

Coláiste Chiaráin



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Strategic Plan 2020 -2025



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Introduction

Coláiste Chiaráin officially opened in September 2017 following the amalgamation of St Aloysius College, Athlone and St Joseph's College. St Aloysius College, Athlone and St Joseph's College, Summerhill, Athlone served the boys and girls on the west side of the Shannon for many years. Both schools had a wonderful tradition in education. The decision to amalgamate the two Diocesan Colleges was announced in September 2015 following discussions and consultations over a number of years.

The Department of Education and Science informed the Diocese of a significant increase in pupil numbers in primary schools in the Athlone area, particularly West of the Shannon. This increase in enrolment in primary schools will generate a demand for approximately 600 new school places at post-primary level. This anticipated demand led to the development of a new school, initially catering for 500 students and rising to 1,000 pupils in the coming years.

An extensive technical examination of both sites was commissioned by the Diocese to ascertain which site would be most suitable for a 1,000 pupil school incorporating all modern educational and sporting facilities. The Summerhill site, with its extensive 28 acres beside the growing Monksland area (one of the fastest growing urban areas in the country) was ascertained to be the most suitable.

After this extensive research and consultation, the Diocese determined that the local community, local primary schools and the parents, boards of management and teaching staffs of St Joseph's College, Summerhill and St Aloysius College supported the provision of a fully equipped, modern, co-educational secondary school serving all the boys and girls of the area. The project management committee, made up of representation from both staff bodies, both parent committees and from the local parishes, worked closely with the DES at the planning stage. The project management committee also met with local representatives and with Roscommon County Council at a full plenary meeting.

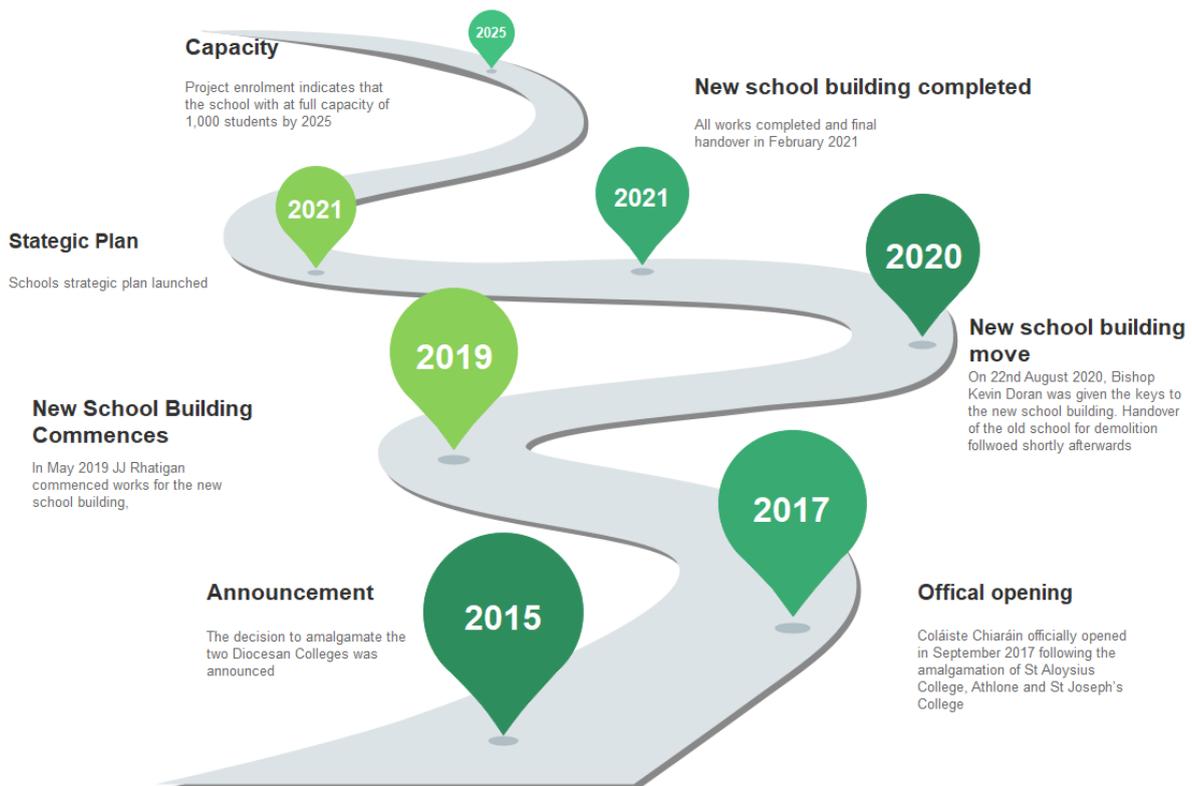
The primary consideration of the Diocese was to work towards the provision of second-level education for boys and girls with a broad range of subjects in state- of-the-art facilities. It

was agreed that this would be best achieved with a larger student population, which allowed for a wider diversity of subject choice. The Diocese made the entire site at Summerhill, comprising 28-30 acres, available for the school.

The new school crest, motto and uniform were agreed following consultations with staff and parents. The crest was designed by a local primary school following a competition in which all schools took part. An interim Board of Management was appointed until October 2017, after which a fully constituted board was appointed.

Teaching staff engaged in a joint programme of planning for the new school during the 2016/2017 academic year. Students who enrolled in St. Joseph's College and St. Aloysius College from 1st September 2016 have been wearing the same school uniform, have followed the same programme in each subject, and have been using the same textbooks.

Coláiste Chiaráin Milestones



School Profile

Coláiste Chiaráin has a current enrollment of 670 students, including 39 PLC students and 12 in our ASD special class.

Our students mainly come from the Athlone West and South Roscommon area. The student profile of the school has undergone significant change since amalgamation, with a reduction of students enrolling from Athlone East and an increase in enrolment from South Roscommon.

St Aloysius College was a DEIS designated school and as part of the amalgamation process, Coláiste Chiaráin retained some DEIS support including a HCSL officer and a pro-rata DEIS grant (for students who had attended St Aloysius college). The school does not receive enhanced capitation, book grants or other DEIS supports. These supports will cease in 2022.

The school has remained part of the Athlone-Ballinasloe School Completion Programme, with the board of management of Coláiste Chiaráin running the management and administrative structure of the SCP. A Local Management Committee comprising the six school Principals and the SCP Co-ordinator meet on a regular basis to oversee the programme. The school serves a number of socially disadvantaged areas of Athlone town as well as its hinterland. A small percentage of international students are also a feature of our student profile.

A new school building opened in August 2020 and can cater for up to 1,000 students. It has two ASD special needs units.

Mission Statement and Aims

Coláiste Chiaráin, Athlone, Co Roscommon is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Elphin.

In partnership with parents, the College strives to educate their children in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. It aims to foster students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and creative development and thereby develop their full potential.

Coláiste Chiaráin Athlone will endeavour to:

- Provide students with a Catholic education that has a sound spiritual, faith, academic and practical content.
- Nourish the building up of a personal relationship with God according to Catholic wisdom as lived out in the community of the church.
- Respect and facilitate the spiritual/human development of students from all religious traditions or faith stances.
- Assist students to reach their full potential by encouraging the talents and gifts unique to each one.
- Develop a sense of self-respect and responsibility among students for themselves and for those whom they can serve, and to foster a sense of community within the school.
- Foster an environment which enables staff and students to promote quality teaching and learning in an atmosphere which is enriching for everybody.
- Inspire students to respect and love their cultural and religious heritage and develop as responsible citizens.
- Encourage students to be creative in their use of leisure through the extra-curricular activities offered.

Enrolment Projections

A review of enrolment from St Aloysius and St Joseph's including traditional feeder schools was undertaken in 2017. A further review was undertaken in 2020. Taking into account the current enrolment for incoming 1st years, a list of schools who are and will be feeders for Coláiste Chiaráin has been identified (see below). There are:

19 Schools primary feeder schools

Ardkeenan National School, Ballybay Central National School, Ballinteleva National School, Brideswell National School, Camcloon National School, Carrick National School, Curraghboy National School, Castlesampson National School, Clonown National School, Cloonakilla National School, Cornafulla National School, Dean Kelly National School, Feevagh National School, Glanduff National School, Lecarrow Community National School, Newtown National

School, St. Ciaran’s National School, Moore National School, St. Peters National School, St Ronan’s National School, Summerhill National School

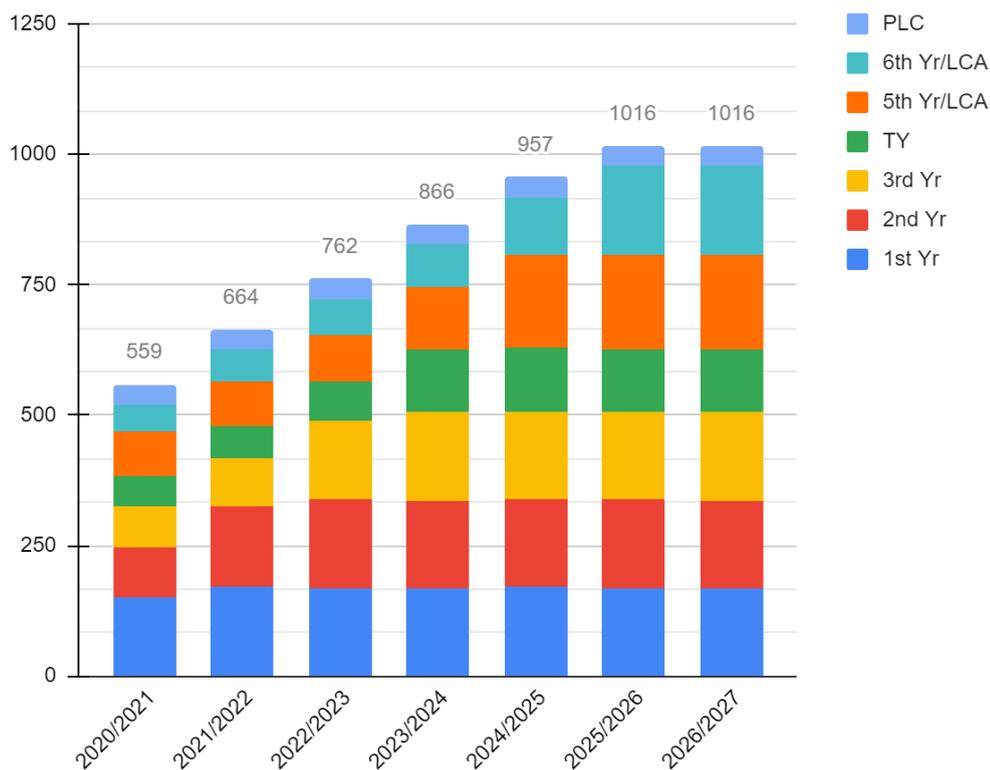
9 other feeder schools

Athlone Mixed National School, Baylin National School, Coosan National School, Cornamaddy National School, Creagh National School, Lismoil National School, Rahara National School, Scoil na gCeithre Máistrí, St Marys National School

The current admission policy has set the number of first year places available at 168.

If the school increases its intake from 144 to 168, the following projected enrolment averages will apply.

Enrolment Projections



Strategic Planning

The first Board of Management of Coláiste Chiaráin, with the agreement of the patron, decided to formulate a Strategic Plan for the school during its three-year term of office to

cover the five-year period from 2020 to 2025. The process was started in 2018 with a data-gathering exercise that involved all the stakeholders – students and their families, the staff, the patron and the local community.

