



Coláiste Chú Chulainn
Dundalk
County Louth

Delivering Sanctuary and Learning for All

Our School's Report and Action Plan to become an accredited School of Sanctuary



November 2025

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School of Sanctuary

Introduction to Coláiste Chú Chulainn

Coláiste Chú Chulainn was established in 2014 and is located in the centre of Dundalk, County Louth. We serve the community of Dundalk and North Louth.

Our school was established as a second level school for up to 1,000 students. We offer Junior Cycle, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational and Leaving Certificate Applied. Students are offered a broad and balanced curriculum from the traditional subjects to innovative technologies.
Teaching and learning in Coláiste Chú Chulainn is centred on our guiding vision of Success for All. We plan for the success of every student and set targets of attainment that engage everybody to realise and exceed their potential. We communicate with students and families about curricular and extracurricular progress.

Coláiste Chú Chulainn has excellent facilities for sports, sciences, technologies and all subject areas. LMETB is the school patron. Louth & Meath Education and Training Board is committed to excellence and innovation in the education of young people and adults through the provision of dynamic services delivered by professional staff.

We are partners with our community, building alliances with sporting and cultural groups from around the area. Our students and staff are embedded in and ambitious for the development of the region socially, educationally, economically and culturally.

Our graduates have entered jobs, trades, apprenticeships, traineeships, further and higher education programmes across the world. Our graduates are in some of the most prestigious universities and have won scholarships to support them in their studies.



What is a School of Sanctuary?

A School of Sanctuary is a school that undertakes a programme of learning, action and sharing, where welcome and inclusion is placed at the heart of the school's identity.



A core element of the Schools of Sanctuary focus is for students and staff to learn the many "whys and how's" of giving sanctuary, especially to refugees, migrants, marginalised ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups.

Another core element is for schools to model and celebrate diversity and difference, striving to ensure that every child or young person respects the identities, cultures, and values of others.

Schools are already equipping generations of school-goers with the knowledge, skills, and empathy to give sanctuary where it is needed. The Schools of Sanctuary award journey builds on and enhances this ongoing work.

Schools pursue a commitment to become ever more inclusive places, taking an active stance against prejudice and racism and are proud to stand in solidarity with minority, marginalised and vulnerable students, their families, and communities.

Coláiste Chú Chulainn as a School of Sanctuary

At Coláiste Chú Chulainn we are proud of our diverse and multicultural community. Our school ethos is **Success for All** and we are dedicated to maintaining our commitment to all students. Their success means that the local, national and international economy and society thrive.

We have a growing student population, and we are immensely proud that so much of that population is made up of students who have fled war-torn countries and found refuge in our school and in Ireland. Our school has acted as a safe haven for students and in doing this, have supported their families in making and maintaining a life of peace and support.



Coláiste Chú Chulainn is a safe place where all students feel welcomed, catered for, listened to, and included. We pride ourselves on our diverse student body and are committed to the process of educating both staff and students on what it means to be a School of Sanctuary so we can continue to grow in our approach to inclusion and equality.

Fís na Scoile Our School Vision

Our school's Vision Statement is built on the three strands of Vision, Values & Behaviours as adopted by our Board of Management. This statement is central to all plans, policies, and routines in school.

Coláiste Chú Chulainn - Success for All.

Values

1. We Plan for Success for Every Student
2. We Model Success in Our Practice
3. We Celebrate Success
4. We are Partners for Success in Our Community
5. We Deliver Success for Students, Families and Community

Behaviours

1. **We Plan for Success for Every Student**

- We set and share learning intentions in our work.
- We differentiate in our lessons.
- We give formative feedback to our students on their work.
- We use self and peer assessment in our lessons.
- We engage all students in school life.

2. **We Model Success in Our Practice**

- We implement LMETB and Coláiste Chú Chulainn policies in all of our work.
- We are prepared for our work as students and staff.
- We reflect on our professional practice and strive for improvements where identified.
- We share resources, knowledge and experience.

3. **We Celebrate Success**

- We praise our students for their efforts and achievements.
- We hold Awards Events.
- We share our stories at every opportunity.
- We include the whole community in our celebrations.

4. **We are Partners for Success in Our Community.**

- We collaborate with local and national enterprises.
- We are active in community activities.
- We invite guests to work with us in our learning.
- We are inclusive of everybody.

5. **We Deliver Success for Students, Families and Our Community**

- Our students achieve the best possible grades.
- Our students complete their 2nd Level education in Coláiste Chú Chulainn.
- Our students progress to Higher & Further Education or employment.
- Our students have excellent attendance.

What are we doing currently as a School of Sanctuary?

Wellbeing



We teach our students about sensitive topics such as refuge, citizenship, war, conflict, and migration through the pillars of wellbeing. All subjects can be used to educate students about the world around us and the importance of offering acceptance, understanding and peace. Wellbeing also goes hand in hand with the School of Sanctuary programme and therefore, our Wellbeing Policy and School of Sanctuary Programme are run in conjunction with one another.

Curriculum and Planning



Cultural diversity and inclusion are embedded in our curriculum at Coláiste Chú Chulainn. We teach our students to be inclusive, respectful, understanding and accepting. Topics such as migration, conflict, equality, and racism are covered in a cross-curricular approach and principles of respect, understanding and justice are taught throughout our lessons.

We already see students being encouraged to celebrate their cultures at any opportunity, whether it be in home economics where our students have created a recipe book consisting of recipes from all our countries of the world, or in their history Class Based Assessment (CBA) project - The Past in My Place, where students complete a research project on the history of a place of relevance to their family and heritage. In 2024, our students have presented projects on family members who have died in World War 2 Concentration Camps, led the governance of ethnic tribes, and participated in the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa.

Student Support Team

Student Support Team is made up of staff who work to identify students seeking additional support and guidance.



Our English as an Additional Language (EAL) Programme

Our EAL Programme has grown over the past number of years in conjunction with the changing needs of not just our school, but the world. EAL classes are tailored to suit the needs of each of our students and our EAL teachers work with our class teachers to offer translated notes, differentiated learning activities, and individualised programmes that bring their competency in the English language to a sufficient level to engage in the full curriculum and economic and social activities.



Coláiste Chú Chulainn

62 languages

in one community

Extra-Curricular Activities

Our extra-curricular programmes offer an opportunity for support and connection amongst our students. Our programme is hugely successful. Whether it be sports or language clubs, we offer students a chance to form connections and develop a sense of belonging.



Through our school's Social Club, we offer student support and a safe space where students are welcomed and encouraged to make connections.

Cultural Diversity Week



Cultural Diversity week is the biggest celebration of our multi-cultural and diverse school community. We love it. Cultural Diversity week offers a range of activities from bake sales, foods of the world, cultural dress day, minority sports and more. Our students lead the organization of these weeks.

Our ACTION Plan - How will we continue our School of Sanctuary Journey?



The first step in beginning our journey is to **LEARN**. We must ensure that the necessary practices are in place to educate the student body and staff about inclusivity and equality.

Step 1: Facilitating staff training

For this to be a whole-of-school approach, all staff will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to begin our School of Sanctuary journey. This is a process of continuous professional development. Becoming a School of Sanctuary and making our school a place of true refuge is a continuous process, while there is still crisis, war, and conflict, where people are forced to seek refuge, the learning journey will continue. Our staff will be offered place on training courses that increase empathy, understanding and inclusion.

Step 2: Making connections and gathering contacts



We will sign off on our pledge form which will begin our journey. Before we do this, we will identify some local links and supports we can engage with from local communities, local support services and nearby centres of refuge.

Step 3: Subject Based approach

English

- Theme of difference is integrated into our Junior Cycle programme of work
- Students explore poems, plays, dramas under the theme of difference
- Students study a variety of texts which cover topics such as equality, inequalities, racism, and war
- A poetry 'slam' is hosted as part of Literacy Week. Students are asked to devise and engage in a poetic battle centered around the themes of difference, equality, prejudice, and inclusion.

Mathematics

Learning about International Poverty Lines (absolute poverty and relative poverty) can help students to explore statistics, data, large numbers, fractions, and currency exchange rates. Learning mathematics means you can ensure you are working with up-to-date figures (which change frequently).

Learning how to manage statistics means that you can learn about the numbers of people who are displaced throughout the world, and in what numbers they are living in different countries. Figures change regularly.

History



Colonialism, migration, social inequality, and injustice all permeate the topic of Irish history. The parallels between the history of Irish people seeking sanctuary and those who now seek sanctuary in Ireland are striking. In centuries of global historical contexts, forced migration or internal displacement comes up again and again, from Jewish war refugees to First Nations / Native American peoples in North America.

Business Studies

There are multitudes of barriers to employment for refugees and other ethnic minority migrants and groups - bureaucracy, language, lack of social capital, prejudice and bias, lack of recognition of prior education and a lack of relevant work experience. Entrepreneurship in business and self-employment is a key necessity in the lives of families new to Ireland. Think about all the shops and services (including online) that are set up by, and often specifically serve, migrant communities in Ireland, e.g., a halal butcher, an Asian food shop, an African barber. It could be an interesting project for Business Studies students to research this in their local community/ region.



