Mercy Secondary School, Mounthawk

School Self-Evaluation '25-26

School Improvement Plan '25/26

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk
School Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Teaching & Learning

Embedding Critical Thinking into the Creative Learning Environment

Wellbeing

Consolidate Integration of the Bí Cineálta Charter

Attendance

Improvement in Full Attendance Across Senior Cycle

Digital Literacy

Development of Digital Skills for Senior Cycle

2024: Creative Schools, Nurturing Connectedness, Linking Guidance & SPHE/Staff Wellbeing, AI as a T&L Tool
2023: Yondrs/Punctuality/Seating Plans, Promoting Full Attendance, Resilience/Restorative Practice, AI/Cybersecurity

DIGITAL LITERACY SIP

	IMPROVEMENT TARGET 1 Staff Targets	REQUIRED ACTIONS	SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION
DIGITAL LITERACY	1. **Staff Capacity: Digital Tools & Pedagogy**	Teachers embed digital skills into subject teaching and use a common toolkit consistently	- PD on AI, data handling, media creation, research, assessment - Shared templates, exemplars, workflows - Cross-subject collaboration - 100% teachers trained Evidence of toolkit integration Teacher feedback should indicate an increased confidence, reduced workload	Senior Management, ICT Department All Staff	2025–2028
	2. **Staff Awareness: Digital Ethics & AI Use**	Teachers understand safe, ethical, and transparent AI use	- Training on SEC/NCCA AI guidance - Share checklists & "good vs bad AI use" examples - Embed ethics discussions in lessons- All project briefs reference AI & ethics - Compliance confirmed in audits - Positive teacher reflections	Senior Management, ICT Department Subject Teachers	2025–2028
	IMPROVEMENT TARGET 2	**REQUIRED ACTIONS**	**SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES**	**PERSONS RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION**

	Student Targets				
	1. **Student Mastery: Digital Literacy Across Senior Cycle**	Students demonstrate mastery-level digital skills aligned with NCCA competencies - Integrate digital literacy objectives into all subjects- Scaffold skills: TY → 5th → 6th (Introduce → Emerging → Mastery)- Adopt minimal toolkit (cloud suite, Canva, video/audio editors)	- 90% of students achieve mastery - Evidence of digital tools across subjects - Progression logs show skill growth	ICT Department, Subject Departments, Senior Management	2025–2028
	2. **Student Research & AI Literacy**	Students plan, evaluate, reference, and ethically use info & AI Train in online research, evaluation, referencing, AI ethics Provide templates and approved AI tools AI use only at brainstorming / drafting stage	- Projects show credible, cited research - AI used appropriately - Internal audits confirm improved research quality	ICT Department, TY & Senior Cycle Teachers	2025–2028
	3. **Student Data Literacy & Visualization**	Students collect, process, and present data in charts/graphs - Teach data entry, cleaning, analysis, visualization- Provide spreadsheet tutorials & dashboards- Link projects to Science, Maths, Geography, Business, PE	- Accurate, clear data in reports/presentations - Charts/graphs in ≥70% of projects - Teacher assessment confirms understanding	Subject Teachers, ICT Department	2025–2028
	4. **Student Content Creation**	Students create professional docs, slides, Canva designs, video/audio	- Projects include well-designed documents & media - Peer/teacher review shows improvement - Digital portfolios maintained	Teachers, ICT Department, TY & Senior Cycle Coordinators	2025–2028

		- Workshops on documents, slides, Canva, video/audio- Provide templates & exemplars- Embed in cross-curricular projects			
	5. **Student Collaboration & Communication**	Students collaborate effectively using digital tools - Train in shared docs, collaborative planning, feedback - Use LMS for group work - Establish peer-feedback rubrics	- Evidence of group projects in shared platforms - Student reflections indicate effective collaboration - Teacher observation confirms peer feedback	Teachers, ICT Teachers	2025–2028
	6. **Student Project & File Management**	Students organise, manage, and track long-term projects - Teach file naming, folder structure, version control, cloud use - Introduce portfolios & project log templates - Link to deadlines & milestones	- Well-organised projects with version history - Digital portfolios comprehensive - Reduced file management errors	Teachers, ICT Department, TY & Senior Cycle Coordinators	2025–2028
	7. **Student Digital Citizenship & Wellbeing**	Students use digital tools responsibly, ethically, with awareness of wellbeing - Workshops on privacy, digital footprint, misinformation, AI ethics-Curated resources & school guidelines-Embed ethics/wellbeing discussions	- Ethical online behaviour in projects - Awareness of AI rules, plagiarism, digital wellbeing evident - Reduced misuse incidents	SPHE & CSPE Teachers, ICT Department, All Teachers	2025–2028

