

Briefing on Ethos Quality Standards and Statements of Effective Practice

May 2021

The Board is proposing that members formally adopt the Ethos Quality Standards and Statements of Effective Practice at the 2021 AGM. These standards were finalised and shared with members in August 2020, following a process of development over a number of years.

The Standards and Statements are core elements of a comprehensive Quality Framework, which includes:

- Educate Together Charter
- Ethos quality standards and statements of effective practice
- Ethos school self-evaluation (SSE) process
- Supports for ethos (guidance platform <https://ethos.educatetogether.ie/>)

This Quality Framework provides schools with a clear process for evaluating systems, processes and practices in the school across six domains, which include the four underlying principles of the Educate Together charter along with a fifth domain for Ethical Education/Learn Together as the patron's programme and a sixth for sustainable practice.

	Domain	Standard
1	<u>Equality</u>	All students are afforded equality of esteem in all aspects of school life, where individual difference and diversity is recognised, mutually respected, and welcomed.
2	<u>Ethical Education</u>	The Educate Together Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is effectively planned and delivered in a collaborative, coordinated and cohesive manner.
3	<u>Child/Learner-centred</u>	The school provides a child/learner-centred experience
4	<u>Democratic Structures</u>	Formal democratic structures operate within the school involving key stakeholder groups at various levels, for the benefit of the school and its students.
5	<u>Participation</u>	The school promotes the participation of key stakeholders in the life of the school.
6	<u>Sustainable Practice</u>	Sustainable practice is promoted across the school community.

The Quality Standards are supported by Statements of Effective Practice, which are listed below (P3-7) and can be accessed at:

<https://ethos.educatetogether.ie/ethos-sse/good-practice/>

In additional further detail on the development of the Quality Framework and school SSE tools and ethos Guidance is available in the Handbook for Schools here:

https://ethos.educatetogether.ie/app/uploads/2020/07/ET-Ethos-Final-Doc-July-20_2.pdf

2018 – 2020 Ethos Development Project

Funding was secured from Salesforce to support this project, which involved the following:

- Contract with DCU's EQI Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection to develop quality standards and an SSE tool.
- Recruitment of Aoife Blood from Citywest ETNS as Ethos Guidance Officer to develop Ethos Guidance materials
- Development of a platform to host these new Ethos resources

The project incorporated:

Research:

- Foundational documents from inception of Educate Together movement
- Decisions made by members at AGMs
- Previous Educate Together ethos consultations, tools, processes and frameworks
- Guidance documents issued by relevant educational and interest groups
- Current academic literature on quality, evaluation and ethos in education
- Examples of good practice – Irish and international

Stakeholder consultation:

- A formal stakeholder consultation to develop the quality framework was managed by Dr Shivaun O'Brien from DCU EQI centre in 2018/19 and incorporated:
 - o Interviews with national office staff - early 2019
 - o Focus group with members of Board of Directors - early 2019
 - o Consultation meetings in Dublin and Cork, with stakeholders from across primary and second-level school communities – April 2019
 - o Circulation of draft standards to all schools for feedback – May 2019
- The School Self-evaluation process was piloted with 20 primary and post-primary schools in 2019/20
- Four advisory panels were established to offer feedback on the guidance materials developed through the project. Groups comprised of parents, teachers, principals, members of boards of management, members of the board of directors, as well as professionals from partner organisations and academics.
- Members were invited to offer feedback on the process and materials at a National members Forum in October 2019.
- Further feedback was obtained at the principals conference in March 2020.
- Focus groups were held online with students in May / June 2020.

Examples of good practice in implementation of the Educate Together ethos were gathered through:

- School visits, websites, social media
- Engagement with members at Educate Together CPD, seminars, events
- Inviting schools to submit examples of good practice from the network

Guidance and examples are now available on the Ethos Guidance Platform here:

