

## ***Aston Village Educate Together National School***

### ***School Plan for Ethical Education***

#### **Introductory Statement:**

This policy was drafted by the Learn Together team in January, 2013. This plan is a record of our decisions regarding Learn Together and it reflects the Educate Together Charter, 1999. 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 value 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. Aston Village ETNS operates in line with the four principles of the Educate Together charter:

- Multi-denominational
- Democratically run
- Co-educational
- Child-centred

The policy is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for Learn Together.

#### **Rationale**

Educate Together recognises the need to develop a curricular programme which focuses on the ethical, moral and social development of children in an inclusive school setting. It also recognises the unique nature of each child and endeavours to ensure that “No Child is an Outsider” through the living out of an ethos that recognises that children may have different religious and cultural identities. The ethical education curriculum celebrates difference and provides the knowledge, skills and attitudes that children need to enable them to make informed moral decisions and live in a society that embraces diversity.

#### **Vision:**

The commitment to the four key principles of Educate Together is encapsulated in the motto “Learn Together to Live Together”. Aston Village ETNS is committed to this motto through the ethos, the stated values, and the day to day relationships both within the

school and with the community. The school's educational philosophy identifies the importance of an inclusive ethos and affords the opportunity to embrace the reality of what it means to live out the ideal of learning together to live together.

**Aims:**

- To foster in each child, knowledge and understanding of different values, belief systems in an atmosphere of critical enquiry and mutual respect.
- To prepare children to become caring members of a multicultural society with the necessary intercultural skills to enrich such a society.
- To address issues of spirituality and morality.
- To facilitate in children the ability to make reasoned and informed moral judgements.
- To support children in cultivating their spirituality in a secure environment.
- To raise awareness in children of issues of human rights, justice and equality in society.
- To develop in children an ethical and reasoned approach to caring for the environment
- To 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.
- To encourage each child to explore and reflect on their experiences
- To develop in each child qualities such as courage, respect, tolerance, responsibility, integrity and trust.
- To foster empathy and concern for people who are excluded, vulnerable, marginalised or with a disability both in school and outside
- To teach children to critically and constructively reflect on the means used in the wider world to influence and shape their values, attitudes and beliefs such as the media, advertising and peer pressure.

Curriculum Planning:

**1. Strands and Strands Units**

The Learn Together curriculum is divided into four strands as recommended in the Educate Together Ethical Education Curriculum 2004. These four strands that underpin the delivery of the Educate Together ethos are

- Moral and Spiritual
- Ethics and the Environment
- Equality and Justice
- Belief Systems

The curriculum is designed to be spiral in nature. As they progress through the school children will experience opportunities to refine and develop their skills, abilities, knowledge and appreciation in each strand. The strand and strand units for each class group are set out in the curriculum document.

## **2. Approaches and Methodologies:**

Aston Village E.T.N.S. encourages the use of the following approaches and methodologies.

- Direct teaching approach
- Guided discovery approach
- Integration

We will use a variety of methods to encourage maximum participation by the child including:

- Team work
- Individual work
- Paired work
- Hot-seating
- Role-play
- Circle Time
- Cooperative games
- Kinaesthetic learning activities
- Classroom discussion
- Audio-visual material
- Songs
- Debates

- Artwork

### **3. 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
- Teacher designed tasks

### **4. 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 (S.N.A.s/Resource teacher) will be made to ensure that all children experience the richness of a full Learn Together curriculum.

### **5. 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.

### **6. Linkage and integration**

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

## **Organisational Planning**

### **7. Current practice in our school**

- All teachers have a copy of the Learn Together Curriculum and Learn Together appears as an item on staff meeting agendas
- There is a “Learn Together” notice board in the staffroom
- Broad topics are suggested which class teachers can then deliver at an age appropriate level
- Two and a half hours each week are designated as Learn Together time. Assembly is included in this allocation.
- Assembly topics have a theme linked with the Learn Together curriculum. Teachers leading assembly bring topics/issues to the children’s attention with a focus on one of the four strands of the learn together curriculum

### **Learn Together curriculum**

- In line with the Aston Village ETNS Positive Behaviour Policy, awards are given out during Assembly times, rewarding the children for following the school rules.
- In order to promote the Democratic Process, children are elected (by their peers) onto the Green School Committee and the Student Council.
- From Senior Infants upwards, the children have a Learn Together copybook. These copies go home to parents from time to time throughout the year to communicate with home the work that is covered in school.
- Learn Together books and resources belonging to the school are kept in the staffroom so that teachers have access to them at all times. These books are marked with a yellow sticker and should be returned to the staffroom after use.
- Aston Village ETNS makes a clear distinction between religious education and religious instruction. Religious instruction which focuses children on one single religion and fosters a commitment to that religion is the responsibility of the child’s parents or guardians.
- Religious instruction classes are organised by parents and are held outside school hours. They do not form part of the school programme.
- In the Learn Together strand called Belief Systems, the programme explains and explores the major belief systems in the world in an educational manner, teaching children about these faiths and beliefs without endorsing any particular one as religious

truth. The educational aim of this work is to model positive information about world faiths in a respectful atmosphere which highlights rights and responsibilities.

## **8. Promoting an Intercultural School**

- Aston Village ETNS uses visual aids, posters and displays in our classrooms and in the public areas in the school to promote the Educate Together ethos
- Every family will be asked to fill in a form (optional) outlining their family's country of origin and other culturally related issues.
- A map of the world is displayed in the school showing the various different countries represented in our school community.
- Simple phrases such as 'Hello' or 'Welcome' will be displayed in different languages on classroom doors.
- We participate in the Louth Schools Intercultural and Anti-Racism week each year.

