



# Learn Together Plan

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### 1. Introductory statement

This plan was developed in consultation with staff in October 2023 and coincided with the introduction of the revised Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum. The plan is based upon the Educate Together Charter, which we uphold in our school. This charter affirms that children of all social, cultural, religious and non-religious backgrounds have a right to an education that reflects their individual identity while exploring the different values and traditions in the world in which they live. The four key principles outlined in this charter are to guide the delivery of an ethical education curriculum in our school and inform our culture and ethos. Lucan Educate Together National School operates in line with the four principles of the Educate Together charter:

- Equality based
- Co-educational • Child centered o Democratically run

This Learn Together Curriculum Plan was developed by staff members in order to support teachers with planning, delivery and evaluation of Ethical Education lessons in our learning community.

### 2. Rationale

Ethical Education is defined as education that enlightens, challenges and widens our perspective of the world. It encourages reflection and engagement with local and global issues and emphasises a shared responsibility for ensuring that equality and human rights are extended to all. Ethical Education invites pupils and teachers to engage with issues and problems facing society and aims to develop the skills of critical-thinking, discussion, and debate.

Educate Together is working towards a future in which all people have access to an excellent education that is inclusive of all, irrespective of belief system, race, ethnicity, class, culture, gender, language and ability.

Educate Together recognises the need to develop a curricular programme which affirms children's ethnic, cultural, racial, sexual, and linguistic identities, and empowers them as citizens both in the school and in larger society.

The curriculum directly underpins teaching that will ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

### 3. Vision

Lucan Educate Together NS seeks to provide an environment that is child centred, coeducational, multi-denominational and democratically run. Our mission is to educate our pupils to their fullest potential while enhancing their self-esteem and creativity. All pupils are treated as individuals and their uniqueness is celebrated. All members of our school community are encouraged to respect themselves and others, and we aspire to provide our children with the life skills necessary to become the best that they can be.

Lucan Educate Together National School's ethos and vision is shaped by the philosophy of the 'Learn Together' curriculum and is an integral aspect of our school's identity. Through our shared values and our lived ethos we are committed to delivering the Educate Together vision; "Learn Together to Live Together".

### 4. Aims

The Learn Together curriculum aims to enable pupils to:

- Become self-aware, reflective individuals with a secure sense of belonging and identity. ● Develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will facilitate them to live as ethical people who are empathetic, socially aware and committed to democratic principles and values, global citizenship and equality.
- Develop and use critical thinking skills that will facilitate them to critique their world and empower them to give reasoned answers for their opinions, decisions and actions. ● Recognise their role as active members of a democratic society with the potential to take action that will lead to positive change.
- Develop ethical principles in relation to human rights, equality and justice, and apply these principles to their daily lives.
- Become familiar with the tenets and beliefs of the major religions and rational understandings of the world.
- Relate this learning to their individual experience in the context of their local, national and global community.

### 5. Curriculum Overview & Aims

The four curricular strands that underpin the delivery of the Learn Together curriculum are:

- Belief Systems
- Equality and Justice
- Values & Ethical Perspectives
- An Ethical Approach to the Environment

The curriculum is spiral in nature, with similar themes explored and developed from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Planning by schools and teachers will help to ensure that pupils experience continuity, balance and progression throughout the curriculum. It is envisioned that the Learn Together curriculum will inform and influence a variety of decisions and practices in Lucan Educate Together to demonstrate our ethos in action.

### 5.1 Belief Systems

The Belief System strand utilises a conceptual enquiry approach to exploring beliefs, enabling child led learning.

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the richness of belief systems and worldviews, both religious and secular, and relate these to the human experience and day-to-day life.
- Develop an understanding of the right to hold and practise a belief or worldview and to change that belief at any time.
- Develop their knowledge of conceptual understandings as they relate to religious and secular beliefs.
- Relate aspects of religious and secular beliefs to individual experience, leading to enhanced mutual understandings.

### 5.2 Equality & Justice

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture, diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness.
- Develop a critical way of being, fostering questioning, analysis and open engagement with ethical and social justice issues.
- Feel empowered to become informed, ethical and active citizens.

### 5.3 Values & Ethical Perspectives

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong and a heightened awareness of social, ethical, and moral standards through reflection on life itself.
- Learn to explore their own identities and in doing so, strengthen and enhance their self-worth and self-esteem.
- Explore, understand and identify appropriate responses to the multitude and richness of human emotions.

- Identify values integral to personal development which can inform ethical decisions. ● Engage in philosophical discussion and enquiry.

## 5.4 An Ethical Approach to the Environment

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Develop a knowledge, understanding and respect for the natural environment and an appreciation of its fragility and vulnerability.
- Explore the interdependence of life and the impact of over-consumption on the planet. ● Recognise the importance of active citizenship in attempting to redress this damage and protect the environment for the present and future life on the planet.

## 6. Structure

The structure of the Learn Together curriculum is divided into Four Stages.

Stage 1: Junior and Senior Infants

Stage 2: First and Second Class

Stage 3: Third and Fourth Class

Stage 4: Fifth and Sixth Class

In Stages 1 and 2, curricular areas are interrelated and overlap. Ethical Education is taught using a thematic approach, encompassing the four strands. In Stages 1 and 2 eight themes are covered each year and are mapped in this section of the plan to ensure coverage and balance. The themes reflect all four strands.

In Stages 3 and 4 Ethical Education is taught by strand, with opportunities for linkage and integration into other curricular areas.

### 6.1 Stage 1 - Junior & Senior Infants

Themes have been placed in the strand they most closely align with and have been divided across year groups to ensure balanced coverage. In the Belief System strand there is focus on one belief system per theme with the aim of covering all Belief Systems by the end of Stage 2. It is expected that each theme would be taught over approximately 18 days.

Strands	Belief Systems	Equality & Justice	Values & Ethical Perspectives	An Ethical Approach to the Environment
Year Group				
Junior Infants	Love (Belief System)	Food	Feelings	Exploring the Natural World

	Seasons (Belief System)	Fairness	Family	Making a Difference
Senior Infants	Special Books (Belief System)	Introducing Democracy and Democratic Practices	We Are All Different	Our Environment
	Remembering (Belief System)	Values	Philosophy for/with Children	We Can Make a Difference

### 6.2 Stage 2 — First & Second Class

Strands	Belief Systems	Equality & Justice	Values & Ethical Perspectives	An Ethical Approach to the Environment
Year Group				
First Class	Growing & Changing	Rights & Responsibilities	We Are All Different	Exploring our Natural World
	Special Clothes/Dress	Making a Difference	Feelings	Food
Second Class	Celebrating	Communication & Democracy	Our Educate Together School	Our Environment
	Giving Things Up	We Can Make a Difference	Philosophy for/with children	Values

### 6.3 Stage 3 — Third & Fourth Class

In Stages 3 and 4 Ethical Education is taught by strand, with opportunities for linkage and integration into other curricular areas. Content is presented by element rather than class grouping to illustrate the spiral nature of the curriculum.

In Stage 3 there are 16 elements in Third Class and 17 elements in Fourth Class. 13 elements are taken from the following strands:

- An Ethical Approach to the Environment
- Equality & Justice
- Values & Ethical Perspectives

These elements embody the spiral curriculum with outcomes and initiatives outlined per year group.

The Belief System Strand in Stage 3 aims to develop knowledge of conceptual understandings as they relate to religious and secular beliefs, as well as, relate to individual experiences to promote mutual understanding.

The Belief System Strand focuses on three belief systems per year (one per term) through prescribed key concepts. The staged conceptual enquiry approach focuses on one Belief System at a time and ensures that children engage in the skills of communication, application, enquiry, contextualisation and reflection.

