



**Stratford College**  
*Co-educational Secondary School*

# **Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice: A Quality Framework**



## Foreward

I am delighted to introduce this document *Stratford College Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice: A Quality Framework*.

This Framework is the culmination of critical reflection and consultation with our stakeholders since 2018 on the values underpinning all aspects of our school life.

I look forward to using the Framework to guide our work over the coming years.

Patricia Gordon  
Principal



30 May 2023

## Introduction

Stratford College is a co-educational, fee-paying secondary school in Rathgar, Dublin 6.

Founded by the Dublin Jewish community in 1954, today the school welcomes students of all faiths and none. This commitment to cultural and religious diversity, while at the same time being committed to the religious education and formation of our Jewish students, makes our school truly unique in an Irish context.

In this Framework document we aim to provide a comprehensive picture of highly effective practices in relation to our school's ethos and values. It is designed to give the widest possible scope in identifying and achieving excellence in relation to living out the Stratford College ethos.

It is not an inflexible checklist but rather an enabler of critical self-reflection, helping us meet the needs of Stratford College now and into the future, in a way that is authentic, and practical.

## Purpose of the Framework

### Reflection

Reflection is a key element in the behaviour of effective teachers and leaders. This Framework can be used in a number of ways to support our teachers and leaders as they critically reflect on their practices in relation to ethos. This enables them to consider the impact of these practices on the wider Stratford College Community. By school community we mean our stakeholders patron body, staff, parents and students and the context in which we operate as a Department of Education recognized school.

As such, the Framework can be used;

- For individual self-reflection on professional practice and as an ongoing reference to support the development of individual confidence and competence in relation to the ethos of Stratford College.
- As a tool for reflection between staff of Stratford College.
- As a way to reflect on ethos with the wider Stratford College community.
- Informs the development of supports by Stratford College.

## **Transparency, Consistency and Accountability**

This Framework provides:

- Clarity regarding what living out our ethos in an effective way looks like.
- A transparent guide to support teachers and our school leaders in being accountable to their communities.
- Consistency in appraising strengths and a means of identifying areas for development.

## **Developing and Sustaining Staff**

Stratford College has considerable interest in developing and sustaining our teachers and leaders. This Framework provides a structure through which:

- We can gauge the appropriate supports needed in building the capacity of teachers, leaders and potential leaders.
- Experienced teachers and leaders can provide advice and guidance for new and emerging staff members.

## **Recruitment of Staff**

The recruitment of staff is one of the most important roles that Stratford College undertakes. These decisions have a long-term impact on ethos. This Framework provides support in this endeavour by:

- Highlighting good practice for all potential employees which is central to developing and maintaining the ethos of Stratford College
- Facilitating clarity and consistency in any consideration of candidates during the interview process for Stratford College.
- Ensuring potential candidates, and those recruiting candidates, have a clear understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of teachers and Stratford College leaders in relation to Ethos.

## Induction of Staff and Students

Good induction of new staff and students is central to their integration to the Stratford College community. This Framework supports the induction of new staff and students by:

- Providing a clear understanding of Stratford College ethos and how it is lived out in Stratford College.
- Facilitating new staff and students to reflect on the ethos of Stratford College schools and how their practices and behaviours should be informed to support this ethos.

## Parents and Guardians

Proactive relationships with parents and guardians are key to creating a cohesive Stratford College community. This Framework supports relationship building with our Stratford College parent/guardians by:

- Providing clarity regarding what living out Stratford College ethos looks like.
- Facilitating the involvement of parents/guardians in sustaining the Stratford College ethos.

## School Self-Evaluation of Ethos

From time-to-time we may wish to engage in a Stratford College self-evaluation of ethos and this framework will provide the structure for doing so effectively.

## Vision

Stratford College's vision is –

*Honouring the past,  
valuing the present  
and committing to the future*

Most pupils in Stratford College are of other faiths or none, however the legacy of our heritage underpins all aspects of our school life and is encapsulated in this vision. Stratford College continues to be the school of choice for most Jewish families. Although small in number they are a vital part of our school mission.

### *Honouring the past:*

Founded by the Jewish community in 1954 Stratford College has a deep understanding of what is to be a minority religion and culture and so strives to create an especially welcoming, accepting and respectful campus and environment for all.

We believe our legacy gives us a perspective and ability to celebrate equality, diversity and belonging, ensuring all our students feel seen and accepted.

### *Valuing the present and committing to the future:*

Stratford College provides meaningful learning opportunities in an environment that is open and inclusive, and which encourages all individuals to flourish and reach their potential.

Stratford helps students transform their own lives through education and progressive pedagogies. We strive to encourage and guide our young people to new possibilities.

Our outlook and intent in all we do is spirited, curious, agile, caring and we seek excellence.

The school is a progressive, open, innovative and diverse environment.

This founding vision continues to inspire Stratford College's mission - educating our students in an inclusive academic environment which seeks to foster in young people a sense of personal and academic achievement, of respect for diversity, celebration of our values and service to the community.

## **Mission**

Stratford College aims to provide a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education. The school is a dynamic, learning organisation.

*Definition: School as a learning organisation (SLO) – a school as a learning organisation has the capacity to change and adapt routinely to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, learn their way to realising their vision. OECD Education Working Papers No. 137 What Makes A School A Learning Organisation?*

We are dedicated to:

- Creating a village campus where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of their place in, and responsibility to, society whereby each of our students fully participates in their school life.
- Inspiring within our Jewish students a deep appreciation and passion for their tradition, while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.
- Promoting personal achievement and academic success in a vibrant co-educational environment.
- Creating a sense of belonging for all our students.
- Understanding our role as custodians of a unique Jewish culture. We are committed to ensuring this unique legacy can thrive and be shared in a relevant and engaging manner with all our students, and the wider community.

## Culture and Values

The school's Jewish legacy is a deep and important driver of who we are, the core values of which are reflected in the lived, essential values of the school:

*Openness, Respect, Tolerance, Care  
Engagement with our community and the world.  
Excellence in teaching and learning.*

These values translate into a school that is open to transformation, renewal, growth, change, energy, intuition and belief.

And these core values, in a practical and measurable way are a living guide to our school culture and our school experience.

## School Crest



Our school crest, proudly worn on our school uniform, represents the two tablets containing the 10 commandments from the Book of Exodus in the Bible.

*The crest reflects our ethos and values:*

- Our continuing pride in our heritage, and our commitment to learning, wisdom, thought and guidance.
- It represents opening our students up and guiding them to new possibilities through education.
- And our commitment to honour the past, value the present and commit to the future.

*The two tablets - In the Bible, during the Israelites' encounter with God at Sinai, Moses was given two tablets with the ten commandments inscribed on them. In Jewish tradition, the tablets have come to represent the Torah (Jewish law and custom).*

*The torch - In Judaism, light is seen as a representation of the Divine and of moral goodness. In modern-day Israel, Independence day commences with a torch-lighting ceremony, representing the outstanding contributions the Jewish people have made to society.*

*The olive branch - In the Bible, the people of Israel are compared to an olive tree. In Judaism, the olive branch represents both peace and wisdom. The two olive branches going around the crest was likely inspired by the crest of Jerusalem, which has the same feature. Rabbi Yoni Wieder January 2024*





## Conclusion

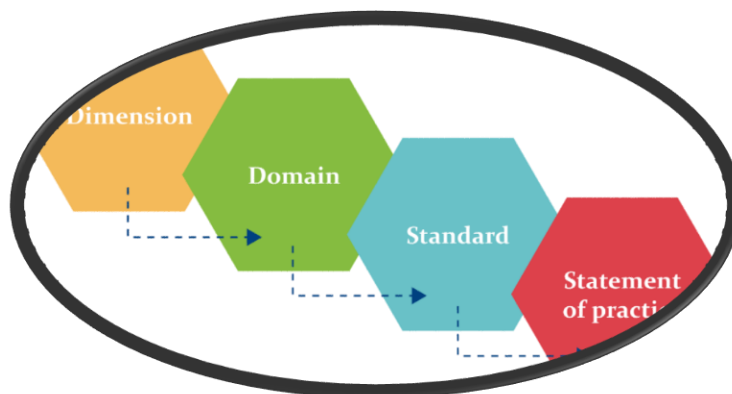
Stratford College is a school with a rich and proud history. We have a clear understanding of our core values and ethos, the exploration of which has included stakeholder input and reflection.

The broader school community shares this understanding which is reinforced daily through the teaching practice, culture, behaviours, communication and the overall environment.

Our ethos and values are measurable, practical and authentic.

## Outline of Framework on Ethos

The Framework is developed in line with the Looking at our School (LAOS) Framework that all schools are very familiar with. Central to the Framework are domains, definitions, standards and statements of effective practice.



*Looking at our Schools: A Quality Framework DE 2022 (Post Primary)*

<b>Domain</b>	Each domain represents a distinct, but interrelated aspect of the ethos of Stratford College.
<b>Definition</b>	A definition is provided for each domain to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the concepts.
<b>Standard</b>	The standards are stated as the behaviours and attributes characteristic of practices related to ethos in an effective, well-functioning school.
<b>Statements</b>	The statements of effective practice describe practices in the day-to-day life of a school where our Stratford College ethos is lived out in an effective way.

## An Overview of Stratford College Ethos Standards and Statements of Highly Effective Practice

Domain	Definition	Standards
<b>Centrality of Our Ethos</b>	The ethos underpins all policies practices in the school. It informs the values taught to students attending the school, how the formal and informal curriculum are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school. Ample opportunities are provided for all members of the Stratford College community to reflect on the ethos.	<p>The ethos is clearly visible and communicated to all members of the Stratford College community.</p> <p>It is reflected in how we communicate internally and externally to all key stakeholders.</p> <p>Stratford College leadership and teachers ensure the systematic promotion and application of the ethos in key decision-making processes.</p>
<b>Excellence in Teaching and Learning.</b>	Our ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by our core values. Excellence encompasses outcomes, experiences and expectations for all members of the Stratford College community.	Stratford College strives to achieve excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning.
<b>Engagement with our community and the World</b>	<p>The Stratford College community encompasses students, staff, parents, <b>our patron and local community</b>. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the Stratford College community.</p> <p>Founded by the Jewish community we are committed to providing a Jewish education for our Jewish students, while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.</p>	<p>We value our Jewish identity, religions, legacy and heritage in our school's teaching, culture, values and policies.</p> <p>Students, staff and parents experience a sense of belonging and purpose as members of the Stratford College community.</p> <p>All members of the Stratford College community are provided with meaningful opportunities to have an active voice in the school.</p> <p>Stratford College is immersed in, reflects and engages with local and national communities in order to support the work of Stratford College and the local community.</p>
<b>Caring</b>	Care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the Stratford College community. It is	Stratford College provides a caring environment that effectively promotes the welfare of all its members.



	exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.	Staff ensure that they get to know the interests and abilities of individual students. Systematic approaches are developed and implemented in relation to student and staff support and in particular supports for the most vulnerable.
<b>Tolerance, Openness and Respect</b>	<p>Openness and respect are about treating all members of the Stratford College community equally, and recognizing and celebrating the diversity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need, and prioritising a culture of belonging.</p> <p>An acceptance and understanding of diversity has always been part of the Stratford College experience. The school has had a tradition of welcoming students outside of the Jewish faith. This makes its commitment to diversity both long-term and authentic.</p>	Stratford College promotes a respectful environment for all members of the Stratford College community.



## Ethos Standards and Statements of Effective Practice for Stratford College

### Domain: Engaging with the Community and the world

In Stratford College, community encompasses students, staff, parents, our patron and local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the Stratford College community.

