TEMPLEMORE COLLEGE
EDUCATING WITH RESPECT

Templemore College of Further Education
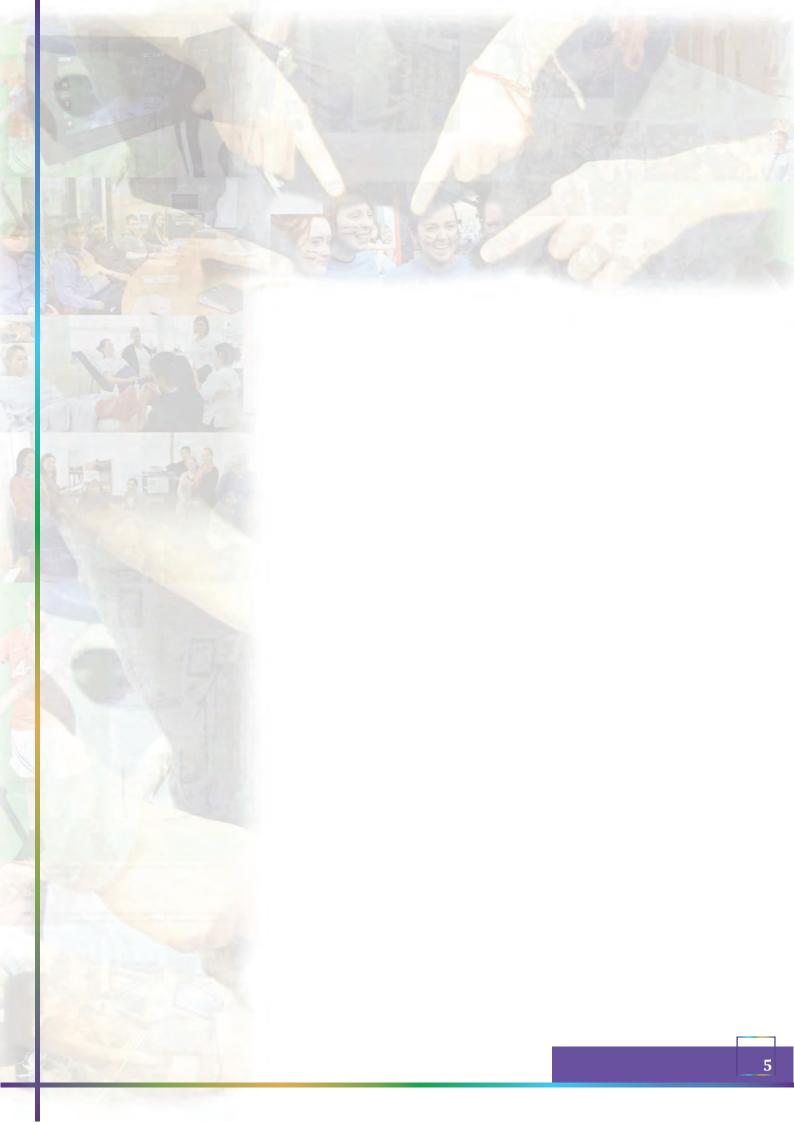## College Development Plan
2015 - 2018

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College Plan for the maintenance and improvement of a quality education service for students at Templemore College of Further Education
2015 - 2018

1. Background

On July 1st 2013 South Tipperary VEC amalgamated with North Tipperary VEC. The amalgamated organisation is known as Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB). This development was brought about by the commencement of the Education and Training Boards Act on July 1st 2013. As required by the preceding VEC legislation both constituent VECs developed an education plan spanning 2011 – 2015. This College Plan will continue to address the issues and challenges identified in the North Tipperary VEC Education Plan 2011 – 2015, as well as our FETAC/QQI Programme Improvement Plans, and our Annual Reports.

1.1 North Tipperary VEC Education Plan 2011 – 2015

North Tipperary VEC developed its Education Plan 2011 – 2015 in late 2010. This document provides the framework by which the organisation assured maintenance and improvement of quality education across the service (See Appendix A).

1.2 FETAC/QQI Programme Improvement Plans

Parallel to this development was the requirement, associated with out Quality Assurance Agreement with the then FETAC, to carry out a self-evaluation process to include all programmes over a five-year period. Templemore College has carried out three self-evaluations and developed three Programme Improvement Plans as a result.

1.3 Annual Reports

Templemore College also provides Tipperary Education and Training Board (TETB) with an annual report in the summer of each year.

These three documents are the most appropriate sources to develop a relevant and timely College Plan and, indeed, the idea of a strategic approach has been mentioned, directly and indirectly in all three sources.

Therefore, this Plan is based on three sources:

1. NTVEC Education Plan 2011 – 2015
2. QQI/FETAC Programme Improvement Plans 2012, 2013, and 2014
3. College Annual Report 2014.

This Plan will incorporate all these elements to ensure Templemore College is *Providing Education for Life*.

1.4 Things to keep in mind

The overall objective set out in the Education Plan 2011 – 2015 is to '**Provide Education for Life'**. The interesting subtext to this objective is that it challenges educators to see each student as much more that a person preparing for an

assessment process at the end of a particular programme: it challenges us to take account of all aspects of the student's life including the social, emotional, economic, and so on.

Deriving from this key objective is the *'Bill of Expectations'* including statements such as:

1. Students' needs will be prioritised in all decision- making
2. Students will be treated with respect and dignity at all times and will be expected to treat staff and fellow students in a like manner
3. Our education environment will be safe physically and emotionally
4. Our education environment will provide for a holistic education
5. Staff will provide a professional service to the highest standard
6. Management will provide support for staff and students by emphasising 'learning' and 'personal development' in all activities.

Taking the key objective and the expectations mentioned above as the philosophical underpinning of our practice, Templemore College committed to develop an annual update, in the form of an annual report, over the five years of the plan. This will ensure that all students are provided with an excellent education service. Furthermore it was agreed that the format of each annual report would include the following elements:

– Quality of Management
– Quality of Leadership and Planning
– Quality and Relevance of Curriculum Provision
– Quality of Learning and Teaching
– Quality of Support for Students.

This Plan will use the elements above and incorporate the actions to be carried out over the period of the Plan. However it is important, firstly, to provide the College background and the education process practiced in the College.

2. College Profile

Templemore College was founded as Templemore Vocational School in 1934, serving the community as a traditional vocational school. In that era the role of a Vocational School was 'to offer general and practical training in preparation for employment in trades, manufacturing, agriculture, commerce and other industrial pursuits' (Vocational Education Act 1930, 601).

The Intermediate Certificate was introduced in 1974, and in 1977 the Leaving Certificate was introduced.

In 1985 the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme was introduced nationally and in Templemore to provide integrated general education, vocational training and work experience for young people who had completed upper second level education or equivalent to enhance their prospects of gaining employment. The nature of this provision was a natural progression from the founding role of the College in 1934.

In 1990, the school adopted the new name of St Sheelan's College. However, in 1999, because of a reduction of post-primary enrolments, the decision was taken

by North Tipperary VEC and the Department of Education and Science to develop the College as an exclusive Further Education College.

In 2000 St Sheelan's College began an extraordinary transition from a post primary school to a College of Further Education. In 2005 it became the first exclusive Post Leaving Certificate College in North Tipperary.

Also in the year 2000, Céim Eile, a programme that addresses the challenges experienced by early school leavers, was established in the College.

In 2012 the Board of Management of the College agreed to change the name of the College from St. Sheelan's to **Templemore College of Further Education** with a view to establishing both the location and the range of educational services it now provides.

3. The education process in Templemore College

In Templemore College we think it is important to let our staff, students, parents, employers, and other relevant parties, know what we do and how we do it in the College i.e. the education process. Unlike other templates used to describe this process – e.g. mission, vision, etc. - we believe that our education process is best described and incorporates the following elements:

3.1 The Educational Priority
3.2 The Educational Purpose
3.3 The Educational Method
3.4 The Educational Outcomes
3.5 The Educational Values.

3.1 The Educational Priority

Templemore College undertakes to provide a learning environment that **encourages each student to get the best from him/herself**.

3.2 The Educational Purpose

We educate to enable students discover that **they can take charge of their lives** and they have the freedom to decide what direction it takes.

3.3 The Educational Method

The method provides **a learning environment that explores not only relevant content but also students' self-awareness, capabilities, and interests.**

3.4 The Educational Outcomes

The consequence of this method is that **students develop important technical skills and knowledge and the vital self-awareness and esteem to see themselves as capable and confident learners**.

3.5 The Educational Values

The education process in the College is built on agreed motive forces, i.e. values, that we are all behind. The following educational values will support the on-going realisation of our education process.

1. **Student-centred** - Keep the learners' interests at the centre of all important College decisions and actions
2. **Empowerment of staff** – enable staff access appropriate professional and personal support and acknowledge quality and innovation
3. **Quality**– expect highest standards from yourself, colleagues, students, and service providers
4. **Relevance** – programmes, resources, and teaching methods meet students needs
5. **Honesty and Integrity** – listen closely and communicate openly and directly, and do what we say
6. **Diversity** – welcome diverse people and encourage diverse thinking and approaches
7. **Participation** – promote collaboration and involvement so that all staff and students have a sense of belonging to the College
8. **Leadership and Initiative** - leadership is the responsibility of all staff and students and is encouraged and supported by all.

4. Strategic Objectives

Having detailed the background, the College profile, and the education process, we now identify the strategic objectives and actions to ensure the education process is practiced and maintained. The objectives will be structured around the following:

– Quality of Management
– Quality of Leadership and Planning
– Quality and Relevance of Curriculum Provision
– Quality of Learning and Teaching
– Quality of Support for Students
– Branding and Publicity.

It will become clear, by the nature of the implementation process, that some actions are applicable to a number of strategic objectives.

4.1 Quality Management

Quality Management will be assured if we address the following developmental areas and actions.

Developmental Areas

i. Ensure the provision of a safe and healthy working environment
ii. Provide effective management of College infrastructure
iii. Communicate effectively
iv. Manage Board of Management Meetings and all meetings effectively and efficiently
v. Implement and develop relevant polices
vi. Provide for distributed management in the College
vii. Ensure that Human Resources are managed effectively

4.1.1   Provide a safe and healthy working environment – physical and emotional
Actions

- Evaluate current Safety Statement and repeat annually
- Address issues arising from the evaluation
- Regular Fire Drills
- First aid training, and defibrillator training
- Appropriate training in the use of equipment
- Maintain a high standard of hygiene
- Improve external appearance of College
- Listen closely and communicate openly and directly (see 4.1.3 below)
- Encourage diverse thinking and approaches
- Promote collaboration and involvement
- Actively discourage bullying and intimidation by being mannerly, courteous, and respectful
- Provide opportunities for debriefing after stressful incidents.

4.1.2   Effective management of College infrastructure
Actions

- Deputy Principal to manage Caretaker and Cleaner to ensure hygiene, repairs, energy saving, and a welcoming environment, both inside and out, is maintained and improved.

4.1.3   Communicate effectively
Our understanding of 'Effective Communication' comprises the following:

- Using multiple media (spoken, hard copies, soft copies, TV, staff notice board, etc.)
- Appropriate language (take account of the person, audience)
- Timely (appropriate lead-in time, not late)
- Appropriate context (private, public, etc., as appropriate)
- Encourages feedback (a communication event is not complete without feedback)
- See Appendix B - Organisational Communication Strategy - for operational guidelines.

Actions

- Develop a Croke Park Programme of activities so that all staff, and part-time staff in particular, can identify the most important meetings to attend
- Ask staff for agenda items before each staff meeting
- Create an open-door environment where suggestions are encouraged and mistakes are identified, irrespective of who makes them
- Listen closely and communicate openly and directly
- Encourage diverse thinking and approaches
- Promote collaboration and involvement
- Use internal staff email system and hard copies as appropriate, to communicate relevant information to staff and gain feedback

– Use of paper printouts may be appropriate on occasion
– Use information board in the staff room to emphasise relevant information and for other staff members to place information
– Explore the feasibility of College Newsletter
– Organise Programme Co-ordinators meetings
– Clarify the role of Programme Co-ordinator
– Student feedback, both formal and informal, are used to ascertain level of satisfaction and suggestions from students
– Information monitors in the canteen, the staffroom and in the reception are to be used for staff and student information (information monitors need to be checked so that they are working efficiently)
– Be accountable regarding whole-staff and other staff meetings:
  o Provide a template for meetings to include a list of actions to be carried out, timeframes, and by whom
  o All staff meeting minutes emailed to the Principal
  o Principal/Deputy Principal attend a number of Programme Meetings
- Create an awareness of Data Protection Policy and its implications for the receipt, use and storage of communications
- Discussion with staff about implementation of the ICT policy in the College.

4.1.4 Implementation of effective Board of Management meetings
Actions

– Establish new Board of Management according to TETB regulations
– New Board informed regarding responsibilities etc.
– Provide support and training for new Board
– The Board shall meet five times a year
– Minutes are kept and emailed to TETB
– Actions, timeframes, and people responsible for implementation, identified
– Information regarding decisions of the Board is communicated to staff and students if relevant.

4.1.5 Develop and implement policies
Actions

– Ensure that all policies are cognisant of our core values
– Principal responsible for Policy Implementation, Development, and Evaluation
– 'Policy issues' to be on the Agenda of all College Management Meetings
– Implement relevant policies from the Department of Education, SOLAS, ETB, ETBI, and other agencies
– Develop customised policy responses
– Set a timetable for the evaluation of all policies

4.1.6 Share responsibility through distributed management
Actions

Education management is far more effective in a distributed mode, where responsibility is shared through an effective College Management and Programme Management structure.

– Weekly meetings of College Management to include Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals
– Keep other Post-holders informed by emailing agendas and minutes of meetings
– On-going reports to whole-staff meetings by Principal or Deputy Principal
– Develop and enhance Course Meeting process:
    o Develop list of Programme Co-ordinator duties
    o Timetable Course Meetings throughout the year
    o Ensure, where possible, all relevant staff attend
    o Minutes including actions, timeframes, and people responsible emailed to the Principal and Deputy Principal
    o Programme Co-ordinators report at staff meetings
– Evaluation of Course Meeting process at the end of each year
– Develop a step-by-step process to enable distributed accountability
– Explore the establishment of Exam Boards in each Department.

