Please include any comments in relation to the curriculum below.

No responses yet for this question.

9. Have you noticed improvements to school facilities this year?

9 responses

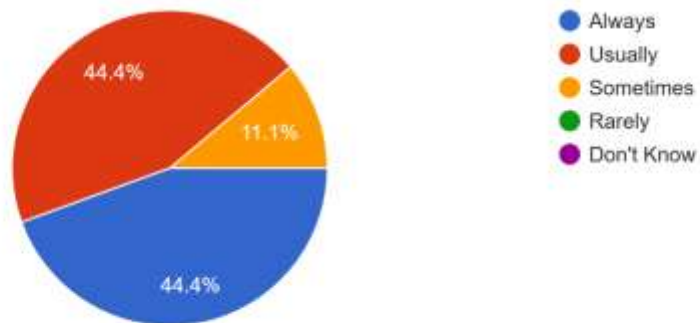


10. Please include any comments you wish to provide on facilities in the space below.

- I would like to see more student voices in the design/decoration of the building. More colour would be welcome.
- Some of the classrooms would benefit from redecoration, including fresh paint, as well as a more thorough deep clean of floors, desks, and other surfaces to improve the overall learning environment.
- Obvious investment in school facilities and appearance
- Obviously, lot of modernisation needed but definitely some signs that things are moving in terms of library space and significant plans for other areas.

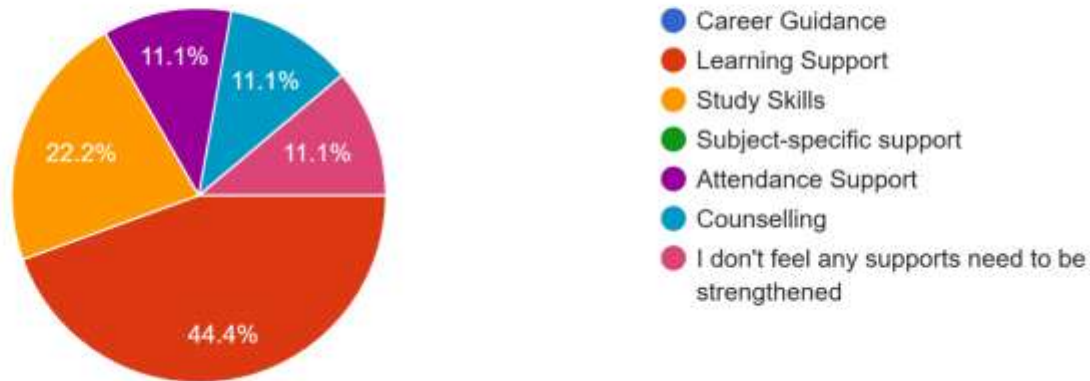
11. In your opinion, do students have access to the supports they needs, such as academic supports, wellbeing supports and/or guidance supports?

9 responses



12. What supports would you like to see strengthened?

9 responses



13. Please include any comments on school supports in the space below.

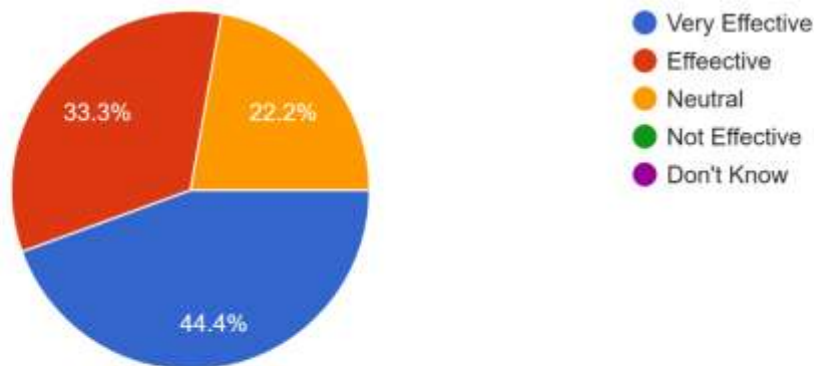
- It would be great to have fidget/focus toys available in all classrooms where it is safe to do so. I provide them in my room for all students so no one feels singled out if they use them.
- Students would benefit from being explicitly taught effective study skills, using a more hands-on, interactive approach rather than traditional lecturing. This would allow students to actively explore and identify the study techniques that work best for them, supporting greater independence and improved learning outcomes.
- Good organisation and strength in this area. Students are very well supported overall and I feel they are given every opportunity to be provided for support if they need it.
- Lot positive evidence that students are cared for and guided.

14. Please include any comments on extra-curricular activities in the space below.

- It's great to see how much the girls take part in sports. The widening of extra - curricular activities is fantastic to see.
- As mentioned above, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on public speaking and debating across the school. Developing these skills would not only build students' confidence and communication abilities, but would also have a positive impact on their academic achievement by enhancing their critical thinking, reasoning, and ability to structure and express ideas clearly.
- Extra-curricular is beneficial to all but some students are missing many areas
- Burden on small number of teachers. Need more involved if teams and activities are going to continue to thrive.
- Small team of committed teachers well supported by management. Always areas where students/parents feel there could be more provided.

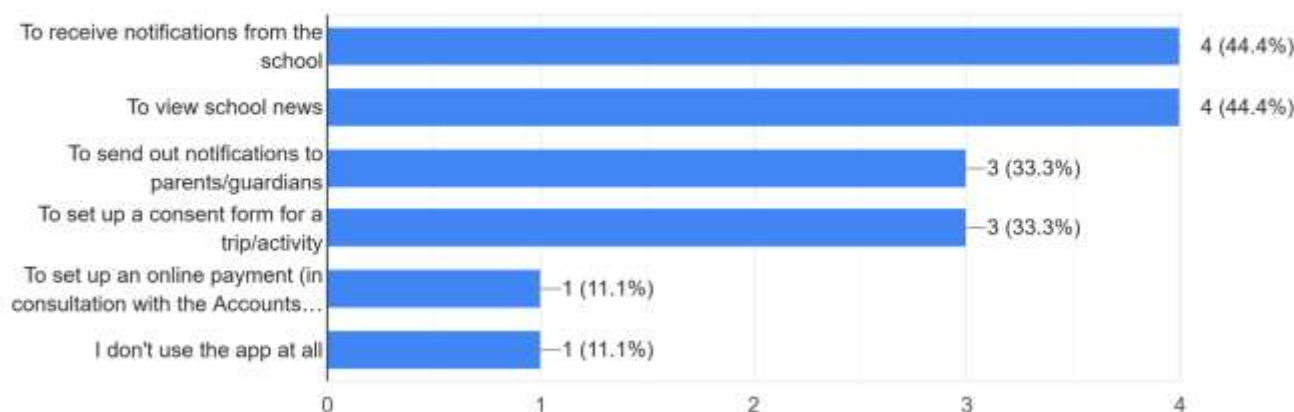
15. How effective is the school app for communication to and from the school

9 responses



16. What do you use the app for? (You may select more than one option)

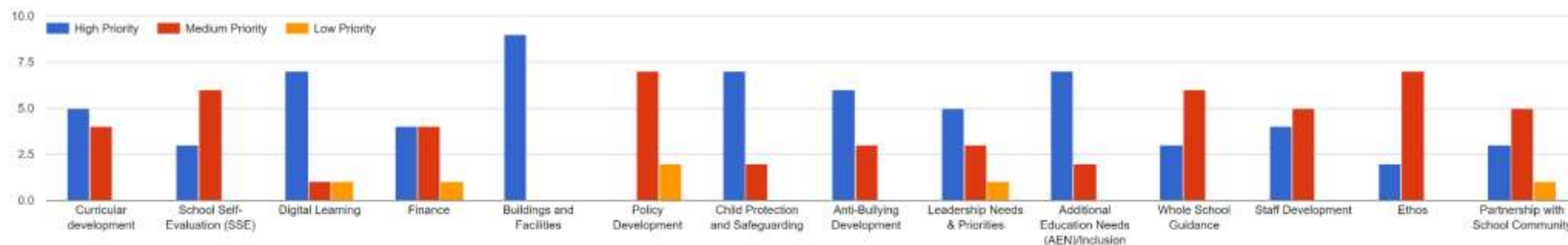
9 responses



18. Please include any comments on student wellbeing in the space below.

- The school has a strong focus on student wellbeing.
- I would welcome the development of more student-led wellbeing initiatives within the school, as I believe these play a key role in promoting a positive, inclusive, and supportive school culture. Giving students ownership of wellbeing activities can empower them to support one another and take greater responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing. I would also like to see increased and more consistent recognition of student achievement across the school. This could include regular acknowledgements over the intercom on a weekly basis, as well as the introduction of a "Wall of Fame" displayed in a prominent area of the school to celebrate student successes in a visible and meaningful way. In addition, more frequent assemblies focused on recognising and celebrating student achievements would further enhance a culture of positivity and encouragement. These initiatives would help to ensure that students feel valued, motivated, and proud of their contributions to school life.
- Supports for student wellbeing good. Would love to see more wellbeing whole school initiatives like the wellbeing week we used to have.

19. Please indicate the level of priority that should be allocated to each area of the strategic plan in Year 2 (2026/27).



20. Please include any additional feedback regarding strategic priorities in the space below. E.g. Are there other areas that should be included in the strategic plan going forward.

- Staff wellbeing and mentorship of new staff members.

21. What CPD opportunities would you like to see prioritised for the whole staff group in 2026/27

- If another whole school inspection were to occur some CPD in how to prepare for it would be great. We have a lot of staff who were not here for the last one.
- Wellbeing for staff.
- I would like to see CPD prioritised in the area of student wellbeing and mental health, including practical strategies for supporting students with anxiety, low confidence, and emotional regulation. This would further enhance our capacity as a staff to respond effectively to the evolving needs of

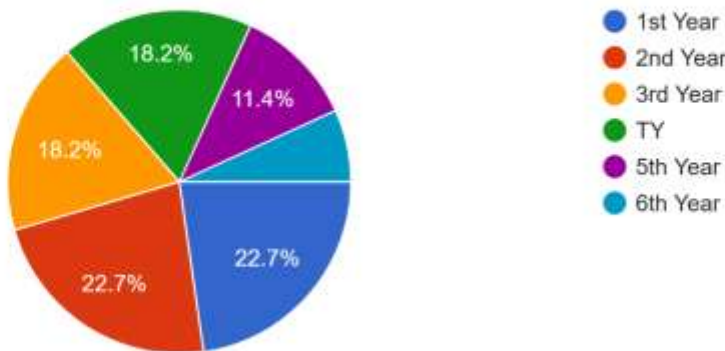
students. Given the importance of communication skills across all subjects, I would also welcome CPD opportunities in public speaking, debating, and oracy development, which would support both academic achievement and student confidence.

- Neurodiversity, Technology
- SE AND INCLUSION & DIGITAL LEARNING

Appendix 3- Parent/Guardian Survey Responses (May 2026)

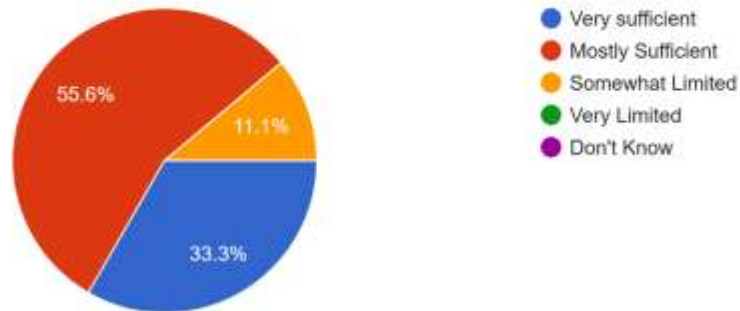
1. Please indicate the year group that your child is in?

44 responses



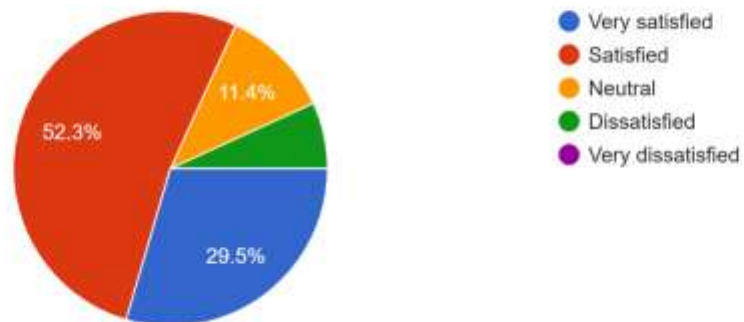
2. Has your daughter had sufficient opportunity to explore different subjects this year? (1st Year and TY only)

18 responses



3. Are you satisfied with the range of subjects available to your daughter?

44 responses

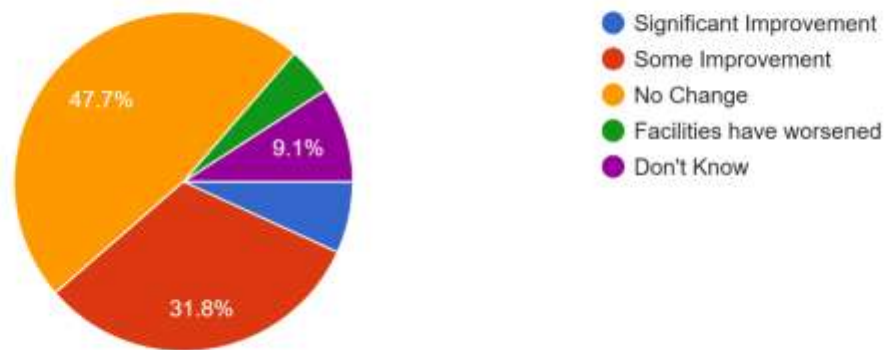


4. Please include any comments in relation to the curriculum below.

- I would like Economics to be available for senior cycle
- Woodwork
- None
- Couldn't do accountancy as clashed with DCG Spanish would be a great option to learn
- The subjects my daughter does are satisfactory and she enjoys them but a lot of subjects like Physics or Economics or Accounting did not run for her year. Availability of teachers might be an issue
- While it eventually worked out, offering either french or music was sub optimal. The range of options is narrow and feels more driven by the school rather than the student needs
- Language options could be looked at
- Would have liked the option of accounting

5. Have you noticed improvements to school facilities this year?

44 responses

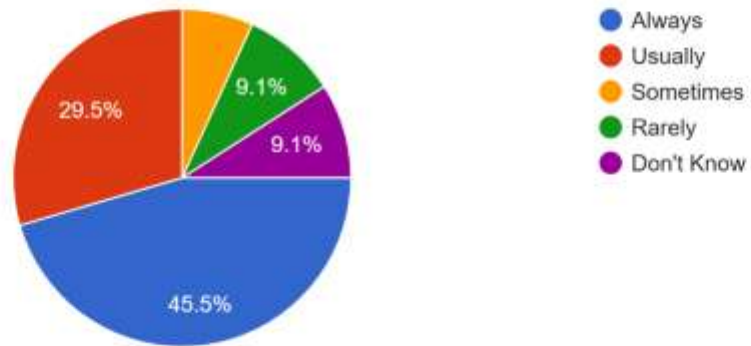


6. Please include any comments on facilities in the space below.

- School is old.
- There has been a big improvement in the school in the last few years.
- Home economics/science facilities could be updated
- The app is a big help with communication, information and notifications
- School App very much user friendly
- No visible investment in school science labs, art rooms home economics rooms. Canteen very poor. No signs of Sport facilities invested in past year
- Thank you for introducing online payment, for staying in touch with parents online eg reminder of bus registration for next school year.
- Canteen has improved
- PT meetings in the Hall work better

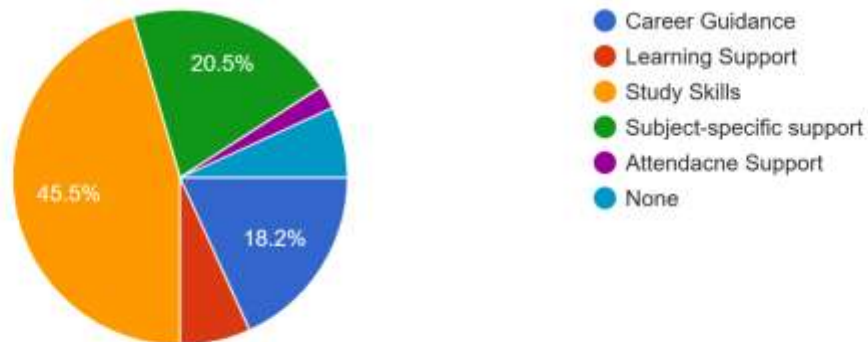
7. Does your daughter have access to the supports she needs, such as academic supports, wellbeing supports and/or guidance supports?

44 responses



8. What supports would you like to see strengthened?

44 responses

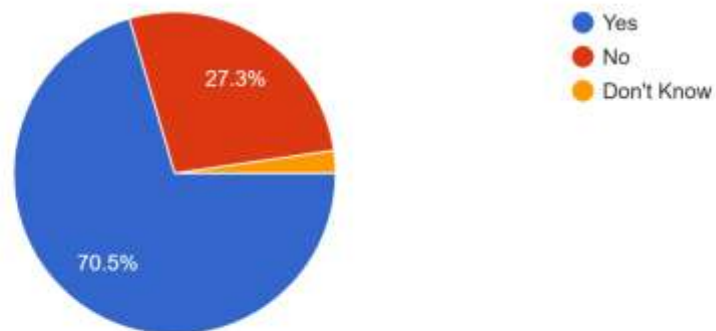


9. Please include any comments on school supports in the space below.

- None
- Career Guidance is a very important part of choosing what is next for Senior cycle students
- More career guidance , learning support, study skills and subject specific support is needed
- I would like to see maybe more visits to college/university open days, or maybe more professionals coming in and giving talks on what is involved with their career and what courses would be suitable to go for.
- There should be no phones allowed in After School Study it's ridiculous-phone policy should be strictly no phones in school-Students need this.

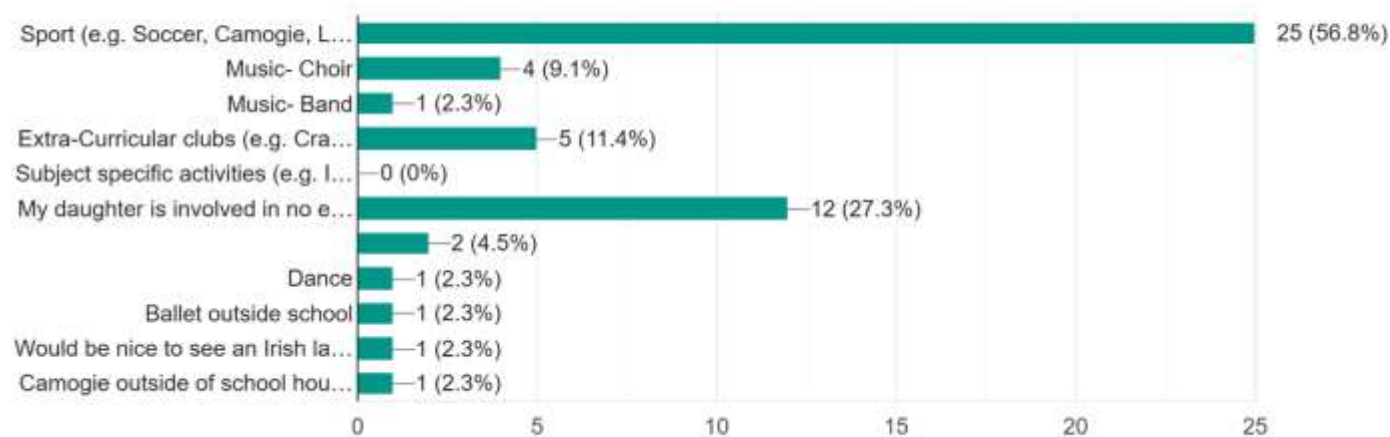
10. Is your daughter engaged in extra-curricular opportunities?

44 responses



11. What extra-curricular activities is your daughter engaged with? (You may select multiple options).

44 responses

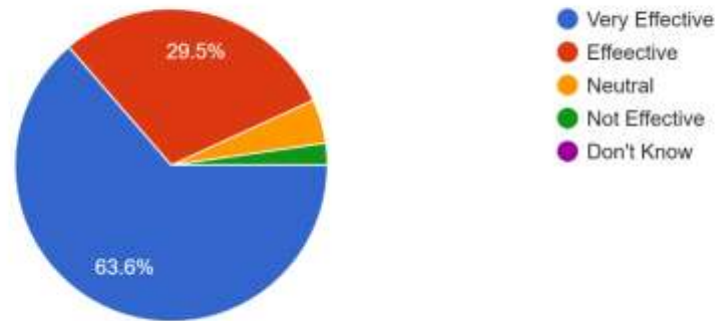


12. Please include any comments on extra-curricular activities in the space below.

- None
- Piano, dance
- Volleyball would be great in school
- She enjoyed this club as an informal way to prepare for her oral
- Film club
- She would like to be involved but is nervous of volunteering. It would be great if there was some peer support system in place to encourage the girls who are shy or more timid, to support them to get involved. It always seems to be the same people involved in doing things ... that is nothing against these girls, it is great to see but there are a whole raft of other girls who are too self-conscious or timid to put themselves forward and yet, really need it! Also, other sports please!!! Hockey for example. Loads of girls in the school are involved in the local club. It is nice for all girls to have a chance to represent their school.
- Only available to girls on good teams. No support to unknown names to offer camogie soccer. No swimming tennis supported.

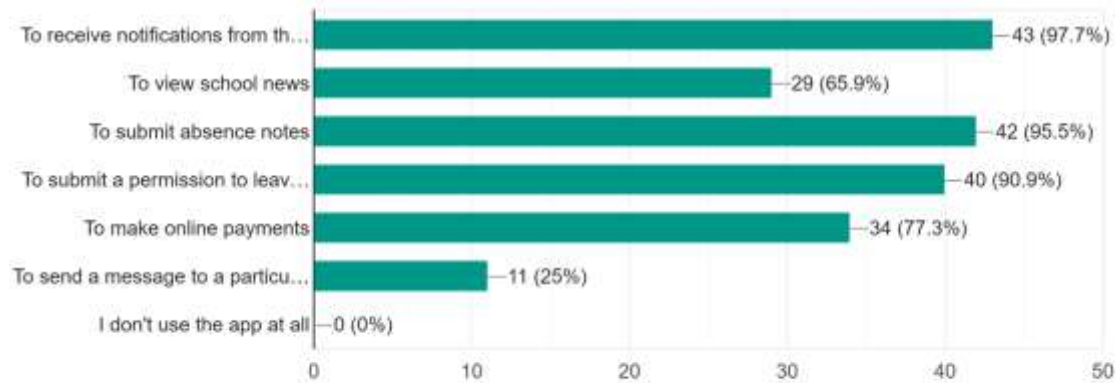
13. How effective is the school app for communication to and from the school

44 responses



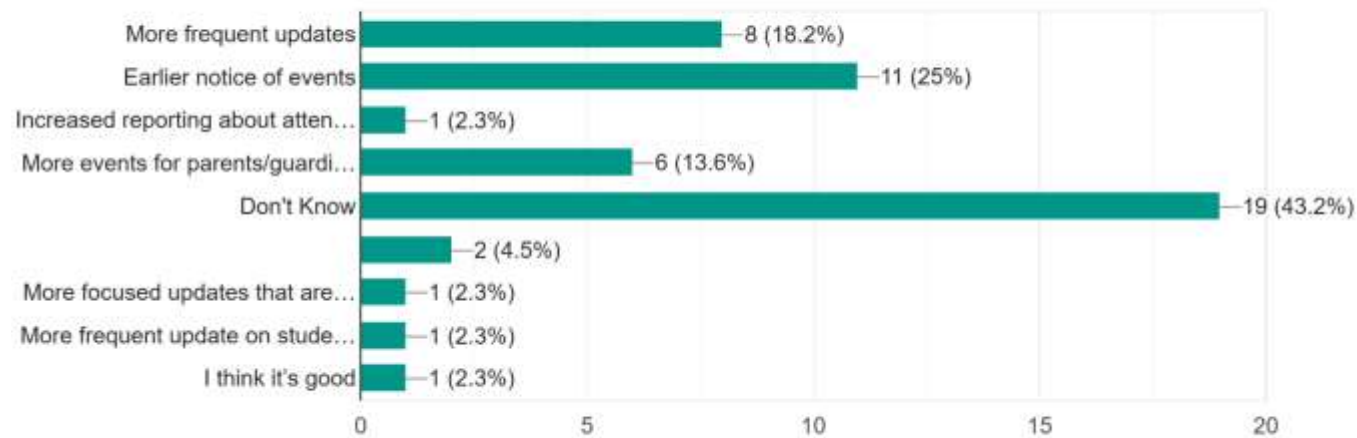
14. What do you use the app for? (You may select more than one option)

44 responses



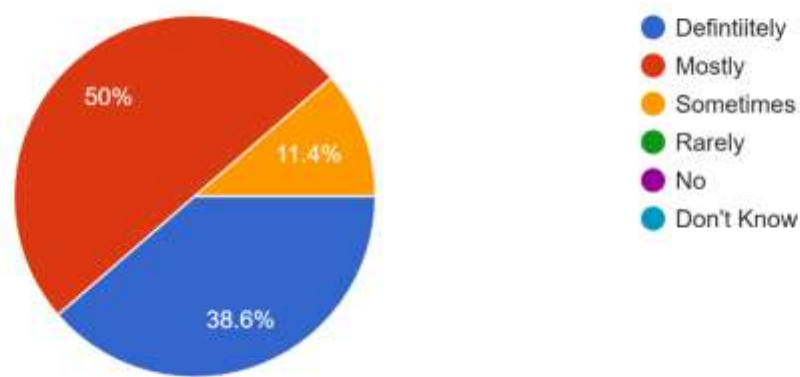
15. What would improve school-parent communication? (You may select more than one option)

44 responses



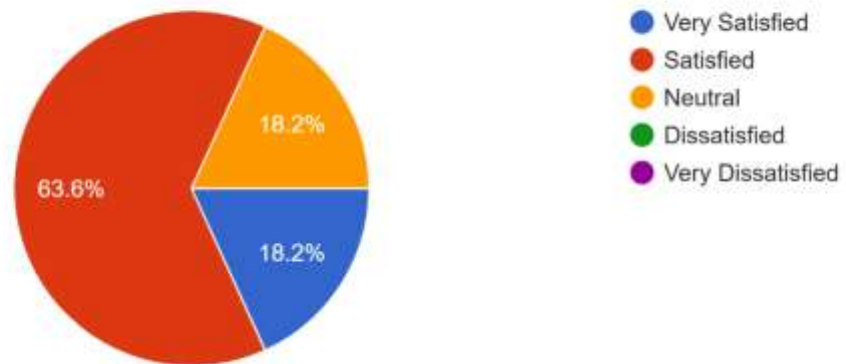
17. Does your daughter feel safe, supported and included in the school?

