

## 1 Our mission

The mission of the Learning Hub is to enhance the lives of children and young people by sparking passion for personal learning and development.

We work in partnership with parents and guardians, education providers, statutory agencies and the wider Limerick community to provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring learning environment for children and young people in the local Limerick area and the wider region.

## 2 Our philosophy

### *Holistic approach*

It really does take a village, or a community, to raise a child. Children and young people need the support of their families and local community if they are going to fulfil their potential. They need to see reasons to be optimistic in their local environment if they are going to have hope in their future. This is why we work closely with families and the local community as well as children and young people directly.

### *Child-centred learning*

Learning needs to start where each child or young person is at, in their personal development in general and how they are on any particular day. This could be as simple as asking them what they would like to do and working from there. It also means being welcoming, listening carefully without pre-conceptions and being respectful, so that we can engage in an open and non-judgemental way.

### *Engaging creativity*

Tapping into creativity and imagination are central to the learning process. It can unlock previously undiscovered talents and abilities and create a new way in to learning. It also validates the experience of the learner and can be the first step in building self-belief.

### *Learning by doing*

People learn in different ways and many of us learn by doing. While traditional education relies on telling first, we often start by doing as well as talking, or even doing before talking. This is another way into the learning process that is made possible in an informal educational setting.

### *Commitment to quality*

We are committed to developing dynamic and engaging programmes of the highest quality. Our programmes are linked to the school curriculum, are evidence-based and designed to complement rather than duplicate the work done in schools. We work with schools to find gaps that we can fill so that we meet the needs of our schools as well as our children and young people. We work across subject areas by creating active learning projects that combine aspects of the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) curriculum with the core skills of literacy and numeracy.

These projects are delivered through our Art, Health, Music and Science Hubs working together to enhance the learning experience. We review our work regularly to ensure that we are adapting and responding dynamically to the changing environment and the changing needs of our learners.

### *Lifelong learning*

Education is one of the keys to a happier life. It changes perspectives, raises expectations and develops resilience, adaptability and perseverance. It lays the foundations for continuing personal growth and develops the skills and habits needed for full participation in society. We are committed to sparking the desire for learning in children and young people so that they make the most of their school experience. We also work to foster an interest in personal learning and development that can take young people beyond their school years and open up the possibility of lifelong learning.

### *Working in partnership*

Partnership is critical to the delivery of our mission. We work in partnership because we know that we are not the only people involved in the lives of children and young people and we cannot do this work alone. We work in partnership with parents and guardians by consulting them about potential future activities for themselves and their children on a regular basis. We work in partnership with schools by enhancing the school curriculum with creative and practical projects that are difficult to achieve in a formal educational setting. We have a strategic involvement with our educational partners at board level and take placement students from each institution, training them to assist us in delivering our programmes.

### *Inclusion and diversity*

Children and adults are more likely to access opportunities and flourish in an environment where they feel welcome. A welcoming environment is one which embraces difference and extends its welcome to all. A diverse environment builds social cohesion and community. This is why we encourage and welcome a broad mix of learners on site, which provides social and cultural experiences that benefit everyone.

### *Having fun*

Having fun should be part of every child's life. Having fun brings joy, energy and enthusiasm. Being able to play teaches children to take risks and embrace challenges. We seek to provide safe, happy and friendly indoor and outdoor spaces where children have the freedom to have fun – in other words, a place where kids can be kids.

## **3 Our aims**

In order to fulfil our mission, we aim to contribute to the following outcomes:

### **3.1 For children and young people**

- Realising and exploring the talents and skills that they already have
- Feeling more positive about learning in all its forms
- Growing in confidence and self-esteem

- Increasing in resilience and being more able to deal with challenges
- Having greater belief in the possibilities for their future
- Increasing belief in learning as a lifelong experience and increasing participation in education in its broadest sense

### 3.2 For parents and guardians

- Increasing confidence in their ability to support the personal learning and development of their children
- Having greater awareness of the opportunities for their children's education and future

### 3.3 For people in the local community

- Increasing physical and mental well-being
- Increasing participation in lifelong learning
- More community leadership and champions emerging from within the community
- Increasing confidence in being able to make a difference in the community

## **4 Our objectives**

In order to contribute specifically to the outcomes described above, we do the following:

- 4.1 We extend the learning experience during the school day by providing activities on site, and beyond the school day by providing activities after school and during the school holidays.
- 4.2 We enrich the learning experience in school by developing and delivering tailored educational programmes with school groups on site and in the school classroom.
- 4.3 We provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring learning environment with access to a garden, supervised play area, multi-use games area, art studio, music studio, science lab, café and health hub.
- 4.4 We work with parents and guardians by providing personal development and skills-based courses on-site or signposting them to available courses in the area, and by providing a space to connect with other parents and guardians.
- 4.5 We work with the local community by encouraging participation in the health hub through activities such as gardening, active lifestyle, healthy eating.

- 4.6 We engage and support third level placement students, TY Students and local volunteers who act as mentors and help us to deliver our educational programmes.
- 4.7 We work in partnership by networking with and providing space for other service providers and signposting to other services.
- 4.8 We work in collaboration with other agencies to improve the physical environment of the local community.
- 4.9 We contribute to future plans for the local area and the wider region.

## **5 Our strategic priorities 2023-26**

- 5.1 Providing services as described in the objectives above by
- Continuing the delivery of high quality services
  - Exploring and developing services to meet changing needs
- 5.2 Improving the physical environment of the Learning Hub by
- Upgrading the campus to ensure we meet the highest standards in relation to safety and energy efficiency
  - Improving access in relation to mobility and sensory issues as well as creating more opportunities for gardening and active lifestyle
- 5.3 Strengthening organisational sustainability by
- Improving staffing levels and conditions
  - Strengthening governance systems and processes
  - Developing operational guidelines and service standards
- 5.4 Developing a financial sustainability strategy by
- Maintaining existing funding sources
  - Maximising existing resources to develop further income generation