## **9. Individual teachers' planning and reporting:**

- Individual teachers will create a Learn Together plan for their own class, which should be spiral in nature.
- Teachers are encouraged to refer to their Cúntas Míosúil (Monthly Reports) to ensure all relevant strands and strand units have been covered.

## **10. Staff development:**

Staff needs will be assessed regularly and relevant organisations, local community groups and the appropriate education centres will be accessed to provide ongoing training as the need arises. Details of courses and training days relevant to Learn Together will be displayed on the staffroom notice board and staff will be encouraged to attend. Teachers will familiarise themselves with the Intercultural Guidelines.

## **11. Parental involvement:**

Parents who are willing to be involved in activities in the school will always be welcomed by the staff of Aston Village E.T.N.S. where possible and appropriate. The school recognises parents and guardians as the primary educators of their children. They will be

encouraged to engage with their children in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes around the four strands of the Learn Together curriculum.

## **12. Community links:**

The school patron, Educate Together, and the Board of Management 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. Aston Village ETNS endeavours to maintain strong links with fellow Educate Together schools in the area and the rest of the sector.

### **Success criteria**

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

- Teachers' preparation has been based on this plan
- Procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed.
- Teacher feedback
- Children's feedback
- Parental feedback
- Board of management feedback

### **Implementation**

- Pauline Quinn will be responsible for overall development of the Learn Together curriculum. She will work with the staff Learn Together development in the school.
- The staff will evaluate the progress in Learn Together by referring back to our set of stated objectives as outlined in this plan.

### **Ratification and Communication**

- On ratification of this plan by the staff and Board of Management this plan will be communicated to all teachers through distribution and will become part of the Plean Scoile.
- This plan will be reviewed after two years. All teachers on the staff will be responsible for informing the Learn Together post holder/Learn Together Curricular Team of any amendments they think should be made.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Whole School Activities</b>	<b>Optional Suggested Activities</b>	<b>Strand</b>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict Resolution lesson in the classroom</li> <li>• School rules</li> <li>• Class Rules</li> <li>• Green School activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Day of Languages (26<sup>th</sup> of September)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> <li>• Morality and Spirituality</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate Together National Fundraising Day - Responsibility, citizenship and activism</li> <li>• National Tree Day (11<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>• <i>Eid Ul Adha (Islam)</i></li> <li>• Visit from the RSA (Road safety campaign)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Food Day (16<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> <li>• Belief Systems</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Schools Action Day</li> <li>• Recycling Week (minimum one activity per class during this week)</li> <li>• <i>Diwali (Hinduism)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Children's Day Rights of the Child – 20<sup>th</sup> November</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief Systems</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights lessons</li> </ul>		
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights Day (10<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>• Green school activities (Green School Team to advise)</li> <li>• <i>Christmas (Christianity)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Day of People with Disability (3<sup>rd</sup>)</li> <li>• Winter Solstice (21<sup>st</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief Systems</li> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict Resolution – beginning of term lesson in the classroom about the yard.</li> <li>• Holocaust Day (27<sup>th</sup>) – class appropriate</li> <li>• Green school activities (Green School Team to advise)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Luther King Day (21<sup>st</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief Systems</li> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> <li>• Morality and Spirituality</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darwin Day</li> <li>• Friendship Day – 3rd of February (tied in with human rights)</li> <li>• Fairtrade Fortnight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road Safety Awareness (Organise visit from the community guard)</li> <li>• Green School activities</li> <li>• Charles Darwin anniversary of birth 12th Feb 2013</li> <li>• Chinese New Year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief Systems</li> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercultural and Anti Racism Week and International Day for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Water Day (22<sup>nd</sup> of March)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethics and the Environment</li> <li>• Equality and Justice</li> </ul>

	<p>the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hat Parade (children design and make their own hats from recycled materials)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul>	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Passover (Judaism)</i></li> <li>● Conflict Resolution lessons</li> <li>● Earth Day (22<sup>nd</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Green school activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Belief Systems</li> <li>● Equality and Justice</li> <li>● Morality and Spirituality</li> <li>● Ethics and the Environment</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family Day (19<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>● Green school activities (green school team to advise)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● May Day</li> <li>● International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (17<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Belief Systems</li> <li>● Ethics and the Environment</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sports Day (social skills/co-operation)</li> <li>● <i>World Humanist Day (Humanism) 21<sup>st</sup></i></li> <li>● Traveller Pride Week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Water Safety</li> <li>● World Refugee Day (20<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ethics and the Environment</li> <li>● Morality and Spirituality</li> <li>● Belief Systems</li> </ul>

**Brief outline of Whole School Activities:**

**Belief Systems:**

Junior Infants, 1<sup>st</sup> class, 3<sup>rd</sup> class and 5<sup>th</sup> class will focus on Christianity, Hinduism

Senior Infants, 2<sup>nd</sup> class, 4<sup>th</sup> class and 6<sup>th</sup> class will focus on Islam, Judaism and Humanism.

*These belief systems were chosen due to the composition of the school population.*

**Morality and Spirituality:** Relaxation, Meditation, Co-operation, Thinking Time (philosophy)

**Equality and Justice** – human rights, friendship day, visiting speaker, fundraising day

**Ethics and the Environment** – Green schools, clean-up, road safety

As these activities do not cover the complete curriculum please refer to Learn Together Curriculum and Google.docs (class appropriate planning help from the Learn Together Online course) for further activities, strategies, integration ideas, and suggested resources for your class.