44 responses



18. Are you satisfied with how the school promotes student wellbeing?

44 responses



19. Please include any comments on student wellbeing in the space below.

- None
- My daughter feels supported from a number of teachers.

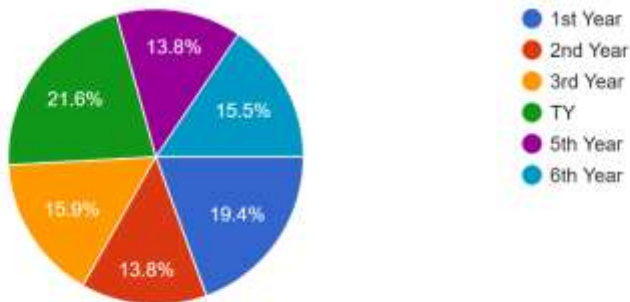
Appendix 4- Student Survey Responses (November 2024)

- 283 responses

Curriculum

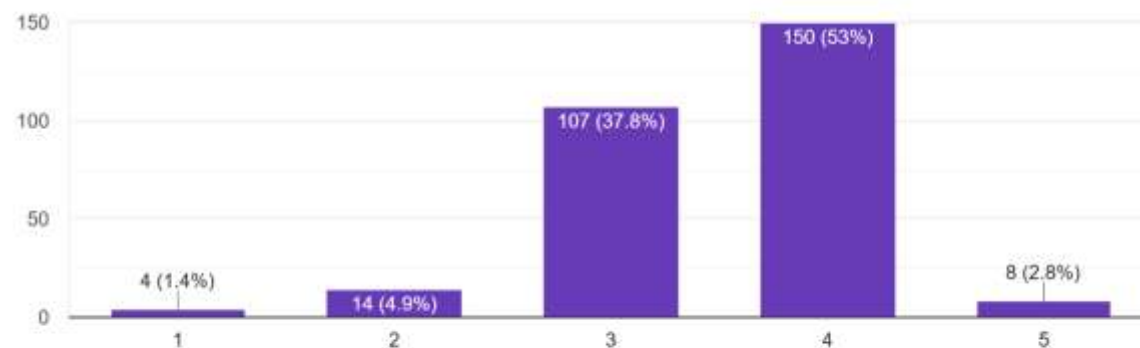
1. Please indicate the Year Group that you are currently in:

283 responses



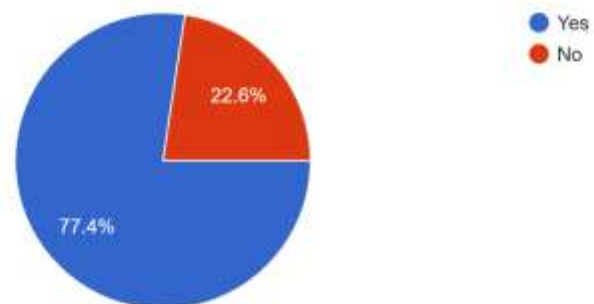
2. Please indicate how effective you believe the school curriculum is in St. Mary's.

283 responses



3. Do you think that you have a good range of subject options available to you?

283 responses



4. Please comment on why you chose yes or no for the previous question.

- **Wide Range of Subjects in First Year:** Students are exposed to around 19 subjects in first year, helping them explore different options before making decisions for future years.
- **Benefits of Trying Multiple Subjects:** The opportunity to try various subjects is valued as it allows students to discover their strengths and interests.
- **Concerns About Subject Overload:** Some students feel overwhelmed by the number of subjects and suggest reducing the trial period to ease pressure.
- **Demand for Practical and Diverse Subjects:** Students seek additional practical options like woodwork, metalwork, engineering, and coding, which are not always available.
- **Limited Language Options:** Although French, German, and Irish are offered, there is a desire for more language choices like Spanish and Italian.
- **Subject Availability Based on Demand:** Subjects like physics and economics may not run due to low student demand, leaving some students disappointed if these subjects are critical to their career goals.
- **Broad Range of Interests Catered:** The school offers subjects across various fields (academic, practical, and creative), but students want to challenge stereotypes, particularly with traditionally male subjects.
- **Positive Feedback on Trial Approach:** The chance to explore subjects in first and Transition Year is seen as valuable for personal growth and career exploration.
- **Desire for More Practical Subjects:** Students want more hands-on subjects like woodwork, metalwork, and coding, believing these are crucial for certain careers.
- **Suggestions for Curriculum Improvement:** Recommendations include reducing compulsory subjects, adding more practical and language options, and introducing study skills classes for better exam preparation.

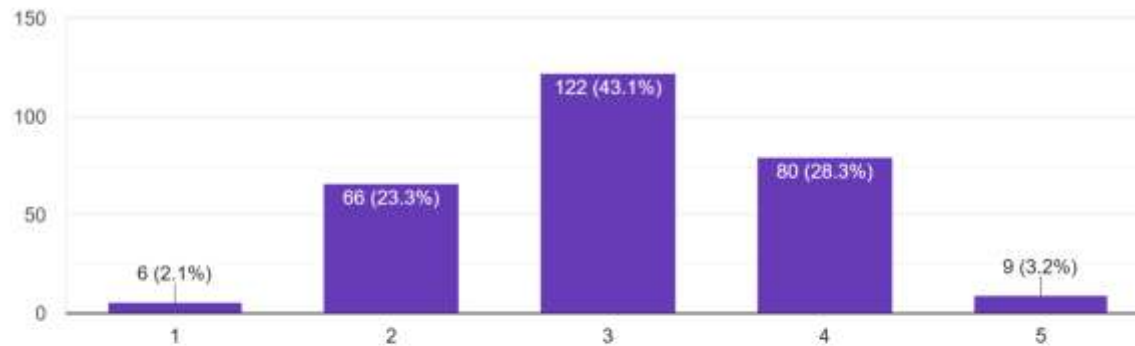
5. Please add any additional comments regarding the curriculum in St. Mary's?

- **Taster Program Duration:** Students feel the subject taster period is too long and should end after Christmas, so they don't have to take exams in subjects they won't continue.
- **Subject Variety:** St. Mary's offers a good range of subjects, including both academic and practical ones like technology and home economics, which students appreciate.
- **Desire for More Practical Subjects:** Many students express interest in more hands-on subjects like woodwork, metalwork, and extra technology courses.
- **Homework Concerns:** Students feel that homework is excessive and often unnecessary, as they already revise in class and after school activities like sports take up time.
- **School Facilities:** Complaints about cramped spaces, particularly the canteen and lockers, and inadequate bathroom cleanliness are raised.
- **Subject Availability:** Certain subjects like physics, politics, and economics were not available when students wanted to take them, which is seen as unfair, especially when classes are cut due to low demand.
- **Pressure and Stress:** Students feel stressed by the amount of work and homework, especially when balancing it with extracurricular activities like sports.
- **Curriculum Suggestions:** There is a call for more language options (e.g., Spanish), more interactive learning, and flexibility in subject choices, particularly in the Leaving Cert, where students want the option to take more subjects.
- **Cultural and Learning Differences:** Some students feel that the curriculum doesn't accommodate all learning styles and suggest that the school should offer practical life skills education, such as understanding taxes and mortgages.

Facilities

1. How would you rate the school's facilities?

283 responses



2. Please comment on the reason for your answer to the previous question

- **General Facilities:** The school provides a wide range of facilities such as a PE hall, gym, canteen, science labs, computer rooms, and home economics rooms, which are largely appreciated but require better maintenance.
- **Bathroom Cleanliness and Facilities:** Bathrooms are identified as areas that could do with some improvement, including providing sanitary products for students.
- **Canteen and Eating Areas:** The canteen is too small to accommodate all students, with limited seating and alternative eating spaces. Issues like food delivery problems and overcrowding are common.
- **Sports Facilities:** The PE hall and gym are well-regarded, but outdoor sports areas like the pitch and camogie field are poorly maintained, unsafe, and lack essential equipment such as nets.
- **Technology and Equipment:** Computers, projectors, and other classroom technology are outdated and insufficient, limiting subjects like Computer Science and modern teaching practices.

- **Old and Outdated Facilities:** Key areas such as science labs, home economics rooms, and some classrooms are outdated, worn out, and in need of renovations to meet modern standards.
- **Overcrowding and Space Issues:** Narrow corridors, insufficient classrooms, and overcrowded communal spaces like the canteen hinder daily activities and create logistical challenges.
- **Cleanliness and Maintenance:** Beyond bathrooms, classrooms, corridors, and communal areas are noted for being dusty, messy, and poorly maintained, reflecting a lack of thorough cleaning and upkeep.
- **Heating and Comfort:** Many parts of the school, including classrooms, are often cold due to malfunctioning radiators, making the environment uncomfortable for students.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Students propose better maintenance of sports and classroom facilities, providing sanitary products in bathrooms, addressing overcrowding issues, and offering more accessible food, water, and improved heating systems.

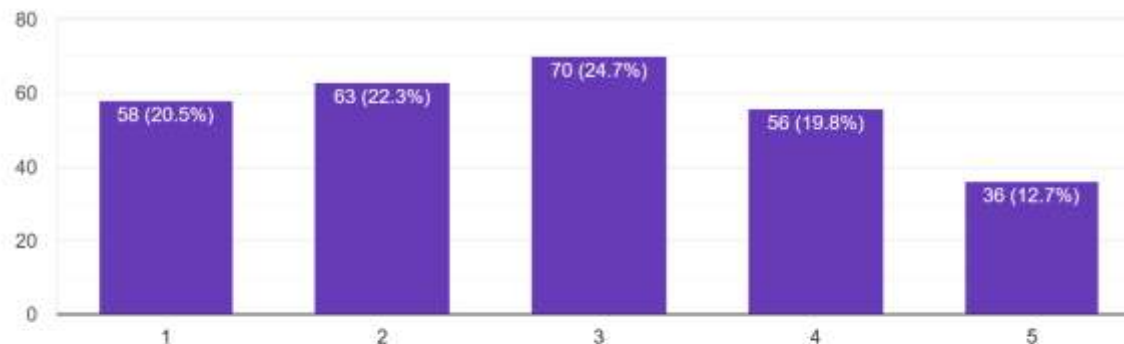
3. What aspect(s) of the school's facilities, if any, do you feel require improvement?

- **Canteen Space and Food Access:** The canteen is too small to accommodate all students, with inadequate seating and limited space. The online ordering system is criticized for being impractical, especially for students who forget their lunch.
- **School Pitch and Sports Facilities:** The sports pitch is in poor condition, with holes, long grass, and broken or missing nets. PE equipment is outdated and underutilised.
- **Overcrowded Hallways and Locker Areas:** Narrow hallways and cramped locker spaces cause delays and congestion, impacting students' ability to move efficiently between classes.
- **Heating and Comfort:** Many classrooms and parts of the school are cold, especially during winter, as the heating system is insufficient or unevenly distributed.
- **Outdated Classrooms and Equipment:** Several classrooms, including science labs and home economics rooms, require renovation. Old and uncomfortable furniture, such as chairs without back support, adds to student discomfort.

- **Library and Study Spaces:** The library is underutilised and lacks resources. There is a need for designated study and relaxation areas, particularly for senior students during lunch and free periods.
- **Technology and Learning Resources:** Computers and other technological equipment, such as projectors, are outdated or slow, affecting classroom productivity. There is also demand for more accessible tech resources like iPads.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Common recommendations include expanding the canteen, improving the pitch and bathrooms, adding sanitary products, upgrading heating systems, and providing separate spaces for year groups to alleviate overcrowding.

4. How effective is The Food Village service?

283 responses



5. Please add any other comments that you feel are relevant to the facilities of the school.

- **Food Service Challenges:**

- Many students find the "Food Village" service inconvenient due to the need to pre-order food days in advance. This makes it difficult for those who forget to order or change their minds about what they want to eat.

- **Preference for the Old Canteen:**

- A majority of students express a preference for the old canteen system, where food could be bought on the spot without pre-ordering, making it more accessible and practical.

- **Accessibility and Equity Issues:**

- The reliance on online ordering excludes students without phones, cards, or knowledge of how to use the app. Those who forget their lunch are left without options, particularly younger students ("blue jumpers") who cannot leave campus.