4.1.7 Manage human resource effectively
Actions

– In the on-going recruitment of staff we will identify personnel who have specialist and generic skills so that they can be deployed in various developing fields as the developing educational context requires
– Provide Professional Development as per 4.4.2 below
– Enable distributed management and leadership as per 4.1.6 and all of 4.2.
– Improve caretaking and cleaning services
    o Implement a Performance management system for Caretaker and Cleaner
    o Deputy Principal responsible for caretaking and cleaning in the College
    o All staff report to the Deputy Principal regarding caretaking and cleaning issues
– Provide on-going training for teaching and support staff
– Provide in-house mentoring for new staff
– On-going reports from the Deputy Principal to staff meetings.

4.1.8 Manage College funds wisely and improve College infrastructure
Actions

– Continue to manage College funds effectively
– Report financial position to the Board on an on-going basis
– Set aside funds to continue structural developments such as iMac lab, new hairdressing Salon
– Each department to submit an annual budget

- Develop, evaluate, and enhance online application and payments for students
- Develop measures to improve payment of fees by students
- Make submissions to relevant agencies regarding the provision of funding for on-going infrastructural developments
- Explore Erasmus+, in particular, to provide infrastructural development - ICT software and hardware related to EU training partnerships.

4.2   *Quality of Leadership and Planning*

Each member of staff in the College has an opportunity on a daily basis to be a leader in how we care about our students, how we represent the College, how we handle challenging situations, and how we use College resources. In this understanding leadership is the responsibility of all staff. Our education process determines **where we lead**, our core values determine **how we lead**. All is manifest in the way we treat each other, our students, their families, and others we come in contact with on a daily basis.

Developmental Areas

    i.   Quality Management (see above)
    ii.   Adopt a leadership role
    iii.   Practice ethical leadership
    iv.   Understand staff strengths and needs both individually and collectively.

4.2.1   Manage effectively
- See all 4.1 above

4.2.2   Taking a leadership role
Actions

Encourage staff to accept leadership opportunities in the way they:

- Care about students,
- Represent the College
- Teach in the classroom
- Carry out duties associated with role
- Handle challenging situations
- Use College resources
- Are included and participate in relevant developments and decisions in the College
- Make suggestions for development
- Point out shortcomings and suggest solutions
- Evaluate the spread of courses across the county and develop proposals, regarding allocation of funding to develop capital intense programmes such as Catering
- Become involved in the development of national programmes when opportunity arises
- Explore EU funds as a resource for College initiatives
- Develop an EU Strategic Development Plan.

4.2.3 Practicing ethical leadership
Actions

- Provide for ethical leadership by acting according to our core values
- Encourage staff to object when this is not happening
- Encourage diverse thinking and approaches – intellectual disagreement is productive
- Accept that some people know more than us about certain issues
- Only interrupt colleagues and students in a mannerly fashion
- Address problems – do not assign blame
- Support each other
- Implement what has been agreed
- Provide relevant information in a timely and appropriate fashion.

4.2.4 Understand staff strengths and needs both individually and collectively
Actions

- Carry out systematic evaluation of staff strengths and needs – collectively and individually
- Encourage and support on-going Professional Development (see 4.4.2 below)
- Encourage diverse thinking and approaches
- Acknowledge success both formally and informally.

4.3 Quality and Relevance of Curriculum Provision

Developmental Areas

i. On-going Evaluation of the Service
ii. Development and implementation of improvement plans
iii. Take account of external factors
iv. Canvass stakeholders for guidance.

Actions

4.3.1 On-going Evaluation of Services
- Set evaluation timeframes
- Conduct Self-evaluation of Services on an Annual Basis.

4.3.2 Development and implementation of improvement plans
- Establish a Self-Evaluation Working Group to develop and implement improvement plans
- Develop Annual Improvement Plans from evaluation reports
- Provide briefing for all staff re: Improvement Plans
- Set targets, timeframes, and people responsible regarding actions
- Provide new and relevant programmes as required.

4.3.3 Take account of external factors
- Evaluate College Programmes in light of jobs market trends and demands
- Evaluate relevant reports from agencies such as DES, SOLAS, Forfás, ESRI, OECD, etc. regarding programmes on offer

- Meet with stakeholders from Industry and get their views on what the programmes should be offering
- Take advantage of Funding Agencies especially Erasmus+ particularly regarding student placement and professional development for teachers.

4.4 Quality of learning and teaching

Developmental Areas

    i.   Build a holistic education experience
    ii.   Provide relevant teaching experiences for all students
    iii.   Ensure integrity of assessment process
    iv.   Consult and collaborate with important stakeholders
    v.   Provide for relevant Professional Development
    vi.   Provide quality work experience placements for students.

