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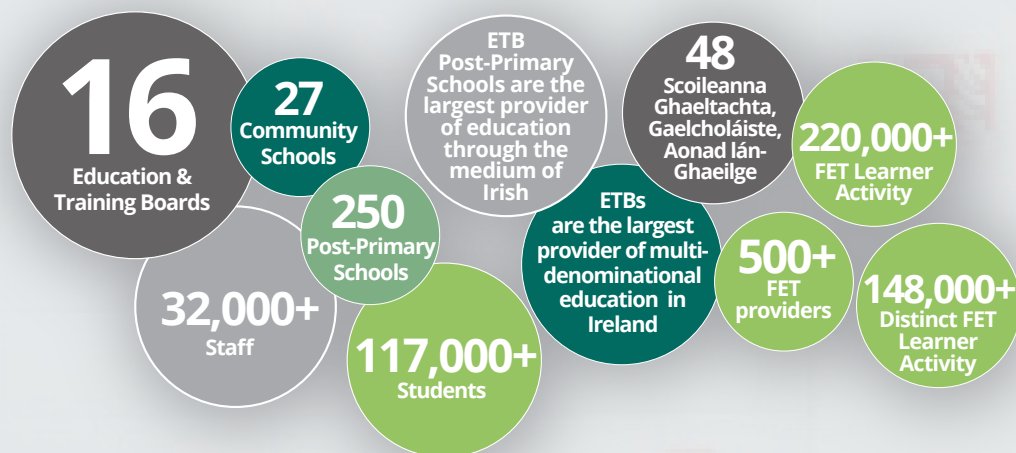


ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos



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Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is the national representative body for our member ETBs and comprises of the staff of ETBI, the ETBI Chief Executives, Directors of Further Education and Training, Directors of Schools, Directors of Organisation, Support and Development Forums and the respective networks and groups associated with these forums. Our mission is to lead and advance the continued development of education, training and youth work in Ireland and our vision is to harness our strength to influence and promote a strong education and training sector through collaboration and collective effort. ETBI is guided by the core values of excellence, care, equality, community and respect and our strategic goals focus on delivering under the themes of people, partnership and potential.

Education & Training Boards are Ireland's leading statutory providers of Education and Training and are unique in providing lifelong learning for all. Collectively, the sixteen Education and Training Boards have responsibility for 27 Community National Schools and 251 Post-Primary Schools with over 117,000 students. ETB Post-Primary Schools are the largest provider of education through the medium of Irish with 48 schools. ETBs are also the largest provider of multi-denominational education in Ireland. ETBs deliver Further Education and Training to 148,000 unique FET learners each year across 500+ FET providers and play a central role in the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships in partnership with employers. ETBs also support, monitor, and deliver youth services. The ETB Sector employs over 32,000 people and has a combined annual spend in excess of €2bn.





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FOREWORD – PADDY LAVELLE

I am delighted to introduce this publication ‘ETBI Patrons’ Framework on Ethos’. This document is central to the Education and Training Board (ETB) sector achieving its goal of becoming Ireland’s largest provider of multi-denominational, equality-based education at both primary and post-primary level (ETBI Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2024).

This Framework is the culmination of ten years of empirical research, critical reflection, consultation, and visionary policymaking involving all ETB schools, their sixteen patron ETBs, ETBI and other relevant stakeholders. I have watched this work evolve over the past number of years with great interest and am delighted to see it reach this significant milestone.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all ETB schools well as they work with this Framework. They will be well supported locally by their Ethos Coordinator, Director of Schools and Chief Executives and nationally by ETBI as they implement it. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Patronage Task Group and the CNS and ETB Patronage Directorate in ETBI who have shown remarkable leadership in bringing this Framework to this crucial stage. I would like to thank Dr. Shivaun O’Brien (DCU) for her central role in translating 10 years of reports from various consultation events, relevant research and numerous policy background papers developed by ETBI into a coherent set of standards and statements of effective practice which are fundamental to this Framework. The positive reaction of school leaders to the statements of effective practice is testament to how accurately she captured all the work that had been carried out to date. I want to pay particular tribute to Séamus Conboy who has worked exceedingly hard over the past number of years to bring this work to fruition.

I look forward to working with the sector in the implementation of this Framework across our schools over the coming years.

Paddy Lavelle

Paddy Lavelle, General Secretary, ETBI.



Introduction

When lessons are forgotten, and differential calculus, the periodic table of the elements and irregular verbs have become shadowy memories, the ethos of the school we attended can remain part of our consciousness (Kevin Williams, 2000)

Over recent decades, Ireland has experienced major cultural, religious, political and demographic changes. As ETB schools are 'state' schools, they have particular responsibilities in respect of the 'common good' in an increasingly diverse society. It is therefore imperative that ETB schools have a clear understanding of the ethos underpinning life in their schools and are guided in their realisation of this ethos.

The 'ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos' has been developed by ETBI and the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection, Dublin City University (DCU) in conjunction Ireland's 16 ETBs and ETB schools, primary and post-primary. The Framework aims to describe what an ETB school is, locally and nationally by providing:

- ETB school communities and other relevant stakeholders with a common understanding of the ethos of the ETB school sector
- practical guidance to ETB schools on how the ethos can be lived out on a day-to-day basis
- a decision-making Framework for ETB school leaders and Boards of Management

Background Information

There are sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs) across the Republic of Ireland which are the patrons of Community National Schools and Community Colleges. Collectively, ETBs are the largest provider of multi-denominational education in Ireland.

Section 15 (2) (b) of the Act requires the Board of Management (BoM) of a school to "uphold and **be accountable to the patron** for thus upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...". In order for BoMs to be able to comply with their obligations as set out in the Act, it is imperative that there is clarity on what the patron's expectations are in relation to characteristic spirit. The sector has been on a significant journey over the past decade to provide this clarity to school communities.

Prompted by the conversations on patronage happening nationally as a result of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism, the ETB sector began to seriously consider the characteristic spirit (ethos) appropriate for state schools in 2011 with a series of conferences on the issue. As a result of these conferences, the University of Limerick (UL) was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive piece of research across 18 ETB post-primary schools in six ETBs. The purpose of this research was to ascertain current understandings and expressions of characteristic spirit (ethos) in publicly managed ETB schools. The main findings from this research were that although values such as equality, respect and care were evident throughout the schools, there was little coherence within or between schools in understandings of their overall ethos or what it meant to be an ETB school.



Background Information (Cont.)

To address the issues raised in the research, ETBI established a Patronage Task Group in 2016 consisting of ETBI personnel, Chief Executives and Directors of Schools from across the sector. ETBI held its first Patrons' Day in 2017 where Chief Executives and Directors of Schools from all ETBs met to discuss how to make progress on these issues. This led to ETBI being mandated to carry out a Core Values Review process across all 16 ETBs in 2018. It consisted of two workshops with principals and many deputy principals from all ETB schools. The focus of the workshops was on establishing:

1. The core values underpinning the characteristic spirit of the sector.
2. The place of religions and beliefs in ETB schools.

The findings from the Core Values Review confirm that ETB schools are, in the main, thriving in the areas they serve. There is ample evidence of excellent practices across the sector in relation to the core values underpinning the ethos of their schools and living out the 'multi-denominational' aspect of the ethos. However, it confirms that many areas of the ethos require attention. This was recognised and articulated by school leaders throughout the process.

Principals and deputy principals were consistent in their request for leadership and clarity from their patron ETBs in relation to developing sectoral positions on key areas such as how to articulate the ETB ethos and in particular the place of religions and beliefs in ETB schools.

This Framework is the ETB sector's response to this call for leadership and clarity. Central to this Framework are the standards and statements of effective practice that were developed by the Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection, Dublin City University led by Dr Shivaun O'Brien in consultation with ETBI and the wider sector. ETBI engaged with school leaders, Directors of Schools and Chief Executives throughout 2021 introducing them to these standards and statements of effective practice. The response has been extremely positive. Overall, school leaders have expressed that the Framework is reflective of the good practices already happening in schools. ETB school communities now have a shared language to articulate and celebrate those good practices. The Framework also challenges ETB schools to critically reflect with their school communities on aspects of their current practices that are incongruous with what is set out in this Framework.

Characteristic Spirit or Ethos?

There can be some confusion around the differing terms used to describe the culture and values of a school. The Education Act defines the term 'characteristic spirit' as being "determined by the cultural, educational, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...". The NCCA defines it as "an expression of the aims, objectives, goals, values and beliefs which the school aspires to, endorses and preserves". Essentially, the characteristic spirit of the school is the values underpinning all aspects of school life.

It is widely argued that the concepts of 'characteristic spirit' and 'ethos' are synonymous and can be used inter-changeably. The Education Act may have avoided the use of the word 'ethos' as in the past it had religious connotations in an Irish context. However, internationally, the word 'ethos' does not have such connotations and is widely used to describe the beliefs, values and practices underpinning the life of any school. As 'ethos' is a recognisable term to students, parents and teachers, and is used in other 'multi-denominational' school contexts in Ireland and internationally, the ETB sector has chosen to use the word 'ethos' instead of the term 'characteristic spirit'.



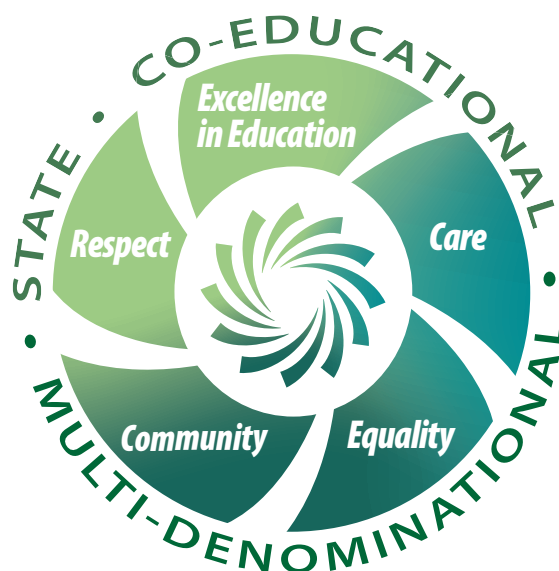
Characteristic Spirit or Ethos?

Ethos Statement

As a result of the Core Values Review Process, the following statement can be made about all ETB schools:

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



Having this clear statement was key to the sector being able to comply with the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 which required all schools to set out their ethos and the general objectives of the school in their Admissions Policies (Appendix 1). The Act also prompted ETBI to engage with representatives from other bodies involved in Designated Community Colleges to agree a statement on ethos for use in these schools (Appendix 2).

Having a clear statement on ethos, although addressing many of the issues previously outlined, is not the end of the journey. The next key step was the development and implementation of this 'Patrons' Framework on Ethos' to support schools in the operationalising of their ethos. Ethos Coordinators have been appointed in each ETB to support this process.



What has Informed the ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos?

The Framework is informed by a number of key documents and events:

UL Research Report and subsequent academic papers

The journey of the CNS model in defining what is meant by being a multi-denominational state school

Learning from the development of the Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMY) curriculum for CNSs

The Core Values Review Process

UL Literature Review on the core values underpinning the ethos of ETB schools

Numerous consultation events across the sector

The Characteristic Spirit (Ethos) Statements for use in Admissions Policies in ETB Schools

The *Looking at our School Frameworks* for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

Outline of the ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos

The Framework is developed in line with the *Looking at our School (LAOS) Framework* that all schools are very familiar with. Central to the Framework are domains, definitions, standards and statements of effective practice.

There are 7 Domains in the Framework:

1. Centrality of Ethos
2. Excellence in Education
3. Care
4. Equality
5. Community
6. Respect
7. Multi-denominational

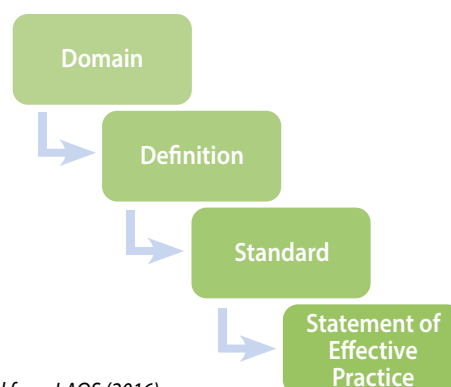


Figure 1 Adapted from LAOS (2016)

Domain	Each domain represents a distinct, but interrelated aspect of the ethos of ETB Schools.
Definition	A definition is provided for each domain to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the concepts.
Standard	The standards are stated as the behaviours and attributes characteristic of practices related to ethos in an effective, well-functioning school.
Statements	The statements of effective practice describe practices in the day-to-day life of a school where the ETB ethos is lived out in an effective way.



Applications of the Framework

This Framework provides a comprehensive picture of highly effective practices in relation to ethos. It is designed to give the widest possible scope to schools in identifying and achieving excellence in relation to living out the ETB ethos. As with the LAOS document, schools should not see this framework as an inflexible checklist but rather as an enabler of critical self-reflection that allows them to meet the needs of the school community.

Reflection

Reflection is a key element in the behaviour of effective teachers and leaders. This Framework can be used in a number of ways to support teachers and leaders as they critically reflect on their practices in relation to ethos. This enables them to consider the impact of these practices on the wider school community and the whole school environment. As such, the Framework can be used;

- For individual self-reflection on professional practice and as an ongoing reference to support the development of individual confidence and competence in relation to the ethos of ETB schools.
- As a tool for reflection between staff within schools, ETBs and nationally across the sector.
- As a way to reflect on ethos with the wider school community.
- Informs the development of supports by ETBI.

Transparency, Consistency and Accountability

Throughout the sector there is need for great clarity and consistency regarding what happens when ETB ethos is lived out in an effective way. This Framework provides:

- Clarity regarding what a school living out the ETB ethos in an effective way looks like.
- A transparent guide to support teachers and school leaders in being accountable to their communities.
- Consistency in appraising strengths and a means of identifying areas for development.

Developing and Sustaining Staff

The ETB sector has considerable interest in developing and sustaining teachers and school leaders. This Framework provides a structure through which:

- Schools, ETBs and ETBI can gauge the appropriate supports needed in building the capacity of teachers, leaders and potential leaders.
- Experienced teachers and leaders can provide advice and guidance for new and emerging teachers and leaders within schools and the wider ETB sector.



Applications of the Framework

Recruitment of Staff

The recruitment of staff is one of the most important roles that ETBs, and school principals face. Their decisions have a long-term impact on the ethos of their schools. This Framework provides support in this endeavour by:

- Highlighting good practice for all potential employees which is central to developing and maintaining the ethos of ETB schools.
- Facilitating clarity and consistency in any consideration of candidates during the interview process across the ETB sector.
- Ensuring potential candidates, and those recruiting candidates, have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of teachers and school leaders in relation to Ethos in an ETB school.

Induction of Staff and Students

Good induction of new staff and students is central to their integration to the school community. This Framework supports the induction of new staff and students by:

- Providing a clear understanding of ETB ethos and how it is lived out in ETB schools.
- Facilitating new staff and students to reflect on the ethos of ETB schools and how their practices and behaviours should be informed to support this ethos.

Parents and Guardians

Proactive relationships with parents and guardians are key to creating a cohesive school community. This Framework supports relationship building with ETB school parent/guardian groups by:

- Providing clarity regarding what a school effectively living out ETB ethos looks like.
- Facilitating the involvement of parents/guardians in the development of ETB school ethos.

School Self-Evaluation of Ethos

From time-to-time schools may wish to engage in a school self-evaluation of ethos. A full resource has been developed by Dr. Shivaun O'Brien (EQI, DCU) on behalf of ETBI to support schools in this process.



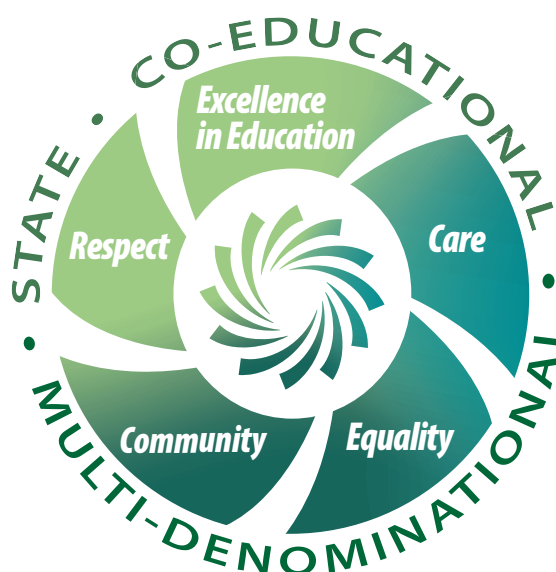
Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice



The Ethos of ETB Schools

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



It is important to begin with a shared understand of the descriptors state, co-educational and multi-denominational. In an ETB school these terms can be defined in the following way:

State – ETB schools are state schools as they are under the patronage of public bodies.

Co-educational - goes beyond a binary perspective on gender to include the full diversity of gender identities and gender expression in the school community and is concerned to underpin respectful relationships across this diversity, and the elimination of any gendered stereotypes and the influence of any such stereotypes.

Multi-denominational - In an ETB school, multi-denominational is about welcoming and celebrating the full range of religions and beliefs in the school community. It is concerned with developing relationships that are respectful and appreciative of such difference, and interactions that embrace, celebrate, and explore such difference.

An Overview of the Ethos Standards and Statements of Highly Effective Practice

Domain	Definition	Standards
Centrality of Ethos	In an ETB school, the ethos underpins all policies and practices in the school. It informs the values taught to students attending the school, how the formal and informal curriculum are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school. Ample opportunities are provided for all members of the school community to reflect on the ethos.	<p>The ethos is clearly visible and communicated to all members of the school community.</p> <p>School leadership ensures the systematic promotion and application of the ethos in key decision-making processes.</p>
Excellence in Education	The ETB school ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community and equality. Excellence encompasses outcomes, experiences and expectations for all members of the school community.	The school aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning.
Care	In an ETB school, care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the school community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.	<p>The school provides a caring environment that effectively promotes the welfare of all its members.</p> <p>Staff ensure that they get to know the interests and abilities of individual students.</p> <p>Systematic approaches are developed and implemented in relation to student support and in particular supports for the most vulnerable.</p>
Respect	In an ETB school, respect is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the school community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the school community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the school community.	<p>The school promotes a respectful environment for all members of the school community.</p> <p>The school develops and implements an effective code of behaviour in line with the ethos of the school.</p>
Equality	In an ETB school, equality is about treating all members of the school community equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need, and prioritising a culture of inclusion.	The school promotes a culture of equality and inclusion which affirms diversity within the school community.
Community	In an ETB school, community encompasses students, staff, parents and the local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the school community	<p>Students, staff and parents experience a sense of belonging and purpose as members of the school community.</p> <p>All members of the school community are provided with meaningful opportunities to have an active voice in the school.</p> <p>The school is immersed in, reflects and engages with local and national communities in order to support the work of the school and the local community.</p>
Multi-denominational	In an ETB school, multi-denominational is about welcoming and celebrating the full range of religions and beliefs in the school community. It is concerned with developing relationships that are respectful and appreciative of such difference, and interactions that embrace, celebrate, and explore such difference	<p>The school is multi-denominational in its affirmation of the beliefs and religious identities of all members of the school community with regard to the five core values underpinning the ethos.</p> <p>The school engages appropriately and equitably with religious/ belief communities.</p> <p>The Patrons' Curriculum/ Religious Education Curriculum is appropriately developed and implemented in the school.</p>

Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

Domain 1: Centrality of Ethos

Definition: In an ETB school, the ethos underpins all policies and practices in the school. It informs the values taught to students attending the school, how the formal and informal curriculum are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school. Ample opportunities are provided for all members of the school community to reflect on the ethos.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The ethos is clearly visible and communicated to all members of the school community.	1 (a)	All members of the school community, including students, parents, staff, Board of Management are informed of the ethos and are aware of their responsibility to uphold and promote it.
	1 (b)	The ethos is evident throughout the school campus and online school environment.
	1 (c)	As part of induction programmes, opportunities are provided for discussion and clarification of the ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos.
	1 (d)	The ethos of the school is visible in all policy, promotional, communication, recruitment and relevant documents.
	1 (e)	Recruitment processes provide opportunities to discuss the ethos of the school and the expectations for all members of the school community to uphold it.
	1 (f)	All members of the school community are provided with formal and informal opportunities to discuss and reflect on the ethos of the school.
	1 (g)	Opportunities for the articulation and discussion of the ethos is an inherent part of meetings of the Student Council, Parent Association, staff and Board of Management.
	1 (h)	The ethos of the school is reflected and highlighted in all school activities and events.
School leadership ensures the systematic promotion and application of the ethos in key decision-making processes.	1 (i)	All school leaders and members of the Board of Management take responsibility for the promotion of the school ethos.
	1 (j)	The ethos is central to the decision-making processes of school leadership and the Board of Management.
	1 (k)	The ethos of the school is articulated in all school policies and procedures and is central to their development and implementation.
	1 (l)	An Ethos Leadership Team (ELT) is established in the school to ensure that the ethos is fully integrated into the operation of the school and is regularly reviewed through the school self-evaluation and planning process including the implementation of actions related to ethos. The ELT is an active participant in the ETB's Professional Learning Network (PLN) for ELTs.
	1 (m)	School leadership address school practices or the expressions of views that are not in keeping with the ethos of the school.

Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

Domain 2: Excellence in Education

Definition: The ETB school ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community and equality.

Excellence in education encompasses:

- Outcomes, where all members of the school community are enabled to reach their full potential;
- Experiences, where provision is tailored to individual skills and needs, and a positive environment offers safety and support and encourages exploration and taking risks in learning;
- Expectations, where all members of the school community collaborate, play their roles to the best of their ability, and are motivated to learn in different ways; and school cultures, where the core values of care, respect, community, and equality are promoted.
- the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and moral aspects of the identity of students.

Although 'Excellence in Education' is a core value underpinning the ethos of ETB schools, it is not outlined in this document in the same way as the other domains. The rationale for this is that schools are already working with the LAOS Framework which clearly addresses effective practice in teaching and learning. Therefore, outlining standards and statements of effective practice underpinning this domain would have led to duplication of work.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning	2 (a)	Statements of effective practice for excellence in teaching and learning are set out in Looking at Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary/ Post-Primary Schools (DES Inspectorate, 2016).

Domain 3: Care

Definition: In an ETB school, care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the school community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school provides a caring environment that effectively promotes the welfare of all its members	3 (a)	Care is promoted as a core value of the school and informs school policy development and implementation, as well as practice and decision-making at a whole school and classroom level
	3 (b)	A whole school wellbeing policy is developed, communicated and implemented at a classroom and whole school level. Specific wellbeing-related policies are in place such as, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Critical Incident.
	3 (c)	As part of the school curriculum, students learn the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for wellbeing including the development of social and emotional competencies e.g. effective listening, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, tolerance, empathy and mutual respect for individual differences.
	3 (d)	Positive, supporting relationships are established and the school is experienced as a caring, inclusive environment that treats all members equally.

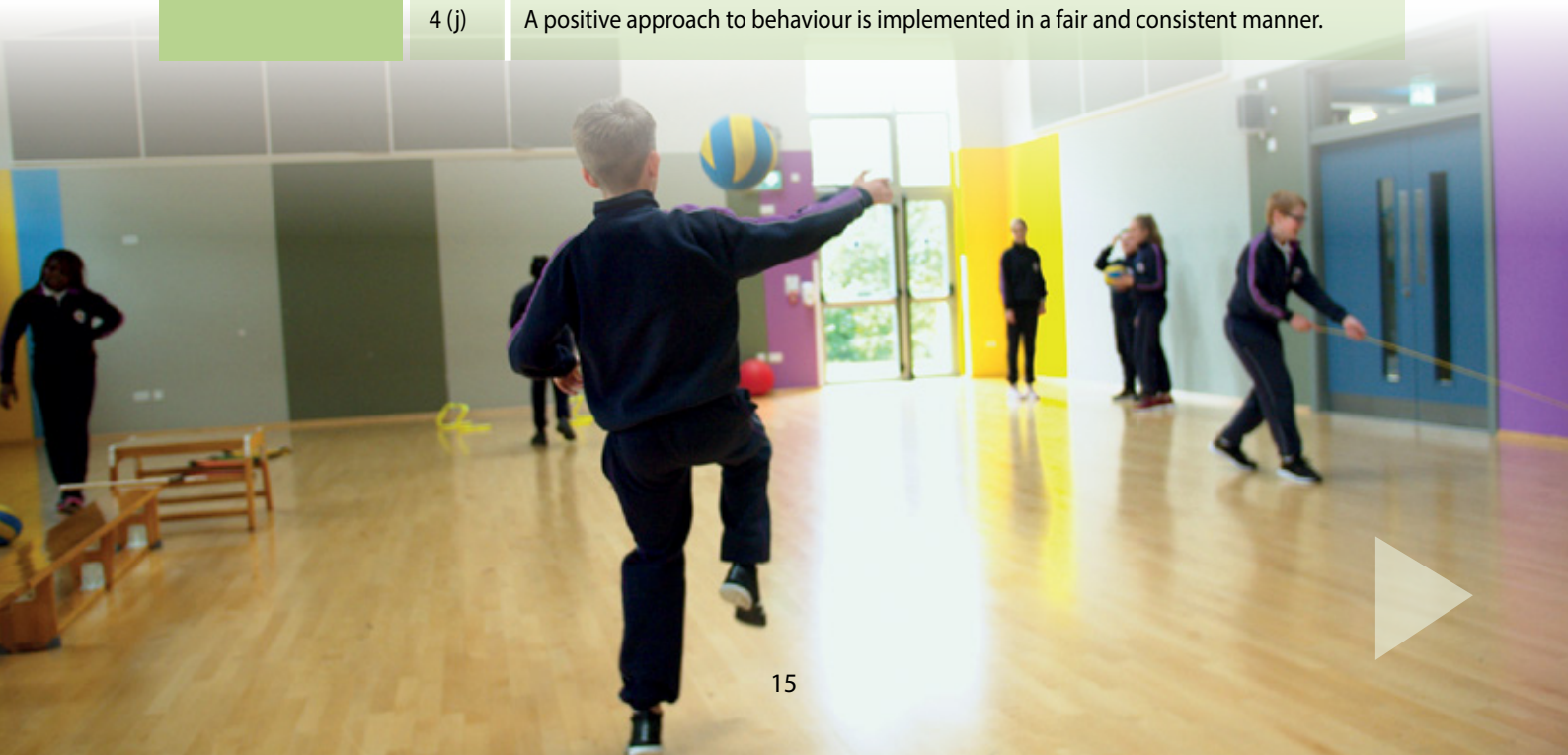
Domain 3: Care (Cont.)

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
	3 (e)	Students and staff are connected, acknowledged and supported in school and have a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Staff care about students and support their learning and development.
	3 (f)	Staff model caring behaviour in their interactions with school leadership, colleagues and all other members of the school community.
	3 (g)	School leadership has systems in place to support all members of staff. Staff wellbeing is enhanced through professional learning/ networks, celebrating staff strengths and achievements, encouragement to collaborate with other staff, and access to professional advice.
	3 (h)	Members of the school community have opportunities to raise issues of concern in a safe and supportive manner.
Staff ensure that they get to know the interests and abilities of individual students.	3 (i)	Effective working relationships and reporting structures are developed between relevant settings such as early childhood care and education settings, primary feeder schools and post-primary schools in order to support the transition of students from one setting to the next.
	3 (j)	Procedures are in place to gather information on students who are at risk, so that early interventions may be provided.
	3 (k)	Teachers take time to get to know their students' strengths, challenges and interests to support their learning and wellbeing.
	3 (l)	Assessment results are used effectively by staff so as to ensure that appropriate levels of challenge and support are provided to students.
Systematic approaches are developed and implemented in relation to student support and in particular supports for the most vulnerable.	3 (m)	An effective two-way communication process has been established to engage parents with the intention of increasing student engagement, achievement and progression. The school communicates with parents on such issues including student welfare, achievement and attainment. Clear protocols are in place to provide parents with opportunities to communicate with school leadership and/or individual teachers.
	3 (n)	Clear, whole-school policies, procedures and structures are established in order to guide a responsive, systematic and evidence-based approach to the provision of support for all students.
	3 (o)	Roles and responsibilities for student support are clearly delineated and effective systems for meetings, communication, reporting and record keeping are established and implemented. Staff are facilitated to engage with relevant professional development to build their capacity in their provision of support for students.
	3 (p)	A student support team is established and operates in line with national guidelines.

Domain 4: Respect

Definition: In an ETB school, respect is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the school community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the school community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the school community.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school promotes a respectful environment for all members of the school community.	4 (a)	Respect is promoted as a core value within the school and informs school policy, practice and decision-making at a whole school and classroom level.
	4 (b)	All members of the school community are mutually respectful in their interactions with each other and the school environment.
	4 (c)	Different points of view among members of the school community are respected within the parameters of the ethos of the school.
	4 (d)	School staff are treated respectfully by all members of the school community.
	4 (e)	Staff model respectful behaviour in their interactions with all members of the school community.
	4 (f)	Students experience classrooms as learning environments in which they are treated with dignity and respect in an atmosphere conducive to dialogue, questioning, and making mistakes.
The school develops and implements an effective code of behaviour in line with the ethos of the school.	4 (g)	In line with national guidelines, the code of behaviour is developed through collaboration with the school community and reflects the ethos of the school.
	4 (h)	Clear expectations are communicated to all members of the school community regarding student behaviour and the consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
	4 (i)	Opportunities are provided to students, parents and staff to discuss the code of behaviour and their role in maintaining a positive school environment.
	4 (j)	A positive approach to behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.



