

**Holy Family Secondary School
Newbridge, Co. Kildare**

Roll Number: 61682A



HOLY FAMILY SECONDARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL PLAN 2021-2026

“To Be Family and To Build Family”

Our Strategic Plan at a Glance



Executive Summary:

This living document is intended to outline the strategic plan for Holy Family Secondary School over the course of the next five years. The key goals of the Strategic Plan will be:

- 1. Reimagining curriculum, teaching and learning**
- 2. Developing our Digital School**
- 3. Improving the physical environment of HFSS and our commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness.**
- 4. Strengthening our Culture & Ethos**
- 5. Enhancing the school experience in a respectful learning community.**

The unprecedented enormous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly have lingering effects for the foreseeable future. However, in HFSS it remains our priority and our collective responsibility to ensure the highest quality learning experiences for all of our students. We strive to focus on pupil engagement, learning and development in a safe, learning and working school environment. In order to help us achieve our aims, we have prepared our School Plan 2021-2026.

As a living document, we accept that there are many variables that will impact on our planning over the next five years. However, this plan will also insure that we keep a clear focus on attainable targets. Our school plan acts as a reference document that guides the activities of Holy Family Secondary School and facilitates monitoring and self-evaluation.

Our School Plan is the product of an ongoing school self-evaluation process whereby the whole school community in a spirit of collegiality and partnership, plan for our shared vision and educational philosophy. Using the 'Looking At Our Schools 2016' quality framework as a tool to support reflection, self-review and evaluation over the next 5 years for the school's standards and statements of quality. The plan allows for effective communication to organisational stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities facing the school, along with clearly defined and measurable goals.

- Mission
- Vision
- Goals, resources, timelines
- Evaluation and refinement process
- The plan provides a basis for measuring progress

In our continuous reflective review, we aim to keep our focus on four core questions:

1. *What is our shared vision at HFSS that shapes our school community?*
2. *Who are our learners?*
3. *What is our vision of success for learning for each pupil?*
4. *How can we best improve practices in our teaching and learning community?*

Seeking Input to Framing the Strategic Plan 2021-2026: Stakeholder engagement

Students, families, staff, and community members have been our inspiration, partners, and collaborators throughout the process of engagement. The feedback provided valuable insights that informed the development of broad, overarching priorities and specific, measurable objectives that lay the foundation for improved student success. Our commitment to utilising research-based methods to authentically engage our community has resulted in the development of a responsive strategic plan that reflects our various stakeholders' needs.

The Board and school partner of HFSS were consulted extensively and identified pillars of a plan that represent the work streams that will guide the school's activities over the next 5 years.

- Focus groups of parents, staff, and students were conducted to gather further input on the priorities and actions in each of the pillars.
- School leadership and management teams further refined the plan and consolidated the vision that the plan would achieve.

Thank you to all those who participated.

PART ONE of this plan is an overview of the relatively permanent features of our school, including its mission, vision and aims, context factors, curriculum, and organisational policies.

PART TWO is a development section specifying our school's current development proposed strategic directions and outlining action plans for their attainment.

Sarah Allen
Principal, Holy Family Secondary School
August 2021

Part One: Permanent Features of our School

HFSS Mission Statement

Holy Family Secondary School is a Catholic, girls, all-ability, diocesan day school, under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Our school provides an education based on the vision of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, founder of the Holy Family Order. In accordance with this vision, we promote the Christian virtues of faith, hope, love, gentleness, respect and tolerance, and we emphasise togetherness and family.

Guided by these Christian virtues, and dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, it is our mission to provide a safe, caring, inclusive learning environment in which to foster the spiritual, intellectual, academic, aesthetic, physical, emotional and social development of each pupil so that she may fulfil her own unique potential and may leave our school with the capacity and the willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by these Christian virtues. It is also our mission to foster a strong, positive partnership with our parents, parish, past-pupils, and the wider community.

"L'esprit de famille se résume tout entier dans ce mot: charité."

(P.B. Noailles)

The Holy Family spirit may be summarised in one word: love.



Looking back before we can move forward: HFSS History

Building on the HFSS heritage of respect, caring and excellence since 1959

When the official opening of the school took place in 1959 there was an enrolment of seventy-five pupils and a staff of five. Sr. Catherine Moran was Principal and she was assisted by Mrs. Máire Ryan – later to become the first Vice-Principal of the school. For the first eight years of its existence, Holy Family Secondary School was located in the east wing of the Convent. However, due to a significant increase in enrolment, it became obvious that a new building was essential. For the first time the Department of Education announced state capital grants to fund new buildings. The Holy Family Secondary School was one of the first in the country to avail of the scheme.

