

Ballygiblin National School

Whole School Plan (Plean Scoile)

Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Our School Context](#)
3. [Our Vision and Ethos](#)
4. [How We Work in Ballygiblin NS](#)
5. [Leadership & Roles](#)
6. [Organisation & Day-to-Day Systems](#)
7. [Partnership with Parents & Community](#)
8. [School Policies](#)
9. [School Development & Improvement](#)
10. [Review and Oversight](#)

1. Introduction

This Whole School Plan outlines how Ballygiblin National School operates on a day-to-day basis and how we support the learning, wellbeing and development of every child in our care.

It is designed as a clear and practical guide for staff, parents and the wider school community. It reflects the lived experience of our school and provides a shared understanding of how we work together.

This is a live document. It is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect ongoing development within the school.

This document reflects how Ballygiblin NS works in practice and is intended to support clarity, consistency and shared understanding across the school community.

2. Our School Context

Ballygiblin National School is a co-educational primary school serving the local community of Ballygiblin and the surrounding areas.

We provide a broad and balanced education from Junior Infants to Sixth Class, including a special class supporting pupils with autism, alongside a strong range of support for pupils with additional needs.

Our school is grounded in a strong sense of community, where relationships between pupils, staff, parents and the wider community are central to school life.

We aim to create an environment where every child feels known, valued and supported as an individual.

3. Our Vision and Ethos

Our overall vision is to enrich each child's life and lay the foundation for happiness and fulfilment in later education and adult life.

Children learn best when they feel safe, happy and secure.

Creating that environment is the starting point for everything we do.

For this reason, wellbeing is not separate from learning — it is the foundation of it.

We prioritise:

- positive relationships
- a strong sense of belonging
- a calm and supportive environment
- high expectations for learning and behaviour

Relationships are the foundation of our school.

Strong, respectful relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the wider community are central to how Ballygiblin NS operates. When relationships are strong, learning, behaviour and wellbeing are stronger as a result.

This relational approach underpins how we teach, how we support behaviour, and how we work together as a school community.

We are committed to:

- recognising the uniqueness of every child
- supporting each child to succeed
- creating an inclusive and welcoming school environment
- fostering respect, honesty, friendship and happiness

Our work is guided by our motto:

Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí

Praise the young and they will flourish

4. How We Work in Ballygiblin National School

4.1 A Wellbeing-First Approach

Wellbeing is at the core of how Ballygiblin NS operates. It shapes the daily experience of pupils and staff.

Our approach is built on:

- strong relationships
- consistent routines and expectations
- opportunities for pupil voice and participation
- a supportive and inclusive environment

Wellbeing is supported through both curriculum and whole-school practices, including:

- Physical Education and SPHE as key curriculum areas
- whole-school initiatives such as assemblies and wellbeing-focused events
- a structured house system that promotes belonging and positive behaviour
- targeted supports such as Braincalm where required

This ensures pupils feel safe, supported and ready to engage in learning.

4.2 Behaviour and Relationships

Behaviour in Ballygiblin NS is grounded in a relational approach, supported by clear structures and expectations.

We:

- promote positive behaviour through recognition and encouragement
- use systems such as house points to reinforce positive choices
- maintain clear and consistent expectations across the school
- support pupils to understand and take responsibility for their behaviour

When difficulties arise, responses are:

- restorative in nature
- focused on learning and reflection
- supported by natural and appropriate consequences

We aim to develop:

- self-regulation
- respect for others
- a sense of responsibility

Pupils are supported not only to meet expectations, but to develop high expectations of themselves.

4.3 Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning in Ballygiblin NS is guided by a balance of consistency and teacher expertise.

We have developed:

- clear whole-school approaches to curriculum planning
- structured programmes to support progression across class levels
- shared expectations around teaching and learning

At the same time, we recognise that:

- teachers bring individual strengths, skills and interests
- teacher agency is essential to high-quality teaching

Staff are encouraged to:

- use their strengths to enhance learning experiences
- engage in continuous professional development
- contribute to whole-school improvement

School development is supported through:

- identifying priority areas
- targeted CPD
- ongoing reflection and review

This approach ensures consistency for pupils and supports professional growth for staff.