Standards	Statements of Effective Practice
Stratford College is immersed in, reflects and engages with our patron, local and national communities in order to support the work of Stratford College and the local community	<p>The Jewish identity, religion and heritage of the school are celebrated to reinforce the religious formation and identity of our Jewish students, as a way of understanding plurality and diversity; and how the contribution of Jewish history and culture to Irish life more generally is fostered. Our religion, legacy and heritage is celebrated and shared in a way that is inclusive and fosters understanding and respect among all.</p> <p>The ethos of Stratford College is communicated within our patron and local community in order to highlight its values and purpose.</p> <p>Stratford College provides opportunities for members of our school community to engage, where possible, at various levels with local schools, and local and national networks. Stratford College promotes professional networks for Stratford College staff and ensures that staff avail of the range of supports provided by the Department of Education support services and other external bodies.</p>
Students, staff and parents experience a sense of belonging and purpose as members of the Stratford College community	Students, staff and parents of all religions and belief identities are treated equally. The Stratford College environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst at the same time acknowledging and facilitating students of Jewish faith.
	Staff and parent induction information and school communications will include sufficient to promote diversity and belonging in our school community.
	Community is promoted as a core value and informs Stratford College policy development and implementation, as well as practice and decision-making at a whole Stratford College and classroom level.
	Mechanisms are in place to ensure that all members of our community can reflect on the ethos and purposes of Stratford College and on their role in supporting its development.
	All members of our school community are encouraged to contribute to and support the development of the school.
	Staff create a sense of community in the classroom in which all students learn and practice the skills of collaboration. Students experience a sense of belonging, shared responsibility for the learning and welfare of fellow students.



	Opportunities are provided for new students to settle into the school, to get to know their peers, make friends and develop a sense of belonging.
	Students identify positively with our school and take pride in representing Stratford College in various events, activities and external communication.
	Stratford Schools campus is maintained and furnished so as to support the values and purpose of Stratford College and promote a sense of welcome, pride and belonging among members of our school community. The work and achievements of students are displayed and celebrated throughout the school.
	There is a strong sense of co-operative effort among all staff and they are provided with opportunities to collaborate and support each other in order to improve teaching and learning. New members of staff receive induction and newly qualified teachers are sufficiently supported and mentored.
	Clear and effective systems of communication exist between all members of our school community in order to ensure they are informed on relevant matters. Feedback is periodically gathered on an appropriate vehicle for communication.
All members of the school community are provided with meaningful opportunities to have an active voice in the school	Student voice and choice is promoted and facilitated at a classroom and whole school level in order to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence. Stratford College endeavours to ensure that students grow in an understanding of the power of their own voice, that they grow in the skills and confidence required to use their voice effectively for the good of themselves and others. Stratford College is particularly mindful to ensure all student given the opportunity to participate.
	Members of our school community are meaningfully consulted on the development of policies and procedures and as part of the Stratford College self-evaluation process.
	A Parents' Association is established and supported to build positive relationships between home and school.
	The Board of Management meaningfully collaborates with the Parents' Association and the Student Council in the management of the school.

### **Domain: The Centrality of Ethos**

Definition: In Stratford College, the ethos underpins all policies and practices in the school. It informs the values taught to students attending the school, how the formal and informal curriculum are delivered, and the nature of the relationships within the school. Ample opportunities are provided for all members of the Stratford College community to reflect on the ethos.

Standards	Statements of Effective Practice
Our ethos is clearly visible and communicated to all members of the Stratford College community.	All members our school community, including students, parents, staff, Board of Management are aware of our ethos and their responsibility to uphold and promote it.
	The ethos is evident throughout the campus and online Stratford College environment.
	As part of induction programmes, opportunities are provided for discussion and clarification of our ethos.
	The ethos of Stratford College is visible in all policy, promotional, communication, recruitment and relevant documents.
	Recruitment processes provide opportunities to discuss the ethos and the expectations for all members of the Stratford College community to uphold it.
	All members of our school community are provided with formal and informal opportunities to discuss and reflect on the ethos of the school.
	Opportunities for the articulation and discussion of the ethos is an inherent part of meetings of the Student Council, Parent Association, staff and Board of Management.
Stratford College leadership ensures the systematic promotion and application of the ethos in key decision-making processes.	All Stratford College leaders and members of the Board of Management take responsibility for the promotion of the Stratford College ethos.
	The ethos of Stratford College is articulated in all Stratford College policies and procedures and is central to their development and implementation.
	Stratford College leadership address Stratford College practices or the expressions of views that are not in keeping with the ethos of the school.