Strands & Elements common to Stages 3 & 4	
Strand	Element (13)
An Ethical Approach to the Environment	Examples of Environmental Initiatives Interdependence of Life Environmental Issues Environmental Activism
Equality & Justice	Examples of Equality-based Initiatives Equality Issues
	Democratic Process Human Rights and Global Citizenship Equality-based Activism
Values & Ethical Perspectives	Ethical Issues and Dilemmas Values and Dialogue Communication Philosophy for / with Children
Belief Systems (3)	
Year Group	Element
Third Class	Belonging (Select BS), Symbolism (Select BS), Pilgrimage (Select BS)
Fourth Class	Sacred (Select BS), Ritual (Select BS), Prophecy (Select BS) Faith (Select BS)

It is expected that each element from: An Ethical Approach to the Environment, Equality & Justice, Values & Ethical Perspectives would be taught over two weeks. The Belief System element would be delivered over three weeks to allow for adequate enquiry.

Stage 3 — School Plan				
Term	Third Class (16 elements)		Fourth Class (17 elements)	
1	Ethical Issues & Dilemmas Values & Dialogues Examples of Equality Based Initiatives Democratic Process Examples of Environmental Initiatives		Ethical Issues & Dilemmas Values & Dialogues Examples of Equality Based Initiatives Democratic Process Examples of Environmental Initiatives	
	Belonging	Belief System	Sacred	Belief System
2	Communication Equality Issues Human Rights & Global Citizenship Interdependence of Life		Communication Equality Issues Human Rights & Global Citizenship Interdependence of Life	
	Symbolism	Belief System	Ritual & Faith	Belief System
3	Philosophy for/with Children Equality Based Activism Environmental Issues Environmental Activism		Philosophy for/with Children Equality Based Activism Environmental Issues Environmental Activism	
	Pilgrimage	Belief System	Prophecy	Belief System

#### 6.4 Stage 4 — Fifth & Sixth Class

In Stage 4 there are 16 elements in Fifth Class and 17 elements in Sixth Class. 13 elements are taken from the following strands:

- An Ethical Approach to the Environment
- Equality & Justice
- Values & Ethical Perspectives

These elements embody the spiral curriculum with outcomes and initiatives outlined per year group.

The Belief System Strands in Stage 4 are prescribed at each class level (Fifth & Sixth). There are three Belief Systems covered in Fifth Class with four Belief Systems covered in Sixth Class. The five stages of the conceptual enquiry approach are applied to each Belief System as in Stage 3.

It is expected that each element would be delivered over 8/9 days.

Stage 4— School Plan		
Term	Fifth Class (16 elements)	Sixth Class (17 elements)



1	Ethical Issues & Dilemmas Values & Dialogues Examples of Equality Based Initiatives Democratic Process Examples of Environmental initiatives		Ethical Issues & Dilemmas Values & Dialogues Examples of Equality Based Initiatives Democratic Process Examples of Environmental Initiatives	
	Trinity	Christianity	Nirvana	Buddhism
2	Communication Equality Issues Human Rights & Global Citizenship Interdependence of Life		Communication Equality Issues Human Rights & Global Citizenship Interdependence of Life	
	Torah	Judaism	The Khalsa	Sikhism
3	Philosophy for/with Children Equality Based Activism Environmental issues Environmental Activism		Philosophy for/with Children Equality Based Activism Environmental Issues Environmental Activism	
	Rationalism	Atheism, Agnosticism, Humanism	Brahman Ummah	Hinduism Islam

## 7. Approaches & Methodologies/Organisational Planning

### Contexts for Learn Together:

- Affording pupils time to think, contemplate and reflect on a range of ethical, social, spiritual and moral issues.
- Providing a safe and secure environment to express feelings, emotions, views and opinions.
- Modelling best practice through a respectful relationship between adults and children.
- Ensuring a positive teaching and learning environment.
- Creating an atmosphere for team spirit and co-operation.
- Developing a physical environment that reflects the inter-cultural, inclusive nature of the school.
- Acknowledging the multi-denominational nature of our Educate Together School through the celebration of similarities, differences and diversity.

### Approaches and Methodologies:

Teachers will use a range of approaches and methodologies and ensure that lessons are delivered in a manner that acknowledges the range of learning styles that exist in each classroom.

#### Assessment and record keeping:

- Teachers will use a wide range of assessment methodologies in order to ensure that the concepts have been clearly understood and that learning has taken place.
- Oral work, written work, project work
- Teacher observation during classroom discussions, group work, role-play and cooperative activities.
- Exploration of attitudes and the link between attitudes and actions.
- Portfolio of children's work — Learn Together copybooks.
- Teacher designed tasks.

#### Linkage and integration:

- Every attempt will be made to link the various strands of Learn Together across the curriculum.

#### Current Practice:

- 1 hour and 40 minutes per week is designated to the Learn Together curriculum at Stage 1 (Junior & Senior Infants).
- 2 hours per week is designated to the Learn Together curriculum at Stage 2, 3 & 4.
- Every teacher has access to the Learn Together curriculum documents.
- Learn Together is discussed at staff meetings.
- Assemblies provide an opportunity for classes to share what they have been learning about in Learn Together.
- All children have a hard back Learn Together copy book- carried with them for 2 years.
- Learn together work is displayed in each classroom.
- There is a designated Learn Together notice board that is updated monthly.
- To promote democracy among the children we have an active student council.
- There is a designated area for all Learn Together resources. There is a wish list for new resources needed. All teachers have access to these resources.
- Parental involvement is welcomed and encouraged in all aspects of school life.

### Individual teachers' planning:

- Individual teachers will create a Learn Together plan for their own class, which should be spiral in nature.
- All teachers are provided with the Learn Together Plan which includes a yearly overview of strands/elements at the start of the school year.

### Homework:

All homework will be given at the class teacher's discretion.

### Staff development:

- Details of Learn Together courses and training days will be posted on the staff notice board and teachers will be encouraged to attend. Staff members who attend courses/conferences will be asked to share ideas and expertise acquired with other teaching staff during staff meetings.
- Teachers will familiarise themselves with the Department of Education and Science's 'Inter-cultural Guidelines' paying particular attention to the pages relevant to their own classes. These are available on the NCCA website.
- The CPD courses available on the Educate Together website will be continually promoted.

## 8. Inclusion & Differentiation

### Children with different needs:

- It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in Learn Together lessons and activities. Learn Together will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class.
- Every attempt, with the valued assistance of additional staff (ANA's/Resource teacher) will be made to ensure that all children experience the richness of a full Learn Together curriculum.

### Equality of participation and access:

As an Educate Together school equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, and socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

## Parental Involvement

- Lucan Educate Together NS recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their child/ren.
- They will be encouraged to engage with their children in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes around the four strands.
- Parents and guardians are welcomed and encouraged to come in to the school to share their skills and expertise with the children throughout the year. This is to be prearranged with the principal and class teacher(s).

## Community Links

School patrons and boards are committed to work in such a way as to embrace the input of parents, teachers, children and members of the community and to enable the highest level of participation and partnership. This includes visits to local places and worship and visits from members of different faiths/non-faith.

## 9. Success Criteria

The success of this school plan will be based on the following criteria

- Teacher's preparation has been based on this policy.
- 0 Current practice is upheld and developed further.

## 10. Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2023 and subsequently communicated to all stakeholders. A copy of the policy is available to view on [www.letns.org](http://www.letns.org) and a hard copy is available upon request from the school office.

The plan will be reviewed annually. All staff members will be responsible for informing the Learn Together coordinator/ the principal of any amendments or adjustments required.

Signed:



Ultan Casey, Principal

23-1-2024

: Derry McVeigh

Date:

Signed:

Derry McVeigh, Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: