



Ashbourne Community School Numeracy Policy

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Introduction:

In Ashbourne Community School, we recognise that the development of numeracy skills is essential to a student's personal, educational and holistic development. In this policy, we seek to outline our whole school approach to numeracy.

Numeracy is a proficiency that involves confidence and competence with numbers and measures. It requires an understanding of the number system, a repertoire of computational skills and an inclination and ability to solve number problems in a variety of contexts.

Literacy and numeracy are among the most important skills taught in our schools. They are fundamental to a person's ability to succeed in education, to gain fulfilling employment and to lead a satisfying and rewarding life. Advances in communication systems demand ever-increasing competence in literacy and numeracy and emphasise the important roles that schools, teachers and parents play in fully developing these skills. Department of Education & Skills Circular No. 0025/2012)

As is evident from the above, numeracy underpins every aspect of the school curriculum as well as a student's ability to think independently and contribute to wider society. Through the promotion of an integrated whole school approach, we aim to create an environment where numeracy is developed and recognised as a lifelong asset.

Rationale:

In July 2011, Minister for Education and Skills, launched the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2011-2020, Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people in Ireland. As it has been noted: -

1. Ireland's numeracy levels had dropped to worrying levels. Source: PISA Report 2010.
2. Numeracy is a whole school issue. Every teacher and subject must work on it together.
3. Numeracy is linked to subject planning, cross curricular links as well as self and peer evaluation.
4. Improvements in Numeracy benefit every subject and the whole school community.

Literacy & numeracy is an 'issue of equality' that allows for fuller participation in society. "It is one of the greatest contributions we can make towards achieving equality & social justice in our country" (Literacy & Numeracy Learning & Life 2011-2020 / National Strategy)

Numeracy underpins the school curriculum by developing students' abilities to think, explore and organise. This includes helping students to express themselves numerically. All departments and all teachers have a crucial role to play in supporting students' numeracy development.

Competent numeracy skills also enable students to understand and access examination materials, so that students can achieve their educational potential across the curriculum.

In Ashbourne Community School our aim is to make Literacy & Numeracy a real measurable and positive difference to our students achieving their full potential. The school is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with a holistic education which encourages independent thinking and allows all students to reach their full potential. Numeracy is seen as an essential part of the teaching and learning process. It also opens personal pathways to success and active participation in the society, economy and culture.

Relationship to Mission Statement:

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to prepare all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respect the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community. Our vision of numeracy is to have high expectations for all our students to ensure they can realise their potential and become life-long learners. The numeracy policy is an integral framework which we are committed to, creating a learning environment which emphasises the holistic development of each student.

The school's role in the development of young people is enriched by the active participation of teachers and parents/guardians in many aspects of students' lives. We are committed to continual and consistent efforts to improve numeracy standards, which may include providing extra available resources to those pupils with additional needs, will further enhance the opportunity for our pupils to participate fully in education and in all aspects of society and culture including local, national and global communities.

Aims of Policy:

The aims of this policy are:

1. To promote a whole school approach to numeracy across all curricula.
2. To help support students learning across all subjects through numeracy and numerical skills.
3. To support students' confidence with their numeracy skills.
4. For students to be able to recognise, read, comprehend, and use key words in their approach to specific subjects.
5. To encourage staff to take responsibility for the development of numeracy in their subject areas.
6. To support the development of numeracy through the deployment of a range of resources in school e.g., computer rooms, laptops etc.
7. To foster an appreciation of numeracy through subject specific & whole school activities.
8. For parents/guardians to recognise their role in supporting their son's/daughter's progress and to support the school in our endeavours.

Context of this policy/Links with other Policies:

The emphasis of this numeracy policy is on the role of the whole school community in implementing it. This is a whole school policy and other school policies will be informed by it:

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Internet Safety Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Critical Incident Policy
- Acceptable usage policy
- Extra-Curricular Activities Policy
- Intercultural Policy
- Safety Statement
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Literacy Policy

Roles & Responsibilities

The role of Subject Teacher may involve:

1. Using agreed common approach and strategies in identified areas for numeracy development within various subject departments and clearly recorded in subject plans/schemes of work.
2. Contributing to the development and implementation of a whole school numeracy policy/plan.
3. Contributing to the monitoring and evaluation of numeracy development throughout the school.
4. Participating in whole school numeracy initiatives e.g., personal numeracy; graphic organisers
5. Participating in relevant continuous professional development where the opportunity arises.
6. Identify areas of student weakness in numeracy and alert the subject department and SET Team.

The role of students may involve:

- Making every reasonable effort to improve their numeracy skills.
- Participating fully, and to the best of their ability, in activities provided by staff to improve their numeracy skills.
- Following the school's homework policy.

The role of parents/guardians may involve:

Ireland's Constitution states that parents are the child's primary educators. Support from home is vital for a child's success in school. To support student's numeracy, parents/guardians can:

- Engage in conversations around numeracy. Ask students what they are studying in Mathematics, Accounting & many other subjects.
- Offer a numeracy-rich environment. Model good numeracy behaviour. Talk about school. Have a lot of age-appropriate numeracy material around the home.
- Technology can help families meet the numeracy needs of their children. Parents/Guardians can talk with students about using technology in creative ways. These talks can boost numeracy development, build background knowledge, and help students develop useful skills.

