

Educate Together Second-level Campaign 2021 - Gorey

Public Meeting Monday 10th November 2020 - Questions & Answers

Common Queries Answered:

- (1) The school will open for 1st Years only in 2021, and will grow from there.
The number of 1st Years that can be enrolled for 2021, will depend on the accommodation provided by the Department of Education.
There is generally 24 students in each class.
- (2) Admissions policy will prioritise children living in the school planning area, and will not have feeder schools.
- (3) Educate Together schools are not fee paying. They are funded by the Department of Education like all other voluntary secondary schools, and teachers are paid by the Department of Education.
- (4) Educate Together schools follow the national curriculum.
- (5) In Educate Together schools students follow an Ethical Education curriculum, which includes themes on values, worldviews and belief systems, global citizenship education, diversity, migration and equality. Our ethos provides a strong moral, ethical framework for the whole school community, and informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school.
- (6) Educate Together is committed to opening additional needs units. The ability to open a class for September 2021 will depend on the accommodation available in September. The permanent school building will have capacity for additional needs units.
- (7) Educate Together secondary schools will not have a compulsory uniform but an agreed dress code which promotes safety, learning and equality. The principals and boards of management will consult with the whole school community to decide on an agreed dress code for the school.

Q: What is a Voluntary Secondary School?

A: Most secondary schools in Ireland are voluntary secondary schools. Voluntary secondary schools are privately owned and managed. They are under the trusteeship of religious communities/ boards of governors/Educate Together or individuals. The Education Act 1998 requires secondary schools to have boards of management that include parent and teacher representatives. In Educate Together schools, we go one step further have student representation on the Board of Management.

Q: Can you explain the ethos of Educate Together schools?

A: The ethos of Educate Together schools is equality-based, which means all children are welcomed to school, and treated equally at school. Our schools are co-educational and counter gender stereotyping. They are student-centred which mean that the student is at the centre of all decisions made in the school. Student voice is central to our schools. Also, the schools are democratically run, with the whole school community playing a part in the school (<https://www.educatetogether.ie/about/values/>)

Educate Together schools welcome and celebrate diversity. A recent ESRI study found Educate Together Secondary Schools found to be more diverse on average, and alongside this diversity, students expressed strong feelings of inclusivity and belonging within their schools, and very high self-reported rates of respecting people from other cultures.

The research also found a strong culture of respect at the core of relationships between students and teachers, supported by the use of restorative practices to behaviour and discipline.

(<https://www.esri.ie/publications/examining-the-experiences-of-students-teachers-and-leaders-at-educate-together-second>).

Q: Does the curriculum differ from other schools

A: Educate Together schools offer the same curriculum as other schools, but also offer Ethical Education as a subject, which is unique to Educate Together schools.

Active, engaging teaching and learning methods are used throughout Junior and Senior Cycle. Teachers take a cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning, helping students to understand the links between subjects and their real-world applications. This enables students to develop research skills, group work skills, time management skills, digital literacy skills, presentation skills and more. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is widely used as a tool for learning across all subject areas.

Q: What are the schools policies for extra-curricular activities, such as sports, music, and other such areas?

A: New schools strive to offer a variety of subjects and extracurricular activities, even in temporary accommodation. Most temporary accommodation will have Science, Home Economics Art and Technology rooms. In addition, many short courses are offered as part of the Junior Cycle programme. Student voice is central to Educate Together schools.

Extracurricular: Students participate in a variety of sporting activities, both indoor and outdoor, team and individual. Students are encouraged to join one of the many clubs on offer, such as foreign languages, cookery, film, drama, art and craft, chess, music, science and technology. Students also have opportunities to participate in programmes such as the Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, Young Social Innovators and the Gaisce Awards.

Technology

Q: Will you be an iPad/technology school and will it be mandatory?

A: Most Educate Together second-level schools use one-one devices for enhancing learning, and in that case it would be required that all students have their own device.

The technology in the classrooms is used in a blended way, and to facilitate and enhance learning, with many of the schools opting for iPads. Some Educate Together schools use ebooks, others have teachers creating content.

Paper based learning has not been replaced, and the art of handwriting and presentation are very important. Technology opens up the learning and allows students to both access learning and create their own content, and thus control their own learning.

Stepaside Educate Together Secondary School demonstrates this well in this video here: (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1091631174572052>)

Q: Is there a specific device required in the school? What is this

This will be a decision for principal and school manager when they are appointed. Many of the Educate Together secondary schools use iPads.

Q: Would you count step children from blended families as siblings?

A: Yes. The definition of a sibling our admission policies includes step siblings and foster siblings who are enrolled in the school at the same time.