- **Quality and Cost of Food:**

- While the food quality in the Food Village is praised by some, others complain about inconsistencies (e.g., soggy or undercooked food) and high prices, making it less appealing.

- **Seating and Space Constraints:**

- The canteen and locker areas are often overcrowded, leading to difficulties in finding seats or accessing lockers, especially during peak times like lunch or dismissal.

- **Hygiene Concerns:**

- Students are dissatisfied with the cleanliness of school facilities, particularly bathrooms, which they believe require more attention and additional cleaning staff.

- **Temperature Control:**

- There are complaints about the school being too cold in winter, with suggestions to improve heating in the building.

- **Library and Resource Facilities:**

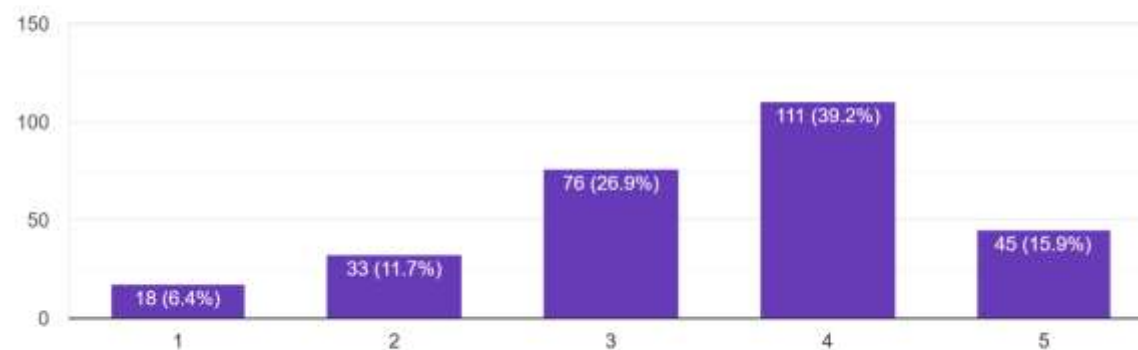
- Students suggest setting up a library with books to borrow and improving access to designated resource classrooms for more effective learning.

- **Desire for Extracurricular Variety:**

- Requests for additional non-sport clubs, such as LEGO, book, and games clubs, highlight the need for more diverse extracurricular activities.
- **Instant Purchase Limitations:**
 - Although the Food Village offers instant purchase options, the selection is limited to snacks rather than proper meals, frustrating those who need a meal on short notice.

1. How do you rate the supports that are available in St. Mary's Secondary School for students? (e.g. Guidance Support, Additional Education Needs Support, Support from staff)

283 responses



2. Please comment on the reason for your choice in the previous question.

- **Support Availability:** There is a lot of support available at the school for students who need help, whether it's from staff, teachers, or peers.
- **Staff Helpfulness:** Most teachers and staff members are described as helpful, kind, and willing to offer support whenever needed.
- **Resource Classes:** There are resource classes and additional support for students with special educational needs, though some students feel these could be more structured and beneficial.
- **SNA Support:** Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are mentioned as being particularly helpful for students with disabilities or learning difficulties.
- **Mental Health and Guidance Support:** Some students feel that there is insufficient guidance and mental health support, with guidance counsellors being difficult to approach or not well-promoted.
- **Access to Help:** While support is generally available, some students are unsure about where to go or whom to approach for specific types of assistance.
- **Lack of Clarity:** Students express confusion about the school's support services, such as guidance counselling and mental health resources, and feel that these services are not always clearly communicated.
- **Room for Improvement:** While the overall sentiment is positive, several students suggest that there is room for improvement, particularly in mental health support, and the accessibility of guidance counsellors.

3. What additional supports, if any, do you feel that the school needs to provide?

- **School Nurse/First Aid:** There is a need for a school nurse or first aid room.

- **Mental Health Support:** More mental health support is needed, including a school counsellor, therapy sessions, and mental health days for students to manage stress and anxiety.
- **Support for Special Needs:** More resources and support for students with special needs, such as neurodivergent students and those needing additional learning help (e.g., dyslexia).
- **Guidance and Career Support:** Increased guidance counselling, particularly for career advice and mental health check-ins, should be available to all students, especially during exam times.
- **Sanitary Products:** Students believe sanitary products should be provided for girls in school bathrooms.
- **Well-being Classes:** A weekly well-being class should be implemented for all students to help reduce stress and support mental health.
- **Accessible Resources:** More resources for students with learning difficulties, including after-school classes, extra help with subjects, and a better special needs program.
- **Student Privacy and Suggestions:** An anonymous suggestion box could allow students to voice concerns or issues without fear of judgment.
- **Improved Facilities:** There is a need for better seating in the canteen, improved accessibility in the school, and better sports equipment (e.g., new goals for the camogie pitch).

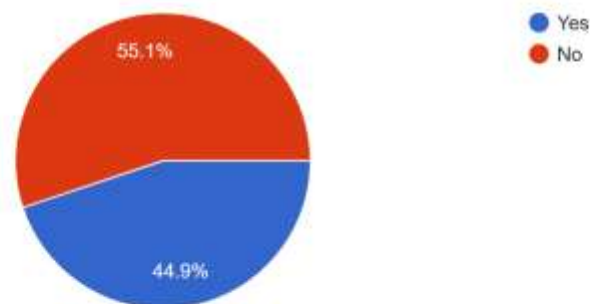
4. Please add any additional comments that you wish to make regarding student supports.

- **Positive Support:** Overall, students appreciate the help and support provided at the school, with many describing the environment as kind and helpful.
- **Elevator Access:** There is a need for elevators on all floors of the school to accommodate students with mobility issues.
- **Guidance Counselling:** Every student should have the opportunity to speak with a guidance counsellor, and mental health and well-being should be prioritized.
- **Homework Load:** Students feel that the amount of homework and studying is overwhelming and takes up much of their short evenings.

- **Teacher Support:** More teachers are needed to help students who struggle with certain subjects, and resource support should be better communicated from the start of the year.
- **Teacher Understanding:** Students want teachers to be more patient, understanding, and respectful, especially regarding classroom behaviour and support for learning disabilities.
- **Mental Health Focus:** Mental health struggles due to pressures from exams, homework, and other life stressors need more attention, and students feel their well-being is often overlooked in favour of academic performance.
- **Teacher Role Models:** Students value teachers who show genuine care and support, creating a safe and positive environment that encourages effort and dedication.
- **Mental Health Days:** There is a strong belief that mental health days would be beneficial for students to help them cope with academic and personal pressures.
- **Facilities and Resources:** Improvements are needed in school facilities, such as proper soccer goals for training and matches, and a better overall focus on student well-being rather than just academic work.

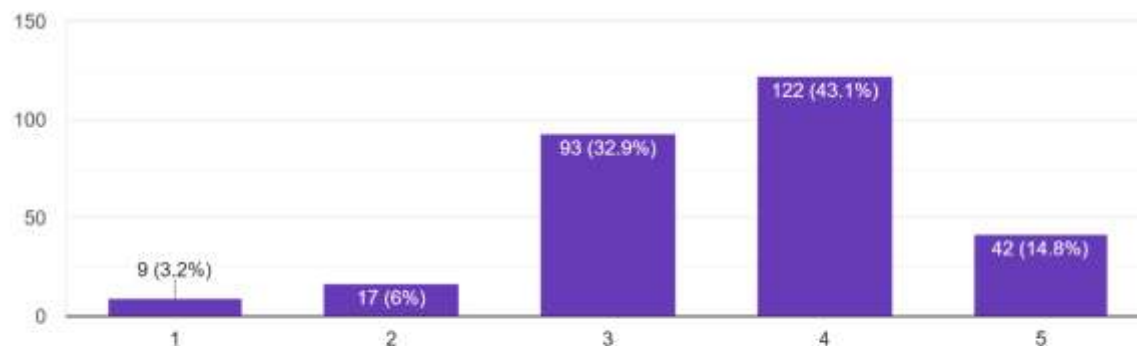
1. Are you involved in facilitating any part of the school's extra-curricular programme?

283 responses



2. How effective do you think the school's extra-curricular programme is?

283 responses



3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see to the school's extra-curricular programme?

- **More Diverse Activities:** There is a call for more non-sport extracurricular options, such as music, drama, and arts clubs, for students who aren't interested in sports.
- **Sports Facilities:** The school's sports pitch needs significant improvements, including new nets, better grass cutting, and an upgrade to create a safer and more usable space.
- **More Sports Options:** There is a desire for a wider variety of sports teams, such as badminton, volleyball, basketball, and other minority sports, to be available for students.
- **Better Communication and Organisation:** Improved communication about extracurricular activities, training schedules, and matches is needed to avoid confusion and overlap, and to ensure students can plan effectively.

- **Inclusive Sports Participation:** Students want better inclusion as well as more accessible opportunities for non-athletic students.
- **Availability of Sports Facilities:** There is a need for better sports equipment, more suitable training pitches, and clearer details on extracurricular events like how often they occur and their schedules.
- **Support for Non-Sporting Activities:** The school should provide more recognition, resources, and support for non-sporting clubs, ensuring these activities are as accessible and promoted as sports teams.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Emphasis on offering extracurricular activities that support mental health, with options for students who are less interested in physical sports.
- **Better Access and Scheduling:** Students request more flexibility in scheduling activities to accommodate those who can't attend after-school training due to transport issues or other commitments.
- **More Funding and Promotion:** Extra funding and better promotion for both sports and non-sporting extracurricular activities, to make them more widely available and celebrated.

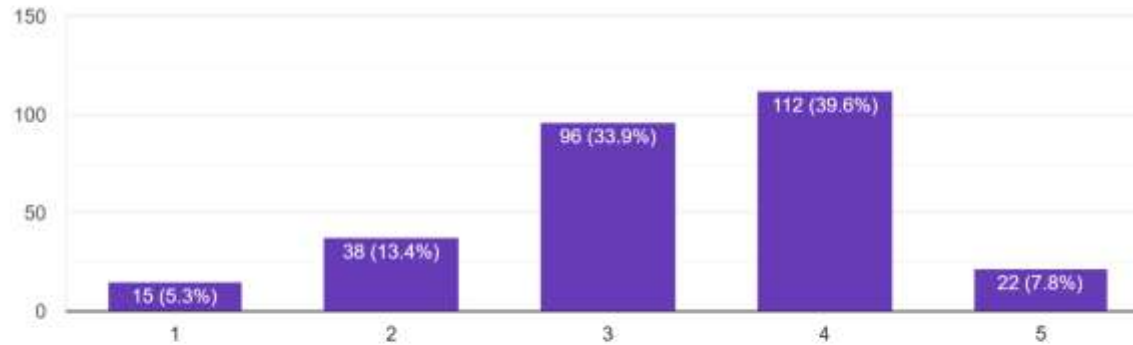
4. Please add any additional comments regarding the extra-curricular programme that you would like to add.

- **Extracurricular Programs:** The school has a good extracurricular program with a wide variety of sports, but there is a need for more non-sport activities like acting/drama, cricket, and musical clubs.
- **Sports Equipment:** There's a lack of sufficient sports equipment, such as in badminton, table tennis, and rugby, which limits students' ability to fully engage in these activities.
- **More Activities for Non-Sporting Students:** There is a request for more extracurricular options for students who are not interested in sports, including drama, music, debate, and coding clubs.
- **School's Advertising of Clubs:** The school promotes a wide range of extracurriculars, but some are not actually offered, which has led to frustration among students.

- **Advanced Notice for Cancellations:** Students express the need for training sessions to be cancelled with at least a day's notice to avoid last-minute disruptions and stress, particularly around arranging transportation.
- **More Opportunities for Participation:** Students desire more opportunities to participate in different sports, especially for those not involved in popular sports or teams.
- **Socialising and Fun:** Extracurricular activities are seen as a great way for students to socialize and show that school can be enjoyable.
- **Sports Facilities and Resources:** More sports equipment is needed, especially in less common sports like rugby, to ensure there are enough resources for all students.
- **Non-Sporting Clubs:** Students request more clubs for those who aren't interested in sports, such as a drama club, book club, and coding club, to cater to diverse interests.

1. How effective is the school's communication with students?

283 responses



2. Please comment on the reason for your choice in the previous question.

- **Communication is generally good, but there's room for improvement:** Most students find the school's communication adequate, but some areas, like last-minute notices and lack of clear updates, can be frustrating.
- **Teachers are helpful and friendly:** Many students appreciate the support they receive from teachers, who are approachable when help is needed.
- **Clear communication in some areas:** Google Classroom and intercom announcements are effective tools for keeping students informed, though some information is not always communicated in advance.
- **Student voice isn't always heard:** While some teachers encourage feedback, students feel their opinions are often overlooked or not acted upon.
- **Misunderstandings between students and staff:** While most communication is clear, occasional misunderstandings or mixed messages can lead to confusion.

- **Issues with last-minute information:** Some students feel that changes, such as schedule shifts or event cancellations, are communicated too late, often leading to confusion.
- **Student involvement in decision-making:** The school is improving in involving students, but decisions like uniform policies or activity changes are often made without enough consultation.
- **Good mental health support:** Teachers and staff are approachable when students need to talk, but some feel the system could be more relatable or accommodating for their mental health needs.

