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Education and Training  
Boards Ireland  
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# *ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos*



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## FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce this publication, the *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 primary and post-primary level (*ETBI Strategic Plan, 2022 – 2024*).

This *Framework* is the culmination of 10 years of empirical research, critical reflection, consultation, and visionary policymaking involving all ETB schools, their 16 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 supported locally by their Ethos Coordinator, Director of Schools, Chief Executive 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 domains, 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 has been carried out to date. I want to pay particular tribute to Dr 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 on 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, social 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 with 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 16 ETBs across the Republic of Ireland which are the patrons of Community National Schools (CNSs) and Community Colleges<sup>1</sup>. Collectively, ETBs are the largest provider of multi-denominational education in Ireland.

Section 15 (2) (b) of the *Education Act* (1998) 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 patrons’ expectations are in relation to characteristic spirit (ethos). 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 (2012), the ETB sector began to seriously consider the characteristic spirit appropriate for state schools 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 6 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 their understandings of their overall ethos or what it meant to be an ETB school.



<sup>1</sup> ETBs also provide education for children at primary and post-primary level in Community Special Schools and Hospital Schools. The *ETBI Patrons’ Framework on Ethos* applies to these settings also.





## Background Information (Cont.)

To address the issues raised in the UL 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 confirmed 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. However, it confirmed 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 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 inconsistent 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 (1998)* 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 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (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 (1998)* 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/guardians and teachers, and is used in other multi-denominational, equality-based contexts in Ireland and internationally, the ETB sector has chosen to use the word 'ethos' instead of the term 'characteristic spirit'.



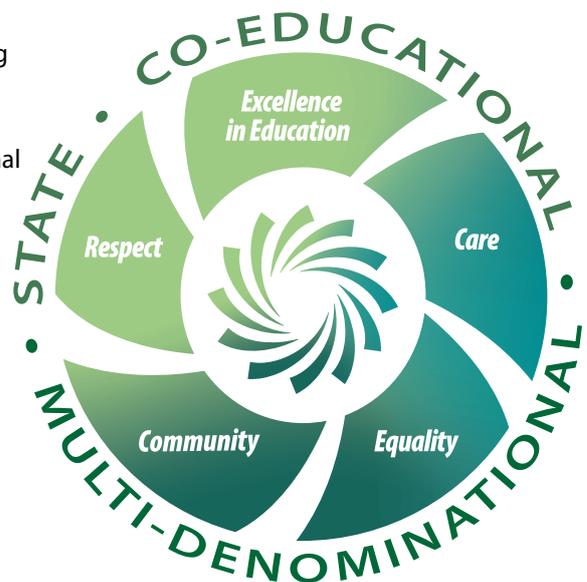


## Ethos Statement

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, multi-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 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). ETB schools which have an association with Educate Together have also prioritised these core values in their Admissions Policies.

Having a clear statement on ethos, although addressing many of the issues previously outlined, is only the beginning of the journey. The next key step was the development of the *ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos* to support schools in bringing this ethos to life. Ethos Coordinators have been appointed in each ETB to support schools in implementing the *Framework*. The Ethos Coordinator supports the Ethos Leadership Team (ELT) in each ETB school. They also work closely with their patron ETB and ETBI to ensure that schools have the supports required to live out the values underpinning the ETB ethos in a meaningful way.





## The Journey Towards the *ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos*

The *Framework* has been 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 <i>Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY)</i> 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 <i>Looking at our School Frameworks</i> for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

## Overview of the *ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos*

The *Framework* is developed in line with the *Looking at our School (LAOS) Framework* which 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. Patron's Curriculum

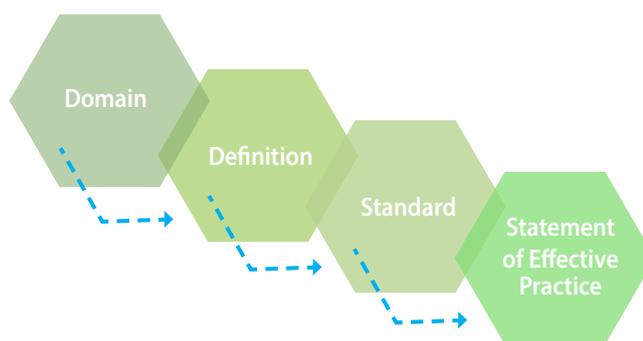


Figure 1 Adapted from LAOS (2022)

<b>Domain</b>	Each domain represents a distinct, but interrelated aspect of the ethos of ETB schools.
<b>Definition</b>	A definition is provided for each domain to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the concepts.
<b>Standard</b>	The standards are stated as the behaviours and attributes characteristic of practices related to ethos in an effective school.
<b>Statements</b>	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.





# Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice

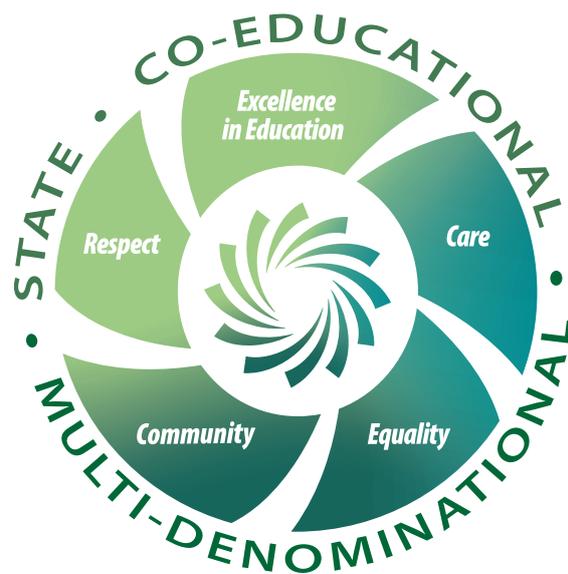




## The Ethos of ETB Schools

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

- excellence in education
- care
- equality
- community and
- respect



It is important to begin with a shared understanding 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** - In ETB schools, 'co-educational' goes beyond a binary perspective on gender to include the full diversity of gender identities and gender expressions in the school community and underpins respectful relationships across this diversity. Our schools aim to eliminate gendered stereotypes and the influence of any such stereotypes.

**Multi-denominational** - In ETB schools, 'multi-denominational' means that all students are given equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. Our schools strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment to all members of the school community that reinforces their sense of identity and belonging to the school community and wider society.



## An Overview of Domains, Definitions and Standards

Domains	Definitions	Standards
<b>1: Centrality of Ethos</b>	In an ETB school, the ethos underpins all policies and practices in the school. It informs the values promoted in the school, how the formal and hidden curricula are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school.	<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>
<b>2: Excellence in Education</b>	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, experiences and expectations for all members of the school community.	The school aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of learning and teaching
<b>3: Care</b>	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>
<b>4: Equality</b>	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 prioritising resources on the basis of need and promoting a culture of inclusion.	The school promotes a culture of equality and inclusion which affirms diversity within the school community
<b>5: Community</b>	In an ETB school, community encompasses students, staff, parents/guardians and the local community. It is about having a 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/guardians 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> <p>The school engages appropriately and equitably with religious/ belief communities</p>
<b>6: Respect</b>	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>
<b>7: Patron's Curriculum</b>	The patron's curriculum is the curricular expression of the ETB school ethos. In Community National Schools, the patron's curriculum is <i>Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY)</i> . In Community Colleges, there are two patron's curricula, for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle (in development).	The patron's curriculum is appropriately implemented in the school



# 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 promoted in the school, how the formal and hidden curriculum are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
<b>The ethos is clearly visible and communicated to all members of the school community</b>	1 (a)	All members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, staff and BoM 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 <i>ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos</i> .
	1 (d)	The ethos of the school is visible in all policy, promotional, communication, recruitment and other relevant documents.
	1 (e)	Recruitment processes provide opportunities to discuss the ethos of the school and the expectations of all members of the school community to uphold it.
	1 (f)	All members of the school community are provided with formal and hidden opportunities to discuss and reflect on the ethos of the school.
	1 (g)	Staff engage in ongoing professional development to support them in implementing the <i>ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos</i> .
	1 (h)	Opportunities for the articulation and discussion of the ethos is an inherent part of meetings of the Student Council, Parent Association, staff and BoM.
	1 (i)	Important school activities, ceremonies and events are in line with and highlight the ethos of the school.
<b>School leadership ensures the systematic promotion and application of the ethos in key decision-making processes</b>	1 (j)	All school leaders and members of the BoM take responsibility for the promotion of school ethos.
	1 (k)	The ethos is central to the decision-making processes of school leadership and the BoM.
	1 (l)	The ethos of the school is articulated in all school policies and practices and is central to their development and implementation.
	1 (m)	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 lead is an active participant in the ETB's Professional Learning Network (PLN) on ethos.
	1 (n)	School leadership addresses 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 students' identity

*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 learning and teaching. Therefore, outlining standards and statements of effective practice underpinning this domain would lead to unnecessary duplication.*

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The school aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of learning and teaching	2 (a)	Statements of effective practice for excellence in learning and teaching are set out in <i>Looking at Our School 2022: A Quality Framework for Primary Schools/Special Schools/Post-Primary Schools</i> (Department of Education Inspectorate, 2022).

## 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, empathy and mutual respect for individual differences.
	3 (d)	Positive, supportive relationships are established and the school is experienced as a caring, inclusive environment that treats all members of the school community 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.
<b>Staff ensure that they get to know the interests and abilities of individual students</b>	3 (i)	Effective working relationships and reporting structures are developed between relevant settings such as early childhood care and education, 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, interests and challenges to support their learning and wellbeing.
	3 (l)	Assessment results are used effectively by staff to ensure that appropriate levels of challenge and support are provided to students.
<b>Systematic approaches are developed and implemented in relation to student support and in particular supports for the most vulnerable</b>	3 (m)	An effective two-way communication process has been established to engage parents/guardians, with the intention of increasing student engagement, achievement and progression. The school communicates with parents/guardians on such issues as student welfare, achievement and attainment. Clear protocols are in place to provide parents/guardians 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/care team is established and operates in line with national guidelines.



## Domain 4: 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 prioritising resources on the basis of need and promoting 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	4 (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.
	4 (b)	The admission policy and procedures provide equal opportunities for student enrolment in line with the <i>Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018</i> . The school is physically and culturally accessible to potential students and their families.
	4 (c)	In accordance with equality legislation, all members of the school community are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief <sup>2</sup> , age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status <sup>3</sup> and their rights are respected.
	4 (d)	The core value of equality is evident in the visual images, resources and displays used throughout the school environment.
	4 (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.
	4 (f)	Religious and belief celebrations which take place throughout the school year are equitable in relation to symbolic representation, time spent and emphasis.
	4 (g)	Staff are facilitated to engage in professional learning experiences to understand their role in promoting equality and challenging inequality.
	4 (h)	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. Staff are provided with opportunities to identify, challenge and 'unlearn' taken-for-granted assumptions, norms and power structures, with particular attention paid to unequal power relations which may exist between members of the school community from dominant and minoritised groups.
	4 (i)	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.
	4 (j)	Data are used to evaluate and address underperformance, or lack of opportunity afforded to any specific groups/identities.
	4 (k)	When religious and belief symbols are displayed in the school, they are reflective of the religions and beliefs of the entire school community. The school community is consulted on the identification of such symbols.
	4 (l)	Diversity within the school community is meaningfully affirmed on an ongoing basis in both the formal and hidden curricula and the organisational structures <sup>4</sup> in place in the school.
	4 (m)	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. Particular efforts are made to ensure that students and parents/guardians newly arrived from other countries are fully informed, in appropriate ways, about how the school operates and about the Irish education system more broadly.
	4 (n)	The school's resources are equitably distributed in an attempt to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Where necessary and appropriate, students are provided with additional supports and reasonable accommodations.

<sup>2</sup> Beliefs include non-religious worldviews. The rationale for using the term 'belief' to describe non-religious world views is that it is the term used in both the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (OSCE, 2007) and by the NCCA in both the GMGY curriculum (NCCA, 2018) and the Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification (NCCA, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Although socio-economic status is not currently a ground of discrimination in Irish equality legislation, it is imperative that ETB schools ensure that children from all socio-economic backgrounds are treated equitably.

<sup>4</sup> 'Organisational structures' refers to the Student Council, Parent Association, BoM and other committees and structures the school puts in place to support various aspects of school life.



# Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

## Domain 5: Community

**Definition:** In an ETB school, community encompasses students, staff, parents/guardians and the local community. It is about having a 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 the school community.

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
Students, staff and parents/guardians experience a sense of belonging and purpose as members of the school	5 (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.
	5 (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.
	5 (c)	All members of the school community are encouraged to contribute to and support the development of the school.
	5 (d)	All members of the school community have opportunities to participate in activities and events at a whole-school level.
	5 (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 and a shared responsibility for the learning and welfare of fellow students.
	5 (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.
	5 (g)	Students identify positively with the school and take pride in representing their school in various events and activities.
	5 (h)	The school campus is maintained and furnished 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.
	5 (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 learning, teaching and assessment. New members of staff receive induction and newly qualified teachers are appropriately supported and mentored in line with national guidelines.
	5 (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	5 (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 develop an understanding of the power of their own voice. The school supports students to develop the skills and confidence required to use their voice effectively for the good of themselves and others. Meaningful efforts are made to identify and help overcome the barriers some students face in activating their voice.
	5 (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.