Actions

4.4.1 Building a holistic education experience
- Integrate self esteem and personal development into the education process
- Provide support for teachers to implement integration
- Focus on Multiple intelligence theories
- Encourage the Methodologies Group (an informal group of teachers who meet several times a year to discuss teaching challenges) and other teaching staff to explore holistic education
- Explore multiple modes of learning including part-time, work-based, blended education, etc.
  Explore the feasibility of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Address literacy and numeracy difficulties – e.g. NALA Policy for FE Colleges
- Provide new certification as appropriate such as CompTia, CISCO and ILM
- Explore the opportunities regarding business incubation
- Organise a 'Job Focus' in the Spring time to enable students become informed about the variety of aspects associated with jobs, job preparation, and opportunities
- Provide short-term, technical-skill based courses on demand
- Develop and expand leisure and enrichment activities
- Use Erasmus+, in particular, to enhance student work placement/experience and language development.

4.4.2 Provide relevant teaching experiences for all students
- Curriculum Development (see 'Quality and Relevance of Curriculum Provision' above).

4.4.3 Ensure the integrity of the assessment process
- Provide annual support for all staff regarding assessment processes
- Ensure assessment are carries out to the highest standards - more formal procedures to be followed at exam time
- Work on formalising handing over of assessment material – e.g. one person in a certain location between set time periods

- Ensure marking schemes, assessment briefs etc., accord with national standards
- Inform staff regarding External Authentication process on an annual basis
- QA Policy training for all staff on how it impacts on the assessment process.

4.4.4 Consult and collaborate with important stakeholders

Many students progress to third level particularly institutes of Technology. Templemore College will continue to develop formal agreements with Higher and third level institutions as we have with LIT Limerick regarding Interior Design and with LIT Thurles and Clonmel regarding ICT, Creative Media and Business. Credits for students are agreed between the institutions.

- Continue to review how our programmes articulate with Higher Education programmes
- Explore the feasibility of partnerships with feeder schools
- Organise visits for students and staff to relevant exhibitions, talks, fairs, etc. to stay informed of innovations and developments
- Review all programmes in light of relevant reports – ESRI, EGFSN, SOLAS, and FORFÁS etc.
- Establish Industrial Advisory Groups
- Regenerate Industrial Advisory Groups in areas such as Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy and Security Studies.

4.4.5 Professional Development

Professional Development for staff is vital to the quality of provision. All staff will be encouraged to engage with formal and/or informal professional development on an on-going basis. We will continue to focus much of our Croke Park hours on improving the capacity of all our staff to teach and assess our students in a fair and consistent manner. Actions regarding professional development will include the following:

- Prepare a Professional Development Plan for Staff in line with suggestions from the Teaching Council
- Review the induction process for new teachers
- Use Teachers Handbook to provide professional development in relation to assessment practices
- Organise more time for staff to meet for development of teaching and assessment resources and materials - Use of Croke Park agreement hours for this exercise
- Use Erasmus+, in particular, to provide professional development opportunities for staff
- Individuals taking short courses to be credited on their Croke park hours
- Annual refresher support for all staff on the Assessment Process
- Facilitate teachers to get together to develop integration plans for the teaching and assessment of modules
- Develop the 'Communities of Practice' idea across TETB in particular subject areas.

1. Introduction

Tipperary (NR) VEC has always been convinced of the need for systematic planning and ongoing strategic development. This conviction is exemplified in the development of FIS 2020. Many of the key objectives detailed in FIS 2020 are now included in our current Education Plan 2006 – 2010. This document, which incorporates the voices of all partners and stakeholders in Vocation Education in North Tipperary, provides a grounded and realistic roadmap for the development of education in the county.

One important objective arising out of our Education Plan is to enhance the learning capacity within the organisation. To support this objective the Plan urges the development of an effective internal and external communication system which reflects the growing complexity and size of the VEC. It goes on to suggest that… *'Communication in this sense is about much more than information exchange. It is about drawing on the expertise of staff, students and Boards and sharing the expertise to maximise the use of limited resources. It is fundamentally about building and sharing our vision of education so that, as a team, we can deliver a first class education service'*. This objective is fundamental to the implementation of our Education Plan.

Coincidentally the VEC sector is meeting the challenge of modernisation and organisational change through the Partnership Process. Under the current National Development Plan *Towards 2016*, the VEC National Partnership Forum has identified Organisational Communications as an essential element for organisational development.To address this two-fold challenge Tipperary (NR) VEC established a Communications Implementation Team to explore all aspects of Communication within and outside the organisation and design and implement a Communications Policy. The work of this Team is presented in our Organisational Communications Strategy.

David Leahy
CEO

4.4.6 Provide quality work experience placements for students
– Ensure students' work experience is rewarding, relevant and carried out and monitored professionally.

