



STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2027

ANIMATING THE CHARTER VALUES IN PRACTICE AND PROCESS

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”

Jn.10:10

“This charter is based on an understanding of Catholic education and schooling. It is set before the whole CEIST community to enrich its life and to foster development at all levels. It is both an inspiration and a challenge. It provides a means to deepen our understanding of the Catholic tradition in education and its application in our time. The identity and core values of CEIST should be the norm by which members, directors, Boards of Management, staff, students and parents measure their mission, performance and priorities. While every school is unique, the charter forms a common bond between all CEIST schools. The mission statement of each school is inspired by the charter and the tradition of the founding congregations.”

CEIST Charter

Foreword

‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ (Jeremiah 29:11)

Fifteen years ago, with the courage and vision of St Louise de Marillac, Jules Chevalier, Nano Nagle, Catherine McAuley and Fr Anthony Receveur, the founding congregations placed their plans and hopes for the future of Catholic post-primary education into the hands of CEIST. The work of the new Trust was wonderfully expressed in the CEIST Charter, a living document, defining the vision and values that would frame and scaffold its approach to this new endeavour. This Charter has guided and directed the work of the past 15 years and enabled CEIST and its 107 schools to become more firmly grounded in the very best possible understanding of what it means to be a Catholic school in 21st century Ireland.

As CEIST publishes its Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 it is evident that the Charter still informs and forms the work. The Plan is structured to reflect the values now firmly embedded in all that the CEIST seeks to do and be. The framing of the Plan is in response to three key, strategic questions. These three questions challenge us to ensure that we will continue to serve the school communities that are the heart and soul of CEIST, enabling them to be vibrant, inclusive places of learning rooted in Gospel values. There is no doubt that our CEO, the members of the Faith, Leadership & Governance Team and our office staff will build on the very solid foundation already in place and approach the many exciting proposed new initiatives with enthusiasm, creativity and expertise.

These questions also call us to be ever attentive to the context that shapes and informs the changing face of Irish education in general and post primary education in particular. There are many challenges to the place of faith-based education in a secular society that will be encountered in the next five years. CEIST is committed to engaging with all the key stakeholders in constructive dialogue and relevant research to ensure that parents will always have the choice

of a Catholic school for their child, if this is what they desire. The ongoing support of CEIST for the newly formed Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools will also form a significant aspect of this work.

As I begin my role as Chairperson of the CEIST Board of Directors, I am delighted that one of my first tasks is to conclude the work, begun by my predecessor Bernard Keeley, of developing this Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors, the Executive and our CEIST school communities to give practical expression to the ambitions, commitments and actions outlined in each of the five strategic goals. It is always good to have a plan but, it is also important to remember, in the words of Ken Untener, that ‘no set of goals and objectives includes everything. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise.’

This is indeed what we are about and we are confident that we do this with God on our side.

Chairperson

Continuing our Journey

CEIST is the Trustee body for 107 Voluntary Catholic Secondary Schools in Ireland as well as enjoying a co-patronage agency arrangement with 34 Community Schools and Designated Community Colleges. CEIST schools educate 16% of the second level student population, this number combined with those enrolled in the Community Schools, where CEIST acts as agent, brings the number to over 74,000 or 20% of the Irish post-primary population. We welcome and embrace the growing diversity of our student bodies and commit to catering for this diversity so that all students in our schools receive a holistic education that is characterised by excellence in all that we do.

Through our Strategic Plan 2022 -2027, the Board and Executive of CEIST will also continue to look outwards, to seek to shape national policy development in education, to assert the role and contribution of the Catholic school in Ireland and to work with partners in education and Catholic schools to influence the development of policy and practice. We will continue to deliver on our commitments to justice, respect and responsibility with staff and students and the key resource of parents and guardians in achieving our mission to provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.

CEIST commits to providing opportunities for every member of our school community to contribute to bring the vision of CEIST to life. In building our sense of community, we will strengthen our sense of identity by looking back and looking forward. In showing respect for every person, we will reflect on how we help others to feel that they are part of the CEIST community and listen carefully to the experience of those who may not feel that they belong.

The origins of CEIST were characterised by a concern for the future of Catholic education in Ireland. This concern continues today and is reflected in this Strategic Plan. We will continue to honour the founding intentions and to support their expression in contemporary life. The Board of Directors has a particular, formal role in ensuring the fulfilment of the CEIST mission. This includes attention to the statutory role of Patron by deepening the understanding of and capacity for Patronage and Trusteeship. As a corporate entity, CEIST must have special regard to reviewing governance to ensure that structures, policies and practices are fit for purpose and to identify and protect against potential future risks. With its sister organisation, Educena, the Board of CEIST will review the foundational documents to ensure that they will serve and support the mission of CEIST into the future.