### Domain: Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Definition: The Stratford College ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by our ethos.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning encompasses:

- Outcomes, where all members of the Stratford College, community are enabled to reach their full potential;
- Experiences, where provision is tailored to individual skills and needs, and a positive environment offers safety and support and encourages exploration and taking risks in learning;
- Expectations, where all members of the Stratford College, community collaborate, play their roles to the best of their ability, and are motivated to learn in different ways;

- the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and moral aspects of the identity of students.

*Although 'Excellence in Education' is a core value underpinning the ethos of Stratford College it is not outlined in this document in the same way as the other domains. The rationale for this is that schools are already working with the LAOS Framework which clearly addresses effective practice in teaching and learning. Therefore, outlining standards and statements of effective practice underpinning this domain would have led to duplication of work.*

*The Quality of Jewish Education is also under the scrutiny of the UK Pikuach Inspection Model.*

## Standards

## Statements of Effective Practice

Stratford College aims to achieve excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning

Statements of effective practice for excellence in teaching and learning are set out in Looking at Our Schools 2016: A Quality Framework for Primary/ Post-Primary Schools (DES Inspectorate, 2016).

### Domain: Caring

Definition: In Stratford College care relates to the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the Stratford College community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.

Stratford College provides a caring environment that effectively promotes the welfare of all its members.

Wellbeing is promoted as a core value and informs Stratford College policy development and implementation, as well as practice and decision-making at a whole Stratford College and classroom level

A whole school wellbeing policy is developed, communicated and implemented at a classroom and whole Stratford College level. Specific wellbeing-related policies are in place such as, Child Protection, Anti-Bullying and Critical Incident.

As part of the Stratford College curriculum, students learn the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for wellbeing including the development of social and emotional competencies e.g. effective listening, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, tolerance, empathy and mutual respect for individual differences.

Positive, supporting relationships are established and the Stratford College is experienced as a caring, inclusive environment that treats all members equally.

Students and staff are connected, acknowledged and supported in Stratford College and have a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Staff care about students and support their learning and development.

Staff model caring behaviour in their interactions with Stratford College leadership, colleagues and all other members of the Stratford College community.

Stratford College leadership has systems in place to support all members of staff. Staff wellbeing is enhanced through professional learning/ networks, celebrating staff strengths and achievements,





	encouragement to collaborate with other staff, and access to professional advice.
	Members of the school community have opportunities to raise issues of concern in a safe and supportive manner.
Staff ensure that they get to know the interests and abilities of individual students.	Effective working relationships and reporting structures are developed between relevant settings such as early childhood care and education settings, primary feeder schools and post-primary schools in order to support the transition of students from one setting to the next.
	Procedures are in place to gather information on students who are at risk, so that early interventions may be provided.
	Teachers take time to get to know their students' strengths, challenges and interests to support their learning and wellbeing.
	Assessment results are used effectively by staff so as to ensure that appropriate levels of challenge and support are provided to students.
Systematic approaches are developed and implemented in relation to student support and in particular supports for the most vulnerable.	<p>An effective two-way communication process has been established to engage parents with the intention of increasing student engagement, achievement and progression. Stratford College communicates with parents on such issues including student welfare, achievement and attainment. Clear protocols are in place to provide parents with opportunities to communicate with Stratford College leadership and/or individual teachers.</p> <p>Clear, whole-Stratford College policies, procedures and structures are established in order to guide a responsive, systematic and evidence-based approach to the provision of support for all students. Roles and responsibilities for student support are clearly delineated and effective systems for meetings, communication, reporting and record keeping are established and implemented. Staff are facilitated to engage with relevant professional development to build their capacity in their provision of support for students.</p> <p>A student support team is established and operates in line with national guidelines.</p>

### Domain: Openness and Respect

Definition: In Stratford College, openness and respect are about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the Stratford College community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the Stratford College community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the Stratford College community.

In Stratford College equality is about treating all members of the Stratford College, community equally, recognising and celebrating the diversity and dignity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need, and prioritising a culture of inclusion.

#### Standards

#### Statements of Effective Practice

Stratford College promotes an open and respectful environment for all

Openness and respect are promoted as core value within Stratford College and informs the school's policy, practice and decision-making at a whole school and classroom level.

members of the Stratford College community.	
	All members of the school community are mutually respectful in their interactions with each other and the Stratford College environment.
	Different points of view among members of the Stratford College, community are respected within the parameters of the ethos of the school.
	Stratford College staff are treated respectfully by all members of the Stratford College community.
	Students experience classrooms as learning environments in which they are treated with dignity and respect in an atmosphere conducive to dialogue, questioning, and making mistakes.
Stratford College develops and implements an effective code of behaviour in line with the ethos of the school.	In line with national guidelines, the code of behaviour is developed through collaboration with the school community and reflects the ethos of the school.
	Clear expectations are communicated to all members of the school community regarding student behaviour and the consequences for unacceptable behaviour.
	Opportunities are provided to students, parents and staff to discuss the code of behaviour and their role in maintaining a positive Stratford College environment.
	A positive approach to behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
Stratford College promotes a culture of equality and belonging which affirms diversity within the Stratford College community.	The admission policy and procedures provide equal opportunities for student enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Stratford College is physically and culturally accessible to potential students and their families.
	In accordance with equality legislation all members of the Stratford College, community are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/beliefs, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status and their rights are respected.
	The core value of respect is evident in the visual images, resources, and displays used throughout the Stratford College environment.
	The values of belonging and respect for diversity are evident in all policy documents, communications, events and activities of the Stratford College at a whole Stratford College and classroom level.
	Staff are facilitated to engage in professional learning to understand their role in promoting equality and challenging inequality.

	Members of our school community are provided with opportunities to reflect on their potential bias towards certain groups and the impact such biases have on perpetuating inequality. Particular attention is paid to highlight those who are disadvantaged or made poor by the inequalities in the world.
	Students have equitable opportunities to engage with the curriculum and to participate in the life of the school. Staff actively promote a strength-based approach with high expectations for the participation, achievement, and attainment of all students.
	Students have equitable opportunities to engage with the curriculum and to participate in the life of the school. Staff actively promote a strength-based approach with high expectations for the participation, achievement, and attainment of all students.
	Data is used to evaluate and address underperformance, or lack of opportunity afforded to any specific groups/ identities.
	Diversity within the Stratford College, community is meaningfully affirmed on an ongoing basis in both the formal and hidden curriculum and the organisational structures in place in the school.
	All students and their families are supported in overcoming potential barriers to having equal access to the curriculum and Stratford College life by being provided with appropriate access to facilities, information, services and supports of the school.
	Resources of Stratford College are equitably distributed in an attempt to ensure that all students reach their potential. Where necessary and appropriate, students are provided with additional supports and reasonable accommodations.

## Appendix 1

### Governance

Dublin Talmud Torah is our Patron Body and it is under the auspices of Dublin Hebrew Congregation. It is the owner of the school campus and buildings.

*The conduct, management and financial administration of the school shall be under the control of the Board of Management (hereinafter called “The Board”) which shall exercise the powers hereinafter conferred, subject to the general supervision and control of the Trustees.*

*The School shall be conducted in accordance with the religious and educational philosophy of the aforesaid Institute as contained in the second schedule hereto and in accordance with such Statutory Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education of the Republic of Ireland as may be in force from time to time and as may have been agreed by the Trustees, and in accordance with the provisions of these Articles, and shall not be conducted for personal gain or farmed out to the Principal or any other person.*  
***Stratford College Articles of Management 2012***

### Characteristic Spirit/Statement of Ethos

There can be some confusion around the differing terms used to describe the culture and values of a school. The Education Act defines the term ‘characteristic spirit’ as being “determined by the cultural, educational, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school...”. The NCCA defines it as “an expression of the aims, objectives, goals, values and beliefs which the school aspires to, endorses and preserves”. Essentially, the characteristic spirit of the school is the values underpinning all aspects of school life.