4.5 *Quality of support for students*

Developmental Areas
i. Quality of Management
ii. Quality of Leadership and Planning
iii. Quality and Relevance of Curriculum Provision
iv. Quality of learning and teaching
v. Branding and Publicity
vi. Provide effective support for Students' Council
vii. Ensure information to, and feedback from students is facilitated
viii. Provide comprehensive Guidance, Counselling, and Learning Supports for students
ix. Facilitate supports for Childcare
x. Develop the Student Hardship Fund service.

Actions

4.5.1 – 5 Management, Leadership, Curriculum, and Learning and Teaching
Implement all actions regarding Management, Leadership, Curriculum, Learning and Teaching.

4.5.6 Support for Student Council
– One member of staff will support and facilitate the workings of the Student Council
– Initiatives will be presented to College management for decision/approval
– Two members of the Council will be invited to sit on the Board of Management of the College.

4.5.7 Feedback from students
– Implement a more formal feedback system for students
– Evaluate feedback and implement actions arising.

4.5.8 Information to Students
– Student Journals and College website will contain all relevant information for students
– Teachers will take students through this information on induction and throughout academic year as deemed necessary
– Each teacher will provide content, assessment, timeframes, etc., for programmes being taught
– Teachers will ensure all students are aware of appeals processes.

4.5.9 Guidance and Counselling
– Guidance and Counselling are carried out in a formal manner by the College Guidance Counsellor and all students have access to this service
– Informal Guidance and Counselling are carried out by all members of staff to support the work of the Guidance Counsellor
– Support for all members of staff regarding the integration of guidance and counselling into all programmes will be provided.

4.5.10 Learning Support
– See 4.4.1 above
– Learner support related to literacy, numeracy, study skills, assessment presentation, etc., are provided on an on-going basis by our Learning Support Officer
– Professional Development for all staff regarding the integration of learner support will be provided
– An evaluation of this initiative will take place to see if it is worthwhile.

4.4.11 Childcare
– The Childcare Centre located in the College campus provides a subsidised service to some of our students
– Funding support is available for some students from Tipperary ETB.

4.5.12 Student Hardship Fund
– This fund provides emergency funding for students who hit financial hard times
– Application forms are available in the Principal's office
– The fund to be administers by a committee
– The student Council organises events to raise funds for this service.

4.6   Branding and Publicity

Recruitment of students on an annual basis is challenging and the College must address issues such as Branding and Publicity to ensure potential students are aware of the quality and diversity of programmes on offer in the College.

Developmental Areas

     i.   Develop new entrance to the College
    ii.   Support communication processes
   iii.   Arrange on-going and timely Open Days and College events.

Actions

4.6.1. New Entrance to the College
– Improve the impact of the College's presence in the town by restructuring the front entrance to the College.

4.6 .2 Support communication processes
– Support the work of our College Publicity and Communications Officer
– Support the work of our website Upkeep and Maintenance Officer
– Provide news articles to newspapers on a regular basis
– Provide timely website updates
– Prepare a College Prospectus
– Regular updates to Careers Portal
– Student involvement in local and community events
– Develop leaflets for public offices and public places
– Further develop College Facebook and Twitter accounts
– YouTube videos on the website
– Internal communication system to include local business advertising
– Electronic noticeboards in the front of the College

- Visit second level schools and education centres in the catchment area
- Develop College Plan.

4.6.3 Open days and College events
- Use College Open Days to the best advantage of the College
- Continue annual exhibition/events in the College to promote developments and the work of students in the College
- Provide regular short open events to let the public know what's going on in the College.

North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee
Education Plan
2011 – 2015

3. The Planning Process

3.1 Background to the Development of NTVEC's Education Plan 2011 - 2015

During the course of the implementation of our first Education Plan 2006 – 2010 a number of issues arose in the context of the formalised implementation and evaluation processes included in that Plan, and also in conversations which took place at Senior Managers Meetings, Ar Aghaidh Linn (this is NTVEC's Professional Development Programme), Local Partnership Group Meetings, and the Organisational Communications Working Group meetings, in particular. A pattern of conclusions was emerging from these contributions and these conclusions indicated a re-think was required in relation to how we approached the development of any follow-on Education Plan. Essentially, it was agreed that the current Plan was provided as an answer to a statutory requirement entailed in the Vocational (Amendment) Act 2001. This required all VECs to develop a Five-year Education Plan, which would detail envisaged developments for that VEC over this timeframe. It was agreed that our new Education Plan would address, in a more comprehensive manner, questions that may not have received sufficient focus in our first Plan such as relevance and practicality.

These systematic evaluations and discussions in many of the management and development teams necessitated the development of an 'Education Plan Evaluation Report'. This Report was discussed at Senior Managers meetings and it was agreed that a 'workshop' was required to explore this report and to make recommendations on how the new Plan will be developed keeping in mind essential design criteria of relevance and practicality.