4.4 Curriculum in Practice

The curriculum in Ballygiblin NS is:

- broad and balanced
- structured to ensure progression from year to year
- aligned with national curriculum developments

We place a strong emphasis on:

- active and engaging learning
- integration across subjects
- developing key skills alongside knowledge

Particular strengths within the school include:

- a strong and embedded wellbeing framework
- a developing and ambitious STEM programme
- a consistent and progressive approach to teaching and learning

The curriculum is planned and delivered in a way that ensures all pupils can access, participate and succeed.

5. Leadership & Roles

Leadership in Ballygiblin National School is based on a collaborative and shared approach, where responsibility is distributed across the staff while maintaining clear structures and accountability.

While the Principal has overall responsibility for the leadership and direction of the school, leadership is most effective when it is shared. Staff are supported to take ownership of areas of school life, contribute to decision-making, and lead development in their areas of strength.

This approach ensures that:

- leadership is visible across the school
- staff strengths are recognised and utilised
- school improvement is a collective responsibility

The work of the school is guided by national frameworks, including Looking at Our School (LAOS), which supports ongoing reflection, school self-evaluation and continuous improvement across teaching, learning and leadership.

5.1 Board of Management

The Board of Management oversees the governance of the school and ensures that it operates in line with all relevant legislation and Department of Education requirements.

The Board supports the work of the school by:

- setting policy direction
 - overseeing finance and resources
 - supporting the Principal in leading the school
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5.2 Principal

The Principal leads the overall direction of the school and ensures that it operates effectively on a day-to-day basis.

The role includes:

- guiding school improvement and development
- supporting staff in their roles and professional growth
- ensuring consistency in teaching, learning and school organisation
- maintaining strong relationships with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community

The Principal works closely with all staff and promotes a team-based approach to leadership, where decisions are informed by collaboration and shared understanding.

5.3 In-School Management (ISM) Team

The In-School Management Team plays a key role in leading and supporting school development. Each member has defined areas of responsibility while working collaboratively to support the overall running of the school.

Some responsibilities are shared across roles to support collaboration and consistency across the school.

Deputy Principal — Adrienne Ring

- leadership support and school organisation
 - leading whole-school Mathematics
 - coordination of SNAs and support systems
 - student leadership (including Student Council)
 - coordination of school events and initiatives
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Assistant Principal II — Emma Murphy

- leadership of the English curriculum
 - digital learning and ICT (in conjunction with Ms. Mullins)
 - coordination of the Green Schools programme
 - leadership of music and school performances
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Assistant Principal II — Marie Mullins

- leadership of SPHE and wellbeing
 - coordination of health and safety
 - administration of medical needs
 - support for SEE curriculum implementation
 - digital learning and ICT (in conjunction with Ms. Murphy)
 - coordination of displays and visual presentation across the school (in conjunction with Ms. Ní Fhearghail)
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Assistant Principal II — Niamh Ní Fhearghail

- leadership of Gaelge
 - coordination of the Active School programme
 - social media and school communications
 - support for SEE curriculum implementation
 - coordination of displays and visual presentation across the school (in conjunction with Ms. Mullins)
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5.4 Teaching Staff

All teachers play a central role in the life of the school.

Teachers are responsible for:

- delivering high-quality teaching and learning
- supporting pupil wellbeing and development
- contributing to whole-school initiatives and development

Teachers are encouraged to:

- use their strengths and interests to enhance learning
 - engage in continuous professional development
 - contribute to a collaborative and supportive staff culture
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5.5 Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs play an important role in supporting pupils with additional care needs and enabling them to fully participate in school life.

