

Catholic Schools
Partnership



FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS
*About Catholic Voluntary
Secondary Schools*



The Catholic Schools Partnership is an umbrella body that provides support for all the partners in Catholic schools. Here we answer some frequently asked questions about Catholic voluntary secondary schools.

1 *What are Catholic voluntary secondary schools?*

These are secondary schools established by people with a vision of education rooted in the Catholic faith. The students, parents, staff and board of management members come from the local community.

2 *What vision inspires a Catholic voluntary secondary school?*

Catholic voluntary secondary schools live the message of Christ in a particular time and place. This challenges them to be witnesses to the Gospel, to cherish each person as made in the image of God, to create solidarity and community, to help those in need, and to welcome the stranger. Catholic schools seek to respect both faith and reason, to continue the mission of Christ, and to provide a religious education that includes faith formation, prayer and sacramental experiences. Such schools foster in students a sense of inner freedom, a capacity for responsible relationships and a commitment to the common good.



3 *What does Pope Francis say about Catholic schools?*

They are 'like seedbeds, places full of potential, fertile soil which we must care for, cultivate and protect'. He also says that schools not only broaden the intellectual dimension but also the human one, and that they are 'a precious means for making a contribution to the progress of the Church and of society as a whole'.

4 *What is the role of the school patron?*

Every school has a certain ethos or characteristic spirit that inspires all aspects of the life of the school. Those who established the schools and their successors are known as patrons. Sometimes they are referred to as trustees. Their role is to support the school in living its ethos. While staff, parents and students interact with the school community for a particular length of time, the patron ensures that the school's founding intention continues from one generation to the next. The patron is ultimately responsible for the education process, and for the fulfilment of certain legally required functions in support of the school.

5 *Who are the patrons of Catholic secondary schools?*

From the eighteenth century onwards, voluntary secondary schools were established in many towns and cities. For the most part they were established by charismatic leaders and religious congregations as they responded to the needs of the Catholic community. Some of these religious congregations were newly founded Irish organisations, while others had long roots in Continental Europe – coming to Ireland for the first time or returning after the centuries of turmoil that followed the upheaval of the Reformation. Dioceses and lay groups also established voluntary secondary schools.

6 *What about the role of parents?*

Catholic voluntary secondary schools want to support parents in their task of nurturing their teenage children by preparing them to live as mature adults according to the gifts that they have been given. Many parents in Ireland and throughout the world choose to send their children to Catholic schools. The Irish Constitution acknowledges that parents and families are the primary educators and that the state should support them in providing funding for schools that accord with their vision.

7 *Who attends Catholic secondary schools?*

Catholic schools are welcoming communities where students from all backgrounds attend. Creating an environment of respect, support and inclusion is a priority so that all students can develop to their full potential.



8 *Are there Catholic secondary schools in other countries apart from Ireland?*

Yes, there are Catholic secondary schools in almost every country in the world. In many nations like our own they form a central part of the education system, while in almost all democratic societies they are funded by the state.

9 *How will Catholic secondary schools develop in the future?*

With the declining number of religious sisters, brothers and priests there is a new era of lay leadership in Catholic education. Trustee structures are being put in place to ensure that Catholic secondary schools will continue to provide a quality education, as they have done for many generations.

10 *Where can I get further information?*

Go to www.catholicschools.ie.

SOME NUMBERS

0

The money spent on pay, travel and subsistence for the volunteers serving on boards of management in Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

32

Nationalities attending one Catholic voluntary secondary school.

46

The number of times Jesus is called 'teacher' in the Gospels. It is the title most commonly associated with him by his followers.

67

The percentage of funding received from the state for running costs of Catholic voluntary secondary schools. The remainder is made up by contributions from parents and fundraising.

344

Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

1772

The year in which the first Catholic voluntary secondary school was established in Ireland.

2,752

Volunteers serving on boards of management in Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland.

43,783

Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the world.

190,587

Students attending Catholic voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland.