



Educate
Together

TERMS OF REFERENCE:
'BELIEF SYSTEMS'
STRAND COMMITTEE

Having regard to the general aims of the Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum, namely to:

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

Considering the general aims of the 'Belief Systems' strand of the said Curriculum, namely to:

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

Educate Together mandates the following terms of reference for the 'Belief Systems' Strand Committee:

1. The term of the Committee will be from ... to ...
2. The activities of the Committee will be coordinated by the Teacher Education Coordinator.
 - The Teacher Education Coordinator will have full authority to supervise, delimit, and direct the work of the Committee.
 - The Teacher Education Coordinator will retain full editorial control over submissions made by Committee members in the course of their activities.
 - The Teacher Education Coordinator will have authority to make reasonable amendments to these terms of reference.

- The Teacher Education Coordinator will be answerable to the Board of Directors in the performance of his/her functions, and his/her duties may be reassigned/delegated/amended by the CEO.
3. Membership will be open to all teachers, past or present, within the Educate Together network of schools, subject to the following criteria:
 - That the teacher's qualifications are recognised by the DES
 - That the teacher has fulfilled a minimum period of six months' continuous employment in an Educate Together school, whether on a full-time or part-time basis
 4. Committees shall consist of a minimum of three, and a maximum of six, members
 5. Appointments to the Committee will be on the basis of application to the Teacher Education Coordinator. In assigning applicants to the Committee, the Teacher Education Coordinator will have regard to
 - the overriding obligation to ensure equal coverage of each of the strands
 - ancillary criteria, including:
 - Stated preference of the applicant
 - Date of application
 - Availability of places
 6. The Committee shall undertake to submit curriculum units to the Teacher Education Coordinator, on the following basis
 - Biannually, i.e.,
 - December date (TBC)
 - April date (TBC)
 - As per the template provided by the Teacher Education Coordinator for this purpose
 - This template shall be subject to revision at the discretion of the Teacher Education Coordinator
 7. A curriculum unit shall:
 - Address an area of one of the following Strand Units in a coherent and progressive manner
 - Introducing key figures in the major belief systems
 - Exploring the rites and ceremonies associated with a variety of belief systems
 - Exploring the important celebrations associated with such belief systems
 - Encountering the philosophy and values of the major belief systems
 - Consist of five consecutive lessons, each of twenty-five minutes' duration
 8. Any material arising from the work of the Committee, and incorporated in the biannual publication specified in paragraph 6, will be deemed to be the sole and exclusive property of Educate Together.