St Augustine's College, Abbeyside, Dungarvan

Staff Development Policy

Mission Statement.

St Augustine's College is a caring community, committed to offering all of its students and staff a happy and safe environment in which they can work, learn, pray and play. We endeavor to facilitate the academic, personal, moral, spiritual and social development of each member of our school community. Our aim is to provide a balanced and well-rounded education for all our students.

Introduction

> *We aim to engage teachers in critical thinking about staff development. In drawing up this policy we have used existing staff development policies from other schools as templates along with some of the findings from primary research conducted by a staff member among our own staff.*

The following constitutes what we believe to be important when assessing staff development needs:

While training and staff development is a whole school responsibility it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to make sure he/she is properly skilled. We believe:

- that we should be sending members on relevant courses;

- in making staff development a part of a range of activities;

- that staff development be planned in advance and be part of a long term programme;

- that the whole school should be involved in all kinds of training;

- that staff development and training is best done as soon as the skills are needed.

Relevant and helpful training in various areas - what follows is a list of the eight training areas identified and our policy stems from teacher responses to these.

1   *Teaching subjects and programmes*
   - *in-service by Department of Education and Science and subject associations*
   - *methods of using Howard Gardiner's Multiple Intelligences in the classroom*
   - *seminars run by people devising the curriculum and writing textbooks*
   - *use of ICT in teaching of subjects*
   - *team teaching*
   - *videos of good practice*

2   *Resourcing Subjects and Programmes in the School*
   - *sharing of resources*
   - *being made aware of relevant grants*
   - *regular meetings among subject teachers*
   - *knowledge re technical resources to be made available*
   - *bank of back-up resource materials*

   3   *Developing Subjects and Programmes within the School*
   - *establishing faculties within the school*

- *showing ways to get subjects across to students*
- *LCVP and LCA training*
- *Invite teachers from other schools to discuss what is going on in their schools*

4 Establishing Cross-Curricular Links
- *timetabling*
- *team teaching*
- *subject group meetings*
- *training to get us away from perception that subjects are a single entity*
- *training for faculty heads*
- *training in planning*

5 Establishing links outside of school with the community and with business
-personal development emphasizing interpersonal skills
-training in working with parents council
-how to deal professionally with guest speakers and visitors
-establishing phonebook of relevant numbers

6 Interpersonal Skills training (relevant to all interactions you have to perform your job)
- *retreats*
- *counselling for teachers*
- *mediation training to create safe environment to solve problems between teachers*
- *in-service on running a school department*
- *training on dealing with students with various problems*

7 Training in ICT e.g. Computers, Video and Overhead Projector
-after school classes
-one-to-one sessions
-equipment needs to be visible and available to teachers
-PCs and internet needed in all classrooms and access to data projector
-In-school training required

8 Supporting the students in their learning
-ideas to motivate students
-training in helping move learning outside the classroom
-awareness of symptoms of ADHD, ADD and other disabilities which may hinder classroom learning

Other training areas which should be included:
- *health and safety*
- *classroom management*
- *basic counselling*
- *pastoral care*
- *critical incident management*
- *leadership*
- *dissemination of information on new methodologies of teaching*
- *professionalism in the workplace*
- *dealing with bereavement and student behavioural problems*
- *first aid*

Possible methods of delivering this training:
- *subject meetings chaired by department 'heads'*
- *number of short in-services with interested teachers applying*
- *guest speakers*
- *staff development evenings*
- *non-teaching specific training in outside venue as this is conducive to inspiring staff interest*
- *small groups or one-to-one*
- *new teachers out of college could talk on new theories of intelligence*
- *develop pastoral care team*

The policy for the professional development of the staff at St. Augustine's College, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford will focus on the following tenets:
- All professional development activities should be guided by the stated principles, aims and vision of this College
- Activities concerning the professional development of our staff should encompass opportunities to fulfil the spiritual, teaching, managerial, personal and career needs of teachers and support staff
- Professional development activities should enhance student learning

There are four main areas in which staff professional development occurs:
1 The development of collective leadership within the staff at all levels
2 The promotion of teaching excellence
3 The spiritual and religious development of staff
4 The continual development of the college and the management of change

1 The development of collective leadership within the staff at all levels
This would ensure that leadership within the staff is shared widely among staff and that all members of staff as educators and stakeholders in the college would see themselves as part of a leadership structure which aims to provide for a successful and progressive establishment for both staff and students alike.
Adequate induction will be provided for all staff taking up new leadership roles as well as for new and temporary members of staff.
We will offer opportunities for all to develop their skills in leadership

2 The promotion of teaching excellence
We will undertake to provide:
- The necessary induction of all teachers in their first year at St. Augustine's College whether they be experienced or newly-graduated
- Opportunities for teachers to become more effective in their classroom practice, involving inservice courses at regular intervals
- Where practical we will facilitate staff members to add to their teaching qualifications in the event that they wish to pursue further studies
- Activities which will enhance the quality of student learning
- A support system for maintaining teacher morale at its maximum by addressing the personal and career needs of staff

3   **The spiritual and religious development of staff**

We will provide each member of the College community with the opportunity to strengthen and develop their personal faith in life. We will provide the Religious Education Department the opportunity to further develop their knowledge and range of teaching strategies. We will support all staff in the implementation of our values as embodied in 'Veritas Unitas, Caritas,'

4   **The continual development of the college and the management of change**
We will seek to ensure that the staff has the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to:
- Establish, maintain and evaluate programmes from syllabi from the NCCA, Department of Education & Science and school-based initiatives
- Provide and utilise technology to improve both teaching and learning
- Respond to change that comes as a result of student needs
- Ensure the rotation of levels in subjects via subject departments

Priorities in Professional Development
We see the following as our priorities:
- New and experienced teachers in their first year at SAC
- Teachers and support staff experiencing specific problems and needing assistance to function more effectively in their roles
- Experienced staff, co-ordinators and leadership building on their leadership skills and their vision for education within a Catholic school
- Management of change and the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process

Staff Induction
The teacher induction programme at SAC will be a pastoral care initiative designed to assist, support and aid in the development of new teachers. A modified programme will also be arranged to support teachers who are either returning after an absence of five or more years from teaching or who are new to SAC. A successful programme will ensure results in that teachers will begin to make commitments to SAC's mission and policies and will provide input in the building of the college's life overall.

We are committed to putting in place a mentoring programme (within each particular department) for new teachers and for those who are covering for leave or who are on teaching practice. We will ensure that an induction package is given to all newcomers to the teaching staff.

For experienced teachers who are new to the college a series of meetings will be held during their first year. These will introduce the teachers to the overall functioning and philosophy of the school, the different roles of responsibility, the expectations of teachers and students, procedures in operation, resources and supports available and to allay any stress or anxiety they may feel. This will ensure an easy transition into the school community.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed regularly. In practice, this process should be coordinated by a core committee consisting of two staff members, two parents/guardians nominated by the Parent's Council and two students in consultation with the wider school community. On going review and evaluation should take cognisance of changing information, legislation, developments in the school based programme and feedback from parents/guardians, staff and students. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.