

Educational Philosophy

Portmarnock Community School

Portmarnock Community School is a co-educational school established under the Deed of Trust for Community Schools. Under the terms of the Deed of Trust – Articles of Management par 2 – the school serves the community of Portmarnock and surrounding area. The Joint Patron of the school is the Archbishop of Dublin, the Loreto Sisters and County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

The purpose of this document is to give an overview of each of the trustees' own charter/mission which will, in turn, inform future discussion on ethos and culture, and will serve to describe the Characteristic Spirit of Portmarnock Community School.

The County of Dublin Vocational Education Committee is constituted under the Vocational Education Act, passed by the Dail and Seanad Eireann in 1930. As a representative democratic body, it strives through its schools, centres and colleges, to deliver an educational service of excellence to all the community of County Dublin.

Students, irrespective of economic circumstances, gender, religious or philosophical outlook, race or social situation are welcome.

In terms of its students it regards them as valued members of the community, each student being respected as an individual and encouraged to develop an awareness of his/her own worth.

It recognizes the importance of preparing its students for participation in the family, the community and the country in the wider European and World context

College programmes are aimed to provide each student with broad, relevant and personally fulfilling experiences.

Education is recognized as a life-long process, providing opportunities for continuing education to the community.

Co. Dublin VEC is proud of the rich cultural heritage and language of each student and consciously strives to foster such pride in the whole community.

In terms of its staff, they are valued as dedicated professional people and Co. Dublin VEC aspires to providing them with the resources and support to achieve the highest possible standards in their work.

Students are required to show respect to all staff members.

Parents and legal guardians are supported in their role as the primary educators.

In conclusion Co. Dublin VEC aspires to develop an ethos characterised by equality, respect, justice and fair play for all.

Loreto Sisters

The sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, popularly known as Loreto have as their founder Mary Ward. In a male dominated society and church she believed that women in time to come would do much. She established foundations in six European countries but what she desired at the time was considered 'outrageous' and her houses were suppressed.

While Mary Ward died with few followers, she did inspire these to remain loyal to the church. Her spirituality is centered on Jesus and in the Gospel values. She attempted to initiate an apostolic way of life and active ministry based on the spirituality and constitutions of St Ignatius.

How does this relate to the educational philosophy of the Loreto Order?

In recent years the IBVM drew up the Kolkata guidelines which challenge us all, as educators, to deliver an excellent educational experience worthy of its recipients.

Key challenges

to enable the fullest possible personal growth, Loreto/IBVM education gives priority to the integration of the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and emotional development of the individual student. Relationships within Loreto/IBVM education are characterised by respect, justice, honesty, courage and compassion.

Informed by the Loreto/IBVM priority 'to stand with those on the margin of society' a Loreto/IBVM school must actively respond to the needs of those excluded from full participation in society on the basis of economic and/or social deprivation. When such a response, based on gospel values, is integral to the school experience it is prophetic and makes the message of the order credible in society.

Loreto Educational Communities aim to make their Centres where

- love, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy find expression (Mary Ward believed that these were essential qualities as a ground and foundation for those called to the way of life she envisaged)
- young people feel accepted and allowed to experience the exercise of appropriate responsibility
- the potential of each individual, spiritual, intellectual, physical is recognized and respected.
- positive critical reflection is developed
- special concern for the disadvantaged and underprivileged is experienced and encouraged
- the challenge of suffering is faced
- staff, parents, students, past pupils co-operate for the common good.

In conclusion the main aim of a school, under Loreto Trusteeship, in this case Portmarnock Community School, is to be a centre of Christian education, which cares for the faith and personal development of each student. The school strives for excellence in providing a holistic education, i.e. religious, academic, cultural, physical, psychological and social.

As a Board, it is grateful that its joint trustees complement each other very well sharing the values of

respect, justice, freedom, sincerity, joy and love

with not only an overall commitment to excellence but in 2007 committed to engaging a multi-cultural and/or multi-faith school community as envisioned by Mary Ward or as the County of Dublin VEC states in its charter 'students irrespective of economic circumstances, gender, religious or philosophical outlook, race or social situation are welcome to join us in the pursuit of knowledge.'

This statement of Portmarnock Community School's educational philosophy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11 June 2007. It will be reviewed in five years.