It is widely argued that the concepts of ‘characteristic spirit’ and ‘ethos’ are synonymous and can be used inter-changeably. The Education Act may have avoided the use of the word ‘ethos’ as in the past it had religious connotations in an Irish context. However, internationally, the word ‘ethos’ does not have such connotations and is widely used to describe the beliefs, values and practices underpinning the life of any school. As ‘ethos’ is a recognisable term to students, parents and teachers, Stratford College has chosen to use the word ‘ethos’ instead of the term ‘characteristic spirit’. ***ETBI Patrons Framework on Ethos***

## Appendix 2

### Stratford College Statement of Ethos

Stratford College was founded by the Dublin Jewish Community and provides a secondary education within a Jewish ethos, as defined by The Chief Rabbi of Ireland. It also welcomes pupils from other denominations and those of none. This richness of heritage combined with our experience of valuing other minority groups and of individuals makes our school truly unique. We welcome students from primary schools who share our commitment to such cultural and religious diversity.

Our Mission Statement aims to provide a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education. We are dedicated to:

- Providing a nurturing environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of their place in, and responsibility to, society.
- Instructing Jewish students in their religion while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.
- Promoting personal achievement and academic success.
- Creating a sense of belonging for all students.
- Respecting the unique potential of every student and encouraging each to maximise it.

The founding values continue to inspire the school today; those of educating our students in an inclusive academic environment which seeks to foster in young people a sense of personal and academic achievement, of respect for diversity and of service to the community.

## Appendix 3

### **Ethos to Practice: What does the legacy & heritage of our school mean in practice?**

Our culture reflects a unique school, a Jewish school with a multicultural and diverse student body.

This commitment to cultural and religious diversity, while at the same time being committed to the religious education and formation of our Jewish students, makes our school truly unique.

#### **Whole School**

#### **Excellence in Teaching and Learning encompasses:**

- Outcomes, where all members of the Stratford College, community are enabled to reach their full potential;
- Experiences, where provision is tailored to individual skills and needs, and a positive environment offers safety and support and encourages exploration and taking risks in learning;
- Expectations, where all members of the Stratford College, community collaborate, play their roles to the best of their ability, and are motivated to learn in different ways;
- the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and moral aspects of the identity of students.

Although 'Excellence in Education' is a core value underpinning the ethos of Stratford College it is not outlined in this document in the same way as the other domains. The rationale for this is that schools are already working with the LAOS Framework which clearly addresses effective practice in teaching and learning. Therefore, outlining standards and statements of effective practice underpinning this domain would have led to duplication of work.

The Quality of Jewish Education is also under the scrutiny of the UK Pikuach Inspection Model.

**Policies and procedures** are developed and implemented through the lens of the mission and values of our school.

**Please note: anything that impacts on matters of faith, morals, curriculum, policy and/or religious practice of a Jewish child or employee in the day to day life of the school are referred to the Rabbi for his approval or consultation prior to any commitment being entered into.**

### **School Calendar**

Important days in the Jewish year are celebrated by all students and activities are planned with these in mind. See our Information Handbooks for details of these festivals.

We are open for the same number of days as all secondary schools but organise some of the closures differently. Our School Calendar reflects the obligations for observant Jews during the High Holy Festivals. The festivals begin the evening beforehand so no school activities are organized on those evenings or days. See this [link](#) for more details on the importance of these days for Jewish families.

Sometimes these dates may clash with state exams. If this happens the State Examinations facilitates our observant Jewish students by arranging alternative exams. We are extremely grateful for their support to our ethos in this regard.

The school office is closed for these days.

### **Celebration of Jewish Festivals**

We hold an Annual Jewish Assembly to celebrate the period of Jewish festivals in Autumn. These festivals are explained in detail in our BOM, Staff and Parents Handbooks.

If the Festival of Hanukkah (Winter) falls during term time we light a menorah and provide doughnuts (oily food is associated with the festival of Hanukkah) for the school community.

If the Festival of Purim (Spring) falls during term time we celebrate World Book Day and dress up as Literary Characters, and enjoy sweet hamantaschen. These events are explained at the nearest school assembly.

The teachings of Tikkun Olan or repairing the world express the Jewish desire to encourage harmony in the world: social harmony, people being able to live in peace with each other, enjoying health, justice and prosperity and the duty of care for the environment.

### **Well Being**

Our Junior Cycle, Transition Year and Senior Cycle Programmes aim to provide the highest quality teaching and learning experiences for our students. See our handbooks for more details.

Well being includes social, emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual and environmental aspects. Learning in Wellbeing focuses on the students' journey across all aspects of wellbeing.

Well being is supported through our policies, curricular programmes and our Student Support and Pastoral Care Teams.

Social Action (or Mitzvah Week (blessings) (winter) promotes a spirit of volunteerism, social action and/or fund raising for our two long standing charitable agencies Focus Ireland and Concern Worldwide.

The Jewish principle of stewardship of the environment lies at the heart of our engagement in our Green Schools Programme.

### **Jewish Culture and Heritage**

Jewish Arts and Culture Ireland (JACI) is a sub-committee of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland and is focused on fostering and supporting the arts relating to Jewish culture and heritage in Ireland, Israel and other Jewish diasporas.

There are many visitors to the school some of whom are involved with Jewish arts, culture and religion.

### **Dietary**

All foods officially or formally provided on the premises should be kosher. In case formally-certified kosher catering is not available, vegetarian, and other foods that comply with the rules of Kashrut will be provided.

### **Junior Cycle Jewish Studies**

The National Junior Cycle Jewish Studies Specification is a cultural studies programme and is approved by the Department of Education. It is open to all students.

In practice, our Jewish students take Jewish Studies and our non Jewish students study an alternative cultural studies programme, Classical Studies.

Teaching of Junior Cycle Jewish Studies is under the authority of the Department of Education, Ireland and its Inspectorate. Key quality standards are outlined in Looking at our Schools: A Quality Framework Post Primary 2022 and school self- evaluation of these standards is facilitated via these guidelines.

Transition Year students take a module in Holocaust Studies as part of their TY History course, and, separately, Jewish/Classical Studies as relevant.

### **Jewish Education for Our Jewish Students**



Jewish education has been a core value to the Jewish people throughout history and is essential to carry on Jewish tradition and values. Jewish education influences Jewish identity, engagement, and continuity.

Jewish education in Stratford aims to transmit Jewish religion and heritage through experience and immersion.

- To inspire within our Jewish students a deep appreciation and passion for their tradition.
- To cultivate a strong sense of identity with the Jewish People and Jewish History.
- To stimulate exploration of the rich teachings and traditions of Judaism, with an open and curious mind.
- To enable our students to be leaders in all spheres of contemporary life, within both the Jewish community and wider society.
- We enable our students to engage with Judaism on an experiential level: *Tefilah* is an essential part of our daily schedule for our Jewish students, who begin their mornings with prayers every day.  
We celebrate and emphasise the importance of Shabbat and the festivals.

**Senior Cycle Jewish Studies** is a religious formation course of study for Jewish students.

**The Quality of all Jewish Education** is also the scrutiny of the UK Pikuach Inspection Model. Click on the link for more details.

# Appendix 4

## References

**The Articles of Management Stratford College**

<https://www.stratfordcollege.ie/content/home/Stratford-College-Articles-of-Management-October-2012.pdf?v=1654759935>

**Stratford College**

<https://www.stratfordcollege.ie/about-us/principals-welcome>

**Looking at Out Schools: A Quality Framework Post Primary 2022**

<https://assets.gov.ie/25261/c97d1cc531f249c9a050a9b3b4a0f62b.pdf>

**School Self Evaluation Post Primary 2022**

<https://assets.gov.ie/232734/3e6ca885-96ec-45a6-9a08-3e810b7cd1ea.pdf>

**Well Being Policy and Framework for Schools**

<https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cco7626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf>

**Pikuach**

<https://www.pikuachuk.org/>

**Jewish Family Life and Customs**

<https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/5518-Jewish-Family-Life-Booklet.pdf>

**Employers Guide to Judaism**

<https://bod.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Employers-Guide-to-Judaism2.pdf>