The site was blessed and the first sod for the new school was turned by the Parish Priest, Monsignor Miller, on 6 November, 1965 – feast of All the Saints of Ireland.

In 1992, the Holy Family Sisters handed over the ownership of the school to the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin. The first Board of Management was set up under the chairmanship of Mr Cahir O’Sullivan, and the first lay Principal, Mrs. Rita Brazil, was appointed. The name, character and ethos of the school would be maintained. As far as possible, the Sisters would maintain contact with the school by providing a school chaplain.

“To be family and to build family” describes the ethos of the *Holy Family Association*. The Second Vatican Council’s insistence on a greater involvement of lay people in the life of the Church spilled over into the area of education. The concept of the rights of parents as partners in education was advanced. Long before the advent of Parents’ Associations there was always a community and ‘family’ dimension to *Holy Family* education. The support of parents, expressed in so many ways, was much appreciated and was one of the great strengths of Holy Family School.

Schools have their own special identity and charism, shaped and nurtured by the people who have worked there. The ‘family spirit’ has been one of the outstanding characteristics of Holy Family Secondary School. As the school grew, the concept of ‘family’ has been considerably broadened and enriched. There is now a beautiful sharing of life with pupils from so many different countries and traditions. This, in turn, has helped all to re-discover the beauty and riches of their own tradition. Holy Family Secondary School has always been to the fore in its awareness of being part of the wider community. Now, more than ever, we realise that everything in creation is inter-related and inter-dependent. The term ‘family’ embraces all God’s creation.

HFSS Philosophy and Aims

To be family and to build family

In the spirit of its founder Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, Holy family Secondary School promotes, encourages and enables the intellectual development of our pupils, supported by Christian values. To fulfil this aim, particular attention and emphasis is given to nurturing the values of kindness, compassion, reflection, as well as those values held dear by Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, which are respect, gentleness, togetherness, inclusion and family. It is hoped that, in becoming well-informed, self-directed, spiritually mature young women, the young ladies who leave our school will have the capacity and willingness to contribute to the building of a society characterised by gospel values.

As a school devoted to learning, we are constantly reviewing and developing our programmes, practices and facilities. Our challenge is to blend the best of our traditions with innovation in a changing world. In support of this, the school places great emphasis on the professional development of staff. Curriculum goals and teaching methods are regularly reviewed as are our general structures and procedures. Integral to this process is the valuable advice and input of parents and pupils.

All of us who work in Holy Family Secondary School see ourselves as partners in our learning community. We look to the future of the school and that of our pupils with great hope and high expectations. We acknowledge and value the dedicated work of our school staff.

Understanding Our school: A Community of Learners

Students	Patron
Student Leadership Teams	Staff Consultative Committees/Focus Groups
Parents/Guardians	Leadership Teams
Teachers & SNAs	Management Teams
Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team	Cara Team
Tutors	Board of Management
Ancillary Staff	Additional Needs Education Team
Chaplaincy Team	School Guidance Team



School Governance and Leadership

Board of Management

The Board of Management of Holy Family Secondary School functions in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, and Department of Education and Skills policies, circulars and directives. The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin and is responsible for ensuring that the characteristic spirit and ethos of the school as expressed in the school plan is in line with the educational philosophy of the Holy Family Order.

The Board ensures that all relevant issues of principle or policy are reflected in the school plan. The Board has a statutory responsibility for the school plan and includes priorities for development, significant proposals for action. School policies are ratified by the Board. The Board of Management asks the Principal to engage with the teaching staff and other partners in the school planning process. The Board receives regular updates on progress and has offered advice and comments on areas of concern or need. The Board ratifies, after consideration, acceptable proposals for inclusion within the plan and amends or seeks further

work or clarification on proposals that raised concerns. The achievement of objectives set out in the school plan and communicated these to parents, as outlined in Section 20 of the Education Act (1998).

The Board pays close attention to Subject Inspection reports and discusses the recommendations that have a significant whole-school dimension or resource implication. The Board supports the planning process as required, particularly in facilitating necessary training and the reasonable allocation of resources. The Board commends the work done in the planning process in its communication with the partners, to help nurture a climate of collaboration, self-evaluation and reflection in the school. The Board of Management leads the review of school policies in collaboration with the staff, parents and pupils. The Board reflects and discusses how the school plan is progressing and whether it is developing appropriately in order to meet the real needs of Holy Family Secondary School and its pupils.

