



Equal Opportunities Policy

Revision No 3

Jan 2017

School Educational and Religious Philosophy:

St. Joseph's Primary School is a school where each individual pupil is made to feel that he/she belongs to a community which (a) promotes the development of self discipline, (b) encourages each pupil to recognise his/her potential and (c) helps him/her to acquire a good self image.

While the school acknowledges the importance of academic excellence it strives to contribute to all aspects of each pupil's development – spiritual, emotional, social, cultural, creative and moral.

The school takes account of the changing social and economic conditions of our country and nurtures in each pupil those attitudes and skills that enable him/her to cope with these changes. It endeavours to foster attitudes and skills that will enable a positive use of leisure time both now and in later life. It encourages an attitude of responsibility and care for our planet as well as an attitude of practical concern for the local and school environment.

While the school recognises that all children are equal in the sight of God, we will have special regard for the poor and less privileged in our school community. The school will grant every possible assistance to those pupils that are materially poor and we will strive to diminish any consequent disadvantage to those pupils. The school will endeavour to show special consideration to those pupils that are emotionally deprived through the loss of a parent or through family breakdown.

Enrolment:

- All pupils are welcome to enrol in our school irrespective of race, religion, membership of the traveller community, family status, or disability (accepting that St. Joseph's Primary School is a Catholic School and will have the ethos of a Catholic school but which will respect the individual freedom of all its community members.).
- Pupils will be placed in age appropriate classes upon entering the school where possible.
- Subject to the terms of the Admission Policy we enrol pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and respect their beliefs and practices. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme. If parents have difficulty with this the Principal shall meet with them to see if an accommodation can be reached. Parents are welcome to view the Religious programme taught – at its core is the commandment 'Love God and love your neighbour'. Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in liturgical celebrations. Pupils that do not wish to participate in religion or R.S.E. lessons will have the option of withdrawing from those classes if the parents so wish. However these pupils may have to be supervised by their parents.
- Non National pupils will be offered English language support through the support of a specific teacher of English for a portion of each school day.
- Pupils from the Travelling Community will be given access to the services of the Teacher for Travellers Scheme and will be given access to the services of the S.E.T. teacher as a right (should same be required).



Home School Communication:

- Pupils that come from homes where there is marital breakdown or parental separation will have procedures put in place so as to allow for both parents to be kept informed of pupil progress e.g. separate report cards, separate Parent Teacher meetings etc.
- In the case of parents of Non National pupils and those that have been identified as having difficulties in the area of literacy arrangements are in place so that these parents can visit with the school Principal and class teacher on a regular basis so that an oral student report may be given to them re their child/children.
- Parents of Non National pupils and those of the Traveller Community will be informed in detail (orally), at the time of enrolment, of the role of the school and the expected role of the parents. Items such as discipline and code of acceptable behaviour will be explained in detail so that a common approach may be taken both at home and in school.

Uniform:

- The Board of Management has access to monies to assist those families that have difficulty in paying for the full school uniform and school tracksuit. This scheme is in addition to the current Health Executive scheme.
- The uniform for boys is grey shirt, striped tie, grey trousers and green jumper. The girls have grey pinafore, blue blouse, royal blue cardigan, navy, white grey tights/ socks and black shoes. Both boys and girls are allowed to wear the same school tracksuit. The school jacket introduced in September 2008 is compulsory for all students except for 1st class boys and 6th class girls (exemption applies for this year only).
- All pupils of whatever background or ethnic group are required to wear the full school uniform or school tracksuit.

Attendance:

- All parents are made aware at the beginning of the school year of the implications of The Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Absences outside the set school holidays are treated under the arrangements of The Education Welfare Act 2000 and will be recorded in line with the provisions of this Act. Parents will be informed of the procedures to be followed in cases of absences exceeding 20 days during the school year. (See School Attendance Policy for further details).

Anti -Racism Charter:

- The school adheres to the Anti Racism Charter as published by the I.N.T.O. in “The Intercultural Guidelines for Schools”, copy enclosed.
- Those that breach the conditions of this charter will be subject to the school discipline and sanctions as in the normal manner.
- All such incidents will be recorded in the school incident book in the normal manner and will be subject to the same methods of investigation as are all breaches of school rules/discipline.
- The Anti-Racism Charter will be displayed in the main corridors of the school and in the school staff-room.