Domain 5: Equality

Definition: In an ETB school, equality is about treating all members of the school community equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity and dignity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need, and prioritising a culture of inclusion.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school promotes a culture of equality and inclusion which affirms diversity within the school community.	5 (a)	Equality is promoted as a core value of the school and informs school policy development and implementation, as well as practice and decision-making at a whole school and classroom level.
	5 (b)	The admission policy and procedures provide equal opportunities for student enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. The school is physically and culturally accessible to potential students and their families.
	5 (c)	In accordance with equality legislation all members of the school community are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief ¹ , age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status and their rights are respected.
	5 (d)	The core value of equality is evident in the visual images, resources, and displays used throughout the school environment.
	5 (e)	The values of equality, inclusion and respect for diversity are evident in all policy documents, communications, events and activities of the school at a whole school and classroom level.
	5 (f)	Staff are facilitated to engage in professional learning to understand their role in promoting equality and challenging inequality.
	5 (g)	Members of the school community are provided with opportunities to reflect on their potential bias towards certain groups and the impact such biases have on perpetuating inequality. Particular attention is paid to highlight those who are disadvantaged or made poor by the inequalities in the world.
	5 (h)	Students have equitable opportunities to engage with the curriculum and to participate in the life of the school. Staff actively promote a strength-based approach with high expectations for the participation, achievement, and attainment of all students.
	5 (i)	Data is used to evaluate and address underperformance, or lack of opportunity afforded to any specific groups/ identities.
	5 (j)	Diversity within the school community is meaningfully affirmed on an ongoing basis in both the formal and hidden curriculum and the organisational structures in place in the school.
	5 (k)	All students and their families are supported in overcoming potential barriers to having equal access to the curriculum and school life by being provided with appropriate access to facilities, information, services and supports of the school.
	5 (l)	Resources of the school are equitably distributed in an attempt to ensure that all students reach their potential. Where necessary and appropriate, students are provided with additional supports and reasonable accommodations.

¹ Beliefs include non-religious worldviews.

Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

Domain 6: Community

Definition: In an ETB school, community encompasses students, staff, parents and the local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the school community.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
Students, staff and parents experience a sense of belonging and purpose as members of the school community.	6 (a)	Community is promoted as a core value of the school and informs school policy development and implementation, as well as practice and decision-making at a whole school and classroom level
	6 (b)	Mechanisms are in place to ensure that all members of the school community can reflect on the ethos and purposes of the school and on their role in supporting its development.
	6 (c)	All members of the school community are encouraged to contribute to and support the development of the school.
	6 (d)	All members of the school community have opportunities to participate in activities and events at a whole school level.
	6 (e)	Staff create a sense of community in the classroom in which all students learn and practice the skills of collaboration. Students experience a sense of belonging, shared responsibility for the learning and welfare of fellow students.
	6 (f)	Opportunities are provided for new students to settle into the school, to get to know their peers, make friends and develop a sense of belonging.
	6 (g)	Students identify positively with the school and take pride in representing their school in various events and activities.
	6 (h)	The school campus is maintained and furnished so as to support the values and purpose of the school and promote a sense of pride and belonging among members of the school community. The work and achievements of students are displayed throughout the school.
	6 (i)	There is a strong sense of co-operative effort among all staff and they are provided with opportunities to collaborate and support each other in order to improve teaching and learning. New members of staff receive induction and newly qualified teachers are sufficiently supported and mentored.
	6 (j)	Clear and effective systems of communication exist between all members of the school community in order to ensure they are informed on relevant matters. Feedback is periodically gathered on an appropriate vehicle for communication.
All members of the school community are provided with meaningful opportunities to have an active voice in the school.	6 (k)	Student voice and choice is promoted and facilitated at a classroom and whole school level in order to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence. The school endeavours to ensure that students grow in an understanding of the power of their own voice, that they grow in the skills and confidence required to use their voice effectively for the good of themselves and others. The school is particularly mindful to ensure the inclusion of all students in engagement on student voice
	6 (l)	Members of the school community are meaningfully consulted on the development of policies and procedures and as part of the school self-evaluation process.

Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

Domain 6: Community (Cont.)

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
	6 (m)	A Student Council is established and supported to operate effectively for the benefit of the school and its students.
	6 (n)	A Parents' Association is established and supported to build positive relationships between home and school.
	6 (o)	All school committees are reflective of the diversity within the school community.
	6 (p)	The Board of Management meaningfully collaborates with the Parents' Association and the Student Council in the management of the school.
The school is immersed in, reflects and engages with local and national communities in order to support the work of the school and the local community.	6 (q)	The ethos of the school is communicated within the local community in order to highlight its values and purpose.
	6 (r)	The school provides opportunities for members of the school community to engage, where possible, at various levels with local schools, and the ETB network locally and nationally. The school promotes professional networks for school staff and ensures that staff avail of the range of supports provided by the Department of Education support services and other external bodies.
	6 (s)	The involvement in the school of individuals, community bodies and local organisations is encouraged in order to promote active citizenship and support the learning and welfare of students.
	6 (t)	The school engages with and is supportive of the local community.
	6 (u)	The ETB/Board of Management permits the uses of the school building or grounds for community purposes in accordance with DES guidelines, as appropriate.

Domain 7: Multi-denominational

Definition: In an ETB school, multi-denominational is about welcoming and celebrating the full range of religions and beliefs in the school community. It is concerned with developing relationships that are respectful and appreciative of such difference, and interactions that embrace, celebrate, and explore such difference.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school is multi-denominational in its affirmation of the beliefs and religious identities of all members of the school community with regard to the five core values underpinning the ethos.	7 (a)	The school community is informed about and understand the rationale underpinning a multi-denominational education.
	7 (b)	Students, staff and parents of all religions and belief identities are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and belief identities.
	7 (c)	Important school events and assemblies are multi-denominational in nature and in line with the ethos of the school.
	7 (d)	When religious and belief symbols are displayed in the school, they are reflective of the religions and beliefs of the entire school community who are consulted on the identification of such symbols.