3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see regarding how the school communicates with students?

- Teachers should listen more to students and their struggles, with an emphasis on better communication and understanding.
- More surveys should be conducted to gather students' opinions, especially for those who may be shy to speak up.
- More one-on-one interactions with students would be helpful for discussing personal or academic concerns.
- Clear communication about upcoming events and changes should be provided well in advance, both to students and parents.
- Teachers should create a welcoming environment where students are not afraid to ask questions or make mistakes.
- Information should be communicated more effectively, especially for things like Google Classroom access or exam-related updates.
- Teachers should focus on fostering a supportive atmosphere, not just enforcing rules and expectations.
- More mental health support should be provided, with regular check-ins and mental health days for students.
- Suggestion boxes or private channels for students to communicate with teachers about issues or concerns could help improve the school environment.

4. Please add any additional comments that you would like to make regarding school engagement with student.

- The school should send information about upcoming activities or events in advance, giving students time to prepare.
- Some students feel that the school's focus on rules and minor issues, like uniform details, detracts from education and mental health.
- The current teaching methods are seen as outdated and overly strict; there should be more modern and flexible approaches to learning.
- Better communication and support from class tutors are needed, as some students feel disconnected and uninformed.

- The school should prioritise student well-being and mental health more, recognising that students need someone to talk to.
- Overall, more open and empathetic communication is needed from staff to improve the school environment and support students effectively.

1. Please add any additional comments regarding any aspect(s) of the school that you have not had the opportunity to mention in previous sections.

- The new canteen system is inconvenient, as students must order food 2-3 days in advance, limiting options for those who forget their lunch.
- The school uniform policy is too strict, with issues such as discomfort in track pants and unnecessary focus on minor details like socks.
- More sports options should be available, such as adding an acting class or a cricket team, to cater to diverse student interests.
- There should be more flexibility for students to access food or use phones during lunch breaks, especially for those without lunch or when emergencies arise.
- There is a need for better classroom conditions, including addressing overcrowded classrooms and narrow hallways, which make it difficult to transition between classes.
- The heating system is inadequate, especially during winter, leading to discomfort for students who are not allowed to wear additional warm clothing.
- The canteen should accept cash payments to accommodate students who do not have access to the online food ordering system.
- Students should be given more freedom and opportunities to manage their own time, such as shorter school days, less homework, and more time for personal activities.

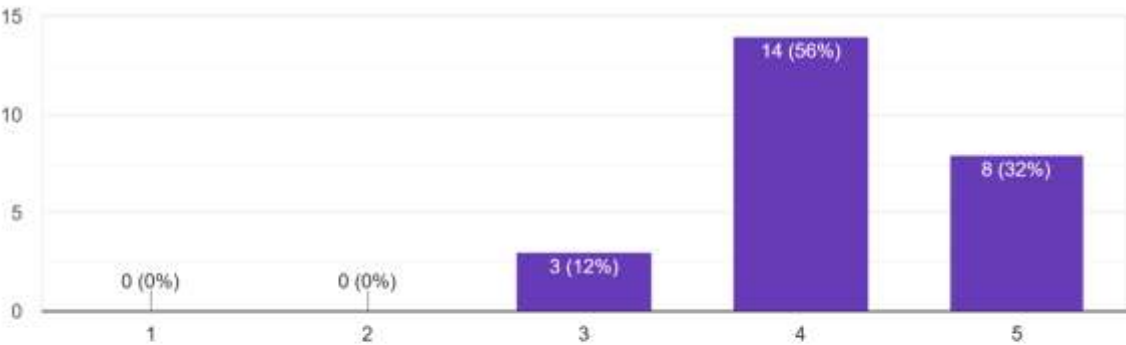
Appendix 5- Staff Survey Responses (November 2024)

- 25 Responses

1. Curriculum

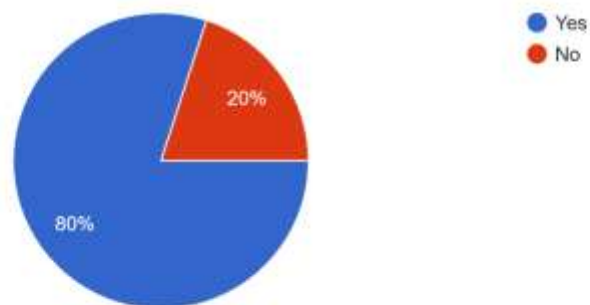
1.Please indicate how effective you believe the school curriculum is in St. Mary's.

25 responses



2. Do you think that students have a good range of subject options available to them?

25 responses



3. Please comment on why you chose yes or no for the previous question.

🔍 **Wide Range of Subjects Offered:** The school provides a broad selection of subjects across both junior and senior cycles, allowing students to explore various interests and strengths.

🔍 **Junior Cycle Taster Programme:** While the range of subjects is good, there is a suggestion to reduce the length of the taster programme in junior cycle, as one year may be too long, and more focus could be placed on subjects students are interested in.

🔍 **Expansion of Subject Variety:** As the school grows, there is a desire to expand the variety of subjects offered, particularly as the school continues to increase in size.

🔍 **Popular Subjects and Options:** Subjects like languages and practical subjects (e.g., Ag Science) are particularly valued, and there's interest in offering more subjects like Accountancy and Agricultural Science at senior level.

🔍 **Challenges with Subject Choices:** With more students interested in specific subjects, there are challenges around offering multiple classes, particularly when subjects are scheduled opposite each other, limiting student choices.

- ☐ **Junior Cycle Flexibility:** The school currently offers a good range of options for junior students, ensuring that a variety of learning styles and skills can be catered for.
- ☐ **Senior Cycle Options:** The school offers a broad array of senior cycle subjects, including LCE, LCA, and LCVP, and attempts to run subjects based on student interest and numbers.
- ☐ **Loss of Certain Subjects:** Some subjects, like Physics, Economics, and Ag Science, have been cut in recent years, and there is a concern that this has resulted in some students leaving the school due to a lack of these options.
- ☐ **Subject Offerings Based on Demand:** The school is flexible in offering subjects, even if student uptake is low, and accommodates students' interests, as demonstrated by an instance of a student taking Polish at Leaving Cert level.
- ☐ **Diverse Learning Opportunities:** There is a balance between practical and academic subjects, with a range of languages and other choices available to meet diverse student needs and career paths.

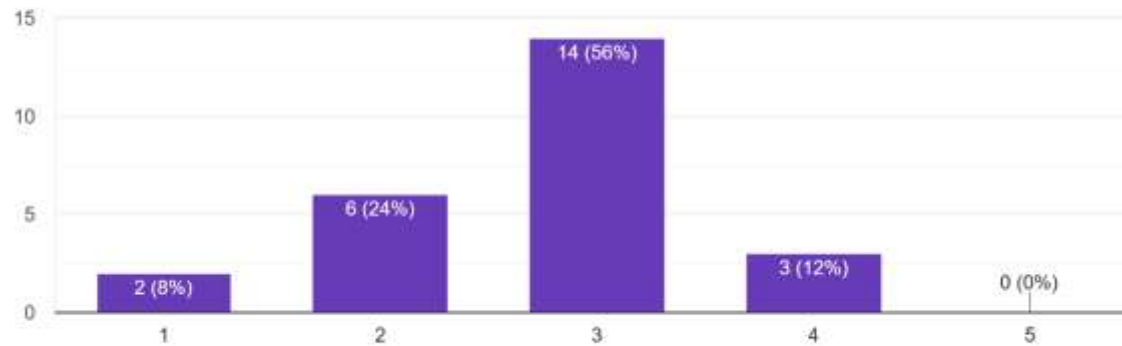
4. Any other comments on curriculum

- ☐ **Maths-Based Subjects at Senior Cycle:** There is a suggestion to reintroduce maths-based subjects such as Physics, Applied Maths, and Accounting at senior cycle.
- ☐ **Mandatory Science and Shorter Rotation for Junior Cycle:** Science should be made mandatory at junior cycle, and the first-year taster programme should have a shorter rotation to avoid students doing too many subjects for the full year.
- ☐ **Intensive EAL Class for Non-Native Speakers:** A dedicated and intensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) class should be introduced for first-year students and beyond, for those who lack the language skills to access the mainstream curriculum.
- ☐ **Reevaluation of First-Year Taster Programme:** The first-year taster programme could be shortened, ideally running until Christmas, to provide students with an early sense of which subjects suit them.
- ☐ **Impact of 'Special Class' Loss on Weaker Students:** The loss of the 'Special Class' has negatively impacted weaker students, especially with all Common Level exams in junior cycle, making it harder for them to engage positively.

2. Facilities

1. How would you rate the school's facilities?

25 responses



2. Comment on Facilities

🔍 **Dilapidated School Building:** The overall condition of the school building is poor, with outdated classrooms, science labs, and home economics rooms in need of upgrades.

🔍 **Inadequate Facilities:** The school lacks suitable IT infrastructure, social spaces, eating areas, and staff toilets. More resources are needed, especially in terms of technology and basic staffroom appliances.

🔍 **Limited Social Spaces:** There is insufficient space for students to eat and socialise. The canteen is overcrowded, and alternative social areas like the GP room need more tables and better use of space.

🔍 **Underutilised Areas:** There are many unused spaces in the school that could potentially be developed for better facilities for both staff and students.

🔍 **Library and Storage Issues:** The library lacks character and could benefit from better displays. Storage for extracurricular bags is disorganised, and more efficient solutions should be considered.

🔍 **Need for Facility Upgrades:** Certain rooms, particularly in older wings, need general maintenance, painting, and cleaning. Practical spaces such as Home Ec and Science labs require significant investment.

🔍 **Insufficient IT Equipment:** While there are computer rooms, they are underutilised, and many computers are outdated. There is also a need for more modern IT equipment, such as updated software (Windows 11).

🔍 **Sports Facilities:** The sports facilities are generally good but could be improved by adding more changing rooms, especially for female teachers and additional teams.

🔍 **Staffroom and Staff Facilities:** The staffroom is overcrowded and lacks sufficient kitchen equipment, such as an extra kettle. The staff areas need better organization and more practical resources.

🔍 **Need for More Social and Relaxation Spaces:** Students need more areas for socialising, especially during lunch, as the current canteen space is too small, and some students find it overwhelming. Areas like a games room and spaces with bean bags could improve student life.

3. What aspects require improvement?

🔍 **Upgrade Facilities and Infrastructure:** Renovate and modernise classrooms, science labs, Home Ec rooms, kitchens, and the library. This includes painting walls, fixing blinds, adding more whiteboards and display boards, and updating outdated equipment like desktops and projectors.

🔍 **Expand and Improve Social and Eating Spaces:** Increase the size of the canteen and repurpose spaces like the GP room to create more seating and social areas for students, especially during lunch. Provide additional communal areas and quiet spaces for staff and students.

🔍 **Enhance IT and Technology Resources:** Improve IT infrastructure by updating outdated desktops, providing more devices like iPads for students, and ensuring better wifi access across the school. Focus on enhancing technology in classrooms to support diverse teaching and learning methods.

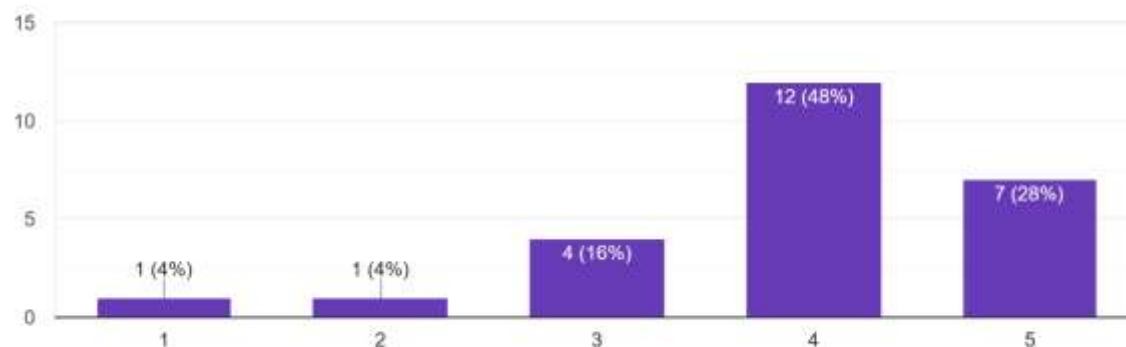
🔍 **Refurbish Staff and Shared Facilities:** Upgrade the staffroom, including additional work areas and kitchen appliances. Address the issue of outdated staff bathrooms, including fixing broken showers. Ensure staff have adequate space for preparation and correction.

🔍 **Improve Sports and Outdoor Facilities:** Revitalize the sports facilities, including updating the GAA pitch, repairing damaged nets, and adding more changing rooms. Consider creating additional social or resource areas in smaller classrooms or unused spaces to accommodate student needs.

3. Supports Available for students

1. How do you rate the supports that are available in St. Mary's Secondary School for students? (e.g. Guidance Support, Additional Education Needs Support, Support from staff)

25 responses



2. Comment

🔍 **Strong Pastoral and Extra-Curricular Support:** Students are well-supported in terms of pastoral care, subjects, and extra-curricular activities, with staff showing great care and dedication.

