

# What are Community National Schools?



Community National Schools (CNSs) are **state, co-educational, multi-denominational primary schools** underpinned by five core values: **Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect**. CNSs are under the patronage of the local Education and Training Boards (ETBs). CNSs give equal opportunities to all children in the communities they serve and strive to provide high quality education through respectful, positive, supportive and responsive learning environments.



## Why is the CNS model growing?

Community National Schools are part of the State's response to an increasing diversity in Irish society. 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 Community National Schools 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.



2020 Map of 27 Community National Schools

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

**Local ETBs are the patrons of Community National Schools.**

ETBs, are statutory authorities with responsibility for Community National Schools, over 245 post-primary schools, and a wide range of adult and further education and 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.



As ETB schools, Community National Schools benefit greatly from a broad range of supports and services from the local ETB. ETBs provide governance, educational, administrative, financial, Human Resources 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 CNSs through their adult education programmes.



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

Community National Schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life **all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.** Our schools provide a

safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff.



Like all primary schools in Ireland, **Community National Schools follow the Primary School Curriculum** (DES, 1999). As CNSs have a multi-denominational ethos, children also engage in multi-belief and values education curriculum, Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY).



GOODNESS ME,  
GOODNESS YOU!  
Curriculum for Community National Schools



## How could a Community National School open in my area?

Community National Schools open in new communities through one of two processes: the **establishment of a new school** in areas of demographic growth or the **transfer of existing school patronage from another patron body to the local ETB.**



### Opening a new CNS

The Department of Education (DE) decides where and when new schools are needed in areas of demographic growth. Parents who are eligible are asked to vote for the type of school they would like to be established through a Patronage Competition Process. If the majority of parents vote for a Community National School through this process, a CNS will be established in their area. For information on upcoming patronage competitions visit <https://patronage.education.gov.ie/>

Parents and local community members can **support Community National Schools in upcoming patronage competitions** by expressing their interest on the CNS website [www.cns.ie](http://www.cns.ie)

### Transfer of School Patronage

In communities where there is an interest in opening a CNS, but the establishment of a new primary school is not feasible, an existing school in the area may transfer patronage to the local ETB. Where another patron, school or local community wish to explore this option, they should visit the CNS Website <https://cns.ie/becoming-a-cns/> and review the ETBI publication *Becoming a CNS* as well as contact their local ETB for more information.