



An ethical education curriculum for Educate Together schools

Learn Together



Vision Statement

"Learn Together to Live Together"

Mission Statement

To promote a philosophy of education in which no child is considered an outsider; which promotes the fullest development of ability irrespective of gender, class or stereotype and which encapsulates this ethos in a democratic partnership uniquely combining the involvement of parents with the professional rôle of teachers.



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Ethical Curriculum Development Team



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Foreword

The curriculum programme presented here has evolved over many years. It had its inception in the Religious Education Core Curriculum document developed in the Dalkey School Project National School in 1989 and subsequent curricula developed in other Educate Together schools. The impetus to develop a national ethical core curriculum emerged as more schools came under the national patronage of Educate Together. It was felt that there was a need to encapsulate the ethos in a curriculum document that would be both functional and accessible to teachers and parents in the Educate Together sector.

To ensure that this document reflected the ethos of Educate Together a collaborative and consultative process was embarked upon. Research findings conducted with Principals in the sector were presented at an ethos conference held in Kilkenny in 2001 and the work was further developed at subsequent conferences held in Bunratty in 2002 and in Dublin in 2003.

The Curriculum Development Committee would like to thank the Educate Together schools whose work and contributions inform the document; those who attended the ethos conferences and made such valuable contributions to the work as it developed; the schools who submitted materials to the committee; the teachers who provided exemplars and the readers for a very valuable critique of the final draft document.

We would particularly like to thank all the children in Educate Together schools who have contributed their drawings and work which help to bring the document alive and enable the reader to see the core values lived out in the schools. Thanks also to the Principals and teachers who work so hard on a daily basis to ensure the delivery of these core values.

We are grateful to the Chief Executive, Board of Directors and staff of Educate Together for their practical assistance, encouragement and support for this project.

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SECTION I

Ethical Education Curriculum



Wood

Shade

Birds

Fresh Air

Birds

Shelter

Fun

Shelter

Shade

Fruit

Fresh Air

Chestnuts

Fruit

Chestnuts

Shelter

Fruit

Fuel

Wood

Fuel

Paper

Ethical Education Curriculum

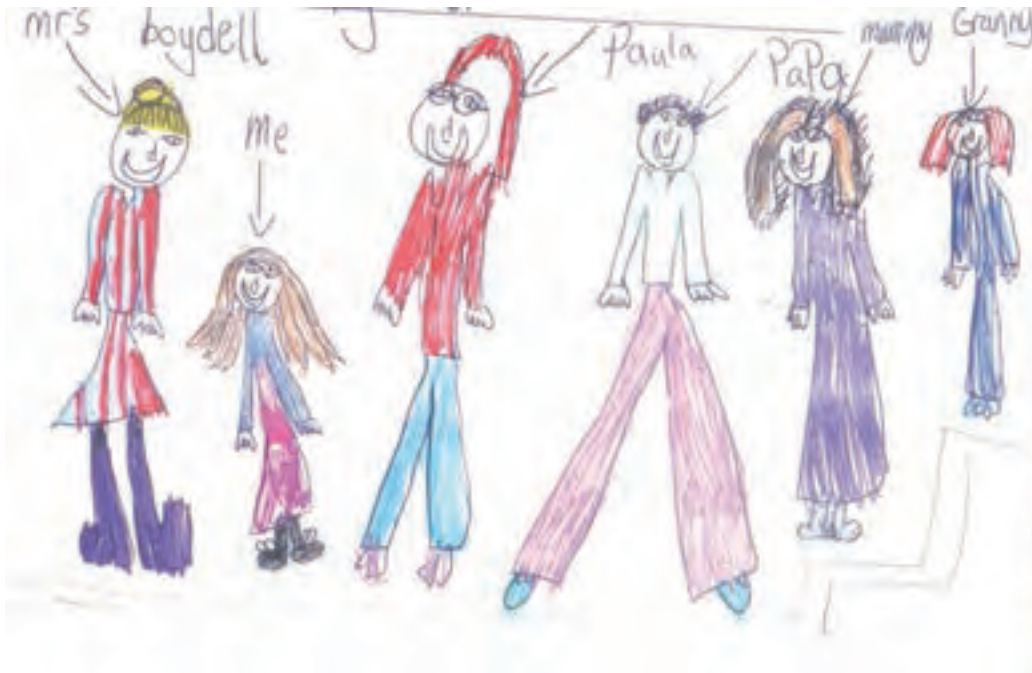
This programme has been developed to aid the design and delivery of a cohesive Ethical Education Curriculum in all Educate Together schools.

The curriculum is strongly influenced by the key principles which underpin and guide the education policy within the Educate Together sector.

These four key principles are outlined in the Educate Together Charter of 1990 and inform the culture and ethos of all our schools.

Key Principles

- **The Multi-denominational Principle:** All children have equal right of access to Educate Together schools. Children of all social and cultural groups and of all religious and non-religious backgrounds are equally respected.
- **The Co-education Principle:** All children are encouraged to fulfil their potential in a school setting that is committed to equal opportunities for girls and boys.
- **The Child-centred Principle:** The schools promote a child-centred approach to the curriculum in which the teacher guides and facilitates the child's learning through both formal and informal methods, while encouraging the child to be an active participant in his/her learning. Each child's individual needs are considered and he/she is encouraged to learn at an appropriate pace. There is a constant striving for excellence in all areas of school life.
- **The Democratic Principle:** School Patrons and Boards are committed to working in such a way as to embrace the input of parents, teachers, supporters and children and to enable the highest level of participation and partnership.



Learn Together to Live Together

The commitment to the four key principles of Educate Together is encapsulated in the motto “Learn Together to Live Together.” All Educate Together schools are committed to this motto through the ethos, the stated values and the day-to-day relationships both within the school and with the extended community. These principles underpin the delivery of the school curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Ethical Education Curriculum is intended to support schools in the task of developing individual school programmes which reflect the four key principles and recognise the moral and spiritual dimensions of children’s growth and development.

