

# PASSING OUT

29 November 2019

## Passing Out

Taoiseach, Minister Flanagan, Invited Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

You are all very welcome to the Garda College on what is a great day for the students, their loved ones, An Garda Síochána and communities around Ireland.

May I say to the Students how well you have turned out and how well you have paraded today.

In front of your family and friends you have been formally welcomed into An Garda Síochána. You have worked hard and done well to get this far, many others would wish to be where you are today.

You are now my colleagues and as such it is my privilege to welcome you into the AGS family and wider policing family.

In reciting the Garda oath, you have taken a solemn declaration of your commitment to acting with integrity and impartiality, upholding the human rights of all, and discharging your duties in accordance with the law.

Everyone here today has witnessed your commitment to those principles.

You too should be very proud to be in the position to swear the Garda Oath. It is a privileged position.

But with privilege comes responsibility.

As a Garda member it is now your responsibility to live by the Garda Oath.

It is now your responsibility to live by the Code of Ethics.

The Oath, along with the Code of Ethics, which you signed earlier, should now be at the core of your approach to policing.

If you fulfil your Oath and abide by the Code of Ethics then you can be confident you will have done a good job.

Policing is not an easy choice, there is no doubt that being a member of An Garda Síochána will test you mentally and physically, it will expose you to difficult situations, it will require diligence, commitment and courage.

Sometimes you will see the very worst of human nature but more often you will see the very best of it. You will find yourself in harm's way to protect others. In the end this is an honourable and decent profession that you have formally joined today.

An Garda Síochána has a proud tradition of close co-operation with communities.

It is the foundation of how we deliver policing in order to keep people safe. It is how we have built and gained the trust of the people.

A trust level amongst the highest for police services across Europe.

That wasn't achieved by accident.

It was done through hard work, patience, and delivering results. It was done by preventing and tackling crime.

It was done by confronting the hard and difficult issues facing communities such as drug dealing, robberies, and anti-social behaviour.

It is done through meeting and talking to people, particularly isolated, lonely or vulnerable people, and this remains an important part of our job.

Also essential is taking on the issues that can blight a community and impact on their quality of life.

Take, for instance, what is sometimes described as street level drug dealing.

This is not just a criminal act, but a quality of life issue for communities, particularly when it takes place in public.

Not only that, but it provides profits for major drugs gangs and enslaves people to drug addiction, which in turn can lead them to a life of crime to feed their habit and even death.

We need to break this cycle and do it early. We will do this not only by concentrating on traffickers and dealers but also with the community, by a concentration on community policing and a localised policing service.



Community Gardaí will be given individual responsibility for specific geographic areas. They will get to know local people and local people will get to know them.

Community Policing Teams headed by an Inspector will also be established with responsibility for working with local stakeholders and agencies to come up with solutions to the key concerns of local people.

At its core, policing is about helping others. It is about treating everyone you meet with dignity and respect. It is about being honest. If you remember the core elements at the heart of the Oath and the Code of Ethics, then your service will be a public good.

The very best of luck to you all in your new careers.

Thank you very much.