<https://ethos.educatetogether.ie/>

Statements of Effective Practice

Domain 1: Equality	
Standard: All students are afforded equality of esteem in all aspects of school life, where individual difference and diversity is recognised, mutually respected, and welcomed.	
Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The school community generally acknowledge the diversity that makes up the school community and the range of identities among its members including: age; belief system; dis/ability; ethnicity; family type; gender; religious; sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.	The school community fully acknowledge the diversity that makes up the school community and the range of identities among its members including: age; belief system; dis/ability; ethnicity; family type; gender; religious; sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
The school management establishes and maintains a positive and inclusive school climate, where members of the school community are welcomed, where rights are respected and promoted, and where members feel safe (physically, emotionally, socially). All members of the school community are responsible for contributing to a positive school climate. All members of the school community are addressed by their first name.	The school management establishes and maintains a very positive and very inclusive school climate, where all members of the school community are welcomed, where rights are respected and promoted, and where members feel safe (physically, emotionally, socially). All members of the school community are responsible for contributing to a positive school climate. All members of the school community are addressed by their first name.
The physical environment of the school reflects the school's values of equality, diversity, participation, access, and respect, as can be seen in: physical access to all areas, the choice of teaching resources, and the visual images and displays throughout the school (limitations of temporary accommodation is acknowledged).	The physical environment of the school consistently reflects the school's values of equality, diversity, participation, access, and respect, as can be seen in: physical access to all areas, the choice of teaching resources, and the visual images and displays throughout the school (limitations of temporary accommodation is acknowledged).
The school community actively promotes the development of social and emotional competencies among students such as fairness, kindness, caring, respect, solidarity, compassion, and concern for others.	The school community develops social and emotional competencies among all students such as fairness, kindness, caring, respect, solidarity, compassion, and concern for others.
The admission policy and procedures reflect the equality-based ethos in that the admission process is fair and equitable. The admission processes are transparent and relatively easy to navigate and where possible, supports are provided to students and families who may otherwise find the admission process challenging.	The admission policy and procedures reflect the equality-based ethos in that the admission process is fair and equitable. The admission processes are transparent and easy to navigate and supports are provided to students and families who may otherwise find the admission process challenging.
The school makes reasonable efforts to ensure equitable access for all students and their families to a range of information and support and to participate in relevant aspects of school life. Generally, members of the school community positively identify with the school and high levels of participation in school life are encouraged. Differentiated supports are generally provided, in so far as it is possible, to those who need them so as to ensure equity of participation and opportunity.	The school consistently ensures equitable access for all students and their families to a range of information and support and to participate in relevant aspects of school life. Members of the school community positively identify with the school and very high levels of participation in school life are encouraged. Differentiated supports are consistently provided, in so far as it is possible, to those who need them so as to ensure equity of participation and opportunity.
The school is co-educational and committed to encouraging all students to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities. School leadership	The school is co-educational and consistently encourages all students to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities. School

promotes gender equality in the provision of opportunities/ subject choices for students, encouraging them to explore their full range of abilities/ career options regardless of their gender or gender identity. Measures are taken to value and celebrate the range of student talents, efforts and achievements.	leadership purposefully promotes gender equality in the provision of opportunities/ subject choices for students, encouraging them to explore their full range of abilities/ career options regardless of their gender or gender identity. Effective measures are taken to value and celebrate the range of student talents, efforts and achievements.
Gender equality is promoted across the curriculum and in the choice of teaching and learning materials. It is specifically addressed as part of the Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum where gender issues, assumptions, and expectations are addressed.	Gender equality is purposefully fostered across the curriculum and in the choice of teaching and learning materials. It is specifically addressed as part of the Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum where gender issues, assumptions, and expectations are addressed.
Staff generally promote the values and actions relating to gender equality and anti-discrimination within the school. Staff are mindful of gender issues in the language they use and in their expectations for learners.	All staff actively promote the values and actions relating to gender equality and anti-discrimination within the school. Staff are mindful of gender issues in the language they use and in their expectations for learners.

Domain 2: Ethical Education

Standard: The Educate Together Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is effectively planned and delivered in a collaborative, coordinated, and cohesive manner.

Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The Educate Together Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum is delivered as a fundamental aspect of the overall curriculum of the school and is promoted and monitored by the Principal and Board of Management.	The Educate Together Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum is consistently and effectively delivered as a fundamental aspect of the overall curriculum of the school and is promoted and monitored by the Principal and Board of Management.
Responsibility for the coordination of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is established in the school. Training and resources are provided to support the coordinator in their role.	Responsibility for the coordination of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is established in the school. Training and resources are provided to support the coordinator to effectively carry out their role.
Members of the school community participate in local and national training / information events, including with other Educate Together schools, to develop the capacity of the school to implement the Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum. Teachers feel confident in their ability to plan for and teach the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum.	Members of the school community participate in local and national training / information events, including with other Educate Together schools, to develop the capacity of the school to implement the Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum. On an ongoing basis, teachers feel confident in their ability to plan for and teach the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum.
Teachers new to the school receive induction on the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum.	Teachers new to the school receive comprehensive induction in relation to the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum.
Teachers collaborate to develop a documented plan for the delivery of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum, including coordinated and cohesive planning for each	Teachers collaborate to develop a documented plan for the delivery of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum, including coordinated and cohesive planning for each year group (on an

year group (on an individual school level or on a cluster basis). The plan incorporates all strands of the curriculum, outlining how they will be taught and assessed. The involvement of parents/guardians and members of the community in the delivery is included as appropriate. The plan is shared with the school community.	individual school level or on a cluster basis). The plan incorporates all strands of the curriculum, outlining how they will be taught and assessed. The involvement of parents/guardians and members of the community in the delivery is included as appropriate. The plan is shared with the school community, its implementation is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is current and the plan is updated to reflect new developments and training.
In addition to timetabled classes, the implementation of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is integrated into the overall curriculum of the school. The Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is referred to at assemblies and other relevant events and activities of the school.	In addition to timetabled classes, the implementation of the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is consistently and purposefully integrated into the overall curriculum of the school. The Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum is referred to at assemblies and other relevant events and activities of the school.
The Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum is taught in an engaging and supportive learning environment, where students are encouraged to gain personal understandings, evaluate information, and respectfully articulate opinions. A range of quality resources are developed and used. Displays and images throughout the school promote the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum and the related work of students.	The Ethical Education/Learn Together curriculum is taught in an engaging and supportive learning environment, where students are encouraged to gain personal understandings, evaluate information, respectfully articulate opinions and extend the learning beyond the classroom. A wide range of high-quality resources are developed and used. Displays and images throughout the school promote the Ethical Education/ Learn Together curriculum and the related work of students.

Domain 3: Learner Centred	
Standard: The school provides a learner-centred experience	
Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The best interests of students are considered in decisions made by the staff and management of the school.	The best interests of all students are systematically considered in decisions made by the staff and management of the school.
In as far as it is possible, the school curriculum provides for the holistic needs of students reflecting differences in need, interests, and abilities.	In as far as it is possible, the school curriculum provides for the holistic needs of students reflecting differences in need, interests, and abilities so that all students experience learning that is valuable and challenging.
The school fosters a supportive and caring environment where students are expected to work, develop, and achieve to the best of their abilities. New students feel welcomed in the school, systems are in place to support new students to settle in and develop positive peer relationships.	The school provides a supportive and caring environment where students are expected to work, develop, and achieve to the best of their abilities. New students feel very welcomed in the school, systems are in place to support new students to settle in and develop positive peer relationships.
Students are known as individuals and feel supported and listened to at a whole school and classroom level. Student voice is promoted through formal democratic structures, and participative processes.	Students are known as individuals and feel supported and authentically listened to at a whole school and classroom level. Student voice is experienced through formal democratic structures, and participative processes.
The school community develops an overall approach to wellbeing that supports students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes	The school community develops a comprehensive approach to wellbeing that supports students to develop the knowledge, skills,

for wellbeing. Parents/guardians are informed about their child's progress, achievements, and welfare.	and attitudes for wellbeing. Parents/guardians are informed about their child's progress, achievements, and welfare.
There is no compulsory uniform imposed on the student body.	There is no compulsory uniform imposed on the student body.
The school is learner-centred in its approach to teaching and learning. See: Looking At Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary/ Post-Primary Schools (DES Inspectorate, 2016). Standards and Statements of (Effective) Practice for Teaching and Learning.	The school is learner-centred in its approach to teaching and learning. See: Looking At Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary/ Post-Primary Schools (DES Inspectorate, 2016). Standards and Statements of (Highly Effective) Practice for Teaching and Learning.

Domain 4: Democratic Structures

Standard: Formal democratic structures operate within the school involving key stakeholder groups at various levels, for the benefit of the school and its students.

Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The school is formally managed by the Board of Management according to the structures and procedures set out for each school type. The Board upholds the ethos, as set out by the Patron/s, the discourse of which permeates the work of the Board and is given due consideration in the decisions of the Board. A strong working partnership exists between the Board of Management, Parent Association/ Parent-Teacher Association, and Student Council/Assembly.	The school is formally managed by the Board of Management according to the structures and procedures set out for each school type. The Board fully understands and upholds the ethos, as set out by the Patron/s, the discourse of which permeates the work of the Board and is given due consideration in the decisions of the Board. A very strong and productive working partnership exists between the Board of Management, Parent Association/ Parent-Teacher Association, and Student Council/Assembly.
The Board of Management consults with members of the school community in the development of policies as considered appropriate by the Board.	The Board of Management effectively consults with members of the school community in the development of policies as considered appropriate by the Board.
A Student Council/Assembly is established and operates according to best practice guidelines in order to maintain a structured partnership with school management, staff, and parents/guardians for the benefit of the school and its students. Training and support are provided to student Council/ Assembly members.	A Student Council/Assembly is established and operates according to best practice guidelines in order to maintain an active and constructive partnership with school management, staff, and parents/guardians for the benefit of the school and its students. Effective training and support are provided to student Council/ Assembly members so that they can confidently carry out their role.
A Parent Association/ Parent-Teacher Association is established and operates in its advisory role, according to best practice guidelines to build constructive partnership between home and school.	A Parent Association/ Parent-Teacher Association is established and operates in its advisory role, according to best practice guidelines to build and maintain constructive and effective partnership between home and school.
Participation of underrepresented groups in the formal democratic processes of the school is encouraged.	Participation of underrepresented groups in the formal democratic processes of the school is encouraged and purposefully promoted.
The school engages members of the school community as appropriate in school self-evaluation and school improvement planning. The Board of Management informs the school community and the Patron/s, about the implementation of school improvement plans.	The school usefully and purposefully engages members of the school community as appropriate in school self-evaluation and school improvement planning. The Board of Management regularly informs the school community and the Patron/s, about the implementation of school improvement plans.

Domain 5: Participation

Standard: The school promotes the participation of key stakeholders in the life of the school.

Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The school curriculum integrates opportunities for all students to learn about and experience democratic processes as a norm. Students are empowered to develop skills of listening, questioning, and respectful dialogue in order to develop as informed, responsible, and participative citizens.	The school curriculum integrates opportunities for all students to learn about and experience democratic processes as a norm. Students are empowered to develop skills of listening, questioning, and respectful dialogue in order to develop as informed, responsible, and participative citizens. Students are provided with opportunities to lead initiatives in the school.
Staff are strongly supported and affirmed in their role and have a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the school.	Staff are strongly supported and affirmed in their role and have a strong sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the school.
The school provides opportunities for all stakeholders to develop a sense of belonging to the school and the Educate Together network through participation in events and processes.	The school maximises opportunities for all stakeholders to develop a sense of belonging to the school and the Educate Together network through participation in events and processes.
Relevant information is communicated between stakeholder groups, enhancing transparency and trust. The school communicates clear expectations for the role and responsibilities of the key stakeholder groups. Opportunities for parents/guardians to meet with staff are provided, following protocols outlined by the school management.	Relevant information is effectively communicated between stakeholder groups, enhancing transparency and trust. The school communicates very clear expectations for the role and responsibilities of the key stakeholder groups. Opportunities for parents/guardians to meet with staff are provided, following protocols outlined by the school management
The school, through the Board of Management, participates as a Member of Educate Together by attending membership meetings and thereby contributing to the direction of the organisation.	The school, through the Board of Management, actively participates as a Member of Educate Together by attending membership meetings and thereby productively contributing to the direction of the organisation.

Domain 6: Sustainable Practice

Standard: Sustainable practice is promoted across the school community.

Statements of Effective Practice	Statements of Highly Effective Practice
The school encourages and models environmentally sustainable practices in all aspects of school life.	The school implements environmentally sustainable practices in all aspects of school life.
The school teaches Education for Sustainable Development as part of the Learn Together/Ethical Education curriculum.	The school teaches Education for Sustainable Development as part of the Learn Together/Ethical Education curriculum and purposefully promotes the application of learning beyond the classroom.
The UN Sustainable Development Goals are visible and promoted in the school.	The UN Sustainable Development Goals are visible and actively promoted in the school.