Structures for School Planning

Policies are formulated and reviewed on a regular basis. This necessitates the involvement of staff, pupils, parents and the Board of Management. There are regular agenda-driven subject department meetings throughout the school year. At the beginning of each academic year, subject department members update their subject plans. Areas for development are prioritised and include a focus on literacy, numeracy, active teaching methodologies, target setting and evaluation. At the beginning of the following academic year, the areas prioritised for development are reviewed and evaluated within individual departments.

HFSS Curriculum Provision

Throughout their years in Holy Family Secondary School, pupils participate in a wide variety of educational experiences which aim to extend and deepen their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities. In this the girls are provided with the highest standards of teaching and learning at all levels by a dynamic, progressive and committed teaching staff.

Subjects/Programmes JUNIOR SCHOOL to JUNIOR CYCLE

English, Irish, Mathematics, History, Geography, C.S.P.E., S.P.H.E., Digital Literacy, Religion, Science, Spanish, French, German, Business Studies, Home Economics, Art, Music and P.E.

First year pupils choose two subjects for their Junior Certificate from the following optional subjects: French, German, Spanish, Home Economics, Art, and Music

Subjects/Programmes SENIOR SCHOOL to LEAVING CERTIFICATE

Pupils may choose from the following bank of optional subjects (subject to viability/pupil uptake) for Leaving Certificate: French, Spanish, German, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Business, Accounting, Economics, Music, Art, Home Economics, Senior Cycle PE, Geography, and History. Non exam subjects also R.E., R.S.E., S.P.H.E., P.E., I.C.T., other well-being modules – Crafts/Cookery. In addition to traditional Leaving Certificate, HFSS offers the Certificate Vocational programme (LCVP)

PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT SECTION

PROPOSED STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR 2021-2026

6. Reimagining curriculum, teaching and learning
7. Developing our Digital School
8. Improving the physical environment of HFSS and our commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness.
9. Strengthening our Culture & Ethos
10. Enhancing the school experience in a respectful learning community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AIM

Students at HFSS require support to realise their potential to be lifelong learners and active citizens. An explicit framework is required for students to become self-motivated, innovative, resourceful and resilient young women.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AIM

Fostering quality leadership and learning within a culture of innovation and collaboration in HFSS. Promoting teaching excellence where every staff member is engaged in collective and individual professional development.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AIM

A safe and challenging learning environment in HFSS, resulting in high expectations, success in learning and positive and productive school-community partnerships

We will monitor and conduct ongoing evaluation and review by:

- The senior management team will lead a steering committee that will monitor and review the plan over the course of the next 5 years.
- Looking At Our School 2016 guiding focus.
- BOM kept informed and direction of the BOM followed
- Ongoing SSE; attitudinal surveys, analysing qualitative data, evaluation feedback
- Pilot initiatives to drive improvement
- Evaluation forms
- Analysis of state exam results and improvement targets identified.
- Tracking our pupils through aptitude tests and relating them to academic achievements
- Discussion and dialogue
- Frequent engagement in scheduled meetings of various stakeholders, teams etc.
- Listening to parent voice, staff voice and pupil voice



Reimagining curriculum, teaching and learning

HFSS is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning by engaging with the Looking at our Schools Framework, school self-evaluation and by continuous engaging in professional development.

We aim to implement: “the most effective and engaging teaching and learning approaches and in enhancing the quality of leadership in their schools. Through the provision of a set of standards describing ‘effective practice’ and ‘highly effective practice’, the framework will help schools to identify their strengths and areas for development and will enable them to take ownership of their own development and improvement”. – Looking at our Schools document