Domain 7: Multi-denominational (Cont.)

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
	7 (e)	Religious and belief celebrations which take place throughout the school year are equitable in relation to symbolic representation, time spent and emphasis.
The school engages appropriately and equitably with religious/ belief communities.	7 (f)	Religious Education is pluralist in nature and distinct from religious instruction in any particular religions/beliefs. Religious and belief communities are facilitated to provide lessons outside the school day in accordance with relevant ETB/school policies on the use of school buildings.
	7 (g)	Religious/belief leaders are provided with equal opportunities to participate in multi-denominational school events.
	7 (h)	Where practicable, space is provided from time to time during the school day for belief leaders to cater for students from their belief communities e.g. at times of tragedy or at special times of year for that belief community.
	7 (i)	Where practicable, where parents or leaders of particular religious /belief communities request to facilitate a specific celebration or event for students from their own religion/ belief, parents (or students over 18 years of age) opt-in to the event or celebration as opposed to students having to opt-out.
The Patrons' Curriculum/ Religious Education is appropriately developed and implemented in the school.	7 (j)	<p>The minimum number of timetabled hours allocated for the delivery of the Patrons' Curriculum/ Religious Education is outlined as follows:</p> <p>Community National Schools:</p> <p>A minimum of two hours per week teaching the GMGY curriculum (excluding other opportunities where GMGY is integrated across the curriculum).</p> <p>Post-Primary (Non-Designated):</p> <p>Junior Cycle: In schools not providing the full NCCA Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification, a minimum of 100 hours teaching at Junior Cycle is provided to deliver RE/ Patrons' Curriculum (when developed).</p> <p>Senior Cycle: In schools not currently providing the full NCCA Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus, a minimum of 66 hours is provided to deliver RE/Patrons' Curriculum (when developed)</p> <p>Post-Primary (Designated)</p> <p>Junior Cycle: A minimum of two hours per week teaching the full NCCA Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification.</p> <p>Senior Cycle: A minimum of two hours per week teaching either the full examinable Leaving Cert Religious Education Syllabus or following the NCCA Religious Education Non-Exam Framework for Senior Cycle</p>
	7 (k)	Teachers are facilitated to engage with professional development in order to support and enhance the delivery of all aspects of the Patrons' Curriculum/ Religious Education Curriculum. Such courses and programmes of professional development are fully compatible with the multi-denominational characteristic spirit of the school such as those provided by ETBI and the Department of Education support services. Engagement in professional development from other sources requires consultation with the ETB in advance.

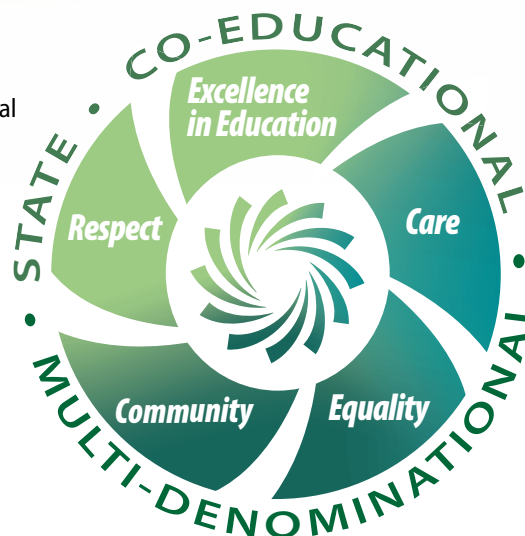


Appendix 1

Characteristic Spirit Statement for Community National Schools and Community Colleges

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multidenominational schools underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a 'multidenominational' school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.

Appendix 2

Characteristic Spirit Statement for Designated Community Colleges

(School XX) is a designated Community College. Designated Community Colleges are established by the signing of a model agreement between an ETB and the local Catholic Bishop and/or a religious congregation. XX ETB is the patron of the school. The model agreement provides for the participation of (Congregation XX/ Bishop of XX Diocese) in the organisation and management of the community college on an ongoing basis.

School XX was established in (xx Year) in a spirit of partnership between (ETB XX) and (Congregation XX/ Bishop of XX Diocese) (*schools should customise to make reference to how the school was established e.g. amalgamation, greenfield site*). The inherited traditions, values and founding intentions of XX ETB and (Congregation XX/Bishop of XX) remain enshrined in the characteristic spirit and in the life of our school.

Our school is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education;
- Care;
- Equality;
- Community and
- Respect.



All members of our school community are treated equally, regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, marital status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status. In our school all students are given equal opportunity for enrolment, in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act (2018). Once enrolled, our school strives to provide all our students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life.

Our school (school XX) provides a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our school promotes a fully inclusive education which recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

Our school is multi-denominational. We welcome, respect and support students of all religions and beliefs. The provision of religious education, religious worship and the work of the Chaplain all combine to reflect the founding intention of the school, the school's mission statement and the needs of the students within the school. The characteristic spirit of the school finds practical expression through the provision of pastoral, liturgical and social outreach activities, as appropriate, for each student.



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