🔍 **Need for More Expertise and Resources:** While staff do their best with available resources, there is a need for more specialised personnel and additional expertise, especially to address the increasing mental health issues among students.

🔍 **Support for AEN (Additional Educational Needs):** AEN support is available, but there are concerns about delays in providing supports at the start of the school year, lack of coordination between AEN staff and classroom teachers, and the unclear role of SNAs (Special Needs Assistants).

🔍 **Inconsistent Student Support Systems:** While some students receive excellent support, others, especially those struggling socially, may not have a "safe space," and there is a lack of consistent systems like weekly support sessions or tutor time to ensure all students are supported.

🔍 **Staff Collaboration and Willingness:** Overall, staff are motivated and willing to help students with academic, emotional, and additional learning needs. There is positive collaboration among staff, but there is a need for a more organized and timely approach to support.

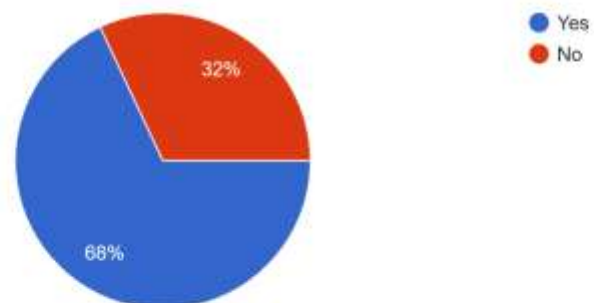
3. Additional Supports Required?

- 📌 **Improved Support for Vulnerable Students:** There is a need for better distribution of SNAs and the establishment of a teacher in an official chaplain role, who is approachable for non-career related concerns, as well as the creation of a safe space for vulnerable students.
- 📌 **Increased Guidance and Counselling:** More guidance counselling is needed, especially focused on study skills, student motivation (particularly at Leaving Cert level), and addressing the loss of a counsellor. Support for mental health issues is crucial.
- 📌 **Mentoring and Social Skills:** Students lacking social skills would benefit from mentoring. Lunch time activities should be more varied, as current options are predominantly sporty, and the library could be better utilised as a resource.
- 📌 **More Structured Support Time:** Tutor time should be scheduled weekly (5-10 minutes) to ensure students have regular access to support from their class tutor, addressing any emerging issues.
- 📌 **Better Integration of AEN and Teaching:** A stronger connection between teaching staff and AEN support is needed, with additional AEN training and programs for staff to enhance the learning experience for students with additional needs.

4. Extra-Curricular

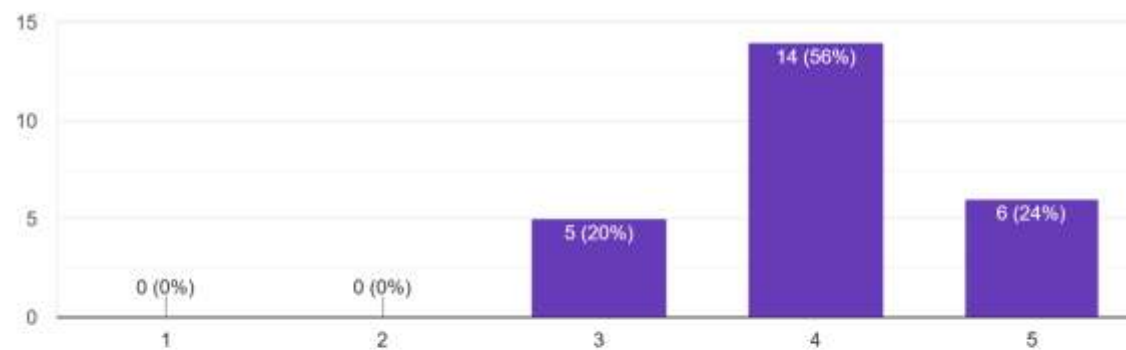
1. Are you involved in facilitating any part of the school's extra-curricular programme?

25 responses



2. How effective do you think the school's extra-curricular programme is?

25 responses



3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see to the school's extra-curricular programme

☒ **Need for More Non-Sporting Activities:** There is a desire for more non-sporting extracurricular activities such as debating, chess, book clubs, and games, to cater to students who are not interested in sports.

☒ **Additional Space for Sports:** The school needs additional space to accommodate the large number of sports teams (e.g., soccer, camogie, rugby, Gaelic football), as the current facilities are not sufficient for all teams to train simultaneously.

☒ **Balancing Activities and Preventing Burnout:** An online or physical timetable of events is needed to prevent clashes and help students manage their participation in multiple activities, especially sports, to avoid burnout.

☒ **Equity Between Sports and Non-Sporting Activities:** There is a perception that non-sporting activities receive less attention and funding compared to sports. More focus and resources should be given to non-sporting extracurriculars to ensure balance.

☒ **Increased Teacher Involvement and Facilities Upgrades:** More teachers should be involved in running extracurricular activities to share the workload. Additionally, upgrades are needed for facilities, including more changing rooms and improvements to the existing sports pitches.

4. Additional Comments?

☒ **Encourage and Support Non-Sporting Activities:** Non-sporting extracurricular activities need more encouragement and support to cater to students who are not interested in sports.

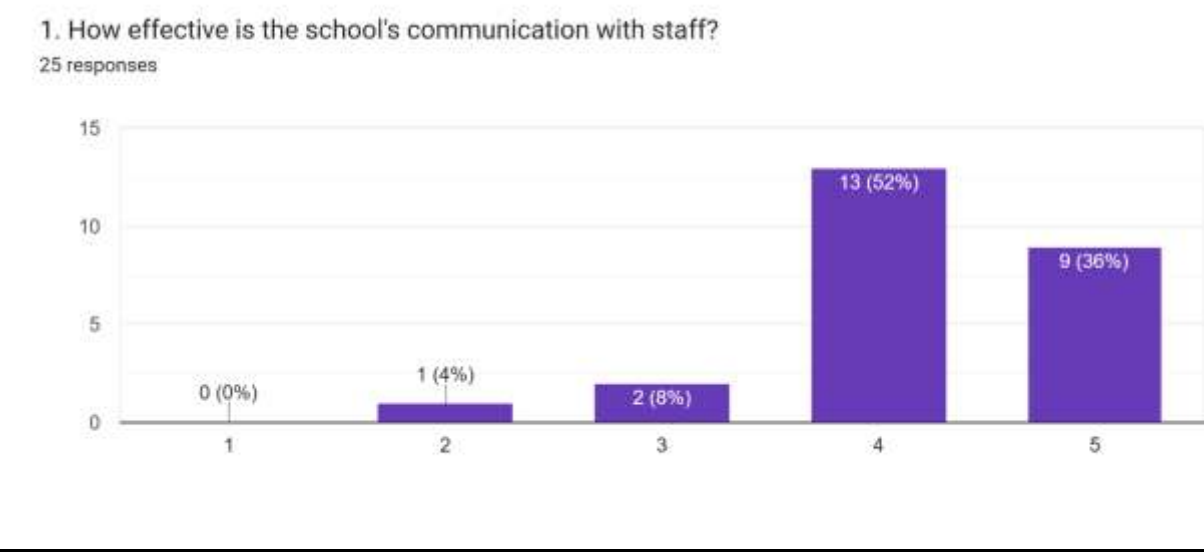
☒ **Dependence on Individual Teacher Interest:** Non-sport extracurricular opportunities often depend on individual teachers' interests. If a teacher leaves, these activities can disappear, highlighting the need for more stable and diverse offerings.

☒ **Strong Sporting Programs, but Limited Non-Sport Options:** While there is a wide range of sporting extracurricular programs, non-sport activities like reading or book clubs are less developed and need more focus.

☒ **Need for a Comfortable Social Space:** The library, when it was a comfortable meeting space, was appreciated by students who don't play sports but still wanted to engage in activities.

🔍 **Potential for Portfolio Art Classes:** While not currently offered, there is potential for portfolio art classes as an extracurricular activity, provided there is enough student interest.

5. Partnership with staff



2. Please comment on the reason for your choice in the previous question.

- 🔍 **Improved Communication:** Communication within the school has greatly improved, with staff regularly updated through emails, weekly bulletins, and briefings. The communication is efficient and respectful.
- 🔍 **Opportunities for Teacher Voice:** While communication is good, there is a desire for more opportunities for teachers to share their voice and contribute to decision-making.
- 🔍 **Multiple Communication Avenues:** Various methods of communication, such as email, WhatsApp, and in-person meetings, are used to keep staff informed about school events and updates.
- 🔍 **Open and Approachable Leadership:** The principal and senior management are described as approachable.

☐ **Some Overload of Information:** While communication is frequent and detailed, there is sometimes an overload of information, particularly via email, which could be managed more effectively.

3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see regarding how the school communicates with staff?

☐ **Teacher Voice:** There is a desire for more opportunities for teachers to have their voices heard and be involved in decision-making.

☐ **Improved Access to Calendar:** A digital calendar (e.g., Google Calendar) would be more accessible for staff to view upcoming events, rather than relying on paper copies in the staff room.

☐ **Updates and Notifications:** Suggestions include a general updates noticeboard in the staff room for minor school information and increased use of the VS Ware dashboard for notifications.

☐ **Student Incident Communication:** Staff would benefit from being informed of student incidents and the identities of involved students, especially if they have the student in class or see them around the school.

6. Additional Comments

☐ **Improving IT Skills:** Students, especially in first year, need basic computer skills training, including Google Classroom and document management, to help with CBAs in later years. More contact time for TY students in ICDL is also important for their future projects and LC subjects.

☐ **Access to Technology:** Students need access to computer devices for research and completing assessments, such as CBAs and AACs. There is also a suggestion to provide iPads for video creation, as their quality and editing capabilities are beneficial.

☐ **Communication with Parents:** Regular communication with parents could be more easily facilitated through a school app.

☐ **Staff Wellbeing and Mentorship:** More staff wellbeing days and group activities could be beneficial. Additionally, a mentor system for new teachers (especially non-Droichead) would help them settle in.

☐ **Improving School Environment:** The library should be made functional, and non-sporting students could benefit from it. Attention to the school's grounds, such as painting, signage, and junk removal, would create a more welcoming environment and support a positive school culture.

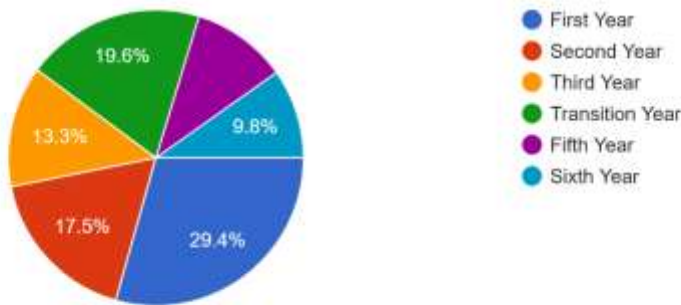
Appendix 6- Parent/Guardian Survey Responses (November 2024)

- 143 responses

1. Curriculum

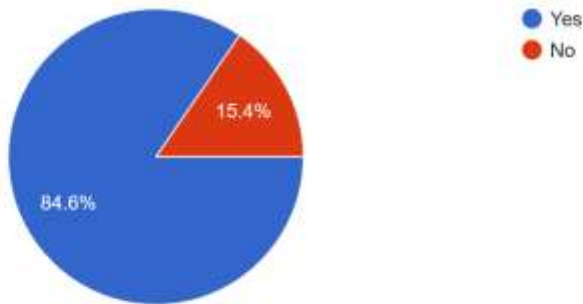
1. Please indicate the year that your daughter is currently enrolled in.

143 responses



2. Do you think your daughter has a good range of subject options available to her?

143 responses



3. Please comment as to the reason for your previous response.

- ☐ A wide variety of subjects is offered to students, including core subjects and optional ones.
- ☐ Spanish is suggested as a more beneficial language option than French or German due to its global use.
- ☐ The broad range of subjects helps students make informed choices about their future education and career.
- ☐ All subjects are offered in 1st year and TY, allowing students to explore various options.
- ☐ The curriculum supports academic growth and diverse skills development.
- ☐ Some subjects, like physics, may not always be available.
- ☐ The subject choices allow students to try new subjects and make better decisions for the future.
- ☐ Many students would prefer practical subjects like woodwork or metalwork, which are not always available.
- ☐ There is a good mix of academic and practical subjects.
- ☐ Some students feel the range of subjects could be expanded to include more options like applied maths.
- ☐ The subject options in TY give students the opportunity to explore and decide on their future subjects.
- ☐ Students can sample many subjects before making final choices.
- ☐ Subjects like business, home economics, and science are available, with a balance of practical and academic options.
- ☐ Spanish and physics are often mentioned as desirable but missing subjects.
- ☐ Some students experience subject clashes or limitations in the availability of certain subjects.
- ☐ Transition Year is seen as an opportunity for students to explore a range of subjects before committing to exams.
- ☐ The school provides a broad curriculum, covering many areas of interest, but more practical subjects could be offered.
- ☐ Parents and students appreciate the chance to choose subjects based on interest and ability.
- ☐ Some students are disappointed when preferred subjects are unavailable or limited.