The Ethical Education Curriculum is the concrete expression of what it means to live out the Educate Together motto. It affords schools an opportunity to set out a curriculum, which identifies and recognises this educational philosophy. It clearly identifies the importance of an inclusive ethos and affords an opportunity for whole school communities to embrace the reality of what it means to live out the ideal of learning together to live together.

Philosophical Rationale

It has been recognised policy for individual schools within Educate Together to develop their own Ethical Education Curricula. While the statement of aims and objectives for these individual curricula may vary in approach and in the priority afforded to specific themes, each curriculum is compatible with the Educate Together philosophy. This philosophy recognises that the spiritual dimension of children's lives within Educate Together schools is nurtured and that children are made aware of a sense of moral and ethical standards in the areas of honesty, respect, justice, integrity, trust and responsibility. This philosophy is the cornerstone for all interactions within the school communities and recognises the pivotal role played by parents and guardians in the development of these standards. The philosophy also recognises the unique nature of each child and ensures that no child is an outsider through the living out of an ethos that recognises that children may have different religious identities. The Ethical Education Curriculum should encourage children to explore their own spiritual identities in a secure setting while also being aware of and respecting the notion that other people may think differently to them. The curriculum should celebrate difference and provide the knowledge, skills and attitudes that children need to enable them to make informed moral decisions and live in a pluralist society that embraces diversity.

This programme has been developed in response to an expressed need within school communities for a consolidated approach to the design of an Ethical Education Curriculum that reflects this philosophy. Research has identified that many of the topics that were addressed in existing curricula are now being addressed through the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme and many related programmes such as the 'Walk Tall Programme', the 'Stay Safe Programme', the 'Relationship and Sexuality Programme' and other such related programmes.

Despite the excellent nature of these programmes, Educate Together recognised the need to explore a specific programme which would reflect the ethos of the sector. More importantly, it was agreed that the sector should embrace this opportunity to develop a model of curriculum which would focus specifically on the ethical, moral and social development of children in truly inclusive school settings.

The Educate Together Charter of 1990 affirms that children of all social, cultural, religious and non-religious backgrounds have a right to an education that reflects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live.

It is hoped that this programme will allow a particular opportunity for school communities to develop responses at curricular level to challenging issues in the search for meaning and purpose in life and to design programmes which reflect the stated ethos.

Key Strands

The four strands that emerged as critical to the delivery of the Educate Together ethos at curricular level were:

The Moral and Spiritual Strand

The Equality and Justice Strand

The Belief Systems Strand

The Ethics and Environment Strand

The aim of these strands is to nurture and develop in the children a caring and responsible approach to society.

All four strands are recognised as equally important and are afforded equal status within the curriculum. While the strands are presented as individual entities in this document, the philosophy underpinning the curriculum views them as complementary and envisages that they would not be studied in isolation.

General Aims of the Programme

The programme should:

- foster in each child a knowledge and understanding of different value and belief systems in an atmosphere of critical enquiry and mutual respect
- prepare children to become caring members of a multicultural society with the necessary intercultural skills to enrich such a society
- address issues of spirituality and morality
- facilitate in children the ability to make reasoned and informed moral judgements
- support children in cultivating their spirituality in a secure environment
- raise awareness in children of issues of human rights, justice and equality in society
- develop in children an ethical and reasoned approach to caring for the environment
- provide children with a range of dispositions and skills to enable them to participate in and contribute to the democratic process and become informed, socially responsible and fair-minded citizens.

Theoretical Underpinnings

- In line with other child-centred curricula within the primary school sector in Ireland, the Ethical Education Curriculum has been developed through the use of a spiral approach that is age and stage appropriate.
- The key concepts are revisited at regular intervals throughout the child's time in primary school.
- The curriculum recognises the readiness of the child to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in these complex areas.
- It is recognised that learning is not compartmentalised but is inter-dependent.
- The child is actively involved in her/his own learning and a strong emphasis is placed on child-initiated, self-directed learning.
- The teacher scaffolds the learning context for the child and is actively involved in collaborative learning and teaching interactions with the child.
- In the delivery of the curriculum, it is envisaged that teachers will use a range of delivery methodologies that recognise the concept of multiple intelligences and ensure that the material is presented in a manner that acknowledges the range of learning styles that exist in each classroom.
- The curriculum recognises the need for reflection at both group and individual level in each class. Methodologies will be used which allow time and space for such reflection.
- Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice in the delivery of this curriculum at both individual and staff level.
- The topics that form the key strands in this curriculum are indeed complex in nature and to a great extent address the affective learning domain. To try to evaluate the learning in this domain is perhaps one of the biggest challenges posed by this curriculum but also one of the most exciting. Principals are encouraged to initiate and lead the evaluation at whole school level as well as within the individual classroom.
- Teachers are encouraged to build up expertise in different aspects of the programme and to share this expertise at whole school level.
- Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of assessment methodologies in order to ensure that the concepts have been clearly understood and that learning has taken place.

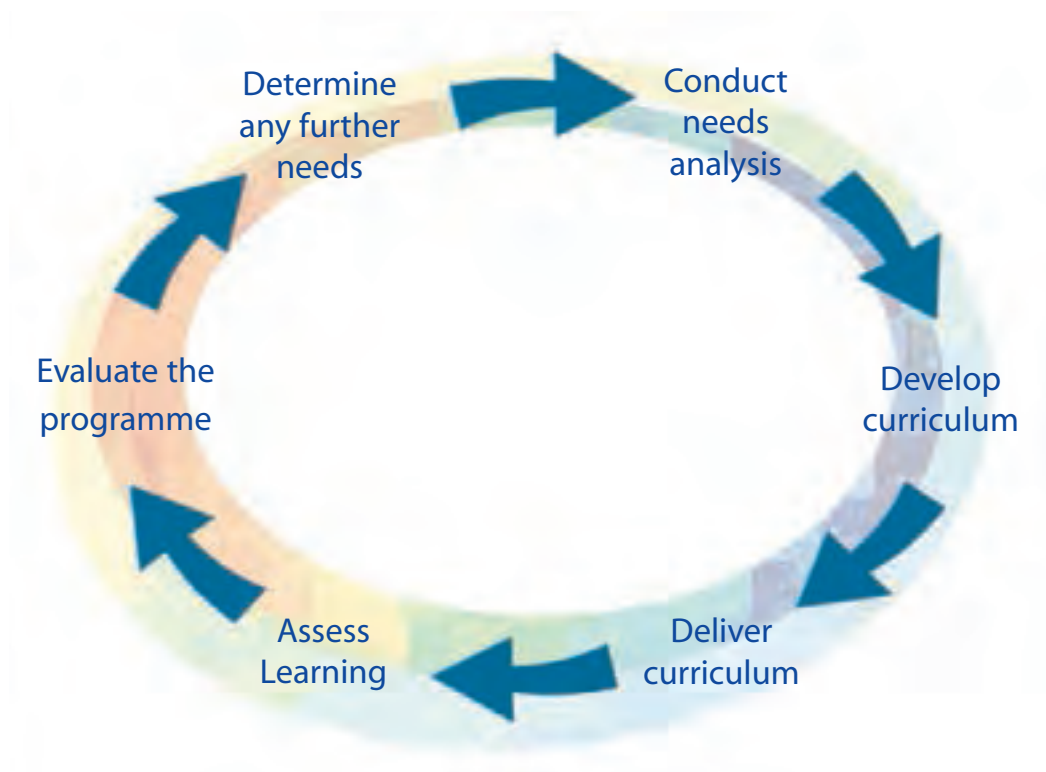
Putting the Curriculum into Practice

Four key principles underpin the delivery of the Ethical Education Curriculum.

1. The curriculum should be delivered in the context of a caring and inclusive school ethos.
2. The support of parents and guardians in the overall development of the child should be recognised at all times.
3. The curriculum should be delivered as part of an integrated cross-curricular approach within the school.
4. Discrete time should be made available for the delivery of the curriculum.

Curriculum Cycle

Schools are advised to recognise the need to plan the programme through the curriculum cycle approach. In practice, this approach recognises the need to involve the entire school community at the early stage conducting a curriculum needs analysis. This programme has to a great extent, completed this stage of the cycle through detailed and prolonged engagement with the extended Educate Together Community. The assessment and evaluation of the curriculum should present interesting challenges for individual schools and it is envisaged that a sector-wide evaluation will take place in the near future.



Some Suggested Approaches to Delivery



Implementing the Curriculum in Your School

School Atmosphere and Climate

Values underlying the Ethical Education Curriculum should be lived out in school through:

- providing children with a sense of security and care by recognising the priority of helping them cope in times of trouble
- providing space for articulation of feelings and emotions
- designing and developing school policies which reflect the values inherent in the Ethical Education Curriculum
- modelling best practice through a respectful relationship between adults and children and also between adults and adults, through the use of respectful and inclusive language
- ensuring a positive teaching and learning working environment
- creating an atmosphere of team spirit and co-operation
- developing a physical environment that explicitly reflects the intercultural, inclusive nature of the school
- acknowledging at all times the multi-denominational nature of Educate Together Schools through appreciating the individual and shared beliefs of children.



Teaching and Learning

Schools are encouraged to implement teaching and learning processes which will nurture the skills and attitudes that enable children to live out the values inherent in the Ethical Education Curriculum. Such processes might include:

- structured play activities
- small group experiential work
- collecting ideas through processes such as mind-mapping
- hot seating/role play
- co-operative games
- circle time
- integration and linkage with other curricular areas.

Resources

For information on resources to support this curriculum, please contact the National Office of Educate Together (www.educatetogether.ie)

Exploration of the Ethical Education Curriculum

In order to provide opportunities for the exploration of issues raised in the Ethical Education Curriculum, schools should provide space for children to:

- reflect and experience a sense of awe and wonder
- express their opinions in a safe environment
- search for meaning and purpose through a study of issues that emerge in their lives such as grief and loss
- grow in self-knowledge through opportunities for reflection and quiet time
- debate, investigate, imagine, predict, record and critically analyse issues
- explore class and school incidents such as bullying, name-calling and exclusion through the use of the values that are implicit in the Ethical Education Curriculum
- engage in positive action to address issues of equality and environmental concerns.

Assessing Learning in the Ethical Education Curriculum

It is acknowledged that the assessment of learning in the areas explored by the Ethical Education Curriculum can be a challenge for teachers. It is suggested that schools might include the use of a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate the children's understanding, skills and attitudes through:

- oral work
- written work
- project work
- teacher observation of the link between attitudes and actions
- exploration of attitudes
- checklist and indicators of desirable outcomes
- communication between children and children and between children and adults
- portfolio of children's work
- homework

It is envisaged that the process of assessment will reflect the learning styles of the children and will provide opportunities for parent/s to engage in the process. The formative approach to assessment provides ongoing feedback not only to the teacher, but also to the child and parent/s through critical reflection on key issues that have been studied in the curriculum.

It is acknowledged that it can be difficult to assess the impact of the curriculum on an individual child at a given time and the extent to which he/she has internalised the learning. However the range of formal and informal assessment methods outlined above can prove very useful.

Exemplar

Implementing the Ethical Education Curriculum climate in the school

SPHE:

- discuss what makes a person special and unique e.g. each child's name, size, hair colour, sex, fingerprints, birthday
- recognise and record each child's personal preferences
- encourage each child to use the five senses to appreciate the world
- display photographs of children's families
- gratitude time: children in groups, choose three things which they are happy and thankful for during the past week

Language:

- introduce stories on core value topics on a regular basis for discussion: sharing, co-operation, safety, love, kindness, honesty, respect, forgiveness, gratitude, inclusiveness
- extend and cultivate children's vocabulary enabling them to use respectful and inclusive language
- encourage proactive listening in a quiet and respectful environment
- discuss/read about different kinds of family groupings and develop language to reflect the diversity of families and its importance

Physical Education:

- play co-operative games
- choose different partners
- work together in dance rhythms and patterns
- acknowledge each other's skill
- act safely for self and others
- respect other's space
- take responsibility

Action:

- sharing days: toys, books or games
- help a friend, include someone e.g. at yard time
- display photographs of children playing peacefully in classroom/yard and use for discussion
- record the children modelling the values and behaviours we want to encourage. e.g. achievements book
- facilitate children to partake in a democratic process such as having a student council
- encourage leadership, awareness of rights and responsibilities
- support children in helping other children through fundraising, community projects etc.
- encourage and create expectation for the whole community to engage in respectful relationships

Drama Music:

- role play scenarios that enable children to learn how to act in a respectful and inclusive way
- during circle time dramatise situations that the children come up with to help solve conflict and develop ways of encouraging long term friendships
- explore happiness and everyone's right to be happy
- listen to peaceful and tranquil music to help create atmosphere in classroom
- use music to stimulate response e.g. through art and facilitated discussion

Visual Arts:

- display collages, posters and photographs illustrating diversity
- display photographs and posters of cultural aspects of family life e.g. celebrations, dress, food, faiths
- display welcoming signs in different languages
- make a personal box for each child e.g. every week put something positive into box related to activation of core values. These can be taken home and discussed

Activating
core values

The Role of Parents and Guardians

This programme recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children. As part of the process, they will be encouraged to engage with their children in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes around the four strands. As partners in the education process, they will be invited to formally endorse the programme. Each strand lends itself to the involvement of parents and guardians and the individual teacher will decide the best way of making this involvement a positive experience for all concerned.



SECTION 2

strands and exemplars







STRAND: Moral and Spiritual

The general aim of the strand is to help develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong and a heightened awareness of social, ethical and moral standards through reflecting on the meaning and purpose of life. The strand should encourage and develop the individual on the journey to inner discovery and empower the child to make informed moral decisions.

Strand Units

- Exploring Moral Development
- Cultivating Spiritual Growth





Exploring Moral Development

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- explore his/her identity and individuality through discussion and projects related to the discovery of a sense of self
- explore moral development through an exploration of family and its importance in his/her life
- develop and create an awareness of core values such as co-operation, freedom, happiness, honesty, love, peace, respect, responsibility, kindness, caring, safety and security in a peaceful and tranquil environment
- foster the development of peaceful co-operative social skills, through stories, songs, games and movement
- explore the many day-to-day incidents which occur in the classroom and school yard to heighten his/her moral awareness and to develop empathy.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- explore values and codes of behaviour in a school community through discussion, playing together and learning together, within a classroom charter which reflects the values and codes of the school
- explore the relevance of the values studied in the previous Junior and Senior Infants cycle and expand on these
- discuss and discover times when he/she has shown these core values and draw and write about these events. Read stories and poems illustrating these core values
- further develop the concept of responsibility towards each other
- identify and understand active feelings - anger, disappointment, isolation, frustration and jealousy and be supported in addressing them in an appropriate manner.





Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- deepen his/her understanding in relation to making personal and individual social choices through discussion of right and wrong and recognition of what is appropriate behaviour
- begin an exploration of the concept of conscience through scenarios, role play, drama and school based events
- begin to apply moral principles, insights, and reasoning to decision making
- take responsibility and accept consequences for his/her own actions within a safe climate that provides him/her with the opportunity for a dignified re-entry.



Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- examine the benefits of values in the wider community and look at the role of these values from a global perspective
- explore interpretations and shades of right and wrong through an exploration of controversial issues
- explore lived values in his/her life and develop these values through the development of a personal values charter
- relate this charter to current political, social and environmental issues
- further develop the ability to critically question and make informed decisions
- further explore the concept of collective responsibility
- act on conviction through the provision of a supportive environment which encourages him/her to act in a moral and responsible manner and not through fear.



Cultivating Spiritual Growth

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- develop his/her meditative spirit through the provision of opportunities for silence and reflection
- develop a sense of wonder in his/her world through play, stories, poems and art and from observations of beauty in the natural world
- begin the process of self-reflection on his/her own feelings and experiences.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- continue the search for understanding of his/her different life experiences, for example: birth of a sibling, arrival of a new pet, separation and loss
- develop the ability to question and reflect on such experiences
- understand and be sensitive to how these life experiences can impact in a range of different ways on individuals.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- continue to cultivate stillness through specific activities such as visualisation exercises, quiet time and the provision of a quiet corner and/or an outdoor quiet space
- continue the process of self-reflection on feelings and experiences through stories, poems and music that stimulate this reflection
- reflect on the significance of his/her own personal experiences.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- identify and examine his/her personal views and insights
- apply these insights in a personal capacity to his/her own life
- understand the tradition of meditation as a key aspect of spiritual development
- identify places associated with meditative practices such as the Irish monastic tradition or the meditative practices associated with Buddhism
- grow in self-knowledge through the provision of opportunities for meditation and reflection.

Exemplar

Strand	Moral and Spiritual
Strand Unit	Exploring moral development
Class	Junior and Senior Infants
Aims	To enable the child to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore identity and individuality • discover a sense of self.

Objectives

Enable the child to discover his/her own uniqueness by looking at 'same and different' through identifying similarities and differences between themselves and their friends.

Teaching Resources

- Photographs to demonstrate four classifications of physical characteristics: hair, skin colour, eyebrows, eyes
- Flashcards which display the vocabulary to be taught
- Flipchart to record language ideas from children
- Activity worksheet related to objectives
- Tape recorder or Dictaphone

Note: Teachers should ensure that the chosen photographs are inclusive and reflect the children in the class group



Stage 1:

- Show the series of photographs to the children
- Ask the children to identify some of the differences in the photographs
- Record these differences on the flipchart
- Record the children's responses on a dictaphone or tape recorder
- Encourage them to discuss their observations

Stage 2:

- Put sample photographs in a coloured box on each table
- Put the children into small groups to identify physical differences in the photographs

Stage 3:

- The children go through three or four photographs naming the differences to each other
- The photographs could then be placed in sets e.g. according to eye colour etc.

Stage 4:

- The children present their findings to the whole group
- The children are encouraged to describe the differences they have identified and in so doing articulate their own uniqueness

Assessment

Worksheet: Draw a friend – put in hair, colour of eyes, skin colour, eyebrows

Note: This could be one of a series of lessons made into a book on 'Magnificent Me'





STRAND: Equality and Justice

The general aim of this strand is to develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture and diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness and to empower them to make a difference.

Strand Units:

- Exploring Human Rights
- Promoting Equality
- Exploring the Democratic Process
- Activating Equality through Positive Action

All of these strand units overlap and are strongly interlinked.





Exploring Human Rights

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- develop the concept of rights through an exploration and celebration of the children's uniqueness and differences, e.g. his/her name, his/her family, his/her nationality etc.
- explore the concept of the reciprocity of rights through recognition of the importance of each individual in the class, that is, each child's right to be happy, safe, grow and learn in school
- develop the concept of justice, responsibility and empathy through a discussion of issues such as "Why share?", "Why be sorry?", "Why be kind to each other?"

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- begin to distinguish the difference between wants and needs
- identify and name basic rights e.g. the right to food, water, shelter, health, play, to be safe, not to be hurt etc.
- explore rights and responsibilities in relation to the other children in the school and the contribution they can make to ensure these rights are upheld.

Anne Frank

Bhí cailín ann fadó fadó,
an t-ainm a bhí uirthí
ná Anne Frank.
Rugadh Anne Frank
I Frankfurt. Ansin thosaigh
an cogadh. Chuaigh
Anne agus a clann i
bhfalach. Lá amháin
fuair na Nazi Anne agus
bhí sé sin an deireadh
do Anne Frank.





Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- further develop the concept of rights and responsibilities within the school and its environs
- begin to understand the universality of rights through an awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- realise that not all children in the world have their rights respected
- understand that sometimes rights can be in conflict and that certain skills are required to resolve conflict in these situations.



Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- understand that in addition to basic rights there are also:
 - *developmental rights* such as education, play and leisure, cultural activities, access to information
 - *participation rights* such as freedom to express an opinion, freedom to join an association and to gather together peacefully
 - *protection rights* to guard children against abuse, neglect and exploitation
- understand how these rights are not mutually exclusive and might overlap
- be involved in an in-depth exploration of human rights and responsibilities in an Irish context, e.g. the right to a home, the right to asylum, the right not to be discriminated against
- carry out an in-depth exploration of a human right in a global context, e.g. the right to education, the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, shelter and clothing.

There are strong integration possibilities and linkages in this strand with English, Social, Personal and Health Education, Geography and History and programmes such as the "Walk Tall Programme" and the "Stay Safe Programme"



Third/ Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- begin to explore the concept of discrimination and prejudice
- explore the concept of discrimination in relation to a specific area, e.g. gender, race and disability
- critically reflect on stories/poems about people who have encountered discrimination and confronted it positively.

Fifth/Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- critically evaluate media coverage of equality and justice issues
- begin to understand and have knowledge of Equality legislation-the Equal Status Act and the nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited*
- examine an equality issue in relation to minorities in Ireland, e.g. the travelling community, refugees, the Jewish/Muslim/Vietnamese population etc.
- explore an issue in depth such as homelessness, poverty etc. comparing issues at a community/local/national level and globally.

* Nine grounds are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community

Exploring the Democratic Process

Junior Classes

Junior Infants - Second Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- participate in a class culture of listening and speaking
- discuss issues such as rules for class, playground etc.
- participate in the development of class and yard charters
- have opportunities to articulate his/her own attitudes, experiences and values
- develop decision making, co-operation and negotiation skills
- participate in the life of the school e.g. through having a voice on the Student Council and the Green School Committee.



Senior Classes

Third Class -Sixth Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- understand how democracy works within the school through the Patron, the Board of Management, the Parent/Teacher Association, the Student Council, the Green Committee etc.
- begin to understand how the democratic process in Ireland works at a national/ local community/school level
- visit a democratic forum such as the Dáil/Senate/County Council
- engage with local issues such as the provision of facilities for the children of the locality
- develop an awareness of the National Children's Strategy
- participate in a democratic process, e.g. through elections to the School Council, the Green Committee etc.
- avail of opportunities to become involved democratically e.g. in Comhairle na nÓg and the Children's Dáil
- develop the skills required to make submissions to a National Body such as the office of The Children's Ombudsman or Minister for Health and Children.



Activating Equality through Positive Action

Junior Classes

Junior Infants-Second Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- share within his/her own setting.
Examples might be 'Share a Book Day'-'Share a Toy Day' etc.
- extend care and friendship world wide
e.g. by selling friendship bracelets on Friendship Day in support of a human rights organisation such as Amnesty International or by twinning with a school in another country
- actively participate in whole school assemblies on various topics, such as "Peace", "Co-operation", "Human Rights"
- begin to become aware of equality issues through celebrations, e.g. "May Day", "International Children's Day", "Anti-Racism Day" and "International Women's Day"
- begin to discuss and critically reflect on issues that may arise within the school.