TEACHING AND LEARNING SIP

	IMPROVEMENT TARGET 1	REQUIRED ACTIONS	SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION
TEACHING AND LEARNING	**Staff Target:**	1. To create a working group of teachers who will explore the impact of AI on our students critical thinking skills	**a) Establishment & Engagement** • A cross-curricular **AI & Critical Thinking Working Group** is established by December 2025. • The group includes representation from at least **6 subject areas**. • The group meets **at least once per half term** (minimum 4 meetings per year). • Meeting minutes and action points are recorded and shared with staff. **b) Research & Exploration** • The working group reviews **research sources** (academic articles, policy documents, case studies) relating to AI and critical thinking in education. • A **baseline audit** is completed on current student use of AI (e.g. survey data, teacher observations, assessment evidence). • The group: o Identified risk and benefits of AI use for critical thinking o Subject-specific implications o Initial recommendations for classroom practice	Senior Leadership Team – Deputy Principal SSE Co-ordinator Teaching & Learning Lead Teachers from the Working Group (implementation); Classroom Teachers (delivery and impact).	November 2025 – Jan 2026

| | | 2. To explore methodologies which will promote the use of critical reasoning skills in an era of AI | a) **Pedagogical Development**

• The working group identifies and pilots **at least 3 teaching strategies**, such as:
   o AI-assisted critique task
   o Socratic questioning and justification frameworks
   o "Explain your thinking" or metacognitive prompts
   o AI comparison and evaluation task
• E**xemplar lessons / task Principals** is created and shared across departments.

b) **Classroom Implementation**

• By a specified term, **X% of departments** have trialled at least one agreed critical reasoning strategy.
• Lesson observations, learning walks, or work scrutiny show:
   o Increased use of questioning that requires justification, evaluation, and synthesis
   o Reduced reliance on AI-generated responses without explanation | Senior Leadership Team – Deputy Principal

SSE Co-ordinator

Teaching & Learning Lead

Teachers from the Working Group (implementation);

Classroom Teachers (delivery and impact). | Feb 2025 – June 2026 |
| **IMPROVEMENT TARGET 2** | **REQUIRED ACTIONS** | **SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES** | **PERSONS RESPONSIBLE** | **TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION** |

| | **Student Target:** | 1. Improvement in students' critical thinking skills

2. Improved awareness by our students of what reasonable use of AI is. | **c) Student Outcomes**

• Student work demonstrates:
   o Improved ability to **justify answers**, evaluate sources, and explain reasoning
   o Clear distinction between AI-generated content and personal reasoning
• Comparative assessment data shows:
   o Improvement in higher-order assessment criteria (analysis, evaluation, synthesis)
   o Reduced incidence of uncritical AI usage in assessed work
• Student surveys indicate:
   o Greater awareness of when and how AI should be used
   o Increased confidence in independent thinking and reasoning | Deputy Principal

SSE Co-ordinator

Working group teachers | Feb 2026 – May 2026 |

WELLBEING SIP

	IMPROVEMENT TARGET 1	REQUIRED ACTIONS	SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION
Wellbeing	**A. Staff Target:** Encourage staff training in areas that relate to inclusion, empathy and anti-bullying. We will also aim to continue to	1. We will send links to staff to train in restorative practices and the Oide course on Cyberbullying.	1.Staff will be asked to email their certs to be uploaded to Google Drive. The aim will be that a minimum of 40 staff will complete the Oide course this year.	Wellbeing Co-Ordinator Deputy Principal (SC) All Staff	Academic year 2025-2026

	raise awareness of the Cinealta procedures for staff.	2. More teachers/members of the pastoral care team will be invited to join the Helping Hands Team as we plan to conduct the sociogram to all 1st and 2nd year classes. Teachers will be encouraged to read the results and recommendations for the classes they teach. The sociogram will be an important aspect of our Cinealtas policy.	2.At the end of the year we will have a focus group consisting of 1st year base teachers to see if they feel students appeared more relaxed when seated with a partner recommended after the sociogram. The deputy principal will have casefiles on whether it improved particular cases of bullying in 1st and 2nd year.	Deputy Principal (JC) Wellbeing Co-Ordinator	April 2026
		3. **(Culture and Environment)** Organise a Culture Day, events for Anti-Bullying Week, a Stand Up Week and weekly meetings with the Wellbeing Student Council Committee.	3.Students will be aware of the events through social media posts, weekly assembly and corresponding curriculum links sent to teachers. At the end of the year we will create a file of student testimonials as a means of measuring it's success.	D.Buckley N.Fitzgerald McBride S. Kissane Wellbeing Committee Student Council Wellbeing Committee	Academic Year 2025-2026

		4. Keep staff updated on anti-bullying events and the progress of the implementation of the procedures.	4. Include regular updates on Wednesday assemblies and during staff meetings.	Deputy Principal Wellbeing Co-Ordinator	Ongoing
		5. Staff will be consulted for their input in the creation of a student friendly version of the school anti-bullying policy.	5. A selection of teachers will be given a rough draft of the student friendly anti-bullying policy. A meeting will then be scheduled to finalise the document before it goes to the student council Wellbeing Committee for final consultations.	Wellbeing Co-Ordinator/Deputy Principal/Wellbeing Committee	April 2026