Homework:

- Homework is allocated to all pupils on an ability to complete basis. Each teacher ensures that all homework allocated to the pupils in their class is appropriate to the educational attainment of the pupil their academic ability and is underpinned by a policy of allowing each child the chance to succeed in the homework allotted.
- Those pupils with a designated educational need will have their homework closely aligned to the content of their I.E.P./I.P.L.P.
- Pupils from the Traveller Community or Foreign National background will also have their homework closely aligned to their specific education programme and the work of the specialist teachers in this area.
- Homework will be allotted in such a manner so as not to be prescriptive to any particular child but rather that it can be complete by each child with the basic resources available to all.

Resources:

- A diversity of textbooks will be reflected in all the textbooks used throughout the school.
- Multicultural images will be used in as far as possible in each classroom and in all school displays.
- The use of the Internet will be encouraged as means of exploring the intercultural nature of our current society.
- The principle of Gender Equality and Racial Equality will underpin all images of projects and posters used throughout the school.

Assessment:

- All assessment procedures will be made as suitable as possible to all communities within the school i.e. learning groups and racial groups. Teacher produced tests will reflect the learning reality of all groups within the school.
- Particular attention will be placed on tracking the results of all ethnic groups within the school. The focus will also be placed on comparing trends in test results as regards gender groups within the school so that any discrepancies can be addressed as soon as possible.
- Those pupils that are learning English for the first time or those that have literacy problems will have the assessments methods tailored to their particular needs and will be assessed on a more regular basis than the main student body.

Extra Curricular Activities:

- All extra Curricular Activities that are offered by the school are available to all school pupils regardless of gender, ethnic group, or social status. These activities will be free to all and provisions will be put in place to assist families in the purchase of the requisite sports/safety equipment as required.

Curricular Areas:

- All pupils will have equal access to all curricular areas regardless of gender, ethnic community, or educational standard achieved within the school.
- Each child will be engaged in intellectually stimulating work that will be appropriate to his/her intellectual ability.



- Children will be encouraged to explore other languages that may be in their classroom, apart from their own, and to learn a little of these languages.
- Teaching methodologies that support integration and promote equality of participation will be strongly encouraged in all classrooms.
- The full use of I.C.T. will be encouraged in each classroom as a means of meeting the needs of all pupils in the curricular areas.
- Teachers will be encouraged to identify specific lessons that support and promote respect for diversity.
- Pupils that qualify under the provisions of Circular 0012/1996 will be exempt from the study of Irish, on the written request of parents and in compliance with procedures in Circular 0012/1996
- All textbooks used in the school will adhere to the principles of equality and respect for diversity.
- The selection of the class novel will be guided by the appropriate betrayal of all peoples.
- Opportunities will be afforded where possible for the analysis of the media coverage of key news stories from other countries.
- It will be undertaken to ensure that there is a balance between the hero/heroine, portrayal of perpetrators, gender ratio, principal characters in history e.g. Ghandi, Mandela, Luther King, Emily Pankhurst, Queen Maeve, Cleopatra etc.
- Topics such as slavery, war, Child Labour, emigration etc will be covered in an equal and respectful manner.
- People from other countries, cultures, national flags etc will be covered in the area of Geography.
- Areas such as "Myself" and "Myself and Others" and Media will be explored for opportunities to promote equality and diversity in the area of S.P.H.E. and Fun Friends and Friends for Life.
- In the area of religion, opportunities will be explored for the study of commonality of other religions, understanding other religions and mutual respect for beliefs etc.
- In the curricular area of Art, exploration of famous artists, ethnic art, international aspects of art and famous artists will be encouraged.

The above are only examples of how the curriculum can be explored as a means of promoting equality and acceptance of ethnic diversity within the school community.

Success Criteria:

- ❖ Awareness of Languages within the school community and the concept of equality and justice.
- ❖ Reduction of the incidents of bullying within the school community.
- ❖ Improvement in the level of pupil attainment within the school in all curricular areas in particular the area of literacy.
- ❖ Parental feedback as to the satisfaction level with the values being promoted within the school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The main groups with responsibility for the promotion and success of this policy within the school are as follows

- The School Principal
- The Teaching Staff of the school.
- The S.N.A. Staff of the school.
- The Ancillary Staff of the school



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- The Parents and the community at large that have contact with the school and its pupils.
- The Parents Association of the school.
- The Board of Management of the school in supporting the school policy and providing the identified resources as outlined in this policy document.

This policy was drawn up by the school staff and was ratified by the School Board of Management at their meeting on _____

The Board of Management has ratified this policy

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson