

MISSION STATEMENT

1. ***"To create an environment which nurtures Faith, one which will provide students with an informed understanding of the Catholic Faith, but which also motivates them to live their lives in accordance with Gospel values."***
- 1.1 Blackrock College is a Catholic school with the particular task of communicating both an intelligent understanding of that tradition, and of encouraging each student's personal acceptance of Jesus as his Saviour.
- 1.2 The School community, a living entity of Christ's Church, lives according to Gospel values that it cherishes and which it wishes to promote. It believes that if the gospel is to take root in the minds, hearts and lives of the students, this will be due, in no small measure, to experiencing the values of the gospel lived, in the first place in their homes, and secondly in the school community.
- 1.3 The School tries to motivate its students to work for the promotion of a caring, Christian society in which honesty and justice are fostered.
- 1.4 Blackrock sees itself as having a particular obligation towards the disadvantaged members of society in line with the missionary traditions of its founders, the Holy Ghost Congregation. We wish our students, guided by their conscience, to be sensitive to their needs. We encourage an attitude of service towards others rather than one that is exclusively self-serving.
- 1.5 The school is ecumenical in its disposition. Members of other faiths are welcomed, and freedom of conscience in all matters pertaining to faith and conviction is respected.

THE PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

- 1.6 Formal religious education will be placed at the heart of the school's programme of instruction.
- 1.7 Provision will be made:
 - For active participation in sacramental and liturgical ceremonies;
 - For reflection and prayer;
 - For counselling and spiritual direction;
 - For an annual Retreat.
- 1.8 Students will be made aware of the many injustices in society; they will be made sensitive to the voice of the poor and the downtrodden.
- 1.9 Through groups within the school such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Aidlink, the Social Awareness Groups, and such other groups, the students will be encouraged to work for the creation of a more Christian society.
- 1.10 Mass will be available each morning for the school community.
- 1.11 Church Unity Octave will be celebrated annually emphasising the common heritage of all Christians.

2. "To provide a community environment in which each student can develop his full human potential."

- 2.1 The sense of community is strong in Blackrock. This is helped by the fact that the College has been from its foundation - in part at least - a boarding school.
- 2.2 The community is a living entity formed over the years by all who have been in any way a part of the school's life. The members of the community are at once the beneficiaries and the stewards of this heritage.
- 2.3 The community spirit reaches beyond the walls and the confines of the time spent by students at the College.
- 2.4 Blackrock accepts that education is concerned with the development of the full potential of each student as he has been gifted by God and called to a special relationship with him in Christ's Church.
- 2.5 A student's spiritual, academic, emotional, moral, social and physical well-being must be pursued as a whole, not as isolated, independent parts. A Blackrock education fosters the development of every aspect of a student's personality.
- 2.6 Excellence, commensurate with ability, is the target in every sphere of school life.

PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

- 2.7 Assemblies with students, meetings with parents, staff meetings and other such gatherings, will be used to stress the importance of community spirit.
- 2.8 The importance of thoughtfulness, understanding, tolerance, and support for each person, student or adult, will be emphasised.
- 2.9 Respect for each individual without discrimination of race, sex, creed, social status, will be fostered.
- 2.10 The House System will be used to promote a feeling of acceptance where the contribution of each will be valued.
- 2.11 Each will be encouraged to play his/her part in the development of the school community.
- 2.12 Teachers, Deans and Coaches will encourage each student to achieve excellence across the broad spectrum of the College curriculum. A range of cultural, pastoral, social and sporting activities will be made available. Rugby will be the main school sport.
- 2.13 Each Year Group will have its own Counsellor who will be available to assist students to achieve their full potential.
- 2.14 A Special Educational Needs Department will address the needs of students, where necessary.
- 2.15 Weaker students will be assigned to small class groupings.
- 2.16 Special care and support will be given to students and parents in times of crisis and suffering.

3. *"To encourage each student to live his life as a responsible member of society, initially as a student, later as an adult citizen."*

- 3.1 Blackrock strives to encourage "Fides et Robur" where its students become creative and responsible citizens and leaders.
- 3.2 Through participation in the school's many activities, the student become well-balanced, trustworthy and informed people, capable of both independent and co-operative activity.
- 3.3 Blackrock seeks to develop in its students a capacity for good interpersonal skills and especially for a positive, caring role within family life.

PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

- 3.4 Each will be encouraged to accept personal responsibility for his actions.
- 3.5 The school will look for high standards of conduct, diligence and deportment, at all times trying to develop persons who are responsible and inner directed, capable of choosing freely in accordance with their conscience.
- 3.6 Each will be encouraged to play an active role in school life, with particular emphasis on team events
- 3.7 Opportunities for initiative and leadership will be provided within the school.

These are:

- Captains will be elected in each House, in each Year.
- Various responsibilities will be assigned within the Boarding School.
- Liturgical leadership will be fostered.
- Student Council – two representatives from each year group and the boarding school - will meet fortnightly in accordance with its constitution.

4. *"To prepare and equip each student for the pursuit of an appropriate career."*

4.1 A range of learning experiences is provided in a developmental sequence, designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to make changes consequent to these choices.

PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

4.2 Blackrock will continue to adapt itself to the educational requirements of a rapidly changing world through an ongoing review of its curriculum, and through the introduction of new subjects as appropriate.

4.3 The school will offer guidance and support to each student, encouraging each to achieve his best.

4.4 Aptitude tests will be administered to help students make appropriate choices.

4.5 Past students and others will provide career talks for the students.

4.6 Students, during the course of their time in the College, will be given the opportunity of availing of a programme of work experience organised by past students and parents.

4.7 Final Year students will be given practical guidelines on the preparation of a C.V., interview techniques and suchlike.

5. "To transmit to the students an appreciation of their cultural heritage."

- 5.1 Blackrock College seeks to transmit to its pupils a thorough knowledge of the Irish language along with an awareness of its leading role in modern Irish culture. Use of the language, both inside and outside the classroom, is promoted and encouraged.
- 5.2 The College fosters an appreciation of Ireland's Gaelic heritage, while at the same time helping students to appreciate and understand other cultural traditions on this island.
- 5.3 In the context of today's world, students are made aware of their European heritage.
- 5.4 The cultivation of an appreciation of language, literature, music, art and drama is an important aspect of college life.

PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

- 5.5 A Blackrock College 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' will be promoted and supported each year.
- 5.6 Pupils will be encouraged to visit the Gaeltacht during holiday periods.
- 5.7 All signs in the school will be bilingual, wherever practicable.
- 5.8 A cross-border school exchange will be organised each year.
- 5.9 Debating Societies will be organised at Junior and Senior level.
- 5.10 Insofar as is practicable, each student will study at least one European language.
- 5.11 At least one musical will be produced annually.
- 5.12 The Leman Concert will be organised annually, to be held in the National Concert Hall.
- 5.13 Drama and Public Speaking will be promoted within the school.
- 5.14 Orchestral and Choral work will be fostered. Individual instrument tuition is provided.
- 5.15 Students will be encouraged and facilitated in their use of the Library.

6. "To promote parental/guardian collaboration in the educational programme of the school."

- 6.1 Recognising the importance of community, Blackrock encourages the support and active involvement of parents in the education of their sons.
- 6.2 The Irish Constitution states that the primary and natural educators of the child are the parents. The School sees itself as a partner with parents in the work of education. It believes that there are many advantages to be gained from close home-school collaboration.

PRACTICAL STEPS TAKEN TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM:

- 6.3 **Information:** Parents will be kept informed about activities which are available within the school, and about their son's performance by means of:

1. Weekly Application Cards/Monthly Progress Cards
2. Reports at the end of each Term
3. Newsletters
4. Website and Email

- 6.4 **Invitations:** Parents will be invited to the school for a variety of occasions which will afford opportunities for interaction with members of staff. These will include:

- Invitation at the beginning of each school year to meet the Dean in charge of their son
- Invitation to the parents of new students to a meeting before the school year commences at which they will be informed about the school's policies and procedures, and they will be given an opportunity of discussing these with the school personnel
- Parents will be invited to special functions each year, such as liturgical celebrations, graduation celebrations, social evenings and seminars
- Parents will be invited to discuss with members of the staff the subjects to be chosen by their sons at the end of their Junior Cycle
- There will be an annual parent/teacher meeting for each year at which parents will be free to discuss their sons' development

- Consultation and involvement:** Through the Parents Association, the College will regularly discuss policies and initiatives with parents.
- Parents will be elected to the Board of Management in accordance with the Education Act (1998).