Their work includes:

- supporting pupils' care and wellbeing needs
 - assisting with access to learning
 - working closely with teachers and the wider school team
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5.6 Shared Responsibility

While roles are clearly defined, Ballygiblin NS operates as a team-based environment where responsibility is shared.

Staff work together to:

- support pupils
- solve problems
- contribute to school development
- maintain a positive and supportive school culture

This shared approach strengthens the school and supports consistency across all areas of school life.

6. Organisation & Day-to-Day Systems

6.1 The School Day

The school day is structured to provide a balance of teaching, learning, play and rest.

- Doors open at 8:50am
- Classes begin at 9:00am
- Morning break: 11:00am
- Lunch break: 1:00pm
- Junior and Senior Infants finish at 1:40pm
- 1st to 6th Class finish at 2:40pm

Transitions throughout the day are managed in a calm and orderly manner, with clear routines in place for entering and leaving classrooms, break times and dismissal.

6.2 Routines and Expectations

Consistency is a key feature of how Ballygiblin NS operates.

Across the school:

- clear routines are established and maintained
- pupils understand what is expected of them

- staff apply expectations consistently

This creates:

- a predictable environment for pupils
 - a sense of security and belonging
 - strong foundations for learning and behaviour
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6.3 Attendance

Regular attendance is considered essential for effective learning.

Attendance is:

- recorded daily using the school's administrative system (Aladdin)
- monitored by class teachers and school leadership
- reviewed regularly to identify any concerns

The school works in partnership with parents to promote good attendance and address any issues that arise.

6.4 Communication

Clear and effective communication supports the smooth running of the school.

Communication with parents is primarily managed through:

- Aladdin
- scheduled meetings
- school updates and notices

Within the school:

- staff communicate regularly through meetings and shared systems
- a weekly Monday morning meeting is held to plan and review the week ahead
- key information is shared with all staff through Aladdin to ensure consistency

A consistent approach to communication helps to ensure clarity, transparency and strong relationships.

6.5 Health and Safety

The safety of pupils, staff and visitors is a priority in Ballygiblin NS.

The school operates in line with its Health and Safety Statement and associated procedures.

This includes:

- regular fire drills and emergency procedures
- supervision during all parts of the school day
- clear procedures for accidents and incidents
- ongoing review of risks and safety practices

A strong culture of safety is promoted across the school.

6.6 Supervision and Care

Supervision is organised to ensure that pupils are safe at all times during the school day.

This includes:

- supervision during arrival, break times and dismissal
- clear allocation of duties to staff
- prompt response to any incidents or concerns

Detailed arrangements for supervision are set out in the school's relevant policies and procedures.

6.7 Homework

Homework is used to support and reinforce learning.

It is:

- purposeful and appropriate to the age and stage of pupils
- designed to support independence and responsibility
- balanced to support pupil wellbeing

Further detail is outlined in the school's Homework Policy.

6.8 Use of Resources and Facilities

School resources are managed to support effective teaching and learning.

This includes:

- shared use of digital devices and equipment
- careful storage and maintenance of materials
- ongoing development of resources to support curriculum areas

Staff work collaboratively to ensure resources are used effectively across the school.

6.9 School Activities and Events

A wide range of activities and events form part of school life.

These include:

- school assemblies
- educational trips
- participation in local and national initiatives
- sporting and cultural events

These experiences support:

- pupil engagement
 - wellbeing
 - a sense of belonging
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6.10 Environmental Awareness

Ballygiblin NS promotes environmentally responsible practices.

Pupils are encouraged to:

- reduce, reuse and recycle
- care for their environment
- develop an awareness of sustainability

These practices are embedded in daily school life.

7. Partnership with Parents & Community

Ballygiblin National School places a strong emphasis on partnership with parents and the wider community.

We recognise that children benefit most when there is a positive and supportive relationship between home and school.

We promote this through:

- open and respectful communication
- clear and consistent systems for sharing information
- opportunities for parents to engage in school life

Communication with parents is primarily facilitated through Aladdin, alongside meetings and regular school updates.

