



SACRED HEART EDUCATION

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ACTIVE SOCIAL AWARENESS

**SOCIAL  
AWARENESS**

# Active Social Awareness

## SOCIAL AWARENESS

The Goal of Social Awareness can be said to be the practical outworking of the work on the other four Goals. The Goal of Social Awareness gives our young people the opportunity to translate the knowledge, skills and values acquired through our work on the Goals of Faith, Intellect, Character and Community into effective action for social change.

### THE CHALLENGE

Mary Cavanagh rscj, in her letter of January 2000 introducing Heritage and Horizon says, 'Behaviour and practice surely demonstrate our convictions more effectively than words.'

'Be humble, be simple and bring joy to others.'  
Sophie

Therefore our challenge is to ensure that:

- Our work on the Goal of Social Awareness has given our pupils the appropriate knowledge, values, skills and opportunities to enable them to effectively address injustice, conflict-resolution and environmental issues and thus become 'agents of transformation'.

*'Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there saying to them, "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!" if you don't give them the necessities of life. So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead.'*

*'Má tá deartháir nó deirfiúr gan éadach agus gan cuid an lae de bhia acu, agus go ndeir duine agaibhse leo: "Imigí faoi shíochán; faighigí goradh agus ithigí bhur sáith", agus nach dtugann sibh riachtanais na beatha dóibh, cén tairbhe é? Sé a fhearacht sin ag an chreideamh é. Tá sé marbh leis féin gan dea- oibreacha.'*

*'Jekk ħuk jew oħtok ma jkollħomx x'jilbsu u jonqoshom l-ikel ta' kuljum, u wieħed minnkom jgħidilħom: "Morru bis-sliem, isħnu u kulu sa tixbgħu?", bla ma jagħtiħom dak li hu meħtieġ għall-ġisem, dan x'jiswa? Hekk ukoll il-fidi: jekk tkun weħidħa u ma jkollħiex l-għemil, din ma tħisser xejn'.*

**James 2: 15-16**

# How can we achieve these objectives?

## HERITAGE AND HORIZON RECOMMENDS:

1. Ensuring that a clear equality/justice agenda, affirming the dignity of each individual, permeates the school at every level and is evident from the interaction:

- Pupil/Pupil
- Teacher/Pupil
- Staff Member/Staff Member
- Teacher/Parent
- School Management/Parent
- School Management/Staff Member

2. Developing programmes which provide our pupils with clear knowledge and information about responsible citizenship and problems of injustice through:

- Clearly focused curricular units of work
- Pastoral work
- Outreach work
- Assemblies
- Whole-school themes

3. Helping our pupils acquire particular skills, attitudes and values which emphasise:

- Love
- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Responsibility
- Solidarity
- Mutual dependence

4. Enabling all pupils to become 'agents of transformation' by highlighting their role as engaged, active citizens committed to:

- Advocacy
- Justice
- Social awareness
- Effective action for social change
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership

### Some Key Words

- **Advocacy**
- **Action**
- **Citizenship**
- **Competitiveness**
- **Developing Countries**
- **Dignity**
- **Disadvantage**
- **Drugs**
- **Environment**
- **Equality**
- **EU**
- **Economy**

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Ask students to identify the most important social issue in their own country and globally. Ask them to identify the values implicit in their decision.
- Discuss the importance of positive social action.
- Discuss the concepts of equality and justice and ask students to identify local, national and global examples.
- Ask students to produce a Code of Social Conduct for the class.
- Discuss the school's position in the local community and explore ways in which the school might be kept informed of local social issues.
- Identify the significant social changes in history.
- Ask students to research and nominate the three people they feel have been important agents of social change. Discuss the reasons for the choice.
- Assign a project involving the tracking of historical social change in the school's locality.
- Debate possible ways of being involved with special segments of the local community such as disadvantaged areas.
- Discuss current environmental issues such as pollution, waste management, water management, global warming, fossil fuels, energy.
- Ensure that our own behaviour reflects these concerns.
- As appropriate, ensure that pupils become aware of the suffering caused by the crime human trafficking.
- Ensure that the values associated with this Goal are suitably stressed when teaching relevant syllabi e.g. Economics, Business. History, Geography.

### How Can We Evaluate Outcomes?

- Estimate the level of interest among students during social discussions and debates.
- Measure the extent to which the school is involved in cross-community affairs on an appropriate scale such as number of meetings per period, number of areas involved etc.
- Measure awareness of environmental or other issues by means of a class quiz.
- Assess whether the school environment reflects a concern for these issues.
- Assess the extent to which the school influences or encourages government and corporate responses to major crises.
- Survey the career choices of students to estimate the proportion choosing socially oriented professions.