As a result of this workshop a draft framework for the development of our follow-on Education Plan was written and circulated to all schools, centres, programmes, and offices. A briefing on the draft Plan was also provided to the Committee.

Consequent to this series of formal and informal evaluations, a workshop with Senior Managers, and a consultation process that included staff, education partners, and the Committee, the following Education Plan for North Tipperary VEC was agreed.

3.2 Structure of the Plan

This Education Plan is structured in such a way as to identify priority actions for the coming years while acknowledging the on-going good practice currently in place. In this way our Plan will provide a roadmap as well as an evaluation process to enable validation of achievements while remaining committed to on-going progress regarding the quality of the service we provide to our students.

To enable the achievement of these objectives we will first declare our **overall objective**. This will be followed by a '**Bill of Expectations'**, which students, parents, staff and other education partners can identify with, and agree, are the key principles and beliefs by which our service is provided.

The third element of our Plan is a list of '**Challenges**' associated with agreed Expectations. These Challenges, which will focus primarily on issues such as Planning and Leadership, Management, Curriculum, Support for Students, and Teaching and Learning, will enable our service to evaluate, on an on-going basis, the level of achievement associated with agreed Expectations.

In this context, Section 1 of this document is our Education Plan and provides a Framework and a Process, which is time-framed for five years. To supplement the plan and with ta view to addressing the twin criteria of relevance and practicality, five one-year plans from each of our schools, centres, and services – see Section 2 for the 2011 Annual Plans for all locations – will be developed each year over the five-year timeframe.

Good practice is continually taking place throughout our service and our Plan for 2011 – 2015 will provide a dynamic process to enable and acknowledge our excellent practice and, simultaneously, evaluate developments and progress associated with our key Expectations.

3.3 Our overall objective

In answering the question 'what is the objective of our work?' we focus on the main reason why we are employed by or work on behalf of North Tipperary VEC. In this context our answer is:

Providing Education for Life

3.4 Bill of Expectations

Our Bill of Expectations will clearly illustrate how our students and other service users will participate and be engaged by all staff in a professional, caring, respectful, and dignified manner. We need to take account of their status as uniquely gifted individuals, students, citizens, and future contributors to a progressive, democratic society.

NTVEC Bill of Expectations

- Students' needs will be prioritised in all decision-making
- Students will be treated with respect and dignity at all times and will be expected to treat staff and fellow students in a like manner
- Our education environment will be safe physically and emotionally
- Our education environment will provide for education of the whole person
- Staff will provide a professional service to the highest standard
- Management will provide support for staff and students by emphasising 'learning' and 'personal development' in all activities.

3.5 Challenges

There are on-going and upcoming challenges that need to be systematically addressed if we are to provide education for life and achieve the expectations we have set ourselves.

Our Education Plan 2011 – 2015 will include a commitment from all our schools and centres to prepare and evaluate annual reports based on the framework provided below. Each school, centre, programme, and office will address, where appropriate, the following areas for development and maintenance:

- Quality of Management
- Quality of Leadership and Planning
- Quality of Curriculum Provision
- Quality of learning and teaching
- Quality of support for students.

See Section 2 for Annual Plans for 2011 related to all our services.

3.6 Framework Summary

Our Education Plan for 2011 – 2015 is based on the twin criteria of relevance and practicality and is structured by our overall aim, expectations, and challenges. In

this regard it is customised to the needs of our organisation and, more importantly, to the schools, centres, programmes and offices.

Each area of our service will provide on-going annual reports built on these expectations and structured in line with the evaluation framework provided. While there may be goals and developments that do not fit comfortably into each of the areas of centre/school activities mentioned above, these can, and should, be identified and implemented throughout and beyond the life of this Education Plan.

Section 2 provides a series of one-year education plans, designed for implementation in each location. Over the five-year timeframe of this Plan it is envisaged that our Education Plan Framework will remain constant while each of our services will have accumulated five one-year plans, which will progressively identify developmental goals and how they are to be implemented.

The Annual Plans will be categorised around second level schools, further and adult education, support services, and corporate services.

Second Level includes:

– Borrisokane Community College
– Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles
– Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré
– Nenagh Vocational School and College of Further Education
– Newport College.

Further and Adult Education includes:

– St Sheelan's College of Further Education and Céim Eile
– Coláiste Éile Thurles
– Roscrea Education Centre
– Teach an Léinn Nenagh
– Thurles Education Centre
– Adult Basic Education Service
– Community Education.

Support and Corporate Services includes:

– Adult Education Services
– Adult Guidance Information Service
– Further Education Support Services
– Corporate Services
– Professional Development Services.