☐ There is a strong emphasis on ensuring students can try various subjects to find what suits them best.

4. Please add any additional comments regarding the curriculum in St. Mary's.

☐ More active learning, such as group work and projects, is recommended to make learning more engaging.

☐ All science subjects should be included in the curriculum.

☐ Spanish is suggested as a beneficial new language option.

☐ Critical thinking, presentation, and research skills should be developed during the senior cycle.

☐ The Transition Year (TY) curriculum is considered very good.

☐ Teacher changes within the same subject can be disruptive and should be minimised.

☐ First-year students benefit from trying a wide range of subjects before narrowing down choices for the Junior Cert.

☐ There is a desire for more practical, hands-on subjects.

☐ Some students feel the range of subjects could be improved, especially with options like applied maths.

☐ It is suggested that the school could assist students who want to take subjects not available in the school timetable.

☐ Concerns about the availability of subjects for the Senior cycle, such as physics and business studies.

☐ A shorter "taster menu" for subjects in first year is recommended to focus on chosen subjects earlier.

☐ Science should be mandatory for Junior Cert, as not having it limits career options.

☐ Some parents feel religion should be optional, as it may not be useful for all students.

☐ More clarity on subject selection and choices for the Junior Cert cycle is needed.

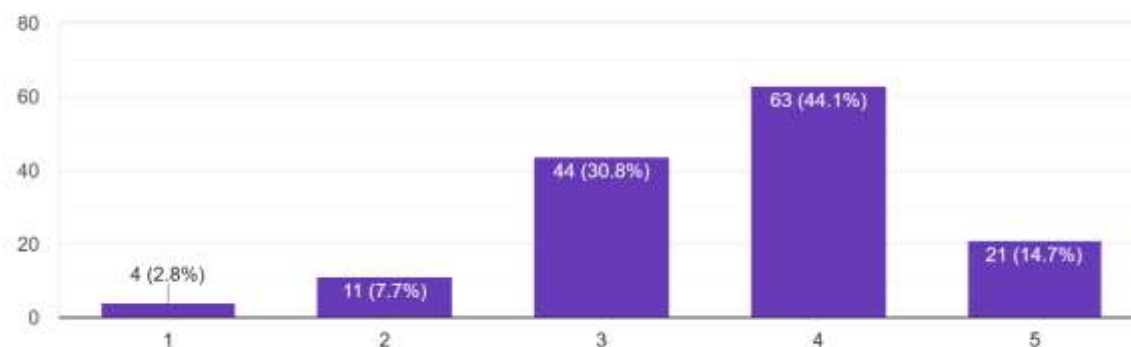
☐ Geography and religion should be optional subjects to provide more choices for students.

☐ The need for earlier subject selection, such as by November, is mentioned.

- ☐ The curriculum should include a stronger focus on mental health, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and self-care.
- ☐ Concerns about the cost of option subjects and the challenge of learning multiple languages simultaneously.

1. How would you rate the school's facilities?

143 responses



2. Facilities

2. Please comment on the reason for your answer to the previous question.

- ☐ **Toilet and Bathroom Issues:** Many respondents highlighted problems with the cleanliness, condition, and maintenance of toilets, including broken sinks, leaking toilets, and full sanitary bins.
- ☐ **Outdated Facilities:** Some areas of the school, such as science labs, home economics rooms, and classrooms, are described as outdated and in need of modernization.
- ☐ **Need for More Seating:** There is a lack of adequate seating for students, especially during lunchtime, leading to students having to stand or sit on the floor.
- ☐ **Sports Facilities:** While sports facilities (e.g., sports hall) are generally praised, some areas, like the hurling pitch, are in poor condition and require improvement.

- ☐ **Lack of Heating:** The heating system in the school is inconsistent, particularly during colder months, with some areas lacking heat for extended periods.
- ☐ **Limited Canteen Options:** The canteen is seen as inadequate, with issues such as limited seating, food availability, and ordering systems, leaving some students without food options.
- ☐ **Need for More Common Areas:** There is a desire for more spaces for students to gather and relax during breaks, with some classrooms being closed during lunch.
- ☐ **Technology and Equipment:** While some technology resources are updated and well-maintained, there are complaints about limited access to computers and outdated equipment in certain subjects.
- ☐ **Overall Facility Condition:** The school is considered generally well-equipped but could benefit from modernization, especially in older parts of the building.
- ☐ **Support for Sports:** While sports are well-supported, there is a call for more variety in sports options and more opportunities for non-sporty students to engage in physical activities.

3. What aspect(s) of the school's facilities, if any, do you feel require improvement?

- ☐ **Toilet Facilities:** Several comments mention poor bathroom conditions, including small cubicles, lack of soap, cleanliness issues, and the need for larger, more accessible stalls.
- ☐ **Canteen Issues:** There are complaints about the canteen, particularly regarding the pre-ordering system, limited food choices, lack of seating, and the need for food to be available on the day.
- ☐ **Heating and Temperature:** The heating system is frequently mentioned as inadequate, with many areas being cold, especially during winter.
- ☐ **Outdated Facilities:** Science labs, home economics rooms, and some classrooms are considered outdated and in need of renovation or equipment upgrades.
- ☐ **Sports Facilities:** The sports facilities, including the playing fields and gym, require improvement, with specific requests for an astro turf pitch, better maintenance, and more accessible training areas.
- ☐ **Locker Space:** Some comments mention a need for more locker space or better organization, as current locker arrangements can cause delays and clutter.

📌 **Seating and Social Areas:** A lack of seating and social spaces for students during breaks and lunch times is a common concern. Suggestions include more common areas or a lounge space with amenities like a microwave.

📌 **Sanitary Products and Accessibility:** The availability of sanitary products in bathrooms, particularly for emergencies, and the need for more disability-accessible toilets are highlighted.

📌 **Additional Facilities:** Some requests include the addition of a library, water refill stations, and areas for students to eat and relax during breaks.

📌 **General School Modernisation:** Several respondents emphasize the need for a general revamp of older parts of the school, including redecoration, updated equipment, and more diverse extracurricular options, particularly in music and drama.

4. Please add any other comments that you feel are relevant to the facilities of the school.

📌 **Canteen and Food Options:** There are concerns about the pre-ordering system in the canteen, limited food availability on the day, and the lack of fresh food. Suggestions include offering healthier options, vending machines, and more flexibility in food purchasing.

📌 **Sports and Recreational Facilities:** The gym and sports facilities need better usage and maintenance. The school could benefit from an astro pitch, more equipment, and improved facilities for physical education. The current facilities, including showers, are not fully functional or accessible.

📌 **Safety and Security:** There is a call for increased safety measures, including more security cameras and addressing issues like bullying, which is a significant concern for some students.

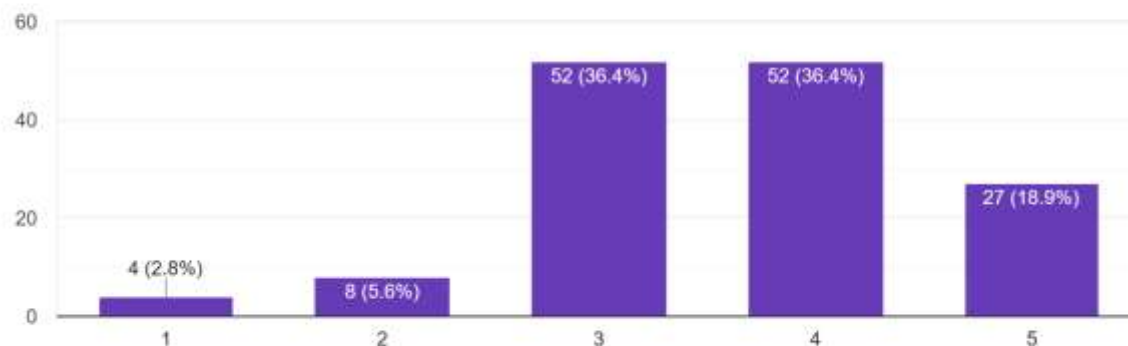
📌 **Technology and Resources:** The need for more up-to-date IT resources like computers and tablets for students is highlighted, ensuring they have the tools for research and project work, especially for senior students.

📌 **Building and Facility Upgrades:** There are calls for improvements to various school facilities, including better heating, updated home economics equipment, access to water fountains, and the creation of a reading hub or library to support student learning and well-being.

3. Supports Available for Students

1. How do you rate the supports that are available in St. Mary's Secondary School for students (e.g. Guidance Support, Additional Education Needs Support and other supports as required)

143 responses



2. Please comment on the reason for your choice in the previous question.

🔍 **Support for Mental Health:** Some parents appreciate the support provided for students with mental health challenges, particularly in making their transition smoother and providing individual support.

🔍 **Teacher Support:** Teachers are described as compassionate, understanding, and supportive, especially for students adjusting to new environments or facing personal difficulties.

🔍 **Lack of Support for Students with Learning Difficulties:** Some parents feel there is insufficient support for students who struggle with specific subjects like languages or have learning difficulties like dyslexia.

🔍 **AEN (Additional Educational Needs) Team:** Several parents expressed concerns that the AEN team's support is reactive rather than proactive, with parents needing to initiate contact.

- 🔍 **Career Guidance:** Career guidance is seen as positive by some parents, though others feel it needs to start earlier and offer more personalised advice, including better support for subject choices and career investigations.
- 🔍 **Communication with Parents:** There is a mix of experiences regarding communication, with some parents finding it excellent and others feeling it's limited or slow, especially regarding career guidance and additional needs.
- 🔍 **Support Initiated by Parents:** Some parents feel that extra support for their children often requires them to push for it, with some finding it slow to come.
- 🔍 **Guidance Support for Transitioning Students:** First-year students appear to receive good support, particularly for easing the transition from primary to secondary school, but older students may need more guidance.
- 🔍 **Counselling Access:** Some parents believe access to school counsellors is not easily available, and students may struggle to approach them when needed, especially if the counsellor is busy or unavailable.
- 🔍 **Inconsistent Support:** Some students have inconsistent support, with one class per week often disrupted by school events like trips or matches, leading to gaps in the help they receive.
- 🔍 **Difficulties with Subject Choices:** Parents express concerns over a lack of clarity and support around subject choices, especially regarding levels in Irish and Maths and the early decisions made in second year based on first-year exam results.
- 🔍 **Resources for Students Struggling Academically:** Some parents feel that the school lacks resources to support students with moderate academic difficulties, leading to frustration when students struggle for long periods without sufficient help.
- 🔍 **Wellbeing Support:** Parents suggest that wellbeing support could be improved, such as by having clear processes for students to make confidential appointments with the counsellor or drop in concerns anonymously.
- 🔍 **Positive Feedback on Specific Support:** Some parents praise the overall support their children receive, with particular recognition for specific teachers and the school's approach to guidance and individual student needs.
- 🔍 **Need for More Awareness and Transparency:** Parents suggest the school could improve communication about available supports and provide more clarity on how to access them, especially for students with specific needs or those making career decisions.

3. What additional supports, if any, do you feel that the school needs to provide?

- 🔍 **Mental Health Support:** Several parents suggest that more mental health support is needed, including yoga, mindfulness classes, and other wellness initiatives.
- 🔍 **Learning Support and Study Assistance:** Some suggest offering additional learning support, including study skills classes, after-school study sessions, and subject-specific study assistance.
- 🔍 **Attendance and Pastoral Support:** Some schools are developing an "Attendance Officer" role to help with emotion-based school avoidance and attendance issues, which could be beneficial.
- 🔍 **Dyslexia Support:** There is a need for more support for dyslexic students, including visual aids, assistive technology, and clearer support plans for those studying Irish.
- 🔍 **More Communication with Parents:** Some parents feel there should be better communication with them regarding school supports, progress, and available resources for their children.
- 🔍 **Bullying and Peer Support:** There is a suggestion for more peer support, such as older students mentoring younger ones, and enhanced measures for addressing bullying.
- 🔍 **After-School Support:** Some parents advocate for after-school study sessions or homework support, particularly for first-year students who may be struggling with homework completion.
- 🔍 **More Mentoring and Guidance:** The need for mentoring programs, including helping students develop study skills and providing additional guidance on subject selection, was highlighted.
- 🔍 **Physical and Emotional Breaks:** There are calls for easier access to rest areas or break times for students who need time out, as well as more lunchtime activities to engage students.
- 🔍 **Support for Language and Subject Struggles:** Extra support is needed for students struggling with subjects like Irish, and students with language gaps may need more time for tests and assignments.
- 🔍 **Career Guidance Earlier:** Parents stress the importance of providing career guidance at an earlier stage, so students can make informed decisions regarding their future paths.
- 🔍 **Support for Transitions:** More support is requested for second-year students, who may face challenges in workload and social integration.

🔍 **Increased AEN Resources:** There is a general call for more AEN resources, including more Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), to help students with various learning difficulties, whether diagnosed or not.

4. Please add any additional comments that you wish to make regarding student supports.

🔍 **Mental Health Support:** There is a strong call for mandatory mental health support for students, including daily activities like meditation, yoga, and a quiet relaxation room.