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Challenges	By 2026 Key Goals & Targets
<p>To achieve a safe and challenging learning environment resulting in high expectations, success in learning and positive and productive school-community partnerships.</p> <p>To support a learning culture where every staff member uses data to self-reflect on performance, set goals and aspire to the best levels of teaching and learning.</p> <p>To define, communicate and deliver a whole school pedagogy that researches and engages best practice.</p> <p>To develop a consistent narrative of the student journey in HFSS supporting learning. Tracking student attainment.</p> <p>To continue to promote staff continuous professional development</p> <p>To explore new pilots and educational initiatives to further professional conversations.</p>	<p>Address the complexities of eLearning development and deployment as well as a potential hybrid system with physical distancing</p> <p>Address the emerging challenges driven by a technological and global change (PISA etc.)</p> <p>Address learning gaps</p> <p>DES staffing allocations and post of responsibility allocation. DES funding/capitation. CPD opportunities</p> <p>Covid compliance issues</p>	<p>Staff can seek opportunities for professional development Encourage staff collegiality through whole school opportunities Encourage a shared vision for learning at HFSS that is based upon contemporary best practice. CPD (continuous professional development) PDST, JCT, NCCA</p> <p>Developed initiatives and programmes that allow our staff and students to develop competencies and share our knowledge, skills and creativity. Ongoing CPD to improve the quality of teaching. Strengthening distributive leadership among our teachers. Forbairt, TL21, WW Glaobal Schools, Active Schools, Peer Collaboration, Distributive Leadership roles, Staff led Looking At Our Schools Committees</p> <p>A comprehensive review of the curriculum, programmes and course options. Curriculum audit for Senior, Junior Cycle subjects and Transition Year modules and sample subjects. Life skills and wellbeing subjects. Politics & Society, Senior Cycle PE, Agricultural Science etc.</p>

Developing our Digital School

In further developing our digital school, we aim to continuously improve our school’s learning, teaching and management systems to equip students and staff with 21st century competencies and skill sets. The world is changing rapidly and skill sets needed are also revolving. At HFSS, we believe in integrating education technology with relevant content and pedagogy into the education system.

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Challenges	By 2026 Key Goals & Targets
<p>To continue to implement our Digital Learning Action Plan so that students use a variety of digital technologies for knowledge creation to source, critique and manage information and to reflect on their learning.</p> <p>To continue to develop the HFSS Digital Learning Team</p> <p>To implement the Digital Portfolio Initiative in order to Improve the use of digital technologies for formative assessment in learning and teaching practices in the classroom. Through the school’s learning from this initiative, plan to expand throughout the whole school in subsequent years.</p> <p>To continue to improve user IT systems in HFSS</p> <p>School app</p> <p>Microsoft Office 353</p> <p>Website and social media embedded information links for the digital communicating school.</p> <p>To form a Digital Portfolio team</p>	<p>More direct links with the support Services established by the Department for the purpose of providing continuing professional development courses and other supports to teachers and schools</p> <p>Determine school’s goal for participating in the initiative (i.e. ‘Embed formative assessment, with particular emphasis on reflection and feedback, through digital technologies to enrich student learning’)</p> <p>Staffing, Training, Allocations and Funding</p>	<p>Engagement (CPD logs) with Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Junior Cycle Team (JCT), National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) and (NCSE) National Council for Special Education.</p> <p>Make links to Digital Learning Plan/SSE</p> <p>Share progress of IT initiatives to the school/wider community (PRO/staff meetings/Teams)</p> <p>Closer links with IT education outreach programmes for sponsorship and mentoring</p> <p>Embed the digital portfolio in summative assessment</p> <p>Embed the Staff Leadership model of the Digital Learning Team</p> <p>Greater digital fluency for all students.</p> <p>Highly effective hybrid school model for increased digital literacy.</p>

Improving the physical environment of HFSS and actioning our commitment to sustainability and environmental awareness

HFSS will aim to make responsible decisions that will reduce our school’s negative impact on the environment. To balance environmental, social and economic considerations and to be an active agent for change. To improve and maintain a safe and effective school environment. Maintaining and developing current and future facilities for all members of our school community.

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Challenges	By 2026 Key Goals & Targets
<p>To educate and work together for a more sustainable school and community environment.</p> <p>To improve the physical infrastructure of the school.</p> <p>Upgrade all practical subjects’ specific classrooms and spaces, including all labs and kitchens.</p> <p>Design and construct additional accommodation for HFSS to incorporate larger student learning and wellbeing spaces and improved facilities such as a library, ASD Unit, general classrooms, multimedia rooms.</p> <p>Upgrade existing sports and arts facilities/infrastructure, including the Front Hall.</p>	<p>Approval and funding from the DES and time delays for school construction projects.</p> <p>Programmes, initiatives and protocols are needed to modify current human behaviours that do not add to the Green schools’ themes.</p> <p>Developing a whole school culture of ‘zero waste’.</p>	<p>Action applications to the DES for Additional Accommodation for a master plan through an Architectural Firm that enhances the school buildings and infrastructure e.g incorporating ASD Unit, a library, new practical subject rooms, new digital media rooms, wellbeing spaces, improved sports facilities and additional general classrooms etc.</p> <p>Action fundraising and restoration projects for the Front Hall and Stage.</p> <p>Develop a sustainability/renewables school campus that aims for zero waste and extensive recycling.</p> <p>Aim to achieve a Green Schools flag. Promoting long-term whole school action for the environment.</p>

