

Equality Of Access, Participation & Inclusion Policy

November 2023

Policy Document

Belclare National School



Equality of Access, Participation and Inclusion Policy

Introductory Statement

In SN an Croí Ró Naofa, we value the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to the preparation of pupils for life in a multi-cultural society and to promoting the values of respect for all. Our school is committed to enabling each person (staff and pupils) to participate in all school related activities. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up to provide clear guidelines for staff and conform with government legislation – Education Act 1998, Part IV, Section 21 (2) and the Equal Status Act (2000).

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the school

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We are committed to prohibiting discrimination on the following nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age, race, religious beliefs and membership of travelling community.

We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of children within our school.

- Girls and boys
- Children who need support to learn English as another language
- Children with special educational needs
- Gifted and talented children
- Children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion
- Children from different ethnic and minority groups

The Equality of Access and Participation Policy will assist all the school partners in achieving a balanced and inclusive learning environment for the pupils in the school. Equality of access and equal opportunities will be afforded to all members (staff and pupils alike) of the school organization.

Aims and Objectives:

- To promote greater awareness of equality issues.
- To help pupils to achieve their potential.
- To promote a supportive and inclusive learning environment which will foster the development of the self-esteem of all children in the school.
- To contribute to the breaking down of stereotypes and to the opening up of opportunities for all pupils.
- To ensure that all school administration and organisational procedures are fair and balanced.
- To ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.

- To ensure that each person in our school feels valued and respected.
- To prepare pupils for life in a multicultural and diverse society and with an understanding of the value of diversity and a sense of pride in their own culture.

The Primary Curriculum is our starting point for planning a curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children.

We meet these needs through:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to children's diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils
- Providing other curricular opportunities outside the primary curriculum to meet the needs of individuals or groups of children.

Teaching and learning style:

We aim to give all our children the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement. We analyse the attainment of different groups of pupils to ensure that all pupils are achieving as much as they can. We also make ongoing assessments of each child's progress. Teachers use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children.

When the attainment of a child falls significantly below the expected level, teachers enable the child to succeed by planning work that is in line with that child's individual needs. Where the attainment of a child significantly exceeds the expected level of attainment, teachers use other materials, or extend the breadth of work within the area or areas for which the child shows particular aptitude.

Teachers are familiar with the relevant legislation governing equal opportunities, race, gender and disability.

Teachers ensure that children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs
- Children whose First Language is not English
- A number of our children have particular learning and assessment requirements, which are linked to their progress in learning English as an additional language.
- The teaching, learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children are important.
- We encourage all our children to achieve to the highest possible standards. We do this through taking account of each child's life experience and needs. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English.

In our school, teachers take action to help children who are learning English as an additional language by various means:

1. Developing their spoken and written English by:

- Spending extra time explaining concepts in appropriate language.
- Providing a range of reading materials that highlight the different ways in which English is used.
- Ensuring there are effective opportunities for talking, and that talking is used to support writing.
- Encouraging children to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding of one language to another
- Building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so their 'developing uses' of English and other languages support one another.

2. Ensuring access to the curriculum by;

- Using accessible texts and materials to suit children's ages and levels of learning
- Providing support through IT and video and audio materials

All children in our school follow the requirements of the Primary Curriculum.

The Special Education Teachers work in partnership with class teachers. This involves supporting individual children or small groups of children, of whom only one or two may be EAL.

Children with Disabilities:

We as a school community are committed to providing an environment that allows children with disabilities full access to all areas of learning. All our classroom entrances are wide enough for wheelchair access, and the designated points of entry for our school also allow wheelchair access. Our teachers would be mindful of differing physical abilities and modify their teaching and learning as appropriate. For example, they may give additional time to children with disabilities to complete certain activities. They may need to speak clearly and slowly as required, use a range of communication techniques; arrange the classroom furniture for optimal accessibility, incorporate technical aids as part of the educational experience and work with Special Needs Assistants on toileting and other physical needs if necessary. In their planning, teachers will ensure that they give children with disabilities the opportunity to develop skills in practical aspects of the curriculum.

The school has a complement of three Special Education Teachers and one teacher for 5 hours part time SET on a Monday. Meaningful integration (and reverse integration) between Rainbow room & mainstream and vice versa will happen following consultation with parents, teachers, outside agents where necessary.

Teachers will ensure that the work for these children;

- Takes account of their pace of learning and the equipment they use.
- Takes account of the effort and concentration needed in oral work, or when using, for example, vision aids.
- Is adapted or offers alternative activities in those subjects where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment, or use certain types of materials.
- Allows opportunities for them to take part in educational visits and other activities linked to their studies.
- Encourages social interaction.
- Uses assessment techniques that reflect their individual needs and abilities.

Gender equality

Pupils will be encouraged to work and play in mixed groups. Care will be taken to invite both male and female outside speakers. We will promote equality in all areas of school life and activities and planning activities.

Interviewing

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 procedures for promotion will be strictly adhered to as per DES guidelines, circulars and guidance from the CPSMA and fair and equitable measures in relation to post of responsibility, maternity leave, career breaks, etc.

Success Criteria

Summary:

In our school the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of every child is important. We follow the necessary regulations to ensure that we take the experiences and needs of all our children into account when planning and learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Equality of Access, Participation and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed as necessary by the Teachers and by the Members of the Board of Management. Where changes in legislation or attitudes have taken place, the contents of the policy will be updated. The success of the implementation of the policy will be monitored, on an on-going basis, by the teachers. The achievement of targets set will be noted.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Policy is supported by all staff and parents.

Monitored by the class teacher, parents and pupils.

TIMEFRAME FOR REVIEW:

Implemented November 2023, review in November 2025

COMMUNICATION

A copy of this policy will be available in the school for inspection by the parents or other interested parties.

RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified on **28/11/2023**

Signed: **Richard Broderick**

Chairperson of Board

Agnes Martyn

Principal

28/11/2023

Date

28/11/2023

Date