

# **This school is Transforming**

A guide for potential parents and  
guardians of Transforming schools

For more information contact the  
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# What Is Integrated Education?

Integrated education brings children, staff and Governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school.

By ensuring that our children are educated together every day, regardless of background and identity, integrated education plays a key part in addressing the segregation within our education system and broader society.

During the period 2018-2020, eight schools from across Northern Ireland, and from both the Controlled and the Catholic Maintained sectors, held ballots of their parents to see if they would support the school becoming integrated. In all eight schools, parents voted overwhelmingly in favour of their school beginning the process of Transformation to integrated status.

## What Does Transformation Mean?

A school that would like to become integrated is required to go through a legal process called 'Transformation' in order to achieve integrated status.

Once a school has decided to explore Transformation, a ballot will be held among all parents who have children in the school. Before the ballot takes place there will be meetings with parents, staff and governors to discuss the process, what it means for the school and how it works.

This school has already held a successful ballot and are currently taking the next steps in the process towards becoming integrated.

Following the ballot, the school will have outlined a plan for how integration will be implemented in its policies and practices and a Transformation Action Group (TAG) has been set up. The TAG is made up of Governors, parents and staff and they will help guide the Transformation process. The school will now be working through preparing and submitting a Development Proposal and Case for Change to the EA for consultation and consideration. These documents set out why the school would like to become integrated, how they have consulted parents, staff, the community and other school stakeholders and will outline how they will achieve the integrated ethos in the school.

Each school context is different and whilst the Transformation journey will follow the same stages, the time frame and order may vary from school to school.

The final decision on whether a school can transform to integrated status will be made by the Minister of Education, based on a range of criteria such as sustainability and the school's potential to attract a mix of pupils from different community backgrounds. The school will keep parents updated on what stage of the process it is currently at and what it means for the school as a whole. There will be a short leaflet included with this pack outlining where the school is currently on this journey.

It is important to note that becoming integrated is a process and that it is not simply about achieving a mix of pupils, it is also about the ethos and the everyday practice in a school:

*“When a school legally transforms to become an integrated school, it makes a range of changes over time to how it is organised, operated and managed so it can become a fully integrated community. The extent and nature of the changes required will vary depending on the school's existing circumstances. To enhance integration, changes might be required to the: ethos; culture; curriculum; governance; pupil intake; and staffing profile.”*

(Department of Education, Integration Works, 2017)

## Common Questions about a School Becoming Integrated

### WHAT ABOUT PLAYING SPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER TRADITIONS?

Integrated schools will try to cater for the cultural interests, including games, of both the main traditions of Northern Ireland. This will be based on demand from parents/pupils. All pupils will be able to participate or not, as they wish.

### WILL THE SCHOOL CHANGE ITS NAME OR UNIFORM?

Some schools do decide, with the support of the school community, to introduce the term ‘integrated’ into their title or choose a new logo or even a completely new name or uniform to reflect their new status. This is up to each school to decide.

### HOW WILL THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION BE AFFECTED?

Integrated status will not diminish the quality of education provided at your school. In fact, it will enhance it by providing new educational, social and cultural experiences. Many schools in Northern Ireland recognise the positive value of cross-community initiatives and for some, integration is a natural next step.

### WILL THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA CHANGE?

The Board of Governors sets the admissions criteria for each school. In an integrated school, the Department of Education will recommend that these are reviewed regularly to offer a genuine commitment to integrated education.

### WILL THE SCHOOL RECEIVE MORE MONEY IF IT BECOMES INTEGRATED?

All publicly funded schools, including integrated schools, are funded under the Common Funding Formula as set out by the Department of Education. The Department has additional funds earmarked to support schools considering Transformation to integrated status and to support schools for up to five years after the formal Transformation. In both cases, the funding can only be used for specific purposes. A Transforming school is also eligible to apply for grants from the IEF.

You can read more Frequently Asked Questions at [www.integratemyschool.com](http://www.integratemyschool.com)

# Contact & Further Information

For more information about this school's Transformation journey please speak to the school Principal or a member of the Transformation Action Group (TAG).

For more information about integrated education and Transformation, visit [www.integratemy school.com](http://www.integratemy school.com) or please contact your school, the Integrated Education Fund or the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.

**integrate  
my School.com**



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