Senior Classes

Third-Sixth Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- participate in a human rights climate in the classroom/school
- express his/her views by writing letters to elected representatives on issues relating to equality
- develop an anti-racist charter
- learn about people who have made a difference through campaigning and protest
- discuss, analyse and debate controversial issues at both local and global level
- actively support fair trade.



Exemplar

Strand Equality and Justice
Strand Unit Exploring Human Rights
Classes 5th and 6th

Discrete Ethical Education Curriculum Time

- Become aware of the UN Declaration of Human Rights
- Explore how human rights can be applicable in their own lives
- Listen to each other explain one right in terms relative to the classroom
- Learn about aspects of human rights violations in their own country and in other countries
- Become aware of some of the cultures, lifestyles and customs of different ethnic groups within our own communities
- Create an assembly to celebrate Human Rights Day

SESE - History

Continuity and Change over Time

- Read and discuss issues to do with nomadism – theories and evidence for origins of travellers in Ireland
- Identify occupations in which nomadism would be a benefit
- Listen to stories from 'Travellers' Words'

English

Oral

- Listen to poetry e.g. 'I too am America', 'Circles' and discuss

Reading

- Research human rights using a variety of sources

Written

- Write poems or stories to illustrate a human right

Music

Listening

- Listen to and describe style and instrument used in the song 'Imagine'
- Listen to travellers' music

Composing

- Compose simple accompaniment to the song 'Imagine'

Performing

- Perform the song with backing music and percussion

UN Declaration
of Human
Rights

SESE – Geography

People in other lands

- Study some aspects of the lives of people in Romania
- Discuss settled and nomadic lifestyles in Ireland
- Explore similarities and differences between Romania and Ireland
- Become aware of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups in Ireland and Romania

Visual Arts

Painting and Drawing

- Create images to represent the 30 rights from the UN Declaration of Human Rights
- Discuss, plan and make images using a range of media
- Make a 'quilt' by fixing images onto backing sheet

* Diwali is a Hindu festival of light

STRAND: Belief Systems

The general aim of this strand is to develop in children a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of the teachings of religious and non-theistic belief systems and how these systems relate to our shared human experience. The emphasis will be placed on an exploration of the infinite variety and richness of humankind through nurturing a respect for a person's right to hold and practice individual belief systems and through creating spaces where values can be articulated and critically examined.

Children will be encouraged to develop an understanding of the right to hold and practice differing beliefs and what it means to live in a world of diverse beliefs.

- Strand Units:**
- Introducing key figures in the major belief systems
 - Exploring the rites and ceremonies associated with a variety of belief systems
 - Exploring the important celebrations associated with such belief systems
 - Encountering the philosophy and values of the major belief systems

Ramadan is a muslim festival
It lasts for a month.
Adhies fast during the day
At the end of Ramadan
the fast.
of Eid ul Fitr



Key Figures

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- become familiar with stories associated with key religious figures such as Noah, Buddha, Gura Nanak, Jesus Christ, Khrisna, Mohammed etc.
- explore these stories through appropriate use of play, music, art and drama.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- identify the sacred writings associated with key religious figures
- know the stories associated with how these writings emerged
- understand the relevance of these writings in their various traditions.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- know that there are religious leaders who wear particular styles of dress and are known by particular titles such as the Roman Catholic Priest, the Church of Ireland Rector, The Hindu Priest, the Jewish Rabbi, the Muslim Imam and the Sikh Granthi
- discuss the role of these leaders in their own communities
- become aware that belief systems have special books which are important to them such The Bhagavad Gita, The Bible, The Dhammapada, The Qur'an and The Tanakh.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- explore the concept of authority as exercised by religious leaders
- find out how these leaders are chosen
- identify any common features which may exist between religious leaders, e.g. the emergence of different Christian traditions, the problems that arose across these traditions and the move towards closer integration.

Rites and Ceremonies

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- identify and recognise the symbols associated with the major belief systems e.g. buildings, dress, books
- examine the foods associated with some belief systems. This exercise might be linked to festival and celebration.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- become familiar with naming ceremonies across a range of belief systems
- study a number of naming ceremonies and look at the customs attached to them.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- categorise a variety of marriage and/or funeral rites
- examine the links between religious rites and ceremonies and their beginnings in older traditions such as Bealtaine, Harvest, Winter Solstice, Lughnasa etc.
- begin an exploration of the nature of pilgrimage and the link to older pagan traditions.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- learn about rites of passage across societies such as Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation
- discuss the similarities and differences across the major belief systems in respect of ritual and ceremony and identify any common links between these rites
- continue the work on pilgrimages which was begun in 3rd and 4th classes and identify common links across belief systems.



Celebrations

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- understand the purpose and joy of celebration
- explore special celebrations that we share with others such as birthdays and special days
- begin to explore festivals such as Baisakhi, Bealtaine, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Easter, Halloween, Hanukkah, May Day, Wesak, World Children's Day and World Earth Day.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- look at how different festivals are celebrated
- categorise and distinguish between festivals e.g. festivals of light and festivals of darkness
- examine the art and music associated with the celebration of these festivals.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- research the diversity of traditions associated with specific festivals such as the differing Christmas celebrations around the world
- explore common links between these traditions.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- listen to and experience the sound and music used by major religions to celebrate their faith
- look at and respond to the differing art forms associated with festivals e.g. Chinese New Year, Diwali and Easter
- present work in the form of an assembly or exhibition.



