

Policy on Equality of Participation and Access

Introductory Statement

The Equality of Participation and Access Policy for St. Brigid's National School was formulated by the staff in conjunction with the Board of Management

Rationale:

The Board of Management, staff and parents felt the need to have a clear policy to ensure that all pupils can access and participate in education and to promote justice and equality for all.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

St Brigid's National School aims to provide a happy learning/teaching environment where each child's self-esteem, spiritual, moral, academic, social and physical well-being is nurtured and enhanced. We believe an effective policy on Equality of Participation and Access will support these aims.

Aims:

This policy aims to: -

- The promotion of equal opportunities for all persons in the school
- Create and maintain an environment where diversity is valued and celebrated
- Ensure that each person in the school feels valued and respected
- To comply with Equality legislation - Education Act 1998, Employment Equality Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000 & Equality Act 2004

Content

This policy is addressed under the following headings:-

- Organisational
- Curriculum

1. Organisational Areas

1.1 Enrolment

- All pupils are welcome to enrol in our school irrespective of race, religion, family status, gender, sexual orientation and disability, in line with the school Enrolment Policy. The school community is familiar with the Equal Status Act 2000
- Pupils are placed in age appropriate class.
- Arrangements can be made for pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in Religion Classes. This supervision will cover events such as attending Mass, choir practice and visits to the Church.
- The characteristic spirit of the school is explained to parents on enrolment so that they are aware of the religious denomination of the school, its reflection in the curriculum offered and the organisation of the school.
- When enrolment forms are returned to the school, arrangements can be put in place to take into account that parents may be separated, divorced, same sex or single parent families.

1.2 Staff

- Appointment procedures followed by the Board of Management are in compliance with the Constitution of Boards of Management and Rules for National Schools.
- Staff is informed of developments in equality issues e.g. new legislation, guidelines.
- The school has a policy in relation to bullying and harassment.
- Classes are assigned to teachers in a fair and transparent manner.

1.3 Home School Communication

If requested by parents the school will provide separate copies of all communications and reports to parents who are separated/divorced.

1.4 Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

The school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy promote respect for all. The school strongly advises that no children under thirteen years of age should have access to social networking sites. Parents are urged to be vigilant as these sites are frequently misused and may lead to bullying both inside and outside school.

1.5 Homework

The homework policy of St. Brigid's National School addresses issues in relation to

- pupils with special needs
- the involvement of parents

1.6 Resources

- The principles of equality and respect for diversity are reflected in the pupils' textbooks.
- Library books are available that explore different cultures, different family structures, achievements of both male and female role models
- Boys and girls have equal access to a range of toys in junior classes.
- Resources available to support pupils with a learning disability

1.7 Tours and Extra-Curricular Activities

- All pupils have an opportunity to participate in school tours or other outings organised by the school.
- Extra-curricular activities promoted by the school are open to all pupils. Many activities are funded by the Board of Management, Leitrim County Council, Sports Council and Arts Council.

2 Curriculum

- All pupils have equal opportunities to experience all aspects of the curriculum, to participate in activities, to use resources.
- Teaching methodologies are employed to support integration and promote equality of various participation e.g. Circle time, co-operative learning, groupings.
- If parents wish to withdraw their child from parts of the curriculum e.g. swimming, religion, RSE, SPHE, they may discuss same with the child's teacher and alternative arrangements will be made for supervision of the child.
- Teachers monitor language in the classroom and challenge existing inequalities/stereotypes.

- Subjects e.g. Language, Drama, Music, Visual Arts, SESE (History, Geography and Science) are used to
 - celebrate difference
 - promote cultural awareness and tolerance
 - focus on the work and achievements of scientists, historians, geographers of both genders
- Opportunities are provided to explore the teachings and values of other religions and cultures.
- Sports coaches and other specialist teachers are made aware of the obligation on schools to include pupils with special educational needs at a level appropriate to their abilities.

Success Criteria

The effectiveness and success of this policy will be measured in a number of ways: -

- Pupils participating in all areas of school life at a level appropriate to their abilities
- Awareness of the concepts of equality and justice
- Pupils using appropriate language

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal, Staff, Pupils, Parent and the Board of Management will have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

It replaces the existing policy and is implemented forthwith.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Review: June 2019

Communication.

This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / Secretary.

Reference Section

- Equal Measures, Dept of Education and Science, 2006
- Intercultural Education in the Primary School – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2005
 - Department of Education Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary School, September, 1993
 - Education Act, 1998
 - Equal Status Act, 2000
 - Equality Act, 2004
 - Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004