Appendix B

Organisational Communications Strategy

2   Background

Tipperary (NR) VEC held an important Organisational Communications Workshop in 2005 with the dual aim of evaluating communications systems operating in the organisation and to provide direction regarding the development of a communications strategy. There was general agreement that ***most, if not all processes and procedures to ensure effective organisational communication are in place***. However it was now time to systematically attend to this important dimension of organisational activity.

3   Principles underpinning a communication policy for Tipperary (NR) VEC

Our Communications Workshop provided many important insights and understandings which are incorporated into this strategy however a most important outcome was agreement regarding the 'principles' underpinning a communication policy. It is essential the our communication strategy is:

– Democratic
– Person-centred
– Ethical
– Transparent
– Relevant
– Realistic
– Quality Assured.

The following strategy aims to reflect all key insights arising from this important Communications Workshop.

4   Our understanding of communication

Real and genuine communication is grounded on trusting, respectful, open and honest interpersonal relationships where all partners/stakeholders are encouraged and even feel obliged to voice opinions without fear of ridicule but with a confidence that each persons' ideas are truly valued (Tipperary (NR) VEC, Communications Workshop, 2005).

5   Underlying Conviction

We are convinced that an effective communication strategy will enable our organisation to access the wisdom and expertise of all our educational partners. On this basis we can build and share our vision of education so that, as an organisation, we can continually provide a quality education service.

6   The Aim

The aim of this strategy is to develop a communication culture that enables our organisation to trust its own potential to respond confidently and effectively to the challenges associated with the provision of a quality educational experience for all our learners.

7 *Priority Goals and Outcomes*

Here we detail the communication priorities which we will address through this strategy so that we can achieve the identified outcomes.

1 To facilitate authentic participation of all partners/stakeholders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an on-going basis

     1.1 Outcome – Engaged and motivated partners/stakeholders

2 To ensure that everyone who is a partner/stakeholder understands and accepts what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation

     2.1 Outcome – Ethical and responsive partners/stakeholders

3 To communicate with stakeholders/partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged

     3.1 Outcome – Respected and appreciated partners/stakeholders

4 To protect and enhance our organisation's image

     4.1 Outcome – Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation.

Actions for Goal 1

By identifying the following specific actions we now deal with the manner in which we will put into operation the way we strengthen and develop communications throughout the organisation.

Goal 1	Actions	Outcome 1
Authentic participation of all partners/stake holders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an ongoing basis	i. Design a clear diagram and other appropriate communication media to illustrate the structure of the organisation including all Schools, Centres, and Services provided ii. Create clear diagrams, illustrations, etc., that clearly illustrate decision-making process within the organisation iii. Illustrate points at which relevant partners can inform decision outcomes iv. Evaluate diagrams and illustrations among relevant stakeholder/partners v. Produce and use a range of media brochures, handouts, presentations - to communicate this information vi. Post information materials on the website vii. Use Staff Newsletter to regularly update regarding structural and decision-making developments. viii. Use a range of sources – staff meetings, notice boards, informal discussions, staff newsletter- to initiate policy developments ix. Inform all relevant partners of decisions made on their behalf x. Relevant stakeholders/partners representation on policy development, consultation and evaluation teams xi. Feedback to contributors regarding their contributions using a range of media including staff meetings, management presentations, Staff Newsletter.	Engaged and motivated partners/stakeholders

Actions for Goal 2

Goal 2	Actions	Outcome 2
All partners/stakeholders understand and accept what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation	In addition to all actions related to Goal 1 i. Develop and Communicate Continuing Professional Development Policy to all Staff ii. Inform staff of relevant staff development initiatives iii. Explore the feasibility and practicality of acknowledging contribution of staff in each location and in the organisation iv. Continue to hold annual Educational Conferences v. Collate information regarding all staff development initiatives vi. Evaluate staff development needs on an on-going basis vii. Clearly inform staff of what they can expect for the organisation viii. Clearly inform staff of their duties and obligations ix. Facilitate an inclusive exploration of ethics in educational practice.	Ethical and responsive partners/stakeholders

Actions for Goal 3

Goals 3	Actions	Outcomes
Communicate with stakeholders/partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged	In addition to all actions related to Goal 1 and 2 i. Communications will address issues such as: – Time and place – Language – Forms of media – Facilitating feedback. ii. Use informal communication as appropriate iii. In consultation with partners/stakeholders develop ways of acknowledging and valuing the contribution of informal communications and feedback	Respected and appreciated partners/stakeholders

Actions for Goal 4

Goal 4	Actions	Outcomes
Protect and enhance our organisation's image	In addition to all actions related to Goal 1, 2, and 3 i. Evaluate organisational brochures, posters, logos, etc., with a view to creating an up-to-date, professional corporate image ii. Use all appropriate occasions and events to promote organisational achievements and plans iii. Clear guidelines developed with regard to responding to external news and media iv. PR person to be appointed in each location v. Training in PR provided to individuals responsible for PR.	Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation

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