

## Briefing on Senior Cycle Ethical Education Curriculum

The Board is proposing that members formally adopt the [Senior Cycle Ethical Education Curriculum](#) at the 2022 AGM.

### Rationale

Educate Together schools place a strong emphasis on ethical and moral education which is specifically articulated in the Learn Together curriculum at primary level. Building on the foundations of this curriculum, when Educate Together second-level schools opened in 2014, a curriculum for second-level Junior Cycle was developed, and formally published in 2019. As the first students entered Senior Cycle in 2017, so too did the need to extend this curriculum to senior cycle.

### Curriculum Development

This curriculum was “[specifically devised for the Senior Cycle programme in Educate Together second-level schools](#)”. It is also strongly aligned with the Wellbeing Guidelines (2017) of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The curriculum was finalised, launched and shared with members in November 2021, following a process of development over a number of years.

- In 2018, Educate Together secured funding from technology company Salesforce, to support the drafting of a full senior cycle curriculum. A senior cycle Ethical Education Working Group was established by the Education subcommittee of Educate Together’s Board of Directors to progress this.
- Ciara McMackin (Kishoge Community College) was commissioned by Educate Together to author the curriculum in 2018 in collaboration with Dr. Laura Dooley, during Laura’s tenure as Second-level Education Officer (until 2020). The draft of this curriculum was in use in schools from September 2018.
- Following a tender process in 2019 the School of Education in UCD, under Dr. William Kinsella were selected to [evaluate the implementation of the draft curriculum](#). Students and teachers from the Educate Together second-level network provided guidance and feedback during the pilot of the curriculum. COVID created many challenges along the way, but the evaluation team completed the work and submitted their findings to Educate Together in June 2021.
- Following the evaluation report, small adaptations were made to incorporate the recommendations. The curriculum was very positively experienced by all key stakeholders, but it was considered too broad given the challenges of time constraints and timetables at senior cycle. The final draft took this into account and the curriculum strands were reduced and the strand components were arranged into core and optional content.
- The curriculum’s focus on ‘global dialogue and on fair and just practice of global citizens’ helped us to receive support from World Wise Global Schools to finish off this project at the end of 2021 by supporting the design, printing and distribution of the Curriculum Specification and a digital accompanying guide for teachers, as well as a launch and CPD.

### Curriculum

The Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum is organised into five strands specifically chosen to empower students to participate in dialogue and ethical decision making on important concepts and values in today’s complex world.

The five strands are:

- 1 Values, Assumptions and Action
- 2 Identity, Inclusion and Diversity
- 3 Pleasure, Purpose and The Meaning of Life
- 4 Power and Privilege
- 5 Justice

The curriculum was designed to be followed linearly, so that learning in each strand builds upon the previous and continuing on from JC Ethical Education.

### **Timetabling and Whole-school approach**

It is recommended that 60 hours of teaching time per year are allocated to the Ethical Education curriculum at Senior Cycle, delivered in weekly, one-hour classes over two years. A key component of the curriculum is the importance of adopting a whole-school approach, to promote fluency in the development of ethical and moral values as part of the culture and ethos of Educate Together schools. This entails a need for all school staff and stakeholders to be familiar with the aims and objectives of Ethical Education to ensure it permeates all layers of the school system.