

DIOCESE OF KERRY



Catholic School Ethos



Introduction

The Catholic school offers a distinctive vision of life, and corresponding philosophy of education; based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel values define its educational ethos. The school is a faith school that expresses a set of core values that can be described as human, religious, Christian and Catholic. The educational vision which flows from these values is one which promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each pupil.

The school provides an education based on a living faith together tradition. Such a Catholic educational vision is inclusive and respectful of all and respectfully engages with pupils committed to other religious traditions and none.

The Catholic school enables children to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. It seeks to form pupils who will unselfishly use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work for a more just and caring society.

The school works in partnership with parents and the parish community to keep the light of faith received at baptism burning brightly. It provides opportunities for prayer, the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments.

Together, the board of management, the principal and the teaching staff, working with the patron, the parents and the parish, model a Catholic education tradition, to nurture the faith of Catholic pupils.

This resource book is intended as a support for the school and board of management in its task of sharing responsibility for maintaining the catholic ethos of the school. The catholic ethos within the school ensures the ongoing faith development and well-being of all pupils within the school community.



Catholic Ethos

A Catholic ethos permeates the life of the whole school. It is evident in the characteristic spirit within the school, springing from belief in the Holy Spirit active within each person. It is expressed in and through the interaction of the school staff, in the school's values, attitudes, beliefs, approaches, practices and decision-making. It is evident in the acceptance, respect, care, support, understanding and encouragement of each individual within the school. This ethos is rooted in the Gospel values of respect for life, love, justice, peace, solidarity and outreach to the needy.



The Catholic School

- a) The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of a pupil's being: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, encompassing a living relationship with God and with other people. A Catholic school offers a distinctive vision of life, and corresponding philosophy of education; based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- b) The school strives to create a learning environment within which every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to his/her full and unique potential as a human being, created in the image and likeness of God. The school seeks to form pupils who will use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work for a more compassionate, just and caring society.
- c) The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The three partners, home, school and parish, working well together, model a living human-religious-Christian educational tradition. This nurtures the faith of Catholic pupils in a manner that is welcoming to and inclusive of pupils committed to other religious traditions.



The Board of Management

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the Grow in Love Catechetical Programme approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic Schools. The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments i.e. First Reconciliation/Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.



Staff

Each member of staff is expected to contribute to the Catholic Ethos of the school.



Parents

Parents are their children's primary educators and the school strives to empower and encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's education and in the life of the local school. Schools value their relationship with their parents and the local community. Schools actively promote pupils' involvement in their parish/community. The school ethos aims at helping the children to grow in appreciation, respect and love for self, others and God.



Reflection for the staff

- 1) How would you describe the characteristic spirit within the school?
- 2) How do people experience the school?
- 3) What do people experience within the school?
- 4) In what ways do you notice, experience and promote the values of the school?
- 5) What one thing can you as a staff agree to do in the coming year to make the Ethos Statement a living reality?

Sample Ethos Statement



Ethos Statement

1. As a school community we endeavour to provide a holistic Catholic education for each child, where the core values are respect and care for all.
2. The values of the Gospel inspire the policies, practices and attitudes of the school.
3. At the heart of the school is our relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.
4. The school works towards developing a sense of awe and wonder and gratitude to God for creation.
5. Prayer and reflection are regular features of the school day. We thus nurture in the children a living relationship with God.
6. The school is a faith community of people who respect, support and empower each other.
7. The school is a learning, teaching community which is based on high professional standards and ethics.
8. Teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each child.
9. The school promotes inclusiveness and respects cultural and religious diversity.
10. The school fosters an active partnership with the parents/guardians and the wider community, a partnership which contributes to the positive learning experience of the children in our care.
11. The school creates an awareness of the suffering of others by learning about charities such as Trocaire, Vincent de Paul, Children Helping Children and encourages a generous and caring response.
12. Reflection on Ethos for the Teaching Staff.



Create your own Ethos Statement