

# **Learn Together Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

This plan was formulated by staff to provide a coherent approach to the teaching of Learn Together across the whole school. Its main purposes are:

- To influence the overall ethos of our school.
- To inform all the stakeholders in the schools, including parents, Board of Management and
- Educate Together about our approach to Learn Together.
- To assist teachers in their long term and short term planning for Learn Together.
- To inform new, temporary and substitute teachers of the approaches and methodologies in
- use in our school.
- To ensure consistency on how Learn Together is delivered across the school.

# Rationale

At Navan Educate Together National School we follow the Ethical Education Curriculum as laid out by our Patron body, Educate Together. This Ethical Education Curriculum focuses on the ethical, moral, social and spiritual development of children.

As an Educate Together school we are fully committed to the four key principles of the Educate Together charter:

- Equality based
- Co-educational
- Child-centered
- Democratic

The mission statement of our patron body: 'Learn Together to Live Together' has been fully adopted as the mission statement of Navan Educate Together N.S.

#### **Vision**

In Navan Educate Together we are committed to the all-round development of each child. Through our ethos and Learn Together Programme, we seek to promote the principles of justice and equality for all members of the school community. An important focus is the preparation of pupils for life in a multi-cultural society in all its diversity. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. We seek to acknowledge, understand, value and celebrate difference. We endeavour to ensure that our physical environment reflects diversity in a positive way.

#### Aims

We endorse the aims of the Learn Together curriculum, which are:

- 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 explanations 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.
- Recognise the impact of the climate crisis and 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.

# **Curriculum Planning**

### 1. Curriculum strands

There are four strands in the Learn Together curriculum.

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

Within the curriculum these four strands are divided into themes (Junior Infants - 2nd Class) and elements (3rd - 6th).

| Themes (Junior Infants - 2nd Class)            | Elements (3rd - 6th)                   |
|--|--|
| We are all Different                           | Environmental Issues                   |
| Family   | Interdependence of Life                |
| Values   | Examples of Environmental Initiatives  |
| Feelings                                       | Environmental Activism                 |
| Philosophy for/with Children                   | Democratic Process                     |
| Our Environment                                | Human Rights and Global Citizenship    |
| Exploring the Natural World                    | Equality Issues                        |
| Introducing Democracy and Democratic Practices | Examples of Equality Based Initiatives |
| Fairness                                       | Equality Based Activism                |
| Food   | Ethical Issues and Dilemmas            |
| Making a Difference                            | Values and Dialogue                    |
| We Can Make a Difference                       | Communication                          |
| Remembering                                    | Philosophy for/with Children           |
| Love   |  |
| Special Books                                  |  |
| Seasons  |  |

# 2. Approaches and Methodologies

Teachers 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.

Methodologies include (but are not limited to):

- Pair work
- Group work
- Role play/drama
- Circle time
- Cooperative games
- Talk and Discussion
- "Thinking time" 'Philosophy 4 Children'
- Music and Art

# Learn Together Policy: Navan ETNS

- Meditation/yoga
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Project work
- Guest speakers
- Stories and poetry
- Artefacts and photographs
- Outdoor activities/field trips
- Assemblies
- Integration with other subjects
- Linkage and integration

### **Structure & Time Allocation:**

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 and progression throughout the curriculum while undue repetition or significant gaps are avoided. A menu approach is also adopted from 3rd to 6th Class, enabling teachers to select content that aligns with their pupils' interests and school contexts. The Belief Systems strand utilises a conceptual enquiry approach to exploring beliefs, enabling child-led learning.

| Stage 1: Junior and Senior Infants | Stage 2: First<br>and Second<br>Class | Stage 3: Third<br>Class | Stage 3:<br>Fourth Class | Stage 4: Fifth<br>Class | Stage 4: Sixth<br>Class |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 8 themes per                       | 8 themes per                          | 16 elements             | 17 elements              | 16 elements             | 17 elements             |
| year                               | year                                  | per year                | per year                 | per year                | per year                |

The discrete teaching time allocated to the Learn Together curriculum per week is as follows:

- Stage 1: 1 hour and 40 minutes
- Stage 2 to 4: 2 hours

#### Context for Learn Together

- Affording pupils time to think, contemplate and reflect on a range of ethical, social 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 of team spirit and cooperation.
- Developing a physical environment that reflects the intercultural, inclusive nature of the
- school.

