

Cotter, John P, 2001, *The Image of a School's Ethos and Discipline. A Case Study.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Schools are thronged busy places where knowledge is imparted and discovered. Increasingly, this knowledge is compartmentalised, measurable and has a practical commercial application. Pupils are prepared for examinations, written, aural and oral. There is competition for places in Third Level Education. What, then, about the 'hidden curriculum'? Are the partners in education conscious of a deeper *raison d'être*? Is an opportunity afforded to discuss the ethos of the school, its aims, rules and regulations?

Is there a difference between the stated aims and values of the trustees of the school and those of pupils, parents and teachers? Does Coláiste nurture personal and social development and involve parents? Do the pupils see the school as a community? Who should have a say in the formulation of a Code of Discipline? Is Coláiste fulfilling its aims; is it producing a well-rounded individual? This study takes a glance at the history of Irish education and the founding of 'Coláiste' in 1964. A perusal of the Constitutions of the Presentation Brothers (the school's Founders and Trustees) and Coláiste's Mission Statement will set the tone for a discussion on the Christian mission of the school.

Literature on this subject will be discussed. A questionnaire on Values, Ethos and Discipline will ascertain what pupils, parents and teachers think the school *actually* values and *should* value. Secondly, respondents are asked to choose one definition of Ethos from a given list of five. In the final section, on Discipline, the respondents are asked to vote and comment on the current system of discipline and sanctions in Coláiste and to add any comments they might have in this regard.

A study like this should cause people to reflect on the issues and to discuss them in relevant groups. Such a forum involving trustees, management, pupils, parents and staff of Coláiste can therefore plot a path for the future.