The school is supported by a highly active and committed Parents' Association, which plays an important role in:

- supporting school initiatives
- organising events
- strengthening links between the school and the community

Ballygiblin NS is proud of its strong connection to the local community. The school plays an active role within the community and benefits from the support, involvement and goodwill of local families and organisations.

These partnerships contribute significantly to:

- pupil wellbeing
 - a sense of belonging
 - the overall life of the school
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8. School Policies & Review

Ballygiblin National School operates in accordance with a comprehensive suite of policies that support the effective running of the school and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and Department of Education requirements.

All school policies are maintained as separate documents and are available on the school website at the link below:

<https://www.ballygiblinnationalschool.ie/policies>

This ensures that policies can be updated, reviewed and accessed easily by staff and the wider school community.

The Whole School Plan provides an overview of how the school operates, while detailed procedures and requirements are outlined in individual policies.

8.1 Review and Development

This Whole School Plan is a live document.

It is:

- reviewed regularly by school leadership and staff
- updated to reflect changes in practice, policy and curriculum
- informed by school self-evaluation and ongoing reflection

The school is committed to continuous improvement and uses:

- staff feedback
- pupil voice
- parental input
- national frameworks such as Looking at Our School (LAOS)

to guide development and planning.

9. School Development & Improvement

Ballygiblin National School is committed to ongoing development and continuous improvement.

Each year, the school identifies a set of **priority areas for development**. These priorities are informed by school self-evaluation (SSE), staff collaboration, pupil and parent feedback, and national frameworks including Looking at Our School (LAOS).

This section outlines the key priorities for the current school year. These are reviewed at the end of the year and updated annually.

This table below is reviewed regularly throughout the year and updated as priorities progress.

9.1 School Improvement Priorities (2025–2026)

Priority Area	Focus	Key Action	Responsibility	Success Indicator	Status	Notes
Curriculum & Learning	English	Implement Starlight programme across all classes; increase emphasis on oral language development	Principal, Staff	Starlight implemented in all classes; improved pupil engagement and oral language	Started	
Curriculum & Learning	Spelling	Implement Spelling Shed (1st–6th); use Heggerty Bridge the Gap to support pupils with additional needs	Staff	Consistent use across classes; improved spelling outcomes	Started	
Curriculum & Learning	Gaeilge	Implement Abair Liom across all classes; increase focus on Gaeilge labhartha	Staff	Increased use of spoken Irish; improved pupil confidence	Started	
Curriculum & Learning	Mathematics	Implement Busy at Maths; begin implementation of new Maths curriculum with focus on Maths language and playfulness	Deputy Principal, Staff	Evidence of new approaches; increased pupil engagement	Started	
Curriculum & Learning	Arts & Physical Activity	Pilot Dabbledoo (Art, Music, Drama); introduce Daily Exercise Plus	Staff	Programmes implemented; increased participation and enjoyment	Started	
	Mathematics (Oide Support)	Work with Oide advisor to develop a clear whole-school Maths Plan aligned with the new Maths curriculum	Deputy Principal	Draft Maths Plan developed with staff input; clear approaches agreed for whole-school implementation	Started	
	Digital Learning	Develop and publish a Digital Learning Plan to support teaching, learning and future-focused skills	Principal with APs	Digital Learning Plan in place; increased use of digital tools in teaching and learning	Started	