***The role of the SET – Special Educational Team may involve:

1. The school has in place appropriate means and processes to assess students' numeracy skills:

- SET, in conjunction with Guidance Department, collaborate to collate the student passport provided by the transferring national school and from this assess incoming First years' numeracy abilities.
- First Year students' numeracy skills are assessed using a variety of testing such as CAT4 and The New Group Reading Test, within the first term providing meaningful data for 1st Year teachers and the SET.
- A range of informal assessment is carried out to assess numeracy skills by SET on students from all year groups if deemed appropriate and beneficial to the student. Formal assessments are being researched by the SET Department at present.

2. The school has clear procedures for the early identification of pupils with difficulties:

- There is regular communication with class teachers to identify students who present with numeracy difficulties in the classroom.
- There is regular communication with parents/guardians to identify students who present with numeracy difficulties.
- House exams are reviewed & tracked to identify students who are experiencing numeracy difficulties.

3. The SET develop targeted and positive learning support to help students develop numeracy skills as per the Continuum of Support:

The support provided includes in-class support, team teaching, small group support or one to one.

Numeracy support focuses on:

- Revision of fractions & decimals
- Working out percentages
- Revision of tables
- Telling the time
- Use of a calculator
- Sequential skills
- Rules for integers
- Algebra basics

The role of the learning-support teacher & resource teacher may involve:

The role of the learning-support teacher is to provide additional teaching support to students with low achievement in the areas of numeracy.

- The learning-support teacher monitors, tracks & prioritises students who are underperforming in numeracy and in house assessments.
- The resource teacher may also provide additional classes in numeracy to students with special educational needs.
- The learning-support teacher / resource teacher may deliver this additional teaching support in several ways, including co-operative teaching with colleagues, small group or one to one support.
- The SET Co-ordinator and/or the learning-support teacher will share this information in a collaborative manner with subject teachers so that each teacher will be in an informed position to encourage and help students in all their subjects to develop their numeracy skills.

The role of the Senior Management Team may involve:

1. Creating and supporting a culture of continuous improvement and shared goals.
2. Supporting the development, implementation and integration across the curriculum of a whole school numeracy policy.
3. Engaging the whole staff in conducting a review of the numeracy provision currently available in the school and the range of interventions already being employed for the improvement of numeracy standards in the school.

4. Providing finance for material resources and ensuring efficient use of available resources.
5. Providing opportunities for effective communication between SEN Department, the Senior Management Team and subject departments so that numeracy and special educational needs are integrated.
6. Supporting the training needs of staff in the form of relevant and focused continuing professional development.

Whole School Actions & Interventions for the promotion of Numeracy (Whole School Teaching & Learning Activities/Strategies):

Teaching and Learning is a vital part of education. Both teachers and students will look at various strategies to encourage, promote and improve numeracy throughout the entire school body.

Some of these Teaching and Learning strategies include:

(a) Numeracy Rich environment

Create a numeracy rich classroom by:

- encourage students to use the correct numeracy language where possible.
- having lots of visual cues/reminders on display.
- referring regularly to the visuals on display.
- displaying student work in numeracy.
- classroom based projects & assignments.

(b) Key words

Acknowledge the importance of keywords by:

- pre-teaching key words for each topic.
- displaying keywords on wall/whiteboard and referring to them regularly.
- getting students to take note of the key words in the subject area.

(c) Graphic Organisers

Support students with numeracy difficulties

(d) Personal Numeracy

Promote student's competency and confidence regarding numeracy by:

- In pairs with a working partner.
- In small groups with opportunities to take on various roles.
- In whole class discussions.
- Presentations to the class (Junior Cycle CBA's)

(e) Employing estimation strategies

(f) Using the calculator

(g) Using patterns; graphs; charts as teaching aids

(h) Problem solving approach – recognise that there is never only one correct method for problem solving and encourage students to develop their own correct methods where appropriate. As a school we always encourage students to show their numeracy workings, rather than just the answer.

Evaluation & Review:

The Numeracy Policy will be reviewed as required. The evaluation will take place on a regular basis and will include teachers, students, parents/guardians and senior management.

When responding to pupils' work the staff in Ashbourne Community School may:

- make comments which are positive and supportive.
- target specific areas for improvement (a selective and focused identification of errors).
- provide guidance on how to achieve the short-term targets set, for example, comfortable using a calculator, use of numerical key works i.e., solve, evaluate.
- create opportunities for students to reflect on the quality of their own work and for peer assessment.

The Numeracy Strategy will be monitored and reviewed through:

- the school and departmental development plans.
- regular inclusion of numeracy on the agenda of subject department meetings and whole staff meetings.
- lesson observation.
- sampling pupils' work.
- discussion with staff, parents/guardians, and students.
- reviewing planning; analysing assessment data (tracking of state examinations results at Junior cycle & Senior cycle).
- discussion of student's information provided from the monitoring and review process which will inform decision making about improvements and further developments in Numeracy.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting 1st June, 2022. (Meeting Nr 270)

Date: 1st June, 2022.

Chairperson

Board of Management

Ashbourne Community School