Beliefs and Values

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- understand how caring and sharing are important in our lives
- talk about rules and why they are important
- share stories about feelings such as love, kindness and forgiveness.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- recognise examples of religious observances such as fasting, ablutions, meditation and prayer
- understand that religious observances are related to each faith system
- share experiences of special occasions and observances in his/her own life which are associated with ritual.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- identify that there are key values associated with a range of religious codes of conduct
- examine how these codes of conduct impact on how people behave.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- explore the common links in any of a range of religious codes of conduct
- attempt to locate common values across the traditions
- explore at class level how these values can benefit society
- visit places of worship e.g. various Christian Churches, Synagogues, Temples, Mosques, Hindu Mandirs and Sikh Gurdwara.

Note: There are strong integration possibilities with this strand and a range of other curricula such as Gaeilge, English, History, Music, Geography and Art.

It is not envisaged that this strand be studied in isolation from the other three identified strands. Each strand should inform the study of the other three and this is particularly relevant to this strand.

Exemplar

Strand	Belief Systems
Strand Unit	Exploring the Rites and Ceremonies associated with a range of belief systems
Class	Third to Sixth Classes
Aim	To explore pilgrimage.

Objectives

To explore how pilgrimage has always been used across a range of belief systems to see and touch places and objects that are considered special.

Teaching Strategies

This exemplar is predominantly project based and is closely linked to other subject areas such as History, Geography, English and Gaeilge. Other teaching strategies would include group work, discussion, debate and presentation.

Teaching Resources:

- Internet access for research purposes
- Maps
- Copy of medieval costume
- Photographs of sites of pilgrimage
- Music and poetry associated with pilgrimage.

Stage 1: Third Class

Initial exploration of the topic - 'Pilgrimage'
The prologue to Chaucer's poem "The Canterbury Tales" could be used as a starting point to begin an exploration of pilgrimage.

Questions for Exploration

- Why did people go on pilgrimage to Canterbury?
- What kind of people went on pilgrimage?
- What preparation did they make before going on pilgrimage?
- What did they hope to gain by going to Canterbury?
- How did they dress for the trip?

Stage 2: Fourth Class

Class groups are given the task of exploring pilgrimage in an Irish context. In order to do this, the children need to be given an introduction to places of pilgrimage such as Croagh Patrick, Lough Derg, Glendalough and Clonmacnoise. Other areas for exploration might include holy wells and mass rocks.

Areas for study might include:

- the connection between Christian pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick and its earlier connection with the Celtic deity Crom Dubh and its use as a site of the harvest festival Lughnasa

- the link between pilgrimage and doing penance. Examples would be the black bread and tea of Lough Derg and climbing Croagh Patrick barefoot
- the children might divide into groups and conduct research into at least three places of pilgrimage. Their findings could be shared at a class assembly
- assessment might take the form of a class quiz devised by the various work groups.

Stage 3: Fifth Class

The third phase of this study could look at medieval pilgrimage in Europe. Children could use a map of Europe to mark the progress of medieval pilgrims. They could research the clothes worn by medieval pilgrims and learn to identify various items used by a pilgrim:

- Broad brimmed hat
- Mantlet
- Staff
- Scrip
- Slavein

Other areas of research could include:

- the ceremonies attached to going on pilgrimage
- the connection between pilgrimage and public penance

- the travel experiences of pilgrims
- the tradition of bringing home badges connected with the places visited
- relics at places of pilgrimage such as St. Patrick's Bell.

This stage might be completed by conducting a presentation entitled:

Were pilgrims the first tourists?

Stage 4: Sixth Class

By combining the three stages and using the experience gathered in the study to date, teachers and children could work together to explore the connection between pilgrimage as it relates to the Christian tradition and as it exists in the other major belief systems.

Classes could be divided into groups to explore the various traditions such as the Hajj. Individual groups could present their findings at class assemblies. Work relating to the various traditions of pilgrimage could be displayed around the school so that all groups working on the topic could have access to the findings.

Stage 5:

Applicable to all 4 class groups

The children are given an opportunity to review the learning from the four stages. All stages can be put together and mounted as a display project for the rest of the school. Children might bring their research to a series of school assemblies. The assemblies could include costume, poetry and food associated with pilgrimage. The learning from the exemplar could be assessed through the materials presented at assemblies and through the observation of the level of awareness shown by the children in their knowledge and understanding of pilgrimage. The final stage of the review should include an opportunity for children to list the difficulties they encountered in researching the topic and to make suggestions for how this module might be improved in the future.



STRAND: Ethics and the Environment

The aim of this strand is to develop in children a knowledge, appreciation and respect for their environment and to empower them to take an active role in its stewardship.

Strand Units

- Knowledge and awareness of environmental issues
- Activation of responsibility and stewardship



Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental Issues

Junior and Senior Infants

The child shall be enabled to:

- develop a sense of awe and wonder in nature through stories, poetry, nature walks, nature table and exploring the natural cycles of life
- grow in awareness of the cycle of life through the seasons, using examples from the school garden or the local parkland
- understand the concept of the natural and man-made elements of his/her environment
- become aware of the need to reduce waste and reuse and recycle materials
- develop an awareness of the amazing order and design of his/her environment.

First and Second Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
- identify, become aware and explore different habitats such as bird nests, fish ponds and wild gardens
- develop an awareness and understanding of the need to reduce waste and reuse and recycle materials to benefit the environment.

Third and Fourth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- understand the impact of the actions of people on the environment through the generations, e.g. how air pollution has been increased by the burning of fossil fuels
- explore how we can enhance our environment for future generations through energy conservation, tree planting, preservation of habitats
- further develop the concept of waste management through creating awareness of the Bring Centres, Green Bins and recycling areas in the school. Examples might be compost heaps and wormeries.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

The child shall be enabled to:

- become aware of the impact of air, water, waste and litter pollution on natural and man-made environments
- be aware of the power of natural disasters on our environment e.g. earthquakes and floods
- develop an understanding of conservation e.g. energy and water
- begin to understand the interdependence of the relationship between human beings and nature and how this contributes to the delicate balance of life on earth.

