

Literacy Policy

This policy is aimed at every member of the school community and it is to be read in conjunction with the SEN Policy and DEIS Planning materials.

Introduction and link to Mission Statement:

Errigal College is a fully inclusive school and in keeping with our Mission Statement each student is enabled to reach their educational potential. The spirit and content of this policy has a direct input to that mission statement.

Rationale:

At Errigal College we believe the fundamental principle that literacy is the key to improving learning and raising standards; it enables students to gain access to the subjects studied in school, to read for information and pleasure and to communicate effectively. Poor levels of literacy impact negatively on what students can do and how they see themselves. All staff at Errigal College share responsibility for the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. Crucially, we believe that literate students will ultimately emerge as confident and articulate communicators, fully prepared to enter the adult work, whether to continue their academic studies or to enter the work of work.

Aims:

1. To adopt a whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum.
2. To enable all students to reach their potential in the key literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Additional provision will be made for students who speak a different language at school from the one they speak at home. (See Policy on Interculturalism)
3. To support the development of literacy skills throughout the curriculum. (See DEIS planning/short term whole school planning/goals)
4. To raise staff awareness of key literacy strategies.
5. To encourage staff to take responsibility for the development of literacy in their subject areas through the inclusion of appropriate schemes of work and lesson planning.
6. To support the development of literacy through the deployment of a range of resources in the school e.g. Library, ICT suites and equipment etc.

7. To identify specific roles and responsibilities within the school with regard to the development of literacy work.
8. To establish procedures for monitoring literacy across the curriculum.

Objectives:

Through the implementation of this policy we in Errigal College strive to have students:

- Read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- Use their skills in speaking and listening to explore, articulate and extend their understanding of texts
- Be able to orchestrate a full range of reading cues (phonic, graphic, syntactic, contextual) to monitor their reading and correct their own mistakes
- Understand the sound and spelling system and use this to read and spell accurately
- Have an interest in words, their usage and meanings and an extensive vocabulary used appropriately for different purposes
- Know, understand and be able to write in a range of fiction and poetry genres, and be familiar with ways in which those genres are constructed
- Understand the conventions of different non-fiction types and be able to use these conventions confidently as readers and writers
- Plan, draft, revise and edit their own writing from notes to a finished form; understand the publishing process and be able to use a variety of means including ICT to produce texts for different audiences
- Have an extended technical vocabulary with which to discuss and evaluate their reading and writing
- Read and write with enjoyment and discrimination
- Through reading and writing develop their powers of imagination, critical awareness and thinking
- Be able to research independently and make notes from a variety of sources, including internet
- Use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. highlighting, scanning
- Use talk to develop thinking about complex issues and ideas

- Be able to write cohesively in an increasingly sophisticated style, using varied punctuation, sentence structures, paragraphs and technical devices
- Adapt their writing to suit audience and purpose
- Be confident users of subject specific vocabulary and correct spellings

Content:

Strategies

Reading:

Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to:

- Read and follow written instructions
- Read to explore and to develop understanding
- Learn how to sift, select and take notes from the text
- Learn how to access their textbook, including format and index
- Learn how to select from written material, reformulate, question and challenge what they read in textbooks etc

Teachers will also provide reading material of high quality and use appropriate strategies to improve reading, e.g. paired reading schemes

Writing:

Across the curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to;

- Use writing to plan and organise
- Plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing, using ICT, where appropriate
- Write for a range of purposes and audiences including answering examination questions
- Make notes in a variety of formats, e.g. brain storming, fish diagrams

Teachers will set writing tasks that have a clear and immediate purpose, are objective driven and which are appropriate for the age and ability of the students concerned.

Teachers will teach students how to structure their writing using a variety of sentence structures, paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation, including higher order punctuation e.g. semi-colons, colons and brackets.

Where students are asked to write in a particular genre e.g. a newspaper report, teachers will ensure that students are familiar with the appropriate style and conventions

Teachers will correct errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling in a manner suitable to the age, ability and level of the student.

Teachers will aim to:

- Provide good models of particular kinds of writing
- Provide frameworks where appropriate
- Display Key Words in the classroom
- Teach subject specific vocabulary and spelling
- Encourage high standards of presentation
- Differentiate the curriculum

Speaking & Listening

Across the whole curriculum teachers will provide activities for students to:

- Listen and carry out instructions
- Explore and develop ideas with others, through talk; pair and group work
- Ask questions as well as answer them
- Work collaboratively with others

Errigal College currently offers and will continue to offer the JCSP. This programme highlights many of the issues in this policy and the JCSP Support Service provides appropriate materials and training to staff and students. In addition, the JCSP Literacy Guidelines and Resource Materials for Developing a School-Wide Literacy Plan are a useful resource for staff. Errigal College also offers LCA and the same comments may be made about this programme.

Roles and responsibilities:

All Staff:

- Are teachers of literacy
- Should ensure that they are familiar with the specific literacy demands of their subject and ensure sufficient coverage of these skills in their lesson planning
- Should participate in CDP in this area
- Should be able to identify a student's literacy strengths and weaknesses and know how to build upon these in order to promote student progress
- Should report on a student's standard of literacy at Parent Teacher Meetings or as appropriate
- Should have a common marking policy where a positive approach is taken and only a small number of mistakes focused upon at any one time

Subject Departments should:

- Ensure that 'subject specific literacy' is clearly identified in schemes of work
- Seek to find opportunities to liaise with the English Department, JCSP co ordinator and the SEN team who can all provide expert advise and materials
- Monitor the work of the department with regard to the inclusion of subject specific literacy strategies in lesson planning
- Encourage models of good practice e.g. modeling and close collaboration between colleagues in order to promote literacy developments
- Use available assessment data to identify appropriate literacy strategies

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the learning of their children and strong home school links are encouraged through the following:

- Use of the diary to review work and sign on a weekly basis
- Visits and relevant information from HSCL teacher.

- Attendance at parent teacher meetings and other meetings as required
- Support the policy by seeking to provide their child with suitable reading materials at home
- Please also see Homework Policy

The HSCL teacher can provide advice and materials to parents to support their involvement in their children's literacy development.

The BOM should:

- Ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time
- Approve the policy
- Consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy

The Principal/Deputy Principal should:

- Establish such structures and procedures that are necessary for the implementation of the policy
- Provide opportunities to staff for CDP in this area
- Monitor the implementation of the policy

Students should:

- Make every effort to improve their literacy skills
- Participate and involve themselves with all activities provided by staff to improve literacy
- See also Homework Policy

Success Criteria:

- Improved literacy standards among all students measurable in part by Reading Age scores
- Increased numbers taking Higher Level papers at Junior and Leaving Certificate
- Increased numbers achieving higher grades in all subjects but especially in English
- Increased retention rates
- Increased progression rates to 3rd Level

Monitoring Procedures:

- Tracking of results at State Examinations and Reading Ages
- Tracking of numbers taking Higher Level papers
- Tracking of retention and progression rates
- Inclusion of review of literacy strategies at all subject department meetings on a regular basis
- Review by JCSP & SEN teams
- Regular inclusion of literacy issues at AP, staff and other relevant meetings
- Principal will report to BOM as required
- Continued review of JCSP and LCA

Review procedures:

The Policy will be reviewed after two years. Review methods will include data analysis, views and experiences of staff and students.

Adopted at BOM meeting 5 April 2011