The purpose of planning in this way is to:

1. Engage the school community and other stakeholders in the life of the school to provide a broad range of opinions and contributions. These contributions will guide the school to develop a focussed and targeted plan. Gathering contributions in this way will also help to build community support for the plan.
2. Provide a focus for the school's policies and development, formalising the school's mission, vision and values ensuring greater coherence and alignment of policies and practice with mission and vision.
3. Become more efficient and effective in deployment of resources

SECTION 2

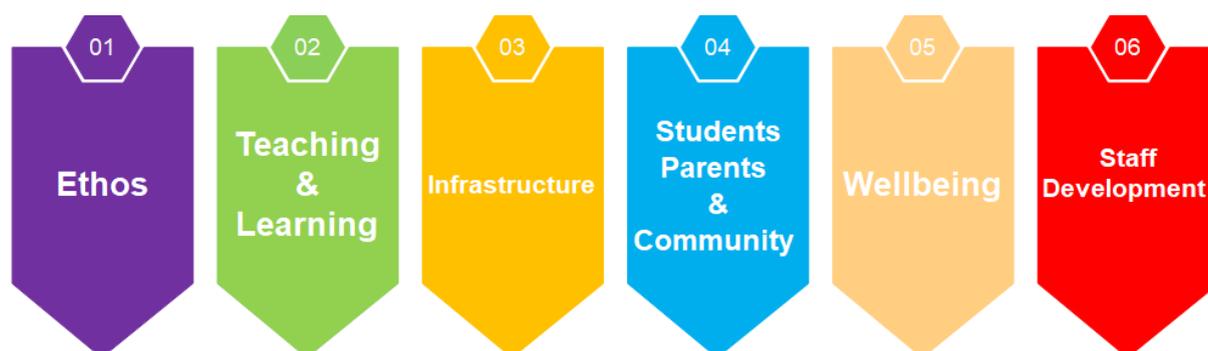
Methodology

The BOM was anxious to ensure the voices of the school patron, students, teachers, parents and relevant members of the community were heard and reflected in this Strategic Plan.

Online questionnaires were prepared using Google Docs and made available to the partners and an interview with Bishop Kevin Doran, the Patron, was arranged to discuss the school's ethos/ characteristic spirit.

The school has identified five pillars which underpin all school improvement and development for the school:

Six Pillars



1. Ethos

The characteristic spirit of the school is underpinned by its mission statement. As a Catholic school we offer faith formation opportunities for Catholics but are also fully inclusive of other faiths and beliefs.

2. Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is at the core of the school's progress. With the planned growth in student numbers and ongoing national educational change, improvement and development of the school's curriculum is central to our strategic planning

3. Infrastructure

With the completion of the new school building in 2021, strategic planning for external and internal development is necessary to ensure that facilities are in place to meet the needs of all members of the school community

4. Students, Parents and Community

From its inception, the involvement of the people in the hinterland with the school community has been central to the school's identity. Promoting student voice along with parent and community involvement in the school is critical to our progress as a school

5. Wellbeing

Ensuring the wellbeing of the whole school community, students, teachers and staff is also a priority area. Developing a responsive programme to meet the current and emerging needs of students and staff is an integral part of our short and long term planning

6. Staff Development

As our school grows and matures, staff both new and experienced should have opportunities for professional development. Promoting a culture of lifelong learning will continue to be central to our school.

The areas for inclusion in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan were identified and it is proposed that a number of school committees - with representation from students, teachers and parents – will be set up to oversee and coordinate the development of each of these strategic areas over the next five years. All these committees will be sub-committees of the Board of Management of the school and a report from each of them will be made to the board mid-year and at the end of the year for review.

The tools of ***School Self-Evaluation*** will be used extensively where data will be gathered to provide an evidence-based approach to planning. ***Looking At Our School 2016*** will guide the work and help in identifying topics and standards

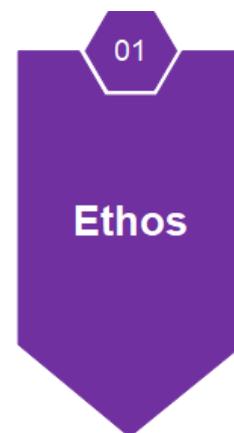
Action Planning was implemented around the 5 pillars commencing in the 2019/2020 academic year. As a result of the Covid19 pandemic many initiatives and plans have been adjusted to adapt to the extraordinary circumstances.

SECTION 3

Pillar 1- Ethos; promoting characteristic spirit

Mission

In partnership with parents the College strives to educate their children in a manner that is consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church. It aims to foster students' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and creative development and thereby develop their full potential.



By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Our students, teachers and parents/guardians will have a shared understanding of the school's mission and vision. These shared values will be reflected in our policies, practices, planning and interactions with each other. While the Religious Education department in the school will play an important role in promoting Catholic education, every other subject department will play an active part in supporting the school's ethos and practices.

It will be obvious to visitors to our school or to those who read our publications, online or in hard copy, that we are a Catholic school, offering faith formation opportunities for Catholics but also fully inclusive of other faiths and beliefs.

A school self-evaluation process will be used in prioritising areas for development and the statements of practice in Domain 3 of the Leadership and Management dimension of ***Looking At Our School 2016*** will be used as a reference guide in the evaluation of progress

DOMAIN 3: LEADING SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

STANDARDS	STATEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	STATEMENTS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
Communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation	The patron, board of management and principal are proactive in establishing and maintaining a guiding vision for the school.	The patron, board of management and principal are proactive in establishing and maintaining a guiding vision for the school.
	The school's guiding vision sets out goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. The principal takes responsibility for communicating this guiding vision, supported by the patron/ trustees and board of management.	The school's guiding vision sets out goals and expectations for the school as a learning community. The principal takes responsibility for communicating this guiding vision, and does so very effectively, working with the patron/ trustees and board of management.
	The principal communicates the guiding vision to teachers in a way that encourages them to see their responsibilities as fulfilling it.	The principal clearly communicates the guiding vision to teachers, parents and students in a way that empowers the whole school community to translate the vision into action.
	The principal takes positive steps to support and motivate staff, and to set high expectations for learners.	The principal inspires and motivates students, staff and the whole school community. He/she sets high expectations for every learner.

The areas for consideration by the sub-committee in the promotion of the characteristic spirit of Coláiste Chiaráin are outlined below but this committee, in conjunction with the school community will prioritise different areas for development of the five-year period.

(a) The Liturgical Calendar

During the Liturgical / Church Year we are invited to celebrate times of significance in the life of Jesus with a special place given to Mary and the saints. A special blessing of the new school building will take place in the near future, providing a very special opportunity for the school community to celebrate its Catholic ethos.

Events from the liturgical calendar that will be marked in Coláiste Chiaráin include:

August/ September	Start of Year School Mass
November	Remembrance, All Saints, All Souls
December	Christmas Mass, Carol Service
Feb/March	Ash Wednesday, Lent
March/ April	Easter Ceremony
May/June	Graduation Mass

(b) Infrastructure and Artefacts

A stained-glass window from St.Aloysius College has been incorporated into the new building, reminding the school community of part of its heritage. We are also developing a Prayer Room with the support of our diocese (patron) and the sub-committee will explore with the school community the most effective ways of using this resource to promote spirituality and our characteristic spirit. The school will explore the provision of a space for students of other faiths and beliefs.

Displays in the school – photos, posters, audio-visual displays – will also reflect and help to promote our ethos. We will include our students and teachers in discussions around the iconography and displays in classrooms. The Religious Education department will be consulted on the displays required in RE rooms that support the teaching of the subject. Our online presence will include the website and social media and these, as well as an annual prospectus, regular newsletters/ bulletins and school stationery will reflect our ethos through the language and the symbols used.

(c) Policies

Every school policy will include our Mission Statement and the intentions of the policies will be aligned with our mission and ethos.

(d) Practices

The parish-school link will be developed and strengthened during the 5-year period of this plan, building a personal and practical relationship with God and the church community. The school community includes people of other faiths and beliefs and strong and respectful relations will be built with them. Students will develop as responsible citizens through respecting their own and others' cultural heritages.

The school is very grateful to the diocese for its provision of a school chaplain to the school. This resource remains available to the school with the support of the parish and our Patron.

Pilgrimage and retreat are central to the discovery of the mystery and the magic of life and its meaning for us. Our college is named after St Ciarán who founded the local place of pilgrimage, Clonmacnoise and it is our intention to organise student retreats there. Knock shrine and other retreat centres will also be used to facilitate spiritual development.

Through the goodwill of teachers and other members of the community, it is our intention to offer a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities to our students, assisting them to reach their full potential. The programme will include social justice activities that foster a sense of community and social responsibility among school members. Our students will participate in the annual John Paul II Awards and the public speaking competition organised by the Knights of Columbanus. The diocese facilitates three networking opportunities per year for its school leaders to explore ethos development and support each other.

(e) Curriculum

Students in this school will be offered many opportunities for faith formation. This will happen in Religious Education classes, but many other opportunities will also be offered through participation and interactions with school and parish events. The school chaplain, provided by our patron, provides our school community with great opportunities for developing strong links with the parish. The booklet *'Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools'* produced by the JMB will be used in decision-making around catering for the needs of students of other faiths.

Relationships and Sexuality Education will be provided to our students and discussions around these sensitive issues will be in a values-based context and in all cases consistent with the teachings of the Catholic church.

The curriculum offered in the school is broad and varied and is designed to meet the needs of our students. There is an emphasis on the holistic development of each student. Subject options available to students will depend on the choices made by students, supported by their parents/guardians and guided by their teachers.

The ethos of the school will permeate all areas of the curriculum.

Pillar1- Ethos; promoting characteristic spirit

Priority Areas of Action
Establish an Ethos Committee comprising students, teachers, parents and representatives of the Bishop.
Introduce and embed John Paul 2 awards
Develop Prayer Room/ Sacred space in new school
Reflect the ethos through posters/iconography and in all promotional material. Develop stationery and an online presence that reflects the ethos.
Facilitate staff discussion on the evidence gathered and formulate a plan for the promotion of school ethos
Facilitate student discussion on their school and explore its distinctive aspects which are important to them and which should be promoted

Pillar 2: Teaching and Learning; progressing 21st century education



As part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) the school has worked on aspects of Assessment for Learning – developing learning intentions with associated success criteria, differentiation techniques and the collaborative and collective practices of teachers. These will continue to be part of the agenda in improving learning and teaching. The school also explored the possibility of extending the use of student Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Student Support Plans (SSPs) and Learning Targets to all teachers and staff.

The school is also involved in two School Cluster groups, as part of the School Excellence Fund, with other schools. The aim of the first project is to promote positive attitudes to Science and Technology which should result in enhanced student outcomes. The second project explores the use of embedded digital video strategies to enhance teaching and learning in Post-Primary schools.

By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Our students will enjoy coming to school and engaging meaningfully in the learning opportunities provided. They will seek to achieve the desired learning outcomes and develop the skills to become life-long learners.

Our teachers will value and engage in continuous professional development and work collaboratively, sharing their expertise around teaching, learning, assessment and reporting (TLAR).

Looking At Our School 2016 is the framework document that contains a Teaching and Learning dimension with four domains. The standards in each of these domains, along with their respective statements of practice, will be used to benchmark our progress.

	DOMAINS	STANDARDS
TEACHING AND LEARNING	Learner outcomes	Students: enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn, and expect to achieve as learners have the necessary knowledge and skills to understand themselves and their relationships demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the post-primary curriculum attain the stated learning outcomes for each subject, course and programme
	Learner experiences	Students: engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning
	Teachers' individual practice	The teacher: has the requisite subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and classroom management skills selects and uses planning, preparation and assessment practices that progress students' learning selects and uses teaching approaches appropriate to the learning intention and the students' learning needs responds to individual learning needs and differentiates teaching and learning activities as necessary
	Teachers' collective / collaborative practice	Teachers: value and engage in professional development and professional collaboration work together to devise learning opportunities for students across and beyond the curriculum collectively develop and implement consistent and dependable formative and summative assessment practices contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise

Curriculum

The curriculum reflects the school's ethos, values and priorities. Along with a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, it provides an outline of how the school will prioritise the development of good citizens and a just society. It provides content and coherence to education policies.