Activation of Responsibility and Stewardship

Junior classes

Junior Infants to Second Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- participate in nature walks in the local park, seashore or farm in order to develop his/her understanding of interdependence in the natural world
- plant bulbs and seeds and watch them grow in order to develop a sense of awe and wonder in new life
- draw up an environmental code for waste management in the school
- make birdfeeders/compost bins for use in the school or at home
- take responsibility for stewardship of the school environment through responsible disposal of litter.



Senior classes

Third to Sixth Class

The child shall be enabled to:

- participate in an environmental project e.g. Green School Project or Environmental Audit of the school
- participate in drawing up a school environmental charter
- discover ways to move towards an environmentally friendly lifestyle such as turning off lights, reducing the amount of water used, recycling paper in the classroom and home
- become involved in local community clean up days/ anti-litter campaigns
- create a wildlife garden or wild flower patch
- engage in seed collection projects and tree planting days
- debate on environmental issues
- become aware of the controversial nature of some environmental issues through role plays, debate, dialogue and discussion
- research and present work on the environment through computer presentations, video and wall displays.

Exemplar

Strand	The Environment
Strand Unit	Knowledge and Awareness of Environmental issues
Class	First/Second Class
Aims:	To enable the child to:

- identify, become aware of and explore different habitats such as bird nests, fish-ponds and wild gardens
 - develop a responsible ownership of the classroom and school environment
 - develop an awareness and understanding of the need to reduce, reuse and recycle materials to benefit the environment.
-

English

To enable the child to:

- research and present findings on the basic types of pollution that exist in our environment
- compose and present poetry that personifies the different elements of the environment e.g. the sea
- use stories to draw attention to a particular problem or aspect within the environment
can be used as a stimulus for class discussions and activities
- engage in newspaper investigations to research current environmental issues in the locality and the wider school community

- present reviews of the problems, developments or solutions that appear in the class discussions.

Gaeilge

Go gcuirfi ar chumas an phaiste:

- amhráin nó dáin a bhaineann leis an timpeallacht a chanadh nó a rá
- cluichí a imirt chun eolas a fhorbairt ar na focail a úsáidtear i leith an timpeallacht
- lipéid agus fógraí a úsáidtear i leith an timpeallacht a chóipeail agus a scríobh mar shampla don bord dúlra.

Maths

To enable the child to:

- examine the classroom and re-design the room using measuring and graphing
- collect and communicate data relating to a survey or investigation through a graph or diagram.

History

To enable the child to:

- explore change and continuity in their own environment through the comparison of past and present photos of the locality
- compare and discuss the good and bad changes that have occurred in the environment and predict future outcomes e.g. new shops compared to old

- engage in local studies of the school and identify changes that have been made in the physical environment and assess their effectiveness today
- become an archaeologist and investigate what our rubbish says about us and compare the findings with the rubbish that could be found in a Stone Age cave.

Geography

To enable the child to:

- observe and identify the different habitats that exist in our environment
- create guidelines for the preservation of different habitats through pictorial or written presentations
- question current systems and methods that are used in the school and at home to control litter management. Are they effective? If not, how could we improve them?
- compare the different habitats through group discussion and picture representations.

Science

To enable the child to:

- investigate and study the animal and plant life that exists within a particular habitat
- investigate and identify the different devices that are employed to deal with various weather types e.g. a wind vane, rain gauge and thermometer
- carry out simple water experiments to investigate water purity.

Belief Systems

To enable the child to:

- identify the attitudes of different cultures towards the preservation of their environments
- discuss and study the views of different peoples and religions in specially allocated periods of 'discrete time' e.g. the Buddhist approach to harming the environment in which we live
- study the individuals and groups who contribute to the abuse and preservation of the environment
- investigate the social mores and social events that are involved in the preservation of one's home, school, community, world etc.
- identify how he/she plays a big part in the changing and growing of the environment in groups and as an individual.

Drama

To enable the child to:

- investigate the results of the abuse of our environment through hypothetical situations and role-plays
- investigate possible solutions to these problems through freeze frames and mind maps
- personify some elements of the environment in group drama scenes and discuss the possible reactions and feelings towards those elements.



Educate Together Charter

Recalling Article 26.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children"

and Article 42.4 of the Constitution of Ireland:

"The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation"

and Recognising:

- 1.1. That many parents have a valid preference for schools in which boys and girls of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds can be educated together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect
- 1.2 That the multi-denominational schools established under the banner of EDUCATE TOGETHER are a distinctive response to the growing demand for such an option within the Irish educational system

Educate Together affirms that:

- 2.1 Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live
- 2.2 Parents are entitled to participate actively in decisions that affect the education of their children. In particular, they have the right to decide what kind of school reflects their conscience and lawful preference
- 2.3 Multi-denominational schools have the right to be treated no less favourably than other schools within the Irish educational system, in accordance with their needs and their identity

- 2.4 The State has a duty to take identity of the multi-denominational sector fully into account when deciding on policy that affects the establishment and development of schools

and commits itself to:

- 3.1 Support the establishment of schools which are:
 - **Multi-denominational** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
 - **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities
 - **Child centred** in their approach to education
 - **Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional rôle of the teachersin areas where the demand for such a school exists.
- 3.2 Promote fuller awareness and recognition of the identity of the multi-denominational sector at all levels in Irish society and abroad
- 3.3 Participate in appropriate structures and activities concerned with the future development of education in Ireland and abroad
- 3.4 Promote a future where multi-denominational education will be as freely available to parents as any other educational option they may choose.

Formally launched on 12th May 1990 at the Aula Maxima, University College Galway. Amended at AGM 7th April 1999.