🔍 **Career Guidance and Subject Choice:** Parents suggest earlier career guidance for third-year students to assist with senior cycle subject choices, as the current timing is considered too late.

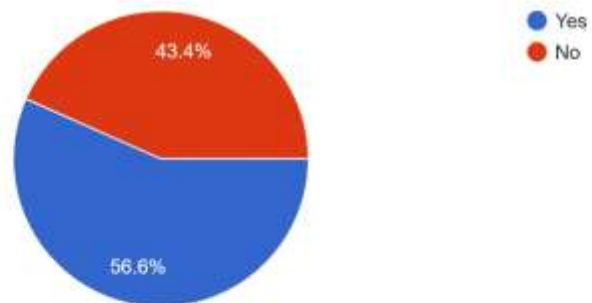
🔍 **Systemic Approach to Exams:** A more organised and early approach to exam preparation, including providing revision lists well in advance, is needed to reduce student stress.

🔍 **Engaging Student Voices:** There's a need to engage students more in the learning process by seeking confidential feedback to improve their educational experience and address their needs.

4. Extra-Curricular Activities

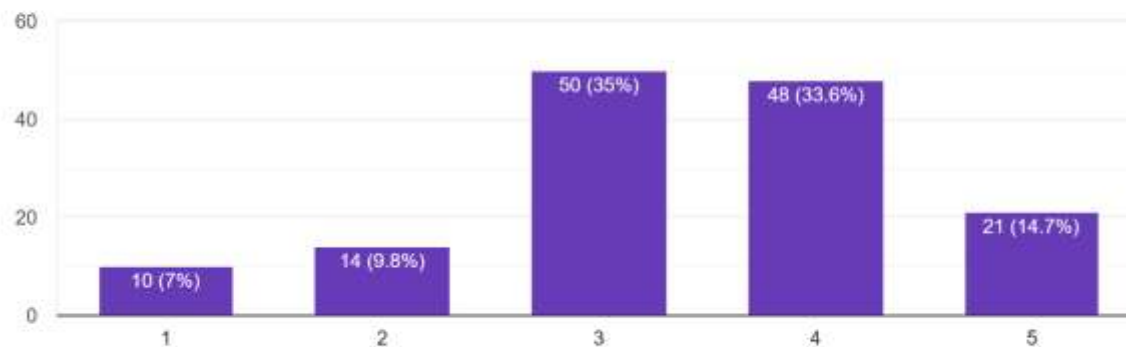
1. Is your daughter involved in any aspect of the school's extra-curricular programme?

143 responses



2. How effective do you think the school's extra-curricular programme is?

143 responses



3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see to the school's extra-curricular programme?

- 📌 **More Variety in Activities:** There is a call for more non-sporting activities like drama, chess, music, and cooking to be offered alongside sports.
- 📌 **Lack of Communication:** Many parents feel that there is inadequate communication about the extra-curricular options available, particularly for shy students who may need encouragement.
- 📌 **Overemphasis on Camogie:** Some parents feel that too much focus is placed on camogie, with fewer opportunities for students who are not in the top teams or not interested in camogie.
- 📌 **Non-Competitive Sports:** There is a desire for more inclusive sports that focus on fun and general fitness, rather than only competitive sports.
- 📌 **Increased Access to Activities:** Parents suggest that more resources should be dedicated to extracurricular activities, including better facilities and equipment.
- 📌 **Clearer Scheduling:** Several parents expressed frustration with overlapping sports schedules that make it difficult to participate in multiple activities.
- 📌 **More Teacher Involvement:** There is a desire for more teachers to become involved in leading extracurricular activities, as well as clearer communication regarding their availability.
- 📌 **Improved Facilities:** There are calls for better sports facilities, such as improved pitches, and more regular training sessions for school teams.
- 📌 **Inclusion of Non-Sporting Students:** Parents want more activities for students who are not particularly interested in sports, such as music, art, and drama.
- 📌 **Encouraging Participation:** There is a need for more encouragement and support for students, especially shy or less confident ones, to get involved in extracurricular activities.
- 📌 **Equestrian and Gymnastics Options:** Some parents suggest including equestrian and gymnastics as additional extracurricular options, based on students' interests outside of traditional sports.
- 📌 **Information for First-Year Parents:** There is a suggestion to provide first-year parents with clear information about upcoming sports programs to help them encourage their children to participate.
- 📌 **Parent-Student Communication:** Some parents feel that the school should communicate more effectively with both parents and students about extracurricular offerings, including time commitments and available options.
- 📌 **More After-School Activities:** It's suggested that extracurricular activities should primarily be scheduled after school rather than during break times, to allow students time to decompress and make teams.

🔍 **Opportunities for Competitive Sports:** Some parents would like to see competitive teams for activities like gymnastics and badminton, allowing students to represent the school in various competitions.

4. Please add any additional comments regarding the extra-curricular programme that you would like to add.

🔍 **Desire for More Diverse Activities:** There is a call for more non-sporting extracurricular options like music (e.g., choir), dance, baking/cooking competitions, and technology-focused activities (e.g., VEX competition).

🔍 **Reintroducing Hockey:** Several parents express interest in bringing hockey back to the school as an extracurricular option.

🔍 **Year-Round Sports Participation:** There is concern that sports like camogie should be offered year-round to maintain competitiveness.

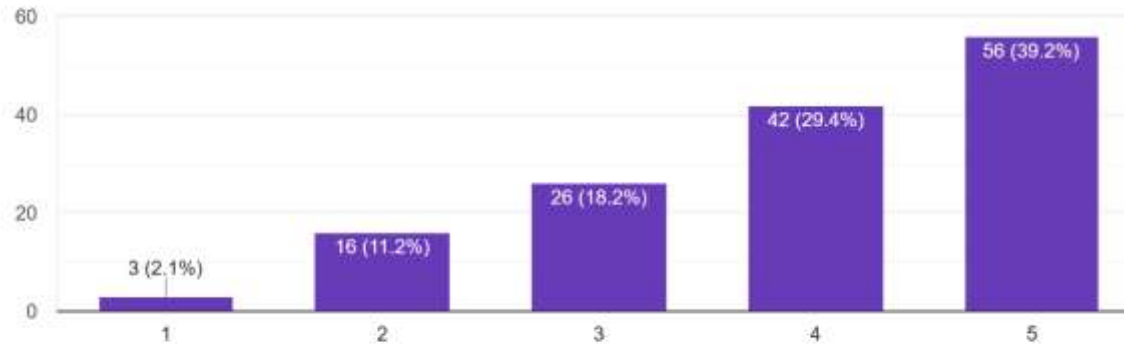
🔍 **Support for Students New to Activities:** Parents suggest grouping less experienced students with peers of similar skill levels when trying out new sports or activities, to reduce overwhelm.

🔍 **Improvement in Communication and Awareness:** Better communication with parents regarding available extracurricular activities, missed classes, and the priority for non-sporting students to engage in alternative options is recommended.

5. Partnership with Parents/Guardians

1. How effective is the school's communication with parents/guardians?

143 responses



2. Please comment on the reason for your choice in the previous question.

- 🔍 **Improved Communication:** Many parents note a significant improvement in communication, particularly since the new principal took over.
- 🔍 **Regular Updates:** Communication through emails and texts is frequent, ensuring parents are regularly informed about school events and updates.
- 🔍 **Clear and Informative:** School communication is generally praised for being clear, timely, and informative, which helps parents stay involved in their child's education.
- 🔍 **Communication Methods:** Text messages and emails are preferred by many parents, though some suggest an app for better organization.
- 🔍 **Areas for Improvement:** Some parents still feel there is a lack of clarity regarding specific details and point out instances of miscommunication.
- 🔍 **Positive Changes:** The recent changes in communication have been welcomed, with many parents appreciating the updates, especially through social media.
- 🔍 **Challenges with Absence Reporting:** Several parents expressed frustration with the traditional methods of reporting absences, calling for a more modern and efficient system like an app.

- 📌 **Information on School Events:** There are requests for more advance notice on events like parent-teacher meetings (PTMs) and school holidays to help working parents make arrangements.
- 📌 **Contacting Teachers:** While communication with teachers is generally positive, some parents have struggled to contact them or receive timely responses.
- 📌 **Need for an Online System:** Many parents suggest that a unified online system for attendance, permissions, and payments would improve efficiency and ease of communication.
- 📌 **Feedback on Extra-Curricular Communication:** Some parents feel that there is not enough information shared about extra-curricular activities, despite improvements in other areas.
- 📌 **Social Media Engagement:** Parents appreciate the school's social media updates, which provide a more visual way to stay informed about school life.
- 📌 **Unclear Reporting Systems:** Some parents are dissatisfied with the outdated use of school diaries and feel that a digital system for reporting absences and interactions would be more effective.
- 📌 **Communication Consistency:** While the overall communication has improved, some parents still feel that not all updates are consistent, especially regarding last-minute notifications.
- 📌 **Suggestions for Further Improvement:** Parents suggest introducing a monthly newsletter, providing better systems for school payments, and improving the clarity of some communication channels.

3. What improvements, if any, would you like to see regarding how the school engages with parents/guardians?

- 📌 **Need for an App:** Several parents suggested implementing a school app for better communication, tracking attendance, payments, and updates in one place.
- 📌 **Use of Online Systems:** Parents recommended expanding the use of platforms like VSware for attendance, behaviour, test results, and general communication between the school and parents.
- 📌 **Improvements in Payment Systems:** There was a strong desire for an online payment system to replace the outdated method of making payments through the office.

- ☐ **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Some parents suggested keeping Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) in the PE hall for better efficiency and recommended more frequent meetings, especially for first-year students.
 - ☐ **Better Engagement with Parents:** Some parents felt there was a lack of engagement during certain school years, such as Transition Year (TY), and suggested more consistent updates on students' activities and progress.
 - ☐ **More Transparency:** Parents called for clearer communication about school events, subject choices, and extracurricular activities, potentially through an online portal or newsletter.
 - ☐ **Improving Access to School:** A few parents raised concerns about difficulty accessing the school building, particularly when needing to pick up students or drop off items.
 - ☐ **Suggestions for Regular Updates:** Parents recommended monthly emails or newsletters to inform them of what happened at school and upcoming events, helping them to encourage their children to participate more.
 - ☐ **Clearer Communication About Absences:** There was a request for clearer procedures for students who are sick at school, including a more defined process for reporting absences without relying on the journal system.
4. Please add any additional comments that you would like to make regarding school engagement with parents/guardians.
- ☐ **Newsletter and Local Publicity:** Several parents suggested using a school newsletter or local media (like the Nenagh Guardian) to showcase the achievements and talents of students, which could enhance school pride and attract future students.
 - ☐ **Online Payments:** Parents expressed a strong preference for implementing online payment systems for various school-related expenses (e.g., administration charges, school buses) to make transactions more convenient and trackable.
 - ☐ **Communication of Academic Placement:** One parent raised a concern about being informed only after the fact about their child being placed in a 'pass' class without prior consultation, suggesting more transparent communication on such matters.
 - ☐ **Improved Notice for School Closures:** Parents requested more advance notice regarding school closures, particularly for events like parent-teacher meetings or staff training days, to accommodate working parents and multiple school schedules.
 - ☐ **Feedback from Students:** There was a suggestion to seek confidential feedback from senior students on the quality of teaching and learning, which could provide valuable insights for improvement.

6. Additional Comment

- 📌 **Tech-Free Policy:** Some parents suggested reducing reliance on mobile phones and devices for homework, advocating for a tech-free policy outside of tech-related classes.
- 📌 **Catholic Faith Formation:** There is a desire for greater emphasis on Catholic faith formation alongside teaching Religion as a subject.
- 📌 **Broader Education Focus:** Parents called for more attention to developing students' soft skills, alongside academic learning.
- 📌 **Heating and Facilities:** The heating system has improved, and parents expressed appreciation for this. However, cleanliness in toilets and availability of sanitary items were noted as areas for improvement.
- 📌 **Curriculum Concerns:** Parents were concerned about the number of free periods and wanted assurance that the broad curriculum is adequately covered.
- 📌 **Homework and Screen Time:** Parents raised concerns about the overuse of screen time for homework, highlighting potential negative effects on mental health and academic performance.
- 📌 **Communication on Sports:** There was a desire for better communication regarding school sports activities and their schedules.
- 📌 **Cost of Living Concerns:** Parents expressed concerns about the financial burden of school fees and suggested payment plans to accommodate families struggling with the cost of living.
- 📌 **Supervised Study Availability:** While parents appreciated the reduction in supervised study costs, there was a request for additional study options on Fridays or Saturdays.
- 📌 **Uniform and Class Disruptions:** Some parents felt that uniform inspections interrupted teaching time. Others raised concerns about changes in teaching staff, which disrupted students' learning.
- 📌 **Weight of School Bags:** There were concerns about the heavy weight of students' school bags, with suggestions for teachers to guide first-year students on lightening their load.
- 📌 **Subject Selection and Timing:** Parents wanted subject choices to be made earlier in the term and felt that selecting subjects mid-term led to unnecessary stress.
- 📌 **Phone Use for Homework:** Many parents felt that homework should not rely on phones or digital platforms like Google Classroom, as it was distracting and made enforcing no-phone rules at home more difficult.