# *Eureka Secondary School*

# *Strategic Plan*

# *2024 - 2029*

*"The simplest and most practical lesson I know is to resolve to be good today but better tomorrow"*
*Catherine McCauley*

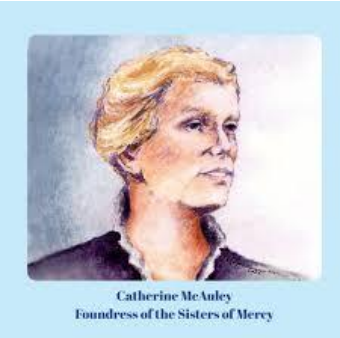
***2025/30***

***Table of Contents***


| | |
|---|---|
| **1** | Fostering and promoting the CEIST Ethos and Characteristic Spirit |
| **2** | Eureka History |
| **3** | Eureka, a Mercy School under the Trusteeship of CEIST |
| **4** | Mission Statement |
| **5** | School Aims |
| **6** | **Looking at Our Schools Post Primary 2022**<br><br>The lens for our school strategic plan is through LAOS 2022 using the process to guide our development. |
| **7** | **SSE & SIP**<br><br>Our school evaluation and improvement planning underpins our strategic planning |
| **8** | **Dimension 1: Leading Teaching and Learning** |
| **9** | **Domain 1 - Learner Outcomes**<br>Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners. They have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes 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. |
| **10** | **Domain 2 – Learner Experiences**<br>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 and responsibility for their learning; they experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning |
| **11** | **Domain 3 – Teachers Individual Practice**<br>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 intentions and to students learning needs; responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary |

| | |
|---|---|
| **12** | **Domain 4 – Teacher's Collective and Collaborative Practice**<br>Teachers value and engage in professional learning 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 and contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise |
| **13** | **Dimension 2: Leadership and Management** |
| **14** | **Domain 1 – Leading Learning and Teaching**<br>School leaders will promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment; foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and holistic development of each student, manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum; foster teacher professionalism |
| **15** | **Domain 2 – Managing the Oganisation**<br>School leaders will create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment and sustain it through effective communication; manage the schools 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 |
| **16** | **Domain 3 – Leading School Development**<br>School leaders will communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation; lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation, build and maintain relationships with parents |
| 17 | **Domain 4 – Developing Leadership Capacity**<br>School leaders critique their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership, empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles; promote and facilitate the development of student participation, student leadership and parent participation, build professional networks with other school leaders |

## Fostering and promoting the CEIST Ethos and Characteristic Spirit of Eureka as a school in the Mercy Tradition




## Mission Statement

Eureka Secondary School aims to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all students, within the limits of available resources, and within an environment and ethos that promotes Christian values, mutual respect, and responsible citizenship.

The school aims to offer opportunities equally to all its students, whatever their ability, circumstances, or religious experiences, in order to develop each person's potential to the full. Programmes are provided to facilitate students whose goal is further education; those who wish to enter the world of work; and those who wish to return to full-time study in the school.

The school is committed to maintaining a supportive partnership with parents who are the primary educators of their children; with employers, schools, the local community, and the parishes from which the students come.

The staff, the school's most valued resource, are supported and encouraged in their work, and we aim to promote their individual and corporate development through supportive structures and in-service training, both internal and external.

The school is committed to developing a community where mutual respect reigns, where personal standards of work and behaviour are high, and where students grow to recognise fully their responsibilities both to themselves and to others. Our hope is that when they leave school, they may be better able to take their place in society as mature and responsible citizens imbued with the Christian values, which are the inspirations of this school. The school fosters an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated, and all breaches are treated seriously.

## Rationale

1. To provide an environment that will enable us to recognise the individuality and uniqueness of each student and to cater for her specific needs.
2. To promote and support the Catholic ethos of the school, while facilitating the spiritual and personal development of all students, whatever their religious experience.