## Domain 5: Community (Cont.)

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
	5 (m)	A Student Council is established and supported to operate effectively for the benefit of the school and its students.
	5 (n)	A Parent Association is established and supported to build positive relationships between home and school.
	5 (o)	All school committees are reflective of the diversity within the school community. Meaningful efforts are made to identify and help overcome the barriers some individuals/groups face in participating in school committees.
	5 (p)	The BoM meaningfully collaborates with the Parent 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	5 (q)	The ethos of the school is communicated within the local community in order to highlight its values and purpose.
	5 (r)	The school provides opportunities for members of the school community to engage, where possible, at various levels with other 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.
	5 (s)	The involvement of individuals, community bodies and local organisations in the school is encouraged in order to promote active citizenship and support the learning and welfare of students.
	5 (t)	Every effort is made to ensure that external organisations/speakers invited to work with/address members of the school community reflect the ETB school ethos.
	5 (u)	The ETB/BoM permits the uses of the school building or grounds for community purposes in accordance with DE guidelines, as appropriate.
The school engages appropriately and equitably with religious/belief communities	5 (v)	Religious/belief leaders are provided with equal opportunities to participate in significant school events.
	5 (w)	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.
	5 (x)	Where practicable, space is provided from time to time during the school day for religious and belief leaders to cater for students from their communities e.g., at special times of year and at times of tragedy for members of that religious/belief community.
	5 (y)	Where practicable, where parents/guardians or leaders of particular religious /belief communities request to facilitate a specific celebration or event for students from their own religion/belief, parents/guardians (or students over 18 years of age) <b>opt-in</b> to the event or celebration as opposed to students having to <b>opt-out</b> .



# Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for ETB Schools

## Domain 6: 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	6 (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.
	6 (b)	All members of the school community are mutually respectful in their interactions with each other and the school environment.
	6 (c)	Different points of view among members of the school community are respected within the parameters of the ethos of the school.
	6 (d)	School staff are treated respectfully by all members of the school community.
	6 (e)	Staff model respectful behaviour in their interactions with all members of the school community.
	6 (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.
	6 (g)	The school promotes respect for and protection of the natural environment by implementing environmentally sustainable policies and practices. These enable all members of the school community to take action locally and within the wider world.
	6 (h)	Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is integrated across all curriculum areas, including the patron's curriculum, and supports students' agency in enacting positive change in the school, local community and wider world. There is strong and encouraging leadership towards embedding ESD as part of whole-school policies and practices.
The school develops and implements an effective code of behaviour in line with the ethos of the school	6 (i)	Opportunities are provided for students, parents/guardians and staff to discuss the code of behaviour and their role in maintaining a positive school environment.
	6 (j)	A positive approach to behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.



## Domain 7: Patron's Curriculum

**Definition:** The patron's curriculum is the curricular expression of the ETB school ethos. In Community National Schools, the patron's curriculum is *Goodness Me, Goodness You!* (GMGY). In Community Colleges, there are two patron's curricula, for Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle (in development).

Standards	No.	Statements of Effective Practice
The patron's curriculum is appropriately implemented in the school	7 (a)	<p>School leaders<sup>5</sup> ensure that the appropriate number of hours allocated to the patron's curriculum are timetabled. They are as follows:</p> <p><b>Community National Schools:</b>  <i>Junior Infants - 6th Class:</i> GMGY is designed for two hours of student engagement per week, excluding other opportunities where GMGY is integrated across the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Community Colleges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Junior Cycle:</i> the patron's short course is designed for 100 hours of student engagement.</li> <li>• <i>Senior Cycle:</i> the patron's curriculum for Senior Cycle, when developed, will be designed for 66 hours of student engagement.</li> </ul>
	7 (b)	Teachers of the patron's curriculum are facilitated to receive appropriate induction and ongoing training.
	7 (c)	The patron's curriculum is delivered in an engaging and inclusive manner in line with methodologies and approaches outlined in the curriculum and associated support materials.
	7 (d)	Teachers engage in ongoing professional development provided by ETBs/ETBI to support and enhance the delivery of all aspects of the patron's curriculum. Other professional development courses undertaken relevant to the teaching of the patron's curriculum are compatible with the ETB school ethos.
	7 (e)	The delivery of the patron's curriculum is overseen by the BoM and principal, in conjunction with the patron's curriculum coordinator.
	7 (f)	The teaching of the patron's curriculum is responsive to the needs, interests and context of the students.
	7 (g)	Teachers collaboratively prepare/plan for learning, teaching and assessment in the patron's curriculum on a short-term and long-term basis.
	7 (h)	Teachers are appropriately resourced to facilitate learning and teaching in the patron's curriculum.
	7 (i)	Students' learning and progress in the patron's curriculum is documented and communicated to parents/guardians through existing report structures.

<sup>5</sup> School leaders include the BoM, principal and patron's curriculum coordinator.





## Applications of the *Framework*

The *ETBI Patrons' Framework on Ethos* provides a comprehensive picture of 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 Framework*, 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
- to inform the development of supports by ETBs and ETBI

### Transparency, Consistency and Accountability

Throughout the sector there is a need for greater clarity and consistency regarding what happens when the 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 the ETB ethos looks like
- facilitating the involvement of parents/guardians in the realisation of ETB school ethos

### School Self-Evaluation (SSE) of Ethos

Schools are encouraged to engage in a school self-evaluation on ethos. A full resource has been developed by Dr Shivaun O'Brien (EQI, DCU) on behalf of ETBI to support schools in this process. For more information on how the school can use the SSE of ethos process, contact your local ETB.



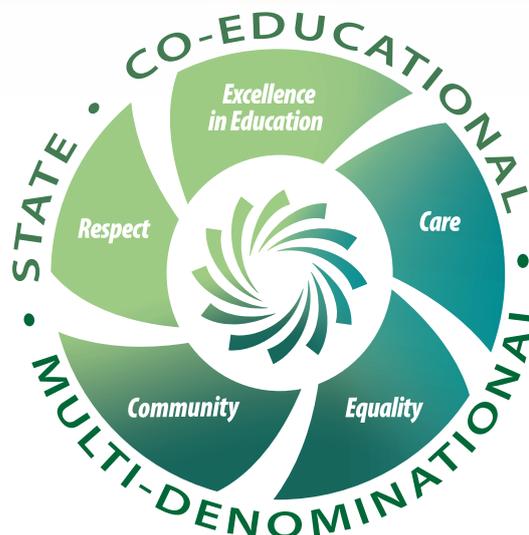


## Appendix 1

### Characteristic Spirit Statement for Community National Schools and Community Colleges

ETB schools are state, co-educational, multi-denominational 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 'multi-denominational' 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/guardians 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

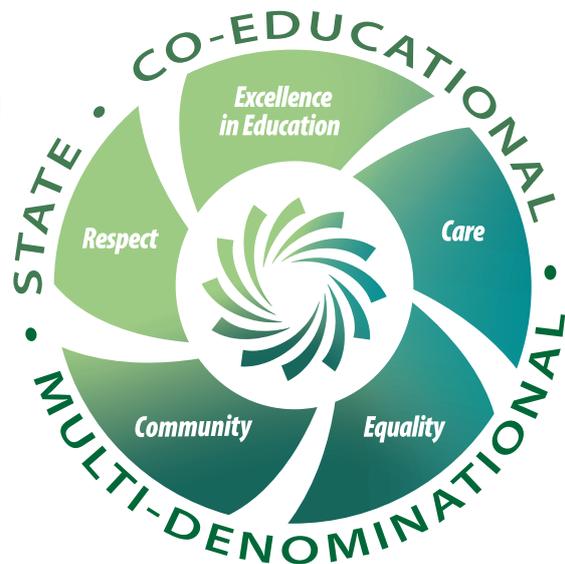
### *Characteristic Spirit Statement for Designated Community Colleges*

(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 opportunities 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/guardians 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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**16**

Education &  
Training Boards

Community  
National  
Schools

Community  
Colleges

Further  
Education  
and  
Training

ETBs  
are the largest  
provider of  
education  
through the  
medium of Irish  
at post-primary  
level

ETBs  
are the largest  
provider of multi-  
denominational  
education in  
Ireland

**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 Community National Schools and Community Colleges. ETBs are also the largest provider of multi-denominational education in Ireland. ETB Community Colleges are the largest provider of education through the medium of Irish. ETBs deliver Further Education and Training to unique FET learners each year and play a central role in the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships in partnership with employers. ETBs also support, monitor, and deliver youth services.





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