CEO

Strategic Questions

As its name reflects, CEIST has a tradition of questioning. “The CEIST, or question, in the acronym underlines the necessary challenge to query accepted norms, so that in the delivery of quality Catholic education, the values, vision and mission enunciated here are continuously refined and developed.” (CEIST Charter).

On the solid foundation of the Charter Values, CEIST frames strategic questions which are important for each member of the CEIST community and for CEIST and its sister organisation, The Educena Foundation. Some of these questions include:

How do we know what is important?

How do we tell ourselves and others what is important to us?

How do we make sure that what we do reflects what we tell ourselves and others about CEIST?

Reflecting our charism, CEIST fosters a spirit of openness to question, review, revisit and deepen our understanding of our vision and mission.

OUR VISION:

A compassionate and just society inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

OUR MISSION:

To provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition

VALUES

AMBITIONS

ACTIONS

COMMITMENTS

The Strategic Plan sets the direction for CEIST as we continue on our mission to provide holistic education in the Catholic tradition. The Plan is a journey, one we embrace, together.

The Structure Of The CEIST Strategic Plan

There are five strategic goals, reflecting the five Values of the CEIST Charter:

1 Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

2 Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

3 Creating Community

4 Showing Respect for Every Person

5 Being Just and Responsible

Our Values intersect and overlap, reflecting different dimensions of a unified and integrated mission. A focus on one enhances and strengthens all others.

Each Value, enshrined in our Charter, has a set of Ambitions – statements of how that Value is expressed in the work of CEIST in schools and in all of our structures and practices.

These assertions are followed by Our Actions which reflect current practice and Our Commitments that point towards additional tasks that will be undertaken by CEIST over the period of this strategic plan, 2022 to 2027.

Charter Calling

God of Love,
We thank You for the gift entrusted to us by our Founding Congregations
We heed Your calling

- To serve
- To Be Just
- To Be Responsible
- To seek excellence in all we do
- To be curious, compassionate, consoling, courageous
- To build community in an atmosphere of care, love and joy
- To treasure the spiritual
- To honour and value the person
- To honour and value our world
- To include all, celebrate all and embrace all
- To model respect

All to give glory to You
May our CEIST schools be places and spaces of hope, of kindness, of welcome and discovery as we give witness to Your unending love for us.
May our CEIST communities experience and exude gratitude and forgiveness
in equal measure as we give witness to Your unending love for us
May our words give witness to Your unending love for us
May our actions give witness to Your unending love for us.
And may Christ be encountered in every word, in every action, in every school
by every person - every day.

God of Peace – Hear our prayer
God of Wisdom – Hear our prayer
God of Grace – Hear our prayer
God of Love – Hear our prayer. Amen

OUR AMBITIONS

OUR ACTIONS

OUR COMMITMENTS

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

"We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives" (Charter 2007)

- To uphold this core Value CEIST
- Articulates the distinctive charism of CEIST as a Catholic Education Trust
 - Affirms our commitment to promoting the spiritual and human development of each member of the CEIST community
 - Supports Board of Managements, Chairpersons, and school Principals and Deputy Principals in fulfilling their obligations as custodians of faith schools
 - Provides specific training for Chairpersons, Guidance Counsellors, Religious Education teachers and Chaplains to support them in their unique roles
 - Engages with parents and guardians as the primary educators of our students as they live their lives in accordance with Gospel values
 - Facilitates professional learning opportunities for school leaders as spiritual leaders in our CEIST schools
 - Encourages schools to provide a breadth of opportunities to foster student leadership, activate student voice, participation and belonging as children of Christ

- Provide programmes that enhance the spiritual and human richness of the lives of our school leaders
- Communicate a deep sense of social justice through all of our personal contacts, formal school visits and our various digital platforms
- Develop support networks for Chairpersons of our Boards, school leadership teams and for Guidance Counsellors / Chaplains and RE teachers, to facilitate their specialist work on behalf of our schools
- Facilitate Student Council Training and host an annual Leadership Conference with emphasis on student voice in a Catholic school
- Develop the Nano Nagle Student Assistance Fund, the CEIST Award, CEIST competitions and scholarships, the annual Student Conference and Gatherings and other appropriate networks

- Animate in the Admissions Policy in our schools a unified and standardised descriptor of the Characteristic Spirit of our CEIST family
- Provide additional training for newly appointed Chairpersons
- Review and update the Transition Manual for newly appointed Principals.
- Facilitate transition meetings with retiring and newly appointed Principals
- Ensure the Parent / Guardian voice at all levels of CEIST
- Engage with Parent and Student Councils during formal school visits

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

"We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning" (Charter 2007)