3. To provide a comprehensive social, personal, and health education programme that will enable students to be well-informed, responsible, healthy, and well-adjusted adults.
4. To provide a variety of programmes to cater for the different needs of students.
5. To provide the best possible facilities for Physical Education to enable students to pursue a healthy lifestyle, encourage teamwork, learn social skills, be aware of the importance of work and recreation, and be able to cope with competition.
6. To provide as wide a range as possible extracurricular activities.
7. To provide opportunities for staff to enhance their professional and personal development to achieve the above aims.
8. To provide channels of communication to parents to keep them informed, to invite feedback, and to foster mutual support and partnership in achieving our aims.

**Eureka, a Mercy school under the Trusteeship of CEIST**

Eureka Secondary School is a girls Voluntary Catholic School. Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley and Mercy Education, under the trusteeship of CEIST, Eureka Secondary School is committed to the holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.
We are guided by the five core values of the CEIST charter.
1) Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
2) Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
3) Showing Respect for Every Person
4) Creating Community
5) Being Just and Responsible

Eureka Secondary School is rooted in the values of the Mercy Order and our foundress Catherine McCauley. The Board of Management of Eureka Secondary School is responsible to the CEIST Trust for ensuring the ethos and values of our school as a Mercy school are nurtured and practiced. The Board of Management facilitates

- The school community are supported in their development as a Mercy school and work alongside the CEIST Trust in terms of growth, support, and governance.
- That all opportunities provided by the CEIST to participate in activities and services are offered to and availed of by the students and staff of Eureka
- Ensures that the Mercy Philosophy of Education, finds expression in Eureka through our policies, actions, and ethos.

**Board of Management 2024-2026**
*Chairperson Martina Donnellan*
*Trustee Nominee Alan Brady*

*Trustee Nominee Brendan Muldoon*
*Trustee Nominee Donna Kerrigan*
*Parent Nominee Laura English*
*Parent Nominee Liam Carey*
*Teacher Nominee Clodagh Brady*
*Teacher Nominee Brian Connaughton*
*Principal, Secretary to the Board, Maria Harney*

## History of Eureka

Eureka Secondary School belongs to a worldwide community of educational service, reaching back to the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy by Catherine McAuley in 1831 and now under the trusteeship of CEIST. In 1844 three Sisters of Mercy arrived in Kells and undertook the running of the primary school set up in 1840 by local lady Catherine Dempsey.
The Sisters of Mercy first provided secondary education for girls in Kells in classrooms attached to the Convent in 1924. A Secondary School was established 1956 and a new premises was needed to cater for the increasing number of students. Eureka House was bought from Lord Headfort by Monsignor McCullen, and it was decided to make it available to the Mercy Sisters for use as a secondary school. The school was officially opened and blessed by Monsignor McCullen on 26th April 1956. Fifty years later in 2006 the first Lay Principal was appointed and in 2007 the school came under the Trusteeship of CEIST. In 2019 the doors of the New School opened on a green field site on the Cavan Road as part of a Private Public Partnership.

## School Stakeholders

- The Board of Management
- School staff
- Parents and Guardians
- Students
- Patron – CEIST Trust

## ***Dimension 1 – Leading Learning and Teaching***

There are four domains in this dimension, and we have looked to plan for a high-quality learning and teaching experience for all students in Eureka. Within our ethos and values the LAOS document guides our planning to develop goals which will give our students a positive, high quality learning experience where they can grow academically, holistically, and personally to achieve their full potential. Our teachers are supported to grow as professionals, hone their craft and expertise, share with each other best practice and model for our students a culture of care, collaboration, leadership, and inclusion with the highest expectations for all our students.

Four Domains are -

- Learner Outcomes
- Learner experience
- Teachers' collective/collaborative practice
- Teachers' individual practice

### Domain 1 - Learner Outcomes

Students enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners. They have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes 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.

