

# AN EDUCATE TOGETHER SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOL

An Educate Together school, through its Board of Management, is legally bound to uphold the Educate Together ethos, as laid down in the Association's Charter.

## The School in Principle

The four core principles of the Educate Together ethos will be central to the process of planning, managing and developing the school. Schools will therefore be:

**Multi-denominational** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social and religious backgrounds being equally respected.

- An ethical core curriculum, along the lines of the Educate Together 'Learn Together' primary curriculum, will form the basis of the curricular framework of the school. This will be most visible in the aspect of the formal curriculum commonly called 'Religious Education' but will permeate all teaching and learning in the school. Different religious and non-religious philosophies will be valued equally within the school, regardless of the number of school community members associated with any one identity.
- Implementation of best international practice in school leadership and management will work to counter identified inequalities in relation to the experience of students with minority religious, ethnic and linguistic identities, as well as those with other minority identities (ability, gender, socio-economic background, etc.).
- Enrolment policies will facilitate equality of access to the school and it will be recognised that further outreach and information provision work may be necessary to maximise equality of access in practice.

**Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities

- Management of the school will be obliged to ensure that active efforts are made to counter gender and other inequalities, both in processes and outcomes, and that all children experience a broad, balanced education in accordance with their individual educational needs.

**Learner-centred** In their approach to education

- Notwithstanding the legal status of the majority of second-level students as children (i.e. under 18 and therefore afforded special legal rights and protections), the term **learner-centred** (rather than child-centred) will be favoured in relation to Educate Together second-level schools.
- As learner-centred organisations, Educate Together second-level schools will place learning, and the needs of different individual learners, at the centre of all decision-making processes, as well as at the centre of the curriculum.

**Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of teachers

- All members of the school community will be meaningfully involved in the establishment and ongoing management of the school.
- Schools will be members of Educate Together, and therefore can affect national policy through the democratic processes of the organisation.

## **The School in Practice**

In keeping with best international practice and with the importance placed on local school communities throughout the sector, Educate Together school communities will develop their own school plan and policies in key areas such as language and literacy, learning support, behaviour, bullying and racism. They will also be fully engaged in ongoing school-based curriculum development.

However, this will be done within the framework provided by the Educate Together charter. Some examples of distinctive characteristics of Educate Together second-level schools are therefore likely to be:

- A fully inclusive Ethical Education curriculum, which permeates the life of the school and to which students from all cultural backgrounds have equal access
- An efficient process of school development planning which maximizes involvement on the part of all members of the school community
- Meaningful participation on the part of students in decision-making in the school
- Development of critical thinking and learning skills, and a strong focus on students' taking responsibility for their own learning
- Differentiated teaching and learning methodologies as the norm, allowing all students to achieve their full potential within mixed ability groups
- Language, learning and other support provided within the mainstream classroom whenever possible
- A range of accreditation options, ensuring that different types of achievement and excellence (academic, social etc.) are valued
- An integrated approach to subject areas where possible with an emphasis on project work, thematic learning and skills development
- An emphasis on continued professional development for all staff members
- A positive approach to team and co-teaching
- Links with educational and other organizations, in recognition of the importance of lifelong and non-school based learning
- Community use of school facilities
- An ethical approach to decision-making within the school which reflects good environmental and human rights practice

**Learn Together to Live Together. No Child an Outsider.**