Blackrock College
Self-Evaluation Report and Improvement Plan

1. Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with our Strategic Plan 2016-2021. It documents the outcomes of our last improvement plan, the findings of this self-evaluation, and our current improvement plan, including targets and the actions that we will implement to meet the targets.

1.1 Outcomes of our last improvement plans from September 2015 to June 2018

- Student Leadership (2017-2018) – a review of our House Captain system was undertaken. The focus was to examine the turnover of students within the position of House Captain. The College wanted to ascertain the number of students that were benefitting from the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills through this role. The review found that there was a turn-over of students in the positions but possibly not to the extent that the College would wish. As a result of the review the Student Council altered the means of election to the position of House Captain in an effort to encourage greater student involvement. A cap has been implemented regarding the number of consecutive years' service (max. 2 years). Having completed two years of service a student will step aside from the House Captain position for a year. The Student Council decided that this cap will not be in place moving from 5th year to 6th year (Appendix 1 – Results of House Captain survey).

- Numeracy (2016-2017) – re-igniting interest in, as well as establishing the focus of, the numeracy group was necessary during the academic year 2017-2018. A decision was made at committee level that, due to current initiative overload within the education system, no new numeracy strategy would be implemented. Instead students would continue calculating their percentages after summative examinations and we would add to the print-rich environment within the school by producing the essentials of numeracy posters in classrooms. (Appendix 2 – Numeracy Posters)

- Literacy (2015-2016) – On foot of statistics published by the Manager of our Digital Learning Centre which indicated a drop in book borrowing our literacy focus for the year was encouraging students to read for pleasure. Two strategies that were implemented was a 2nd year Reading Challenge and DEAR across all years within the College. The 2nd year initiative was very successful and will continue to run during the 2018-2019 academic year. The DEAR strategy has been adopted on a cross campus basis for the coming academic year. The DEAR strategy will occur on the Friday of Progress Card week and its importance is emphasised by its addition in the College Calendar. Furthermore, to highlight the College's reading culture, three book clubs were introduced last year (Student, Parent and Staff). (Appendix 3 – Statistics from the Creative Arts and Digital Learning Centre)

1.2 The focus of this evaluation

The focus of this SSE term is Student Wellbeing. Blackrock College realises that wellbeing is, by its nature, multi-dimensional. The NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines define it in terms of noting that, "Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community." Blackrock College's 'Six Ways to Wellbeing' advises students on ways to assist their wellbeing through: 'Be Active'; 'Take Notice'; 'Keep Learning'; 'Give…'; 'Connect', and; 'Be Grateful'.

Our aim, in Blackrock College is to help students to build resilience, gratitude and optimism, to feel good about themselves through engagement, to promote positive interactions with each other, to help students understand that there is a greater purpose in life, and to teach students to set realistic goals for themselves.

Blackrock College's 'Six ways to Wellbeing' in conjunction with Seligman's theoretical model of happiness (PERMA) forms the basis upon which our targets are set. Seligman's model has five measurable components:

- Positive Emotion (of which happiness and life satisfaction are aspects)
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Accomplishment

This is effective / very effective practice in our school

~ Four core values of the school, 'Be there', 'Be Caring', 'Be Truthful', 'Be Grateful'.

~ Dean system	~ Feature weeks/Awareness Days
~ Counsellors	~ Liturgical events
~ Student Wellbeing Committee	~ August interviews.
~ Amber Flag	~ Nutritional options for lunch
~ Strong extra-curricular and co-curricular programme	~ Application cards
~ Thursday Tunes	

This is what we are going to focus on to improve our practice further

- Talk/Text phones in 2nd year – reducing bullying incidents involving the use of smart phones
- Wellbeing insert in homework journal – focus on 6 ways to wellbeing
- House pages on Moodle – communication
- Student Council Information Officer
- Maintaining our Amber Flag – Student Mental Health
- Greater participation from all year groups on the Student Wellbeing Committee-
- Feature Day on Student Wellbeing
- Implementing JC Wellbeing – Whole School JCT training day
- Continuing Auxilium for 2nd years
- Re-energising Development Education group for students

On the next page we have recorded:

- The **targets** for improvement we have set
- The **actions** we will implement to achieve these

Our Improvement Plan
Timeframe of this improvement plan is from September 2018 to May 2019

Targets	Actions	
Reduce incidents of bullying using social media apps	Talk/Text phones in 2nd year	
Focusing on Positive Emotion	Wellbeing insert in homework journal	
Working on developing relationships across year groups, through House systems	House pages on Moodle Vertical link meetings	
Encouraging greater student engagement with Student Council	Creating a Student Council Information Officer	
Continuing breaking down the taboo around discussing mental health issues	Maintaining our Amber Flag – Student Mental Health	
Representatives from all year groups would be on the Student Wellbeing Committee	Promote Student Wellbeing Committee at Student Council and Student Congress	
Putting Wellbeing on the Whole School Agenda	Implementing JC Wellbeing – Whole School JCT training day Feature Day on Student Wellbeing	
Greater number of students discussing their learning in class	Implement a learning review document	
Increasing leadership opportunities	Creating a Buddy System	