- Ensure our student council is elected annually with all students provided with an opportunity to run for election
- Ensure student voice is a living and real part of school life through continued growth of student groups such as the School of Sanctuary.
- Ensure student voice forms part of all policy making and review
- Continue to use the SSE process and enact meaningful change with student involvement to give them ownership of their school journey, build connection with school and build a kind, supportive Eureka family.
- Carry out an annual student reflection to support student personal development, goal setting, resilience and build motivation.
- Year Heads will work closely with their year group, supported by Tutors and Senior Management based on findings from the SSE process and the annual reflection exercise.
- Through our Tutor system students will continue to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand themselves and their relationships.
- Each Year Group will be given the opportunity to enjoy their faith and explore it further through a retreat at junior and senior cycle.
- Students will be encouraged to achieve and surpass intended learning through house exams, differentiated teaching, state exams and state AACS and State CBAs
- Continue to develop and meet the needs of all students in an inclusive and holistic educational environment by reviewing our AEN policy and AEN Action Plan.

- Ensure the school provides for students with AEN through a sensory space and specialised AEN classroom.
- Continue to build a vibrant extra-curricular culture to stretch student opportunity from the classroom to the greater outside world and community
- Review and develop our TY programme “TY for all”
- Continue to build capacity to deliver L1//L2 learning programmes and LCA

**Doman 2 – 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 and responsibility for their learning; they experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning

- The school will ensure that teachers are provided with professional development for the new Senior Cycle and AACs
- The introduction of 1:1 devices will support the new AACs and student digital literacy. This is a complimentary resource to learning and teaching.
- Training in AI, online safety and good digital citizenship will continue to be provided to students.
- Students will engage in continued experience with the new SPHE programmes at Junior and Senior Cycle. The Board will ensure a core team of teachers are trained and will share their knowledge with colleagues.
- Bí Cineálta will form part of each SPHE class, and all students will engage in ongoing support and understanding of the programme.
- The school will develop a Bí Cineálta committee.
- The Board of Management will continue to support student wellbeing through a school funded counsellor.
- A part of our student-centred approach, students involved in the student council and other groups will be invited to meet and present to the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management will meet the Student Council annually and work with them in partnership in the growth of Eureka.
- The Board of Management will ensure the development of a holistic approach of the school to support students' academic and personal development.

**Domain 3 – 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 intentions and to students learning needs; responds to individual learning needs and differentiates learning and teaching activities as necessary.

- The Board of management will ensure that all teachers are provided with the national Oide training days to support them with curricular development and honing their teaching craft
- Provide for teacher professional development both peer led in school and sourcing external expertise to build on the good practice in place.

- Ensure continued analysis of results and action planning at subject department level and whole school level to support students to reach their full potential and progress to life beyond school.
- Develop a robust holistic approach to school development tracking and provision mapping to underpin a high-quality learner experience and learner outcome for all our students.
- Build on teacher expertise and support their further development through access to personal upskilling.
- Teachers will be trained in UDL and continue to develop an inclusive practice in their classroom approach.
- Teachers will be provided with support to embed the RELATE approach to classroom management and underpin a high-quality learning and teaching environment in their classes.
- Teachers will be supported in their continued use of AfL techniques to ensure all students are supported and challenged to extend their success in all lessons.
- The school will develop an updates policy on Assessment, Learning and Teaching through the SSE process to reflect DEY directives and the development of the new Senior Cycle underpinned by the Junior Cycle already in place.

**Domain 4 – Teacher's collective and collaborative practice**

Teachers value and engage in professional learning 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 and contribute to building whole-staff capacity by sharing their expertise

- The Board will support teacher development through supporting training and personal professional upskilling.
- Teachers will be supported to work on a subject department action plan through engaging with the inspectorate guidance and advisory model.
- The school will continue to engage and meet recommendations from inspection reports to ensure a continued high standard of collective teaching and learning at whole school, subject dept and individual teacher level.
- Subject depts, supported by SMT will continue to engage in data analysis to support learner outcomes and experiences.
- The school will provide training to assist teachers understanding of cognitive ability testing and implications for subject planning and teacher practice.
- Subject departments will continue to analyse jc/LC results, cross referenced with school data and subject dept action plans.
- The Board will ensure teacher professional development is provided in the area of IT through the support of the Digital Learning Team using the SSE process.