Home Economics

When learning about food budgets, a particularly poignant exercise would be to research what you could afford in the supermarket in Ireland if you only had €38.10 available to spend every week. This is the amount that people seeking asylum in Ireland receive as a weekly expenses allowance. During Cultural Diversity week, students will prepare and learn about samples of cuisine from all our schools' different cultures.



Arts, Music & Drama

Students using the arts, music, and drama department to devise performances with the school and local community, showcasing all cultures and bringing pride to everybody.

English as an Additional Language

We will continue the extensive work our EAL department does in catering for the needs of all our EAL students. Our EAL programme has been running successfully for the past number of years and it is seen in the incredible results of some of our students who came to us seeking refuge and now are flourishing in their studies. EAL is a whole-of-school approach. All staff are responsible for ensuring that their students receive lessons that they can access.

Geography

In Strand 3 'Exploring People, Place and Change', several learning units are specific or related to the 'learning' of sanctuary. Students investigate the causes and consequences of migration. They examine population change in Ireland and in a developing country and identify global patterns of economic development. Our students compare life chances for a young person in relation to gender equality, health care, employment, and education opportunities in a developed and a developing country.



Transition Year – Gaisce & Work Experience



TY students undertaking their Gaisce Award can explore how their contribution to the school's sanctuary journey and use this as part of their 'Community Involvement'.

Work experience – Our students, no matter their cultural background, get equal opportunities to gain work placements. They learn more communication and life skills when on placement with local businesses and workplaces.

STEP 5 – Extra Curricular Activities

Our extra-curricular achievements are incredible and that does not involve just our wins but our whole extra-curricular programme itself. Each year we see our wide range of extra-curricular activities succeed in sports, music, clubs, trips, and community projects bringing students together, providing them with long-term friendships and connections, as well as giving students a sense of purpose and belonging.

Sports



Our sports activities include everybody. No student is denied a place in sports training and participation. Barriers such as financial costs and travel arrangements are overcome by school management. Our range of sports ensures that everybody has a part to play and a game to participate in.

Wellbeing and Support

The Social Club has been running for the past four years and is the school's first club of its type. Social Club supports students transitioning to a new school and facilitating students who may be vulnerable or struggling to make connections and friendships in a relaxed and friendly setting. The Social Club is on every Wednesday after school and is beneficial in supporting students' holistic wellbeing.

Themed weeks- Cultural Diversity week

Planned events which center around educating and celebrating the vast number of different cultures and ethnicities that make up our school.



School Culture

- Creation of a School of Sanctuary Committee consisting of staff, students, and parents.
- Engagement of Parents- Parents evenings for Students who seek refuge.
- Focus on Student Voice and Leadership in leading the initiatives – ambassadors.
- Student support service or a 'Buddy System' – Each student will be paired up with a 'Buddy' from their year which will act as their connect and check in person.
- Culture Garden – Culture Garden or Garden of refuge – Students from different cultures and their parents invited to plant seeds or flowers from their native countries e.g., Chickpea.



SHARE

The final process in our journey to becoming a School of Sanctuary will be to share what we have learnt to not just our school community but the wider community. We will also share info about School of Sanctuary online or in-person events where possible.

We will:

1. Share our Action Plan with our community on our website, publications, and school events
2. Broadcast our diversity and culture on our media platforms
3. Place our student's languages and cultures at the centre of our events
4. Maintain our Culture Cabinet of souvenirs from around the world
5. Cook and eat foods from around the world
6. Reject racism in all our work and activities
7. Celebrate the many national and international festivals
8. Sing and play music from many cultures
9. Ensure that all of our students and graduates speak of their School of Sanctuary in such a way that every school in Ireland will become a School of Sanctuary.

Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta an Duine agus Comhionannas
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lmetb
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Lú agus na Mí
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board



Louth & Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) is the largest education and training provider in Louth and Meath, providing a broad range of education and training services to over 30,000 students and learners on an annual basis. LMETB are responsible for an extensive range of Adult Services throughout both counties, including Adult Learning Services, Community Education, Back to Education Initiative and Adult Guidance. **We actively pursue the further development of education and training services in both Louth and Meath and have a history of responding flexibly to community and employer needs and aspirations. LMETB can also be followed on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.**

#WeAreLMETB