

Dublin City
Arts Office

ARTS, EDUCATION & LEARNING POLICY



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

Front Cover – ‘A Work in Progress/City Hall’ Drawing by Maeve Clancy, Visual Artist

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Page 6 – Project 20/20 @The LAB Gallery – Early Years and Contemporary Art with KidsInc Crèche, Foley Street, 2015; Exhibition: Magenta Honey by Gabhann Dunne; Artist & Art Educator, Seodín O’Sullivan. Photo by Sheena Barrett

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Executive Summary

Dublin City Council's Arts, Education and Learning Policy, passed by Council in November 2016, takes as its mandate The Arts Act (2003), which requires that a local authority stimulate public interest in and promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts. The policy takes into consideration international and national research that identifies significant barriers to accessing culture and the arts, such as gender, age, ability, cultural tradition, social class and economic accessibility. Dublin City Arts Plan (2014–2018) states that *"art is a human made expression that makes us think and feel at the same time and that people access the arts in different ways."*

The Arts, Education and Learning Policy also takes its lead from Dublin City Council Cultural Strategy (2015–2021) which has adopted United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child/Article 31 which states that *"State Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts"*. It also acknowledges The Arts Council strategy 'Making Great Art Work' (2016–2026/Objective 8) to make provision for children and young people a key focus of its relationship with local government, which is further echoed in 'A Framework for Collaboration' (2016–2025) between The Arts Council and the City and County Managers' Association (CCMA).

The Arts, Education and Learning Policy is for the citizens of Dublin, acknowledging that each Dubliner has a right to practice and participate in appropriate and equal cultural and artistic activity and learning. It is a key document for scaffolding our approach to questions around where our responsibilities lie in addressing this — realistically, what resources we have as an Arts Office; what resources we can generate through strategic partnership; how might we be informed about barriers and needs directly by children and young people and their stakeholders? These questions, along with our existing body of work, provide the backdrop to the language, vision, objectives and actions set out in this policy that will grow existing practice and opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts across all art forms in Dublin city.

Ray Yeates,
City Arts Officer

The Arts, Education and Learning

Arts experiences where learning in most cases is intentional, often address a particular public. The context for this practice is wide, and includes formal education; the wider field of out-of-school, adult and continuing education; youth arts; community arts; arts and health; arts and older people; arts and social regeneration; arts in settings like libraries and prisons; and arts as part of people's daily activities at home, work and leisure. Though the range of contexts is wide, however, the educational focus is precise, deriving from a commitment to learning.¹

Arts

Any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form. The arts include, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture.²

Culture

A set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.³

Education – Formal, Non-Formal and Informal

Formal learning: Learning typically provided by an education or training institution, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning: Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or 'incidental'/ random).⁴

¹ *Arts, Education and Other Learning Settings – A Research Digest* (2007), The Arts Council of Ireland,

² The Arts Act (2003) and stated in Dublin City Council Arts Plan (2014–2018)

³ UNESCO definition of Culture (2001), stated in Dublin City Council Cultural Strategy (2015–2021)

⁴ European Commission (2001a) Communication: Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/index.htm>

⁵ European Commission (2001a) Communication: Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/index.htm>

What Informs Our Understanding

Dublin City Council understands that experiential learning is one of the strongest assets of the arts in formal, informal and non-formal education. Artforms — visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture — are rich resources for physical, intellectual and emotional engagement, pleasure and joy, which are natural intrinsic motivators leading to expanded capacity for empathy, analytical skills, academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Dublin City Council understands all learning begins, and ends, with the individual's unique interests, motivations, prior knowledge, and experience. Learning is both an individual experience and group experience. Learning is facilitated by appropriate physical contexts and by well thought-out and built designs. Learner-centred learning is focused on the learner as opposed to the teacher and influenced by the developmental stage, ability and cultural tradition of the individual with an emphasis on the environment and community.

Dublin City Council plays a meaningful role in the development of the arts and believes in their intrinsic value in education and learning settings in the city. As a local authority, it does not have an official legislative brief in formal, non formal or informal education. However, it holds an important arts development function as highlighted in The Arts Council strategy 'Making Great Art Work' (2016–2026) and 'A Framework for Collaboration' (2016–2025) between The Arts Council and the City and County Managers' Association.

Dublin City Arts Office understands that the arts, education and learning sphere is an important way to provide employment for artists, arts workers and educators. It understands that currently, practice and provision in arts, education and learning is fragmented and seeks to respond to this through its arts development role in the city, as partner and broker, to strengthen key relationships and grow strategic vision and resources.

Dublin City Arts Office is aware of examples of best practice happening in the sphere of arts, education and learning in the Dublin City administrative area. This work is led by pioneering artists, arts educators and arts organisations in sites for learning. Dublin City Arts Office is informed of this on an ongoing basis through its programme of work which includes direct funding; The LAB (Gallery and Rehearsal Spaces); programming of city-wide festivals; artistic programming with children, young people, and older people; Dublin City Public Art Programme; and professional development supports for artists.

The Arts, Education and Learning Policy will increase understanding and awareness of the value of the Arts and their intrinsic value in Education and Learning in Dublin City. It seeks to increase investment in provision for lifelong learning in arts, education and learning and ensure the quality of artistic experience through the professional development of artists, arts workers and educators. It seeks to increase access and provision for children and young people to quality arts experiences in local neighbourhoods, and foster strategic vision and partnership that strengthens connectivity between professional artists and arts organisations and formal, informal and non-formal education.





Vision

The vision of Dublin City Arts Office's Arts, Education & Learning Policy is that **“all actions of the Arts Office have within them opportunities for education and learning.”**

— Dublin City Arts Office Team Plan (2016–2018)

Specifically, Dublin City Arts Office identified the following areas of its work in Arts, Education and Learning:

- Direct Funding
- Young People, Children and Education
- Older People
- The LAB Gallery and Studios – Relationships with Third Level & Adult Learning
- Professional Development of Artists, Arts Workers and Educators

Guiding Principles

Supporting Artists, Communities & The Arts In The City

Learning Innovation

Support learning in the arts that is creative, competent, reflective, collaborative and relevant to its context.

Pursue Equality, Inclusivity & Excellence

For all Dubliners, as arts makers, participants and arts audiences, in accordance with age, ability and cultural tradition.

Learner-Centred

Approaches that focus on the learner as the starting point by proactively listening to different voices to empower greater ownership.

Partnership & Mutual Respect

For the different ways in which organisations and artists work, and the different ways public(s) experience art as makers, participants and audiences.





Policy Objectives

Objectives

Increase understanding and awareness of the value of the Arts and their intrinsic value in Education and Learning.

Increase investment in provision for lifelong learning in arts, education and learning in Dublin City.

Support quality of artistic experience through professional development of artists, arts and cultural workers, educators and facilitators.

Increase access and provision for children and young people to quality arts experiences in local neighbourhoods.

Foster strategic vision and partnership for Dublin City that strengthens connectivity between professional artists and arts organisations and formal, informal and non-formal education.

Policy Actions

(2017 – 2020)

Work in collaboration to commission ambitious neighbourhood partnerships with national cultural institutions, key arts organisations and local Dublin City Area Offices as a means of developing access and provision in local neighbourhoods.

Ensure quality experiences by investing in professional development for artists, arts and cultural workers, educators and facilitators through arts grants, bursaries, commissioning, training, evaluation and showcasing professional arts practice in arts, education and learning.

Work to enhance connections and collaborations between different areas of the City Council in arts, education and learning.

Establish a Steering Group with membership from internal and external stakeholders to monitor and research city-wide and neighbourhood vision for Arts, Education and Learning in Dublin city.

Explore and research opportunities for the arts in education and the role of the city as partner with formal education in response to the Arts in Education Charter (2013) in order to increase access and provision for children and young people as described in The Arts Council strategy 'Making Great Art Work' and the 'Framework for Collaboration' between The Arts Council and the City and County Managers' Association.

Establish a review and evaluation process to track the implementation of the Arts, Education and Learning Policy.

Advocate for inclusion of the Arts, Education and Learning Policy within future Arts Plans; Dublin City Corporate Plan; Dublin City Development Plan; and Dublin City Cultural Strategy.