Strengthening our Culture & Ethos

Our school ethos is best expressed, helped to develop, and enriched within our school community as the result of the shared dialogue on the core values and principles of our school, embracing all in our school community and in the wider community.

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Challenges	By 2026 Key Goals & Targets
<p>To communicate effectively our shared purpose –intentional Catholic school.</p> <p>To further development the Chaplaincy Team to allow for greater scope to share our core ethos purpose.</p> <p>To further develop a positive faith culture in the school</p> <p><u>AGREED ROOT BELIEFS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are called to be family and to build family 2. We are a community of learners 3. We aim for excellence in all we do 4. All are cherished 5. Courage and resilience inspires strength of character <p><u>AGREED ANIMATING PRINCIPLE:</u></p> <p>‘Soli Deo Gloria’ (Glory to God Alone)</p> <p>The root beliefs of our school ethos stem from the animating principle</p>	<p>DES allocations</p> <p>Budgetary constraints/capitation shortfall</p> <p>Societal misconceptions of faith based schools</p> <p>Covid compliance</p>	<p>Monitor all courses and services to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students.</p> <p>Establish greater networking and community outreach connections.</p> <p>Diocesan Schools cohesion, planning and programmes.</p> <p>Re-establishing formal assessment of religious education at Junior Cycle (curriculum audit review)</p> <p>Renewed culture of volunteerism in line with HFSS ethos and Mission Statement</p> <p>Community outreach programmes</p>

Enhancing the school experience in a respectful learning community

Further strengthening a safe and caring learning community at HFSS. Embracing wellbeing and restorative practices to support the learner in our school. Importance of wellbeing in schools

Strategic Objectives	Strategic Challenges	By 2026 Key Goals
<p>To continue to strive to be a fully inclusive school</p> <p>To embed a strong school culture of student leadership and student voice</p> <p>To continue to strengthen our student leadership –giving a ‘greater voice’ to our SRC (Pupil Council) and continuing to develop our other pupil leadership teams (Senior Prefect team, HFY team, John Paul II team, , Hospitality team, Green Prefects and class prefect team)</p> <p>To embed wellbeing planning and considerations into every aspect of our teaching and learning.</p> <p>To also provide a safe and supportive environment for building life skills and resilience and a strong sense of connectedness to school.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>To action the HFSS Wellbeing Plan and develop a whole school response actions and embed the Junior Cycle Wellbeing indicators.</p> <p>To embed a whole school approach to restorative practice.</p>	<p>Resources and allocation of suitable qualified personnel.</p> <p>HFSS recognises the importance of developing the whole person; emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically. A supportive school environment where high expectations and aspirations are the norm for all young people can of itself contribute significantly to lifelong health and wellbeing. This requires more extensive funding and CPD.</p> <p>At HFSS we provide a range of supports and interventions that address the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical needs of our students. We continue to seek best practice and additional funding for programmes and initiative- future programmes such as WW Global School, Active School. Time to review all restorative practices scheduled for the timeframe of this plan.</p>	<p>To strengthen all aspects of student leadership and student voice forums/opportunities</p> <p>To follow the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Inclusive Education Framework and provide clear signposts to schools on their journey towards inclusion.</p> <p>Encouraging and valuing extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.</p> <p>Higher student engagement, attendance, greater respect for all diversity. Focus on initiatives in: PE, RSE, SPHE Amber Flag, Yellow Flag WW Global Schools, Active School</p> <p>A school culture with strong restorative practice</p>