11

B. Curriculum	1.Staff will use the Fuse Anti-bullying programme in all JC SPHE classes. This course will be conducted for a **minimum** of 3 hours in classes. The SPHE department will also be co-creating the new SC SPHE curriculum and consider which anti-bullying/empathy resources/restorative practices would be appropriate for senior cycle. The FUSE SC course will be implemented in September subject to publication by the department. for senior cycle which will be rolled out when it is released.	1.Students will complete at least one reflection on anti-bullying courses, procedures or events in the school as part of their CBA (3 pieces of work required, one of which must be in relation to anti-bullying).	Wellbeing Co-Ordinator SPHE teachers	April 2026
IMPROVEMENT TARGET 2	**REQUIRED ACTIONS**	**SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES**	**PERSONS RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION**
Student Target: By the end of the year all students should be aware of the charter and the school's student friendly anti-bullying policy. Junior Cycle classes will be	1. All 1st year and some 2nd year classes will be analysed for power dynamics in the classroom using the Helping Hands programme.	Those students who have an unhealthy effect on the classroom dynamics will be identified as well as vulnerable and controversial students. Teachers will be made aware and a seating plan in groups of 2/3 will be made	Year Heads Deputy Principal (JC) Wellbeing co-ordinator	Nov 25-Feb 2026 May 2026

			available to base class teachers.(ON Corr interviews)		
	analysed using the Helping Hands programme and power dynamics in base classes will be analysed.	2. The student council Wellbeing Committee will visit each class in the school with a PPT and a short lesson plan on the importance and significance of the school charter along with the student friendly version of the anti-bullying policy.	All students will be aware of the charter and the policy, know where to find it. (The charter can be found in each classroom and in student journals). The policy will be displayed in the GP area. We will measure this by conducting a pop quiz in the school corridors and recording the results on Google Drive during Wellbeing Week.	Wellbeing Co-ordinator

Deputy principal

Wellbeing co-ordinator

SPHE teachers | Feb 2026 |
| | | 3.   All students will complete the Fuse Anti-Bullying Programme as well as the Activating Social Empathy in JC. Senior Cycle: we are awaiting the department resources for both in SC. | All students will complete a reflection in class. 3rd years will complete a CBA reflection on the topic. | SPHE teachers | March 2026 |

ATTENDANCE SIP

	IMPROVEMENT TARGET 1	REQUIRED ACTIONS	SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION
ATTENDANCE	**Staff Target:** 1.Create an Attendance Sub-Committee who will work with the Tier 2 and 3 students and their families on improving their attendance (LB, DD, KN, MD, MR, BMB, PS, LM, MD, SOS, DH, TB, KM)	**a) Establishment & Engagement** • Train the Attendance sub-committee on the TESS Anseo programme and how to identify the Tiers • Personal communications with the family and student to create and support a plan for improved attendance • Nudge letters, meetings with parent(s), meeting/s with student, reward system	To have a functioning Attendance Committee identifying students to support. Meetings take place between members from the Attendance Committee and the students and their families To have identifies students who need access to the Nurture Space in the school To run the "Enlisting the Student Voice" Mounthawk Glor School-Connection programme with these students Baseline data for Tier 2 and 3 students will have improved by 5%.	Senior Leadership Team – Deputy Principal SSE Co-ordinator Attendance Sub-committee	Feb 2026 – May 2026
	2.Place additional focus on creating a structured, supportive, welcoming, safe classroom learning	Greeting students at the door of our classrooms, Ensuring to include the names of our students in our rooms. Effective anti-bullying policies	**a) Classroom Implementation** Clear routines, seating plans to ensure a calm safe classroom environment.	Senior Leadership Team – Deputy Principal All staff	Feb 2026 – June 2026

environment with routines				
3.Creation of a Nurture Space in the school	Identify a space in the school which would enable students to have a quiet calm space to go to at certain times of the day. Use Boxall Profilling to identify students for use of the Nurture Space Identify a member of staff who would run the space Provide breakfast/lunch club to identified students in the Nurture Space	**Plant** Students who are on Tiers 2 and 3 of the Absentee Pyramid would have a calm safe space to connect to their fellow students. Improvement in attendance rates of these students by 5%	Principal Deputy Prinicipal SSE Co-ordinator	Feb 2026 – June 2026
4.Establish an Attendance Data Analysis Tool	Create a six-year Comprehensive Attendance Data Analysis Tool that will track the attendance of our students up to sixth year categorising reasons for absences	Attendance Data Tool utilised by Year Heads, AYH and Attendance Committee to promptly identify and support students on Tiers 2 and 3.	Deputy Principal Year Heads AYHs Attendance Committee	September 2025 – May 2026
5. Monitoring of regular casual absences	One-to-one meetings with students and family around the reason for absence – protocol for signing out has been reviewed – qualitive data from year heads.- sanctions – punitive - .	Reduction in regular casual absences amongst 5th and 6th year students by 5%	5th/6th year Year Heads	September 2025 – May 2026
IMPROVEMENT TARGET 2	**REQUIRED ACTIONS**	**SUCCESS CRITERIA / MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES**	**PERSONS RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION**

		c) **Student Outcomes**	Deputy Principal	Feb 2026 – May 2026
Student Target: Implement the "Enlisting the Student Voice Toolkit" with students on Tiers 2 and 3	Using the Boxall Profiling system to identify students for the Student Voice programme	o An improvement in attendance of 5% of students identified.	SSE Co-ordinator Attendance Sub-Committee	