- To uphold this core Value CEIST
- Commits to our own learning and to learning with and from others
 - Provides professional learning opportunities for teaching staffs, newly appointed staff, aspiring leaders, support staff and Boards of Management
 - Promotes processes to improve quality in teaching and learning
 - Refines mechanisms for pooling and sharing experience and learning from quality improvement initiatives across the family of CEIST schools
 - Uses evidenced based data to ensure best practice
 - Works closely with Boards of Management and senior leadership teams in a supportive, enabling and mutually respectful way to ensure optimal outcomes for CEIST school communities

- Collate Inspectorate Reports to identify best practice, areas for improvement and aspects requiring additional attention
- Develop robust recruitment processes that ensures optimal appointments to senior leadership positions
- Provide specific training for newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals
- Advocate for enhanced provision and resources in our schools
- Expand the Principal and Deputy Principal Networks; Annual CEIST Conference, Leadership Gatherings, and CEIST Leadership Programmes

- Use evidence (including the commission of professional research) to support school improvement as measured against agreed standards, external evaluations, School Self-Evaluation Processes, reporting structures, formal visits and co-ordinator engagement
- Promote initiatives that enhance excellence in teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice
- Expand our role as Project Executive, supporting Boards of Management in delivering capital projects

Creating Community

"Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need" (Charter 2007)

- To uphold this core Value CEIST
- Sustains the CEIST community with common values and a shared purpose
 - Seeks to enhance our supports and resources for all our students
 - Promotes awareness of CEIST and the Founding Congregations among student body, staff cohorts and all members of our school communities
 - Engages with and contributes to national discourse aimed at achieving greater coherence in the Catholic education sector

- Deepen the relationship with our CEIST Members
- Grow and develop relationship with our sister company, The Educena Foundation
- Strengthen links with the Diocesan Advisors to our schools and among the family of patrons of Catholic secondary schools
- Engage with and contribute to national developments and discourse aimed at strengthening coherence in the Catholic education sector
- Facilitate the sharing of resources and best practice throughout the CEIST community of schools
- Embed the Ceiliuradh CEIST celebration into the annual calendar of every school
- Expand our suite of communication tools to extend influence, enhance identity and forge deeper bonds of unity amongst CEIST schools.

- Record the story of the origins of CEIST by commissioning a history of CEIST in its educational, social, religious and political context and its historic relationship with its sister company Educena and with the founding congregations
- Sustain and expand an active role in the Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools
- Develop an induction module to supplement each school's own 1st Year Induction Programme and Staff Induction packs
- Establish a unified digital STRATEGY to support and enhance the work of CEIST
- Develop specific support for schools exploring reconfiguration, our DEIS schools and schools which require additional assistance or operate in a uniquely challenging environment

Showing Respect for Every Person

"We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person" (Charter 2007)

- To uphold this core Value CEIST
- Recognises and respects the gifts, capacities and contributions of all members of our community
 - Builds capacity to listen to, appreciate, understand and respect the experience of people of all backgrounds, traditions, ethnicities, talents and beliefs
 - Promotes authentic leadership at all levels that recognises the unique and intrinsic value of every person
 - Endeavours to ensure that all CPD opportunities prioritise care of the individual particularly those that are disadvantaged or marginalised

- Give support to Boards of Management, in their oversight of Child Protection Safeguarding Procedures
- Support schools in their efforts to promote inclusion in all school policies and practices and in their promotion of workplace dignity and respect and positive behaviour.
- Promote the teaching of RSE to support an understanding of Catholic values, relationships and sexuality

- Support schools in areas of Ethical Decision Making and Care for our Common Home through the Catholic lens
- Faithful to our Catholic tradition and heritage, support schools' development of policies regarding Consent, Diversity and Gender identity
- Develop sustainable practices that illustrate our respect for the Earth and the gift of life as given to us by our Lord, Jesus Christ

Being Just and Responsible

"We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships" (Charter 2007)

- To uphold this core Value CEIST
- Understands our social responsibility to the world through thought, action and our values as enshrined in our Charter
 - Endeavours to act justly and responsibly in our relationships with each other, our family of schools, the entire educational community and the wider world
 - Supports one another in living out a shared commitment to justice, equality, responsibility and love
 - Protects those who are marginalised, vulnerable or at risk
 - Ensures that social justice, through action, ethical practice and advocacy, remains at the heart of each CEIST community
 - Equips ourselves and our school communities to understand and take up our responsibility as stewards of the earth

- Support and train our Boards of Management in exercising their duty of effective governance, compliance and financial oversight in every aspect and operation in the school.
- Strengthen our commitment to fairness, equality, integrity and honesty in our everyday practice

- Celebrate our shared care for the earth through our practices and teaching and through engagement with external agencies who share this common purpose
- Collaborate with partners to implement the seven goals of Laudato Si in our schools: the Cry of Earth, the Cry of the Poor, Ecological Economics, Simple Lifestyles, Ecological Education, Ecological Spirituality and Community Involvement and Participation
- Promote digital technologies that reduce wasteful use of scarce resources