- Acknowledging the equality-based nature of Educate Together schools through the
- celebration of difference and diversity.

#### **Assessment**

A wide range of assessment methods are used, which assess children's engagement with the learning process as well as gauging their understanding of concepts and the learning that has taken place. These include:

- Teacher observation during classroom discussion, group work, role play and cooperative activities.
- Teacher designed tasks based on the themes and elements of the curriculum.
- Project work including oral and written presentations.
- Presentations or displays at whole school assemblies.

### **Children with Additional Needs**

All children are encouraged to participate in Learn Together to the best of their ability. Teachers will endeavour to adapt and modify approaches and methodologies in Learn Together to promote this participation.

# **Equality of Participation and Access**

We recognise and value diversity, and believe all children are entitled to access the services, facilities or amenities that are available in the school environment. In accordance with the co-educational principle of Educate Together, we are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children to participate in all Learn Together activities.

It is a fundamental principle of our school that everyone who is involved in the life of the school, both has the right to be respected as an individual and carries the responsibility to act in a considerate and respectful manner towards others. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all children to maximise their potential, regardless of age, sex, gender, race, colour, religion or disability. We are committed to enabling each person to participate in all school related activities.

# **Organisation**

Teacher's long-term and short-term planning will be informed by the following documents:

- 1. Navan Educate Together N.S. Whole School Plan for Learn Together
- 2. Assembly 2 Year Rotation Plan
- 3. Revised Learn Together Curriculum 2022

Additionally, delivery of the Learn Together curriculum is informed by a comprehensive Ethical Education Calendar, provided by the patron Educate Together annually.

Learn Together Policy: Navan ETNS

# **Assemblies**

Assemblies will take place on a weekly basis. Each class will host one assembly per term, a maximum of three in a school year. Assembly topics will be assigned based on a 2-year rotation plan and will be taught in addition to the themes/elements covered in the whole school plan. During assemblies, children may present their research and work using a variety of approaches and methodologies, including (but not limited to): drama, music, poetry, art displays.

#### **Homework**

Learn Together homework, in the form of research or project work, may be given in more senior classes.

#### Resources

All Learn Together resources will be stored in a central location made available to staff. All Learn Together books will be categorized accordingly in the school library and available to both staff and students. Staff will also be able to access online resources available through the patron Educate Together.

# **Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Individual planning for Learn Together is undertaken by class teachers in the same way as for all other subject areas:

- •Long term plans and fortnightly plans are completed, submitted to the principal and also stored on the school drive.
- Cuntas Míosúil are completed every month, which outline the teaching and learning that has taken place.

#### **Staff Development**

Staff members are encouraged to undertake Continual Professional Development (CPD) in the area of Learn Together. This includes summer and incidental courses run by Educate Together, as well as courses run by a variety of organisations who provide resources or training relevant to Learn Together.

#### Parental Involvement

Our 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. Parents from all cultural backgrounds will be encouraged to share their stories and experiences in a classroom setting to bring a human dimension to the children's learning.

We are committed to continuing and developing parental involvement in relation to Learn Together. Their involvement is greatly valued as it enhances the spirit of cooperation that we strive to achieve. We remain open to all suggestions on how to further develop parental involvement in our school.

# **Role of Visitors**

Visitors to the school for the purposes of supporting the provision of the Learn Together Curriculum will deal with discussions in line with the curriculum as laid out by Educate Together. It is the duty of the teacher who organizes the visit to ensure the suitability of the visit to the school. Teachers will remain with the class for the duration of the visit. Principal must be informed in advance of all visitors and the content of their presentations.

