

## ***What you can do -***

*If you incline towards preferring a school connected to a religion for your child, please consider how your child will relate to those of other religions, and of no religion, when she or he is grown up and takes their place in society -*

Except for Roman Catholics, your child's young adult peers will mostly have gone to school with children of many religions and no religion. There they will have met this great variety of other cultures and views and they will feel at home in the mixed culture -

but if a young person had been to school with others all of the same religion, he or she will only be learning to live with people's varied cultures when she or he starts college or work.

*If you have already decided that secular schools are best for your child or for kids generally -*

You might live near a school that takes children of any religion or none (example - Educate Together). If not, and the school near you is in the charge of a religion -

You can ask the school to take your child as a pupil, without any proof of your child's religion, without any baptismal certificate.

You can ask that the school not teach your child any religious doctrine, either in the specific class time for religion, or in the rest of the school hours.

*National School Leases are already Secular.*

## Mid West Humanists

The Mid West Humanists are a group of people (in Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary) with no religion, or leaning that way (since 2008), who meet in Limerick, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 20:00, now in the Absolute Hotel. They meet similar people, with no rule about what a person thinks or believes in order to attend.

*Meeting details at*  
[www.midwesthumanists.com](http://www.midwesthumanists.com)

*Inquiries to*  
[info@midwesthumanists.com](mailto:info@midwesthumanists.com)



## Humanism

Humanism is the idea that humans can think, plan, and do all the things that humans need for a good life. For most humanists this means a life with other people - being and doing good for other people as well as for themselves.

Humanism means that humans can get the knowledge they need, by reason and science, and that they do not need information about the world that is said to be revealed by a god/ gods.

Humanism also means that humans can make good moral rules.

### Mid-West Humanists' Leaflets

National School Leases are Secular

A National School Lease (example lease)

Remove Blasphemy from the Constitution

Let Ireland's Constitution be Secular

Mid-West Humanists and Humanism

Mid-West Humanists

# Schools should be Secular and Child-centred

*- Have a State system of Secular Schools*

Ireland's primary and second-level schools should be State-run and secular.

Secular schools are the best for society in Ireland, and the best for all children.

Every child has a right to meet and understand *all* of the children that live in their society - to see fellow students as people with the same range of emotions and interests as themselves.

*Peace and harmony in society are the greatest reasons to have all children in each district attend **one school together.***

This system works with any mix of religious or non-religious views.

The secular school's classes would teach *about* many religions but would not teach any of their ideas as facts.

Religions could have separate classes to teach their doctrines, in the school building, outside normal school hours.

## Why Secular Education is good for all children and for society

The state makes children go to school - so the state must make schools fair to all children.

Children who meet all kinds at school will appreciate that people who have differing parental backgrounds and belief systems are still just fellow students with the same range of emotions and interests as they themselves.

Where schools are segregated by religion, children grow to be adults largely with people of one religion. They thus come to have a stronger sense that they and their co-religionists are a separate group.

Awareness of groups usually includes an idea of difference from other groups. Sometimes this includes the idea that people in other groups are inferior or bad. Most of the time this does not cause much trouble, but in more difficult times it can lead one group to think that another group is to blame for some present difficulty in the society. This has led to civil disorder and, in the worst cases, to war and genocide.

*A society can't stop all ideas about division into groups, but it is wise not to add to such ideas.*

Secular schools are so that all children, as they grow up, meet other children with the full variety of religious, cultural, political, and social ideas; and that they see all other people as the same as themselves, and that their concept of society or people divided into groups is as weak as possible.

Secular schools can have Religion classes

Secular schools can have classrooms open for classes in religion outside school hours.

### Secular to avoid Discrimination

The present system separates children. Also, schools attached to religions discriminate against children of no religion and those of other religions whose numbers are small.

The present system split by religion cannot provide schools specific to each religious group. Of the 3200 primary (National) schools, 1800 schools are the sole school in their village. There are several hundred more that are in groups of a couple or a few schools in small towns. Even the 3 or 4 schools in those towns cannot be converted to a school for every religion.

The schools adapted to a religion (nearly all Roman Catholic), which any child in those villages and small towns must attend, by being so closely adapted, treat the children not of that religion unfairly - telling them throughout the week that certain ideas (of religion) are true, when they or their parents calculate that those ideas are not true.

### More Educate Together NOT a solution

*We are not saying that the Government should enable more Educate Together or similar schools.* Within the patronage system, this can provide secular education to only a small portion of the people of Ireland. If the Department of Education moved to have more of these schools, and presented this as a step towards schools generally becoming secular, *this will delay the change that is really necessary.* The really necessary change is that all schools be secular so that all children can

attend schools where their human rights to an education free of indoctrination, and to a sense of unity with the whole of society - *not being segregated* - are respected.

If there were a lot more schools like Educate Together (ET), nearly all schools would be ET or Roman Catholic (RC) - 2 big groups. Children at the schools like ET would have a broad view of the many social, political, religious, and cultural variations in society. Those at the RC schools might have a fairly restricted view of this variation and might think that their own group is the norm. *This could be a worse version of a society split into groups than now.*

### Secular Schools - how to reach the goal

The main and first action: the Department of Education must make its school rules and curriculum secular. Changes to the Education, Employment Equality, and Equal Status Acts, and the curriculum, would follow this plan.

The Mid-West Humanists have met the Minister for Education and Skills, and asked the Minister to start these changes.

### *National School Leases are Secular*

(a separate leaflet of Mid-West Humanists)

In Ireland, since the UK government started National Education in the 1830s, all children have equal rights to attend any National (Primary) school; and the right not to receive any religious instruction there.

See Article 44.2.4 of the Constitution "*the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction*".