



# What are *Community National Schools*?

## CHILD-CENTRED, MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL, PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### What are Community National Schools?

Community National Schools (CNS) are child-centred, multi-denominational, publicly accountable schools which strive to provide high quality education for every child. They give equal opportunities to all children in the communities they serve. They were established in 2008 and are managed by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

### Why is there a need for Community National Schools?

The establishment of Community National Schools was part of the State's response to an increasing diversity in Irish society. Because of this, there is a growing demand amongst parents for the State to provide more choice of school types other than single-denominational models. There is also a growing demand in Ireland for publicly-managed primary schools, as up until now they have been publicly funded but privately managed. The development of the Community National School model answers both demands and represents a very exciting and welcome evolution in Irish education. With a long history of excellence in primary education acknowledged world-wide, the Irish State is yet again breaking ground with this new model of primary school that recognises and celebrates the identity of all children equally.

### Who owns these schools and what difference does it make?

Local ETBs are the patrons of Community National Schools. ETBs, formerly VECs, are statutory authorities with responsibility for Community National Schools, over 270 second-level schools, and a wide range of adult and further education training centres and services. They have developed an excellent reputation for their provision of inclusive, innovative, high quality education that meets the needs of the entire community.



The characteristic spirit of a Community National School is centred around these four core values.



## Education and Training Boards Ireland

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Having ETBs as patrons is significant for Community National Schools, as the schools benefit greatly from a broad range of supports and services that are not available to other schools. ETBs provide governance, educational, administrative, financial, Human Resources (HR) and Information Technology (IT) supports to schools. This has a direct impact on the children and families attending these schools, as it allows school leadership to focus on their primary task of leading teaching and learning. This ensures the highest standard of excellence in our schools. ETBs can also provide a valuable service to the parents of children attending Community National Schools through their adult education programmes.

### **What will my child experience in a Community National School?**

Like all primary schools, Community National Schools follow the Primary School Curriculum, (DES, 1999). However, a unique aspect of the model is its 'ethos' or 'characteristic spirit'. The characteristic spirit of a Community National School is centred around these four core values:



#### **Excellence in Education**

In a Community National School, your child will:

- Be provided with a child-centred education that caters for their intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual needs
- Have the highest calibre of teacher who will challenge them at their level and guide their learning in a manner appropriate to their individual needs
- Experience the curriculum in the most innovative, stimulating ways to enhance their love of learning
- Be in an environment that nurtures their well-being and personal development

#### **Multidenominational**

In a Community National School, your child will:

- Experience the 'Goodness Me, Goodness You!' (GMGY) curriculum which is a multi-belief and values education curriculum.
- Deepen their understanding of their own family's religion or beliefs with the help of their teacher and parents in an environment that recognises and celebrates this important part of your child's identity (where appropriate).
- Learn about other children's religions and beliefs and learn how to engage in inter-belief dialogue
- Be facilitated to receive specific classes in their own faith or belief by members of their own belief community outside of the school day

#### **Equality-Based**

In a Community National School, your child will:

- Be treated with dignity and respect and learn how to live harmoniously in a diverse society
- Learn that every human being is equally important and that we have a right to be treated fairly and a responsibility to treat others fairly
- Learn about the values of the school, such as equality, human rights and citizenship
- Learn to challenge discrimination and prejudice

#### **Community-Focused**

In a Community National School, your child will:

- Experience a school environment that encourages parental involvement in all aspects of school life
- Benefit from the support and expertise of the wider community
- Enjoy the resources available in the community to enhance their educational experience
- See their parents be given opportunities for adult education through in school through the ETB

### **Where can I find out more about the Community National School model?**

For more information about Community National Schools, please visit [www.cns.ie](http://www.cns.ie). Here you can express an interest in a Community National School in your area, find out about the different Community National Schools, and find other useful links.