Curriculum planning attempts to ensure all our students receive a high-quality education that is appropriate to their needs in a rapidly changing world. The curriculum on offer in Coláiste Chiaráin reflects the views of students, teachers, our parents and our patron. A regular review of the curriculum is necessary to ensure its appropriateness for the needs of our students.

By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Students, teachers and parents/guardians will value the type of education offered by Coláiste Chiaráin and will feel empowered by the experience of being part of the school community.

The curricular programmes, subjects, short courses and learning programmes will continue to meet the needs of our students and will help them to become effective citizens who will contribute to a more just society.

Students will value education, enjoy their learning through interactions with their teachers and peers and will become independent and life-long learners.

The subcommittee working on this aspect of the plan will continue to develop the work done in the years 2018-2020 which includes the consideration of Short Courses in Junior Cycle and the promotion of Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) as a newly introduced programme..

The following curricular programmes are currently offered in the school:

Junior Certificate

- Core Subjects (Level 3)
 - Irish, English, Maths
 - History, Geography, Science, Religious Education
- Optional Subjects:
 - French, German
 - MTW, Metalwork, Technology, Technical Graphics, Art, Home Economics, Business, Music
- Wellbeing:
 - SPHE, CSPE, PE, Wellbeing, ICT, Guidance

Students complete a taster programme of optional subjects for 8 weeks in first year (term1). They then choose French or German and 2 other subjects.

Transition Year

Transition Year is an optional year. The programme is tailored to meet the needs of the students. The Programme typically contains the following:

- Core: Irish, English, Maths, RE, PE, Wellbeing, Guidance
- Subject Sampling: all optional subjects at leaving certificate offered in the school
- TY Modules: Elective modules e.g. YSI, Young Scientist, Robotics, Journalism, Environmental
- Calendar events: musical, work experience, cultural trips, Gaisce etc.

Leaving Certificate

- Core subjects
 - Irish, English Maths
 - Non-exam based subjects: Religious Education, PE, ICT, Guidance
- Optional Subjects
 - Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Agricultural Science, Leaving Certificate Physical Education
 - Business, Economics, Accounting, French, German
 - Construction Studies, Technology, Design & Communication Graphics
 - Geography, History, Home Economics, Art, Music
 - Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The following Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs) are offered:

- **Level 5: Early Childhood Care and Education 5M2009**
- **Level 6: Early Childhood Care and Education 6M2007**
- **Level 5: QQI Mathematics**

Leaving Certificate subjects are chosen by students using a “best fit” system of subject timetabling. Information sessions are organised for parents and students. The Guidance Counsellor provides advice and assistance as well as timetabled classes in Transition Year.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme:

Eligible students can follow the LVCP programme through their qualifying subjects and specific LCVP modules; *Enterprise Education* and *Preparation for the World at Work*. Students also participate in the school's *Business in the Community Programme*.

Autism Special Class:

- 2 Class Groups – 12 students
- Offering Junior Cycle Level 2 and Level 3 programmes

Areas for consideration include:

1. An annual curriculum review is necessary to reflect the needs of the students, school resources and education policy.
2. Religious Education (RE) requires 2 hours per week for all classes.
3. Currently, RE is an exam subject at Junior Cycle but not at senior cycle. The possibility of offering RE as an exam subject at senior cycle will be investigated.
4. The school will make sure that qualified teachers of RE are part of its resources.

5. Students with special educational needs will always be a priority in Coláiste Chiaráin and the school will always have the qualified staff to meet the needs of these students. The level 1 & 2 programmes for designated students will be available but opportunities to be 'mainstreamed' for some subjects will always be available. The Accelerated Reader library will be developed as a resource for SEN support.
6. The new Junior Cycle programme has Irish, English, Maths, History and Wellbeing as core areas. RE, as a central aspect of our ethos, is also core. The school has a high level of flexibility in relation to the mixture of subjects and short courses it offers, provided all students are facilitated to achieve the 24 Statements of Learning, and the views of students, teachers and parents/guardians will be sought when designing the curriculum for Junior Cycle. Of course, the school's resources are limited so this will also be a factor when finalising the curriculum.
7. Wellbeing requires 400 hours (out of approximately 2800 hours available for the 3 years of JC) over the three years of JC and this requires discussion and flexibility as it will involve taking time from other subjects to accommodate it.
8. 'Other Areas of Learning' (OAL) is an important part of JC and requires the school to provide opportunities for involvement of students in activities. A regular review of the activities on offer in the school is helpful in identifying areas that broaden the menu available.
9. Students will be given choices and options when it comes to their subject selection. Taster options will be provided in First Year before they make their final choices and Transition Year will remain optional.
10. With the introduction of Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), its promotion and sustained growth will be explored complementary to the traditional Leaving Certificate (LC) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). Students who qualify for LCVP will have the choice of taking it or they may opt for the LC. In both programmes, the subject options will depend on the choices made by students themselves, with the support of their parents/guardians and the guidance of their teachers.
11. The menu of subjects and other learning opportunities available to students in Transition Year will continue to be explored and developed, within the school's resources.

12. Subject departments will do an annual review of their subjects, looking at the level of interest, the uptake of the subject at higher level and student attainment compared to national averages. Strategies to improve uptake, particularly at higher level, and increase attainment will be outlined in a written plan which will be available to the BOM.
13. The possibility of adding languages such as Spanish to the Modern Foreign Language (MFL) menu will be actively pursued.
14. Cross-curricular interactions will be promoted, e.g., STEM, STEAM, School Excellence Fund etc.
15. The school will be involved in national and international projects that promote achievement, e.g., F1, Young Scientist, Maths and Science Olympiads, Debating and Public Speaking, Junk Kouture etc.
16. With the addition of the new facilities and a growing school, it would seem opportune continue and expand the traditions of school musicals and/or shows
17. It is our intention to have a school choir which will enter in competitions as well as perform at school events. This will be part of our overall aim to promote the Arts.
18. PLCs offered by the school require a review to ensure this is the best use of school resources and is meeting the needs of people in our community.

