



Educate  
Together



# ETHICAL EDUCATION POLICY

## ETSS WICKLOW

*THE GLEBE, WICKLOW TOWN*

### SCOPE:

***Ethical Education*** is both a subject in the school and a way of life for the school.

It is a key component of the Educate Together model of education. Life in the school is centred on values of equality, justice, sustainability and active citizenship and this is also built into the curriculum so that students can engage meaningfully and critically reflect on issues such as making ethical decisions, living in diversity, migration, gender equality, life values. The Board of Management of Educate Together Secondary School Wicklow (ETSS Wicklow) is tasked with safeguarding and promoting ***Ethical Education*** as a subject on the curriculum throughout each course and also by supporting the school community in living the values proclaimed by the Educate Together Charter in supporting the growth of our educational model as an equality-based, co-educational, child-centred and democratically run school serving the community of Wicklow.

### RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL'S MISSION/VISION/AIMS:

***Ethical Education*** guides us towards our vision for a future in Ireland where all children have access to the same opportunities regardless of their belief system, race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, language and ability. ETSS Wicklow serves families in Wicklow Town and the surrounding catchment area. We are agents for change in the Irish education system seeking to ensure that parents/guardians have a choice for the education of their children based on inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all.

Our school's mission statement reads:

***'We are a school where students grow with diversity and democracy, as independent thinkers and lifelong learners, as citizens promoting dignity and fairness for all.'***

### RATIONALE

Our **Ethical Education** policy is a key element of our school development planning because it guides us towards excellence in our work of promoting a social environment where everyone belongs and promoting good citizenship in locally, nationally and as citizens of the world.

**Ethical Education** as a living entity and as a subject on the curriculum provides a strong platform for building inclusivity, equality, democracy and awareness of important issues in the world into the DNA of this school. It is an essential factor in the culture and identity we are building and this policy is a recognition of that importance.

**As a Subject on the curriculum:**

To present the nine strands in the Second-level Junior Cycle **Ethical Education** curriculum:

1. **Values:** Students explore what is of value to them and what has influenced this. The concepts of morality, principles, facts and opinions are also examined.
2. **Making Moral and Ethical Decisions:** Students apply different approaches to ethical decision making and consider different ethical dilemmas using these approaches.
3. **Beliefs and Worldviews:** Students investigate different ideological standpoints and religious beliefs and identify how these might impact on an individual's worldview.
4. **Different Teachings and Perspectives:** Students study a number of texts, myths and narratives and consider how these may have influenced human behaviour and thought.
5. **Diversity in Ireland:** Students explore diversity in a local and national context and think critically about the experience of minority groups in Irish society, particularly experiences of discrimination.
6. **Migration:** Students develop an enhanced awareness of the language associated with migration; discover how migration has had an impact on Ireland and; critically analyse how the media reports migration in different contexts.
7. **Power and participation:** Students reflect on and assess the power and decision-making processes in their school.
8. **Gender Equality:** Students research, debate and reflect on issues related to gender equality in national and international contexts.
9. **Global Citizenship Education:** Students increase their knowledge of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and take action in relation to at least one of them.

**As a Philosophy:**

To establish **Ethical Education** as a living philosophy in the school:

- (a) *we believe in the democratic principle that involving students in the running of the school is essential to the success of the school. Therefore, we have established a culture of elections for class representatives and Student Council members. These elections are important events in the school calendar. Further to this, ETSS Wicklow's articles of management provide for student associate members of the Board of Management who are entitled to attend and vote at all BOM meetings;*
- (b) *ETSS Wicklow has built a strong debating culture – class debates, a debate club, an innovative Model United Nations programme and participation in competitive*

*debating platforms run nationally such as the **Concern Debates**. Debating & discussion bring strands in the **Ethical Education** curriculum to the forefront of the living tradition of our school by translating the curriculum into educational experiences involving ambitious critical reasoning and effortful thinking;*

- (c) ETSS Wicklow promotes the **Educate Together Ethical Education Calendar** published by the national office annually to raise awareness of and celebrate diversity and multi-culturalism in our world during the academic year – the **Educate Together Ethical Education Calendar** helps inform and educate our school community about the values of all ways of thinking and all traditions in the world, as well as reminding us of the work that has yet to be done to advance human rights and protect our environment.*