Priority Area	Focus	Key Action	Responsibility	Success Indicator	Status	Notes
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	Wellbeing	Conduct a whole-school wellbeing audit and identify priority areas for development	Wellbeing Lead, Staff	Audit completed; clear areas for improvement identified to inform future planning	Started	
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	Behaviour Systems	Embed House Points system across the school	All Staff	Consistent use; increased positive behaviour	Started	
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	Behaviour Targets	Focus on one priority behaviour each month at assembly with whole staff placing a greater emphasis on this	Staff	Clear improvement in targeted behaviours	Started	
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	School Environment	Create a vibrant and colourful school environment	Post holders	School looks brighter and more welcoming	Ongoing	
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	Wellbeing Culture	Strengthen Bí Cineálta messaging and recognition	Staff	Consistent use of language and expectations	Started	
Student Behaviour & Wellbeing	Student Voice	Expand role of Student Council in wellbeing and initiatives	Principal, Staff	Increased pupil involvement and contribution	Started	
Learning Environment & Facilities	School Environment	Repaint classrooms and school spaces; install new noticeboards to enhance visual environment	Principal & PA	School environment visibly improved; positive feedback from pupils, staff and visitors	Completed	
Learning Environment & Facilities	Classroom Furniture	Replace desks, tables and classroom furniture to support modern, flexible learning	Principal	New furniture installed across classrooms; improved comfort and organisation	Completed	

Priority Area	Focus	Key Action	Responsibility	Success Indicator	Status	Notes
Learning Environment & Facilities	STEM Development	Raise €12,000 for Learning Labs to position Ballygiblin NS as a leader in STEM	Principal, BOM	Funding secured; Learning Labs in use across classes	Completed	
Inclusion & Special Education	Autism Class	Develop a safe and supportive autism class environment through the purchase and installation of specialised furniture and OT-recommended equipment	Principal & ISM team	Classroom fully equipped; safe, structured and supportive environment in place	Started	
Inclusion & Special Education	Sensory Environment	Develop courtyard into a sensory space for all pupils	Principal, Staff, BOM	Courtyard completed and actively used	Started	
Finance & Sustainability	Financial Stability	Reduce operational costs by €10,000 and historical deficit by €7,000	Principal, BOM	Targets achieved; improved financial position	Started	
Finance & Sustainability	Funding	Explore grants and additional funding opportunities	Principal	Additional funding secured	Ongoing	
Finance & Sustainability	Financial Tracking	Track all income and expenditure using FSSU templates	Principal	Accurate and up-to-date records maintained	Ongoing	
Staffing & Leadership	Enrolment	Increase enrolment from 104 pupils to support staffing allocation	Principal	Enrolment increased or maintained	Ongoing	
Staffing & Leadership	Leadership Development	Use Croke Park hours for working groups linked to priorities	Principal, Staff	Active participation; progress in priority areas	On hold	
Partnerships & Community	Parents' Association	Strengthen engagement and collaboration	Principal, Staff	Continued strong involvement and initiatives	Ongoing	
Partnerships & Community	Communication	Implement Smartphone-Free Childhood communication plan	Principal	Increased awareness and engagement	Ongoing	

Priority Area	Focus	Key Action	Responsibility	Success Indicator	Status	Notes
Partnerships & Community	School Identity	Introduce new active school uniform	Principal	Uniform introduced and adopted	Started	
Compliance & Administration	Compliance	Meet all policy and administrative deadlines	Principal	All deadlines met	Ongoing	
Compliance & Administration	Organisation	Implement deadline tracking calendar with monthly reminders	Principal	Calendar in use; improved organisation	Ongoing	

9.2 Review Process

Progress in each priority area will be:

- reviewed regularly at staff meetings
- monitored by school leadership
- adjusted as needed throughout the year

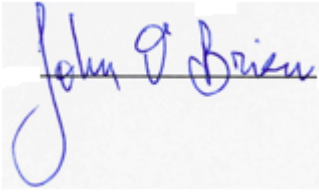

A full review will take place at the end of the school year to:

- evaluate progress
- identify successes and challenges
- inform priorities for the following year

10. Review and Oversight

This policy is reviewed annually by the ISM team and Board of Management.

Signatures

	
<i>John O'Brien</i>	<i>David Hyland</i>
<i>Chairperson BOM</i>	<i>Principal</i>
<i>Date: 18/11/2025</i>	<i>Date: 18/11/2025</i>