Pillar 2: Teaching and Learning; progressing 21st century education

Priority Areas of Action
Curriculum Planning Promotion and growth of new programmes and subjects
Examine feasibility of new LC subjects
School Self Evaluation: use SSE process for embedding all school improvement initiatives
As part of the school's promotion of teacher collaboration, teacher peer observation will be promoted and developed.
Examine the introduction of one-to-one student devices
Review the current provision of Post leaving Certificate courses in the school
Further integrate ASD classes into mainstream
Examine the transition for 40 minute to one-hour classes

Pillar 3: Infrastructure; enhancing the school campus and facilities

We are blessed to be in a new building with state-of-the-art facilities. This area of our planning is concerned with making the most efficient use of the facilities for our students and our community.

The current global pandemic has created opportunities as well as serious challenges in relation to how and when we use Information Communication Technology (ICT). Distance learning became a requirement from March to June 2020 and again in 2021; our teachers found themselves teaching online rather than in the classroom. Thankfully, we had a lot of work done in this area and most teachers were comfortable with the technology. However, there were problems with student access due to lack of devices or poor broadband in their homes.

The school has been using Google as its elearning platform for a number of years. This includes free access to the full suite of Google for Education suite of apps and resources. This suite contains apps for collaboration, communication, managing your classroom effectively, organising your tasks and provides the administrator with a range of tools to manage student accounts in a safe and secure way.

E-portfolios of student work can also be stored and assessed here and teachers can provide feedback to students on the work they've submitted.



By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Our school campus is and will remain a safe and inviting space where students feel a sense of belonging and are proud of their facilities. The students have had a say in the systems in place to maintain high Health & Safety standards and in the displays around the school in corridors and in classrooms.

Displays around the school celebrate student achievement and the vibrancy of the school. The school ethos is evident from iconography and displays at the entrance and around the school. The Prayer Room is a focal point in the building and is appreciated by students and staff.

The ASD facilities are an integral part of the school and students in these facilities are included in all communications and activities.

The excellent ICT facilities are secure and their use is guided and supported by security procedures that safeguard users, including an Acceptable User Policy. The technology platforms used in the school enable effective and safe synchronous and asynchronous distance learning.

Recreational spaces are clearly designated and safe and there are systems in place for their use – a booking arrangement for pitches etc.

The school's facilities are available to community groups when not being used by the school, subject to licencing and insurance arrangements.

The subcommittee will prioritise areas for development based on feedback from students and teachers (and parents and the wider community where relevant). The BOM will manage the areas relating to Health & Safety and the guidelines below will be used to ensure compliance with all the regulations.

Guidelines ^{on} Managing Safety, Health and Welfare in Post-Primary Schools



These guidelines are available from the Health & Safety Authority (HAS) at www.hsa.ie

The following list contains items for consideration by the school:

1. Use of the *PerCent for Art* scheme
2. The use of the Prayer Room and if there's a need for another sacred space for students of other faiths
3. Classrooms in the new school building have been deployed into subject areas. Further enhancement of these areas to showcase subjects and disciplines will need consideration and planning
4. The further development of social spaces as well as quiet spaces for teachers to prepare classes
5. Displays of student work – agree arrangements
6. The use of school facilities by community groups requires the board of management and school leadership to consider policy and procedural implications.

A written policy will need to be developed followed by procedures for booking, security, insurance, contracts etc.

7. The ICT infrastructure must have the required security to prevent viruses, hacking, unauthorised intrusions and user access to inappropriate material. All user accounts must be password-protected. There must be strict controls also around access to the school's online presence – website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc – to ensure that only appropriate material is posted. School management should know who administers the ICT network, who can post material online to the school's accounts and have possession of all passwords needed to access the network and any school accounts.
8. The integration of students in special classes will be a priority and this aspect will be regularly reviewed. The views of students in these classes and their teachers will be sought as part of the planning process.
9. The BOM will ensure Child Protection procedures are in place for all community groups that use the school's facilities.

Pillar 3: Infrastructure; enhancing the school campus and facilities

Priority Areas of Action
Implement the Per-cent art scheme for new school
Policy and procedures on use of facilities
Establish a Fundraising Committee and put in place reporting structures and communication channels
Review development proposals for external sporting facilities, including partnerships with other organisations

Pillar 4: Students, Parents and the Community; developing partnerships and communication

Coláiste Chiaráin is a Christian community whose educational goals are rooted in Christ and his Gospel. It offers a holistic education in this context to students living on the west side of Athlone and south Roscommon. It is our goal to build positive relationships and partnerships with this community and effective communications are a necessary part of this plan.

By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Parents/guardians will feel welcome at the school and feel that their opinions are valued and included in policy development. They will be actively involved in their children's education through attendance at Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) and other meetings organised by the school.

Parents/guardians will access reports on their children on the school's online (password-protected) portal. These reports will be formative in nature and outline their children's successes as well as a clear roadmap for further progress.

Parents/guardians will be involved in the school through the Parent Council, the Board of Management and on various committees set up from time to time to examine areas of interest.

Parents/guardians will be kept up to date on developments in the school through the school website and Twitter as well as Newsletters and annual reports. All reports on the school by the inspectorate will be available on the school website as well as the website of the Department of Educations and Skills

Parents/guardians will be aware of the school's internal evaluations through involvement in completing questionnaires, being members of committees and by viewing the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) report and School Improvement Plan (SIP) which will be published on the school's website.

The wider school community will be aware of the school's extensive facilities and their availability to the community, subject to licencing by the patron, indemnification of the BOM and alignment of the proposed event with the school's ethos.

Areas for consideration by the subcommittee will include items from the list below:

1. The format of Parent Teacher Meetings (PTM) should be considered as a result of new assessment and reporting procedures implemented in 2019. Students and

their families should be more aware of their progress as a result of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches implemented in the classroom. AfL is a constant in every class and teachers will provide regular feedback (mostly oral) on where students are in the learning journey, where they need to be and formative instructions on how to get there. Reporting has become more formative also and parents/guardians should have a better understanding of what their child needs to do in order to reach higher standards of attainment. Therefore, what is left to tell the parents/guardians at a PTM that they don't already know? The current COVID pandemic also has implications for meetings but these will be dealt with in guidelines from the DES.