## OBJECTIVES

- To promote understanding of global citizenship, sustainability, diversity, values, ethical decision making, equality and migration.
- To explore, question, understand and reflect critically on values, beliefs and worldviews;
- To explore dilemmas and ideas central to human life and relations with others, for example, issues about justice, solidarity, equality, care, co-operation and dialogue;
- To develop skills to communicate effectively and respectfully and act ethically;
- To look for opportunities to integrate the **Ethical Education** principles throughout the curriculum;
- To establish participatory and democratic systems in the running of the school;
- To promote principles of human rights and equality;
- To build a sense of community through whole school assemblies, year group assemblies and class meetings;
- To ensure that the subject **Ethical Education** is timetabled for every class group in the school;
- To encourage **Ethical Education** teachers to maximise opportunities for the meaningful integration of **Ethical Education** values across all other curricular areas;
- To ensure adequate training for all staff to build awareness of the principles of the Charter and become committed **Ethical Education** as a vehicle to bring these to life in the school community;
- To encourage and support teachers in their professional development for **Ethical Education**;
- To encourage innovation in all areas of school life which help develop and enhance **Ethical Education** principles at work in the classroom and in school life;
- To maintain a webpage for Ethical Education on our school website  
<http://www.etsswicklow.eu/vision/ethical-education/>

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Students** – engage with the Ethical Education programme in class and opportunities for participating in school life; work to gain an understanding of the values and principles that can help our world to grow; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life. Practice active citizenship outside the school.
- **Class Tutors** – raise awareness of the *Educate Together Ethical Education Calendar* both in classes and leading up to special calendar days; encourage students to discuss issues in a way that includes everyone and focuses on maintaining good relationships and working towards consensus;
- **Ethical Education Coordinator (Amy Cowan)** – guardian of this policy working with all partners to deliver on the objectives for Ethical Education and creating a living tradition in the school; investing heavily in induction to safeguard the ethos of Educate Together and introduce new members of the school community to the values of this educational model;
- **Ethical Education Teachers** – planning classes; making the subject alive in the school; supporting debate activities; commitment to availing of training opportunities; promoting the *Educate Together Ethical Education Calendar*; connecting events from the real world to ethical discussions in class;
- **Subjects Teachers** – being aware of opportunities to connect aspects of their subjects to the Ethical Education programme; fostering a democratic and child-centred approach to learning in their classrooms; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life.
- **Non-teaching staff** – modelling respectful communications; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life.
- **Parents** – maintaining good communications with staff and supporting the work of the school; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life.
- **Board of Management** – being guardians of Ethical Education in the school – ensuring that newly recruited staff members are aware of the ethos of the school and the important work of nurturing it; ensuring that adequate provision is made for the subject on the curriculum in terms of staff and timetabling; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life.
- **Principal & Deputy-Principal** – timetable *Ethical Education* classes; promote and support training opportunities; build a democratic culture in the school; support

innovations which bring **Ethical Education** to life in the school; promote the **Educate Together Ethical Education Calendar** as an essential element in the fabric of school life; supporting activities in the school which contribute to the overall work of the school in promoting the principles of Ethical Education in general school life; supporting the Ethical Education Coordinator in investing heavily in induction that safeguards the ethos of Educate Together and introduces new members of the school community to the values of this educational model;

## **REVIEW PROCEDURES**

- Staff Meetings – Ethical Education Coordinator will add any important updates as agenda items for staff meetings;
- Board Meetings – Report by Principal at each meeting;
- Mid-Year Reflection Meetings with Management, Ethical Education Coordinator Ethical Education and Teachers (January);
- End of Year Teacher Reflections (see appendix one, page 6)
- Student Evaluation (end of year survey);
- Ethical Education Coordinator and Teachers to prepare a report for staff arising from all review mechanisms to inform planning for subsequent academic year.

***Policy to reviewed every three years (next review: academic year 2025-2026)***

## Appendix One

ETHICAL EDUCATION REFLECTION FORM	
Strengths of programme this year:	Why?
Areas for improvement and new ideas:	How?
Priorities for action and development:	When?