## Dimension 2: Leadership and Management

There are four domains in this dimension, the Board of Management and the Senior Leadership Team plan, review and support the development of a high-quality learning and teaching experience in Eureka. Within this context they provide for a safe and healthy environment through the SSE process ensuring that Eureka responds to the changing needs of its own community remaining relevant, attentive and progressive in a modern society. Developing the leadership capacity of our school community is central to our ethos through staff professional development, engaging with the DEY, CEIST and through giving action to student voice.

The four domains are -

- Leading learning and teaching
- Managing the organisation
- Leading school development
- Developing leadership capacity

### Domain 1 – Leading learning and teaching

School leaders will promote a culture of reflection, improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment; foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and holistic development of each student, manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum; foster teacher professionalism

- Develop school structures to support holistic student development which underpins ensuring that all students can reach their potential. This involves reviewing our support structures through Provision Mapping and the SSE process.
- Reviewing school policies in line with guidelines from the DEY for student wellbeing through the RELATE document
- Ensuring professional development for all our school community in the RELATE document, AEN development from the DEY, Wellbeing,
- Ensuring professional development for our school community in the new Senior Cycle and the new AACs.
- Continue to build capacity in Digital Learning so Eureka remains a leader in digital development for both staff and students by engaging with the DEY, expert outside consultants and our Digital Learning Team.
- Review our assessment windows to avoid over-assessment and ensure we continue to support our students achieve their potential within compliance with DEY circulars for both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle.
- Build on our use of school data to put the student at the centre of learning and teaching by providing training to teachers on the use of our CAT 4 tests and teaching implications.
- Review our attendance strategy and procedures in line with NEPS and the DEY working with out SST, Tutors and Year Heads.
- SMT will engage with each subject dept to develop subject dept action planning and harness key data from school assessments and SSE married with the analysis of results.
- Triangulate our school data to ensure a holistic support and student-centred approach to their growth and development within a high-quality educational journey.
- The Board will ensure there is a Core Team upskilled in the new SPHE specifications

**Domain 2 – Managing the organisation**

School leaders will create and maintain a positive school culture and a safe, healthy and purposeful learning environment and sustain it through effective communication; manage the schools 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

- The Board will ensure a policy audit is updated and reviewed regularly in compliance with DEY circulars and guidance.
- The Board will engage Ark Health and Safety to support the school with developing a H& Safety plan and H&S statement in compliance with the HS Act and HSA Inspections.
- SMT will work closely with the NDFA and Sensori Management Company to ensure the school building is maintained and developed to the highest standard with continued growth and expansion to meet the evolving needs of our school community with the development of the running track, the AEN Dept and our school oratory.
- The Board of Management will support the development of our school reception area to welcome parents and visitors to our school.
- The Board will develop further eating areas outside and sensory timeout spaces for students throughout the building.
- The Board will develop an internal reception area for students as part of our holistic support and student wellbeing.
- Our SIP will be reviewed and updated annually in consultation with the whole school community.
- Our Digital Learning Plan will be updated and implemented annually as we continue to develop as a progressive modern school.
- We will use the SELFIE EU assessment tool to guide our digital growth
- School leaders will ensure school policies are reviewed in a timely manner and adhered to in compliance with all DEY circulars.
- The Board will support the development of our Restorative Approach as underpins the national Bí Cineálta strategy.
- School Leadership will support the development of our school pastoral care structures through Tutors, Year Heads, Assistant Year Heads, AEN Liaisons, SST and Assistant Principals.
- School leadership will ensure we continue to engage with Droichead to support NQTs and build our Droichead Team.
- School leadership will work to provide further mentoring to teachers in particular those who may be new to the both the profession and to the school.
- Ensuring the full use of the DES teacher allocations
- The Board will plan for the maintenance and improvement of the school building and environment through the annual walkabout with the NDFA and Sensori the future development of Eureka as a modern dynamic school of choice.
- School ethos will continue to be developed and embedded in school life through our involvement with Cothú
- The school will review of our school attendance strategy and policy in line with DEY circulars and guidelines and NEPS guidance.
- The school will streamline the use of the school app and VS Ware as a centralised information and communication point between school and hoe.
- The school will streamline its use of Microsoft suite as a school information, communication and working platform and move to extend it to its full potential.

