

Join West Cork Sudbury School (WCSS) in a movement towards a revolutionary education model where students play an equal part in the democratic running of the school, shaping their unique learning experiences.

To see our kids growing under the caring guidance of the facilitators has been amazing. This school has very much given our kids a voice and an understanding that their voice is valid and can influence change. **PARENT**

I'm not exaggerating when I say it changed our lives. They feel they can come with their ideas and that those ideas can be explored in a practical way that makes them learn way more. **PARENT**

FURTHER TESTIMONIALS
CAN BE FOUND HERE:



The Sudbury model of education is built on

TRUST

...that we are all unique learners and deserve time to explore what interests and motivates us.

RESPECT

We respect ourselves, others and the world around us, celebrating a diversity of abilities and interests.

FREEDOM

At WCSS students will have the freedom to follow their own educational path and be given the space, time and support to reach their goals.

RESPONSIBILITY

The school meeting nurtures a strong sense of responsibility to meet the needs of both the group and the individual.

OUR VISION

We support children and teenagers to take the lead in their education within a nurturing democratic community. WCSS embodies the principles of justice, equity and inclusivity, embracing the uniqueness of each person.

We are committed to serving as a beacon of good practice, empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully, regardless of age or abilities.

SOME OF OUR CORE VALUES

- We believe children and teens will flourish when given the space, resources and support to follow their passions at their own pace and in their own unique way.
- We believe in the importance of play, and that through free age-mixing children and teens are able to develop their social skills and empathy in a meaningful way.
- We believe children and teens should be given the freedom to make their own choices, which can then lead on to an understanding of the responsibility that this entails. In this way children and teens take ownership of their education, enabling them to become engaged, conscious and self-motivated members of their communities.
- We believe that our planet and local environments should be considered and respected. To that end, we take into account bio-diversity, climate change, social justice, ecological integrity and other ethical issues when making decisions that affect the running of our school.
- We see that the changing nature of our world calls more and more for the abilities the Sudbury model of education nurtures, such as personal & collective responsibility, critical thinking and creativity.

"If you can light the spark of curiosity in a child, they will learn without further assistance."
KEN ROBINSON

HOW WE WORK

We are democratic

Students actively participate in school decisions through a weekly School Meeting. In school meetings students and staff make agreements together, fostering leadership, problem-solving and accountability.

We chose to use the word *agreements* rather than laws or rules to highlight that the needs and wants of everyone affected are considered. This fosters a sense of purpose, empowerment and belonging. Students learn to take responsibility and ownership of their education, becoming more content, engaged, conscious and self-motivated members of their communities.

We self-direct our learning

At WCSS, students direct their own learning: They decide what, when and how they learn. Self-directed learning reaches beyond textbook-based subjects and has been shown to increase learning speed and retention. Students learn to motivate themselves, navigate conflict and voice their opinions in debate. They develop a sense of curiosity and un-learn the fear of failure. A responsive and democratic education changes and evolves as needed, preparing students for a future in a world of accelerated change. See the *How do our students learn* section for more information on what this can look like.

We work together

Using a collaborative approach to decision-making, called *Systemic Consensing*, we facilitate equal power distribution, considering minority voices and achieving solutions that benefit the entire group. Through *Systemic Consensing* everyone can contribute, even our youngest students. It also ensures the final solution is not just a favourite of some, but acceptable for the whole group.

When everyone feels heard and accountable, it is easier to accept a solution that benefits the group, although it might not have been the highest on your own list.

We educate for peace

Conflict, viewed positively, fuels meaningful community change. Inspired by *Transformative Justice* and *Restorative Circles*, we promote emotional literacy, non-violent communication and a safe space for taking others' perspectives. Our Transformative Practice techniques use mediation and communication skills to resolve issues without blaming, shaming or creating fear. Our students learn how to share, speak and truly listen. By changing the language around conflict and holding a safe space we foster a true sense of justice and reparation, as well as personal growth.



When we educate to cooperate and be in solidarity with one another, that day we will be educating for peace.

MARIA MONTESSORI