# **Success Criteria**

We will know that this plan has achieved its aims from analysis of

- Child, teacher and parent feedback;
- Observation of the ethos in action;
- Teacher assessment:
- Cuntas Míosúil records.

#### <u>Implementation</u>

# a) Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to respect and endorse the ethos of the school and to deliver the curriculum as set out in this policy document.

The principal has overall responsibility for the teaching and learning throughout the school. The post holder for Learn Together will support the principal and teachers in their roles.

#### b) Timeframe

This reviewed policy will be fully implemented from the date of ratification.

#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2027 2028.

# **Ratification and communication**

The Board of Management of Navan Educate Together N.S. ratified this plan on 16 10 24.

This policy is available for parents/guardians to view online.

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed

Principal

Date: 16/10/24

Date of next review: 2027 (2028

# APPENDIX 1:

# **Learn Together Assembly 2-year Rotation**

|                 | YEAR ONE (2023/2024)  |  |   | YEAR TWO (2024/2025)  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
|                 | Term 1  | Term 2   | Term 3  | Term 1  | Term 2   | Term 3   |  |
| JI.             | Values  | Fairness   | We can make<br>a difference   | We are all<br>different   | Remembering  | Special Books  |  |
| SI              | Family  | Love   | Seasons   | Feelings  | Food   | Making a<br>difference   |  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | We are all different  | Exploring the<br>Natural World                                   | Growing and<br>Changing   | Values  | Celebrating  | We can make<br>a difference                                    |  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | Our Educate<br>Together<br>School   | Special<br>Clothes/Dress   | Making a<br>difference  | Our<br>Environment  | Human Rights   | Giving up<br>things  |  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Belief Systems - Belonging  | Values and Ethical Perspectives – Friendship and Anti-Bullying   | An Ethical Approach to the Environment - Examples of Environmental Initiative | Equality and Justice – Democratic Process                         | Belief Systems –<br>Symbolism  | An Ethical Approach to the Environment Environmental Activism  |  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | Values and<br>Ethical<br>Perspectives –<br>Ethical Issues<br>and Dilemmas | Belief Systems –<br>Ritual                                       | Equality and Justice – Equality Based Activism                                | An Ethical Approach to the Environment - Environmental Issues     | Equality and Justice – Equality Issues                                       | Values and Ethical Perspectives – Philosophy for/with children |  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | Equality and Justice — Human Rights and Global Citizenship                | An Ethical Approach to the Environment – Interdependence of Life | Values and Ethical Perspectives – Philosophy for/with children                | Belief Systems  Trinity (Christianity)                            | Values and Ethical Perspectives – Friendship and Anti-Bullying               | Equality and Justice — Equality Based Activism                 |  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | An Ethical Approach to the Environment  - Environmental Issues            | Equality and Justice – Equality Issues                           | Belief Systems Ummah (Islam)  | Values and<br>Ethical<br>Perspectives –<br>Values and<br>Dialogue | An Ethical<br>Approach to the<br>Environment –<br>Interdependence<br>of Life | Belief Systems  - Brahman (Hinduism)                           |  |

# Learn Together Policy: Navan ETNS

# **APPENDIX 2:**

# Whole School Song linked to the 'Value of the month'

| MONTH     | VALUE                | School song – The Kids of<br>NETNS Come Together |  |
|-----------|----------------------|--|--|
| September | Respect              |  |  |
| October   | Cooperation          | We are all in this together                      |  |
| November  | Bravery              | Power in me                                      |  |
| December  | Peace                | A song of peace                                  |  |
| January   | Friendship           | You've got a friend in me                        |  |
| February  | Love                 | What the world needs now                         |  |
| March     | ldentity/féiniúlacht | Is leatsa í                                      |  |
| April     | Responsibility       | Count on Me                                      |  |
| May       | Happiness            | Нарру  |  |
| June      | Gratitude            | 6th class performance                            |  |

|  |  | * * * * |
|--|--|---------|
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |
|  |  |         |