



Scoil Náisiúnta Droichead An Chláir

Clarecastle National School, Clarecastle, Co. Clare

Reviewed
November 2020

Policy on Equality of Access and
Opportunity

Clarecastle National School



Policy on Equality of Access and Opportunity

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Principal Martin Moloney
Roll Number 17026M

Introductory Statement:

Through implementation of this policy Clarecastle National School strives to ensure equality of access for all pupils and staff in the school environment and to ensure that no conditions are allowed which may hinder an individual (or groups) participation in school life. Through this policy we seek to promote the principles of justice and equality for all members of the school community. All staff of the school are made aware of their responsibilities in this respect.

Rationale:

This policy has been formulated to:

- Comply with various acts of the Oireachtas, namely:.
 - Employment Equality Act 1998
 - Education Act 1998
 - Equality Status Act 2000

The *Equal Status Act 2000* prohibits discrimination on the following grounds

- Gender
 - Marital status
 - Family status
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Membership of the travelling community
- To promote the principles of justice and equality for all in accessing and participating in the curriculum as provided by Clarecastle National School.
 - To ensure that no condition be allowed hinder a person's participation in school life.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school.

Clarecastle National School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities regardless of physical disability, gender, race, religion or learning disability. We also commit to preparing each and every pupil for life by promoting value and respect for all. Through creating an environment which reflects diversity in a positive manner Clarecastle National School seeks to nurture a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and awareness of one's particular abilities, aptitudes and limitations, combined with a respect for the rights and beliefs of others.

Looking at Our School 2016 – A Quality Framework for Primary Schools

Leadership and Management

Domain 1: Leading Teaching and Learning

Standard

Foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each pupil.

In Clarecastle National School we will:

- Work together as a school community to foster pupils' holistic development by providing a very broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Work together as a school community to promote an inclusive school community which demonstrably values diversity and challenges discrimination.
- Work together as a school community to ensure that all relevant school policies are inclusive and are implemented accordingly.
- Work together as a school community to establish clear principles of inclusion and social justice to deliver equality of opportunity throughout all aspects of school life.
- Work together as a school community to promote a harmonious and pleasant working environment for staff and pupils where everyone feels valued and respected.



All of us do not have equal talent,
but all of us should have an equal
opportunity to develop our talent.

— John F. Kennedy —

AZ QUOTES

Teaching and Learning

Domain 1: Learner Outcomes
Standard
Pupils enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and expect to achieve as learners
Statement of Highly Effective Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Pupils' enjoyment in learning is evident and arises from a sense of making progress and of achievement. Their engagement with learning contributes to their sense of well-being.

Domain 2 : Learner Experiences
Standard
Pupils grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive.
Statements of Highly Effective Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Interactions among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very respectful and positive, and conducive to well-being.○ Pupils contribute their opinions and experiences to class discussion with confidence. They are respectful of and interested in the opinions and experiences of their classmates.

Domain 3 : Teacher's Individual Practice
Standard
The teacher responds to individual learning needs and differentiates teaching and learning activities as necessary.
Statement of Highly Effective Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Teachers engage with pupils' opinions, dispositions, and contexts, and modify their teaching practice to build on opportunities and address any limitations that they present. Teachers empower pupils to exploit these opportunities and overcome their limitations.

Domain 4 : Teacher's Collective/Collaborative Practice
Standard
Teachers work together to devise learning opportunities for pupils across and beyond the curriculum.
Statement of Highly Effective Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Teachers work very effectively with each other and with parents to support pupils with identified learning needs.

In Clarecastle National School every opportunity will be taken to promote gender equality through the discreet and hidden curriculum. Hidden Curriculum includes:

- Teachers' expectations of pupils.
 - Teachers' interaction with each other and with pupils.
 - Allocation of tasks, equipment and resources equally among boys and girls.
 - Organisation of timetable, and choices within.
 - The extent to which others, both boys and girls, are involved in decision-making.
 - Rules, casual remarks and all the day to day experiences in school.
- Parents of pupils from non-Christian religions have the right to request non participation of their child in RE classes,.However, it is not possible to provide physical or human resources for supervision outside the classroom.
- Parental consent is provided on enrolment for some lessons and programmes in the SPHE/RSE curriculum (Stay Safe Programme).
- Where necessary, variations in attainment levels between boys and girls are analysed and addressed.
- Teachers shall ensure that the language used in the school to mediate the curriculum is gender balanced and shall avail of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of unconsciously held attitudes.
- Subjects such as Drama, SPHE, Music, Visual Arts and SESE are regularly used to celebrate difference and diversity within the class and to promote tolerance and cultural awareness.
- Opportunities are provided to explore the teachings and values of other religions and cultures.
- Equal opportunity is afforded to all pupils for participation in PE activities with adaptation of lessons for Special Needs pupils where necessary.

Admissions

The admissions criteria of Clarecastle National School will not differentiate between pupils from different social strata. There is an equal right of access for all under the school's Admissions Policy.

- The application form for admission to school has been formulated so as to ensure equality of access and to enable additional supports to be put in place at the earliest possible opportunity when the need arises.
- Pupils will be placed in age appropriate classes.
- In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal following consultation with relevant stakeholders, alternative placement may be considered.

- The application form for admission to school takes into account the diversity of family structures which exist in present day society.

Code of Behaviour

All members of the school community are expected to interact and behave in a manner which shows **RESPECT** for **Self, Others** and **Our School**.

The Code of Behaviour addresses procedures for dealing with all forms of unacceptable behaviour including comments or other incidents which may discriminate on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the travelling community

Recruitment

- The Board of Management is an equal opportunities employer as per the Equal Status Act 2000, and the Employment Equality Act 1998.
- No discriminatory questions on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, family status etc. will be asked during the interview process.
- Correct selection procedures will be strictly adhered to for all appointments.

Communication

- Where it is brought to the attention of the school that written communication through English may prove problematic, verbal contact with parents of these children will be the preferred mode of communication. Where necessary an interpreter may be employed. School reports issued via Aladdin will be translated to the required language.
- Where necessary an interpreter will be employed to use sign language for parents who may not be able to hear or speak.
- Staff are made aware of the different cultural practices of parents/children, when appropriate.

- The school has a policy of communicating with both parents on pupil progress where divorce or separation is an issue, unless a court ruling prescribes differently. A request for communication with both parents must be submitted in writing to the school Principal.

Parental Involvement

- All parents are encouraged to get involved in the Parents Association and to attend functions and activities organised by them and by the school.

Resources

- It is school policy to provide a gender balanced range of resources in curricular areas - textbooks, ancillary materials, software, sports equipment, toys in Infant rooms etc.
- Positive images of various cultures are occasionally displayed in the school environment and classrooms.
- Principles of equality and respect for diversity are reflected in the pupils' textbooks and our school/class libraries contain a good variety of books which reflect the diversity of modern day society.
- Boys and girls have equal access to all school resources and are equally represented on any duty lists in school.
- Varied resources are available to support pupils with a learning disability

Playground

- All yard rules promote gender equality and equal access for pupils.
- All yard rules reflect our policy of inclusion within a safe environment.
- Every class grouping has a designated playing area.

Transition to Post Primary

- All pupils have equal access to transfer/transition information.
- Pupils are free to attend an induction day in the school to which they are transferring.

Roles and Responsibilities

- All members of our school community, namely, staff, pupils, parents and BOM are responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring equal access and participation by the entire school community.
- The staff has responsibility in promoting the concept of equality and justice for all, both within specific educational programmes and in the “hidden” curriculum throughout the school day.
- Policy will be implemented as soon as it is ratified by the BOM


Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be determined by:

- Pupils participating in all areas of school life at a level appropriate to their abilities.
- Awareness of the concepts of equality and justice.
- Reduction in incidents of bullying/racism.
- Pupils using appropriate language.
- Parental satisfaction with the values being promoted in the school.
- Mutual respect between parents, pupils, teachers and all ancillary staff.
- Good working relationships within the school.

Ratification/Review

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 30/11/2020 and will be subject to review on a cyclical basis or as circumstance dictates.

Signed: 
Mr. Pat Bergin
Chairperson

Date: 30/11/2020

Reference Section

- Equal Measures, Dept of Education and Science, 2006
- Together towards inclusion – Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School, IILT & SELB, 2007
- Up and Away – A resource book for English language support in primary schools, IILT, 2006
- Intercultural Education in the Primary School – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2005
- Intercultural Guidelines for Schools, INTO
- The Inclusive School, Equality Authority, 2004
- Equality and Education, The Equality Authority, 2001
- Guidelines on Traveller Education for Primary Schools, 2002
- Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations, INTO, 2000
- Department of Education Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary School, September, 1993
- Education Act, 1998
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- Equal Status Act 2000. Questions & Answers, INTO, 2003
- Equality Act, 2004
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004