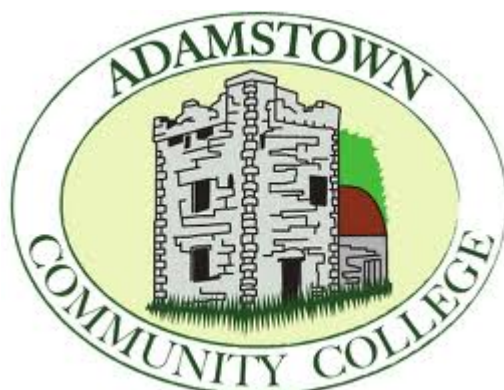# Adamstown Community College

Literacy Policy

Mission Statement

Adamstown Community College promotes a happy and caring school environment where pupils are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. The emphasis will be placed on quality teaching and learning, positive behaviour and the pursuit of standards of excellence in all areas of college activities and academia. Our philosophy is based on respect and understanding while appreciating the diversity of our changing world.

Rationale

We at Adamstown Community College aim to ensure that we maintain a strong focus on literacy and numeracy skills, within a broad and balanced curriculum. We acknowledge that a key element of equal education opportunities provision is the fostering of good literacy skills which are essential to the life prospects of each person and vital for the quality and equity of Irish society. Adamstown Community College is committed to raising the standards of literacy of its students in order that each student will master these crucial skills to the best of their ability so they can enjoy high levels of self-esteem.

Definition of Literacy:

Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media permeating every aspect of a student's life.

Aims of the policy:

- To adopt a whole-school approach to literacy across the curriculum.
- To ensure subject specific literacy is taught in all subject areas, including subject specific vocabulary and to recognise the reading and writing demands of specific subjects.
- To link literacy to the transition programme from primary to secondary school. 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 EAL Policy).
- To support the development of literacy skills throughout the curriculum. 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.
- To raise staff awareness of key literacy strategies.
- To support the development of literacy through the deployment of a range of resources in the school e.g. Library, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) suites and equipment etc.
- To identify specific roles and responsibilities within the school and school community with regard to the development of literacy work.
- To establish procedures for monitoring literacy across the curriculum and compile comprehensive data.
- To ensure that parents/guardians are as fully informed as possible about literacy issues.

Objectives:

Through the implementation of this policy we in Adamstown Community 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 (EAL).
- Have an interest in words, their usage and meanings and an extensive vocabulary used appropriately for different purposes.
- Use appropriate reading strategies to extract particular information, e.g. highlighting, scanning.

- 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 writing for different audiences.
- Have an extended technical vocabulary with which to discuss and evaluate their reading and writing.
- Read and write with enjoyment and through reading and writing develop their powers of imagination, critical awareness and thinking.
- Use oral expression 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 the audience and purpose.
- To encourage students to be confident users of subject specific vocabulary and correct spellings.
- To encourage students to be aware of different current affairs and issues in order to have an ability to form opinions based on these.
- Elevate pupils' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards.

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 CPD 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.
- Liaise with the Learning Support Department.
- Should have a common correction code which is used within the whole school community.
- Students needing additional help are supported through the use of LEXIA software. The school has purchased 60 licences.

Subject Departments should:
- Ensure that 'subject specific literacy' is clearly identified in schemes of work and subject plan.
- Monitor the work of the department with regard to the inclusion of literacy in department plans/ schemes of work.

- Use available assessment data to identify appropriate literacy schemes of work including the Special Educational Needs (SEN) team who can all provide expert advice identifying subject specific literacy strategies in lesson planning collaboration between colleagues in order to promote literacy development strategies.

Parents:

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 journals to review work and sign on a weekly basis.
- 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 and encourage reading in quiet spaces at home; this would be particularly pertinent during holiday periods.
- Accessing the reading list to be put on our website.
- Engaging with their child's Google Classroom assignments and class materials.

The Principal/Deputy Principal should:

- Establish such structures and procedures that are necessary for the implementation of the policy.
- Provide opportunities to staff for CPD in this area.
- Monitor the implementation of the policy.
- Support teachers in their subject planning in relation to literacy.

Students should:

- Make every effort to improve their literacy skills.
- Participate and involve themselves with all activities provided by staff to improve literacy.
- Adhere to the Homework Policy.
- Have access to, and be familiar with, the use of an English dictionary in every classroom.

Strategies/ Initiatives in Adamstown Community College
Monitoring Procedures:

- Tracking of results at State Examinations and literacy levels through CAT testing.

- Tracking of numbers taking Higher and Ordinary Level paper.
- Inclusion of review of literacy strategies at all subject department meetings on a regular basis.
- Review by SEN teams.
- Regular inclusion of literacy issues at AP, staff and other relevant meetings.

Strategies implemented in Adamstown Community College:
- Literacy Week
- Whole school correction code
- Recommended reading list
- Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)
- Adamstown active readers (Library)
- Classroom displays
- Literacy and Numeracy notice boards are being populated with materials from each department throughout the year on a fortnightly basis..
- English language debating team

Evaluation of Strategies/ Initiatives:

Improved literacy standards among all students measurable in part by:

- Reading Age scores
- Increased numbers taking Higher Level papers at Leaving Certificate
- Increased numbers achieving higher grades in all subjects
- Increased retention rates
- Increased progression rates to 3rd Level