- The Board will ensure the development of an AEN Core Team supported by professional development and updated AEN policy documents.

**Domain 3 – Leading school development**

School leaders will communicate the guiding vision for the school and lead its realisation; lead the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation, build and maintain relationships with parents

- The Board will work with the school community to revisit our mission statement and values as a Mercy school under the trusteeship of CEIST and building on the guiding vision of our foundress Catherine McCauley.
- School leadership will support the values and ethos of the Mercy order in the daily practice and decision making in school.
- School leaders, in continued consultation with the school community develop the school plan and communicate its progress regularly to all stakeholders.
- The school will develop its digital infrastructure in terms of hardware to deliver the curriculum at the highest standard and in methodologies to support the best learner experience and outcome for all students.
- The school will ensure teacher professional development, student development to meet the requirements of the new Senior Cycle and AACs and continue to support the embedding of JC as a pathway to the new Senior Cycle.
- The school will continue to engage in the SSE process, seeking guidance from the DEY Inspectorate and engaging in Feabhsú to action recommendations.
- School leaders will work with the SSE Coordinator to annually develop the SIP and enact it.
- The school will ensure continued links with its vibrant Parents Association through an AP 1 position.
- A school newsletter produced by students will be shared at Halloween, Christmas, Easter, and Summer each year to develop student voice, agency and creativity while engaging and celebrating our school community.
- Regular communications from school management on the school app to the whole school community updating parents and guardians as well as inviting their involvement in school life.
- Holding parent information evenings for parents of incoming 1st years, 3rd years/TYs for subject choice and 6th years for CAO
- Regular engagement with parents/guardians through the SSE process to support school development
- The development of our AEN Dept, SSPs and review documents to build relationships and support students in reaching their potential.
- Continue to build on communication around student assessment and development with a holistic approach to support students in reaching their potential with the highest quality educational experience.
- The 1st year taster programme will be reviewed continuing to place students at the centre of the process.
- The Board will continue ensure the development of the IT infrastructure and professional development in Eureka.

**Domain 4 – Developing leadership capacity**

School leaders critique their practice as leaders and develop their understanding of effective and sustainable leadership, empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles; promote and facilitate the development of student participation, student leadership and parent participation, build professional networks with other school leaders

- School leaders will continue to develop student leadership through pastoral systems, school councils, and groups.
- School leaders will engage in continues professional development ensuring knowledge, skills, and expertise in DEY developments for the school
- School leaders will engage in leadership development
- School leaders will support the growth of leadership capacity through a middle leadership structure sharing mentoring and regular meetings.
- School leadership will ensure all staff are aware and avail of professional development opportunities
- Assistant Principals will present to the Board and at staff meetings, working collaboratively as a middle leadership team sharing expertise and building capacity for the future of the school.
- School management will maintain regular attendance and involvement regional meetings, professional organisations, and educational conferences.
- The Board will connect with the Parents Association with a shared vision to support our students and school community.
- The school will continue to be integral to the local community with use of the school premises for local activities, involvement in local projects and groups.
- School leaders will ensure that members of the Board of Management are involved with middle management team through annual presentations.
- The Board will support school development through the introduction of the New Senior Cycle and relevant programmes and specifications, guiding professional development and responding to the needs of the school.

***Ratified on: .....***

***Signed _____*** ***Signed_____***
***(Chairperson)*** ***(Principal)***