2. The areas for involvement of parents/guardians in the lives of their children in school will be examined and developed, where possible. Currently these include PTMs, attendance at meetings for issues relating to their children's education and welfare, subject choice and levels and choices relating to choice of curricular programme in senior cycle – TY, LC or LCVP. Joining the Parent Council is also open to all parent/guardians and some may wish to go forward for election to the Board of Management.
3. The school will have clear systems for home-school communications. Teachers are aware of the system for contacting parents/guardians when they have concerns and this is logged in a way that Class Tutors, Year Heads and senior management are aware that contact has been made. This avoids duplication and causes annoyance for teachers and families.
4. Parents are aware of the system for contacting a teacher or a member of the management team if they have concerns.
5. It is very important to establish if all families have access to the information published by the school on an online forum or by email. Alternative means of communication should be put in place for these homes.
6. When parents/guardians visit the school, it is clear where they are to go and there is a designated waiting area or parents room which provides privacy and comfort.
7. The school and the Parent Council will organise a variety of presentations for parents that encourage engagement and participation and help to break down barriers.

8. Home School Community Liaison is an extremely important role in community building. With the future loss of HSCL allowance from DES, alternative home school liaison systems should be examined
9. The school will prepare an outline of its facilities that may be rented by community groups and the conditions for rental. This information will be on the school website and in the local newspaper. Consideration could be given to inviting members of local community groups to a meeting in the school to show the facilities and address any questions that arise.
10. The school will continue its involvement in the 'Business in the Community (BITC) project in association with a local company, Alkermes. This company offers skills development opportunities for students in Transition Year and in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) as well as leadership skills programmes for teachers who are in leadership positions or are aspiring leaders.

Pillar 4: Students, Parents and the Community; developing partnerships and communication

Priority Areas of Action
Develop Parents Handbook and website page
Review Internal and external communication strategies
Further strengthen links with local industry and employment, through Business in the Community and other initiatives

Pillar 5: Wellbeing; looking after the whole school community

Student Voice and Student Support

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children and young people have a right to ‘have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.’ This is very much in line with our mission in Coláiste Chiaráin to foster an environment which enables staff and students to promote quality teaching and learning in an atmosphere which is enriching for everybody. We value children’s and young people’s ‘unique perspectives on learning, teaching and schooling’ and recognises that ‘they should be afforded opportunities to actively shape their education’. (Cook-Sather, 2006). The school is guided by the findings in the NCCA research study, The Learner Voice Research Study (2017).

It’s not enough to listen to students; their views will be given due weight in decision-making around policies and systems that operate in the school.

Pastoral care of students is an integral part of our ethos and mission. The school will develop a number of systems to support the pastoral care that happens naturally in the classrooms every day.

By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Our students will feel they really belong in Coláiste Chiaráin. School policies have been devised using input from students (as well as the other partners), including the Code of Behaviour. We have a Student Leadership policy which outlines the huge range of opportunities in the school where students can develop their leadership skills.

We have a dynamic Student Council with representatives from each year group, elected by the students themselves. The council meets the staff, Parent Council and the Board of Management each year to listen to each other’s plans and explore opportunities to work together in developing these plans. The council interacts with student councils in other schools, sharing ideas and exploring social justice issues.



Teachers have high levels of skill in relation to Assessment for Learning. This includes the skills of listening to students in the evidence-gathering stage and in the feedback stage. The teachers hear from students to assess their progress and the students hear from the teacher to establish the gaps in their learning. This dialogue ensures classes are appropriately paced and differentiation techniques are used by teachers to meet the needs of the range of abilities in the classroom. While learning intentions are generally devised by the teachers, the students have an active part in setting the success criteria. Students also reflect on their work and inform their teachers about teaching methodologies that best suit their styles of learning.

Students are supported by policies in which they were involved in formulating – Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Wellbeing, Attendance Strategies, Rewards and Awards – and are very aware of the roles of the Care Team/ Student Support Team.

Students are very aware of the strong emphasis on social justice issues in the school and the care given to students who are economically and/or socially disadvantaged.

The subcommittee will work closely with the students when developing this area. The standard in Domain 4 of Leadership and Management (LAOS 2016) will be explored and the statements of practice will provide guidance.

STANDARDS	STATEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	STATEMENTS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
Promote and facilitate the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership	Those in leadership and management roles value students' views, and support students' involvement in the operation of the school.	Those in leadership and management roles recognise students as stakeholders , value their views, and ensure their involvement in the operation of the school.
	They ensure that the student council is democratically elected, and that it is included in decision-making.	They ensure that the student council is democratically elected and representative , and is a catalyst for change , with an active role in decision-making and policy development .
	They offer students opportunities to take leadership roles.	They support students in taking leadership roles by facilitating relevant training and providing opportunities to lead school initiatives.
	Those leading the SSE process recognise the need to listen to students and are increasingly consulting students on their own learning.	Those leading the SSE process actively consult and engage with students to review and improve teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Some of the areas below may be considered by the subcommittee when developing ways of promoting a strong student voice:

1. The teaching staff will explore the key aspects of student voice, possibly using the NCCA document, *The Learner Voice*, which outlines the areas that students consider to be important. It's essential that there is a shared understanding of student voice and a consistent approach by teachers in responding to the views of students.

2. Ways of hearing from all students, particularly those with special needs, will be considered. Peer/ group work in classrooms offers opportunities for the shy or reluctant student to have their voices heard in a small group and then reflected in the answers offered to the teacher.
3. The school will audit the ways the student voice has been heard – what has changed or been done as a result of hearing from students?
4. The work of the Student Council will be evaluated each year by the students and they will report to the BOM on their successes and their contribution to the school. Of particular interest will be the collaborative work that may have been done by working with teachers, parents and the board of management. The student council will also rate the extent to which student voice is heard in the school.
5. An audit of the opportunities for student leadership and participation in the school, the parish and the local community will be carried out annually and new opportunities will be explored through working with the students.
6. The Student Council will be given the opportunity to consider school policies that affect them and offer their opinions before the policies are ratified by the board of management.
7. The views of students in relation to school policies and systems will be given due weight and respect.
8. Classroom culture is extremely important in facilitating student voice. The classroom is a safe space to be and students feel that it's ok to make a mistake without running the risk of being scorned by their peers. Collaborative and investigative approaches to learning are encouraged, resulting in creative and innovative learning opportunities where all answers and opinions are valued.
9. A range of assessment techniques will be used in the classroom and the views of students will be considered when deciding on the modes of assessment.

Student Wellbeing

The school will continue to place a strong emphasis on student wellbeing, inside and outside the classroom. The Wellbeing Programme will be regularly discussed and reviewed

to ensure consistency in its implementation. This reduces anxiety and stress among students as it's easier to understand the decisions being made.

The school will devise and promote policies, with input from all school partners, that support students and will include incentives that reward achievement in a broad range of areas.

The *Friends for Life* programme for First Years will continue to be developed and supported in conjunction with the *Nurture for Wellbeing* programme.

Pillar 5: Wellbeing; looking after the whole school community

Priority Areas of Action
The school will explore the key aspects of student voice, with opportunities for student leadership and participation in the school, the parish and the local community to be promoted.
Establish a Wellbeing Committee to research a Wellbeing Plan for students and staff.
Research and develop healthy eating policy
Investigate active schools programmes
Implement Friends for Life programme and Nurture for Wellbeing programme in Junior Cycle
Review extra-curricular activities and develop a pilot programme for lunchtime activities and non-sporting activities

Pillar 6: Staff Development

Our staff includes teachers, special needs assistants, secretaries, caretakers and cleaners. All of these members of staff need professional development opportunities and our planning over the next five years will include facilitating our staff to engage in professional development.



By 2025, as a result of the strategies we implement:

Our senior and middle leadership and management teams have explored and developed their leadership skills in relation to enhancing learning outcomes for students. They have a shared understanding of the school's characteristic spirit which they actively promote through regular engagement with students, parents and the local community.

Our teachers have availed of all subject-related inservice from the DES support agencies and are active members of their subject associations. Our BOM has incentivised, financially and otherwise, teacher participation in academic courses leading to accreditation by recognised bodies. Collaboration among teachers has developed to a high level in subject planning – particularly in assessment practices – and peer support, formal and informal. They have developed skills and knowledge that has led to a culture of inclusion and holistic development, closely aligned to the school's ethos.

All other staff are involved in staff professional development days, exploration of ethos seminars and social occasions that help to build a team and a sense of belonging. Their views have been sought in relation to policy development and systems that operate in the school.

Domains 3 and 4 of the Teaching and Learning dimension of **Looking At Our School 2016** (see table above) will be used in identifying areas for development and the statements of practice will provide a basis for identifying the school's current stage of development and the possibilities for progress.

The sub-committee set up to coordinate this area of our plan will prioritise a series of steps, using School Self-Evaluation (SSE) techniques, to address this pillar and may consider the areas below in their planning.

1. The BOM will pay the membership fees of teachers who join their subject associations and become active members. In return, teachers will include the resources from their meetings in their subject department resources, sharing their

learning with colleagues through discussion. Teachers will be involved in the Cosán development process (Teaching Council).

2. The BOM will set aside an annual budget to incentivise teacher engagement in accredited courses.
3. The staff will participate in school-organised workshops to explore the school’s ethos and examine practical ways of developing school practices that highlight and promote this ethos.
4. All in-service offered by JCT and other DES bodies which support a new programme, syllabus/specification or curriculum will be available by the school.
5. All recommendations in school evaluation reports from the inspectorate will be implemented and, if necessary, external support will be arranged to address any deficits identified.
6. PDST offers support to teachers in a range of areas and their support will be sought if a need is identified in the school that can be met by PDST resources.
7. The staff will consider the idea of a Social Committee that will organise a range of social events each year that involve all staff, teachers and others. These events will help to build team spirit and help promote a collaborative and inclusive school culture. These events can be school based, e.g., a fitness class in the school gym or can be trips away from the school.
8. Wellbeing begins in the staffroom; it’s easier for teachers to be effective members of the school’s Student Wellbeing Programme if they feel cared for and respected. Therefore, the school will develop a Dignity in the Workplace policy that places staff wellbeing at its core.
9. The Middle Leadership & Management team will play a constructive role in managing the organisation and this domain of Leadership & Management in **Looking At Our School 2016** will be used in identifying areas for development.

Managing the organisation	<p>School leaders: establish an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, and maintain it through effective communication manage the school’s human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice develop and implement a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability</p>
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10. The school will provide effective induction programmes for new teachers as part of the *Droichead* process. We will develop an effective written policy for induction of new staff and this will be implemented by identified members of our leadership team. We are a *Droichead school* with trained inhouse staff This includes involvement in a mentoring programme.
11. The school will develop its engagement in the *Forbairt Programme* being offered by the Professional Development Service Team (PDST). This will involve an being part of an Action Learning Network (ALN) where we identify an action that can be taken in the school to improve learning outcomes and work on this as a Professional Learning Team (PLT), sharing our findings with other PLTs around the country and learning from each other in a collaborative way.
12. All relevant courses being offered at Athlone Education Centre will be publicized in the school and staff will be encouraged to attend. Participants will be asked to bring back the learning to their subject departments and to the staff. Attendance by teachers at courses will be recorded and will contribute towards ‘Croke Park’ hours and may be part of the Cosán process in the future.
13. Opportunities for staff to promote areas of interest in the school, that are aligned to our ethos, will be provided and encouraged.
14. The school will explore procedures for identifying staff for training for positions such as Career Guidance & Counselling, Special Educational Needs teachers and leadership development.

Pillar 6: Staff Development

Priority Areas of Action
Provide effective induction programmes for new teachers as part of the <i>Droichead</i> process.
Develop staff professional development opportunities
Promotion of Staff Wellbeing
The school will develop its engagement in the Forbairt Programme being offered by the Professional Development Service Team (PDST)