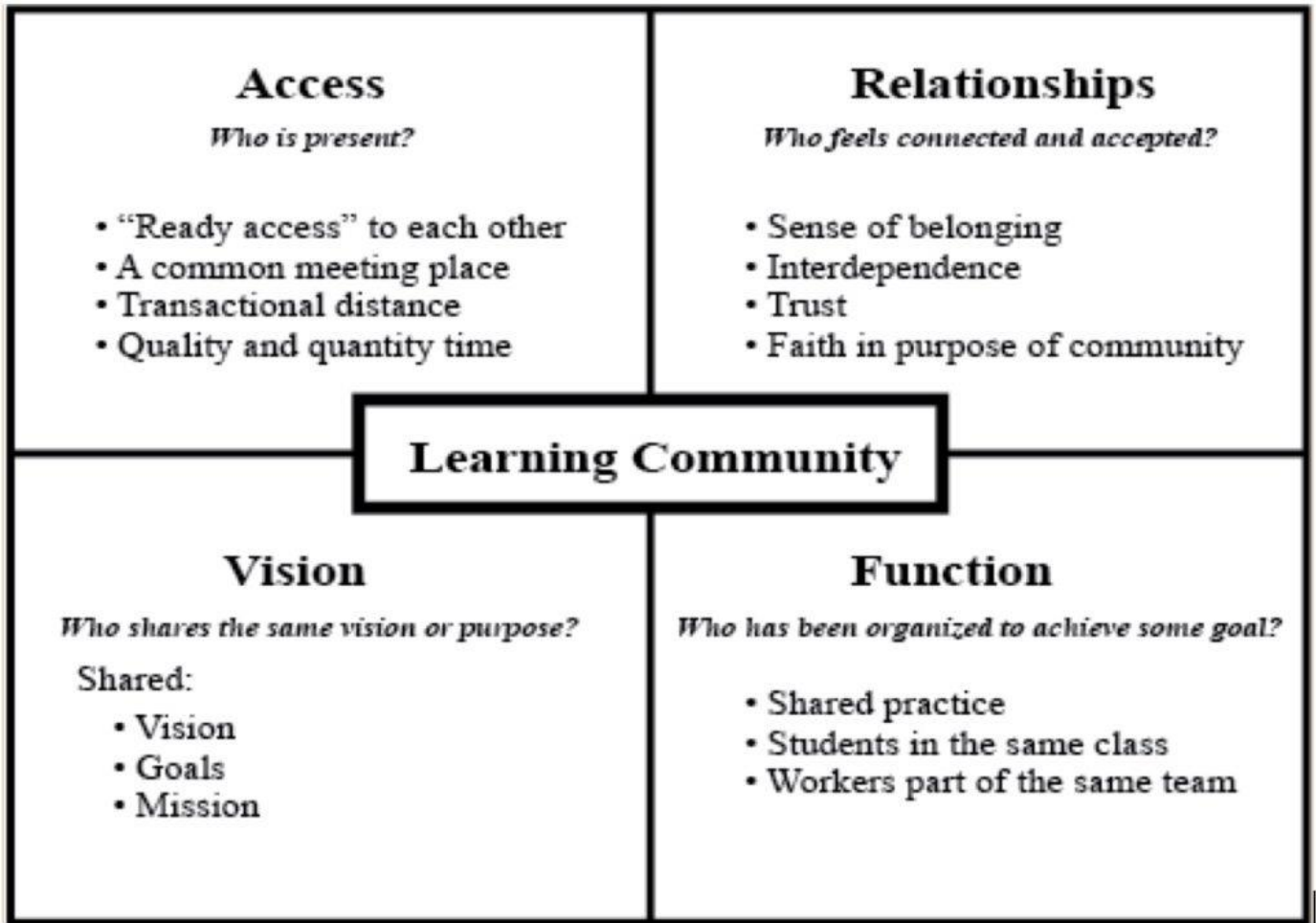


Figure 1. The defining characteristics of learning communities, representing different ways of defining the boundaries of a community



QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS - OVERVIEW

DOMAINS	STANDARDS
Teaching and Learning	<p>Learner outcomes</p> <p>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</p>
	<p>Learner experiences</p> <p>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</p>
	<p>Teacher's individual practice</p> <p>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</p>
	<p>Teachers' collective / collaborative practice</p> <p>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</p>
Leadership and Management	<p>Leading learning and teaching</p> <p>School leaders: promote a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching and assessment foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student manage the planning and implementation of the school curriculum foster teacher professional development that enriches teachers' and students' learning</p>
	<p>Managing the organisation</p> <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>
	<p>Leading school development</p> <p>School leaders: 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, with other schools, and with the wider community manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education</p>
	<p>Developing leadership capacity</p> <p>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 voice, student participation, and student leadership build professional networks with other school leaders</p>

Figure 2. Looking At Our Schools 2016- Quality Framework domains and standards for Schools