

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Policy on Equality of Access and Participation

1. Introductory Statement

The Equality of Access and Participation Policy for St. Joseph's National School was formulated in November 2011 and reviewed between September and December 2016.

2. Rationale

This Policy was devised to:

- To enable all pupils to access and participate in education
- To promote the principles of justice and equality for all
- To encourage critical reflection on school norms and practices
- To comply with Equality legislation - Education Act 1998, Employment Equality Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000 & Equality Act 2004

3. Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school (Ethos)

In St. Joseph's N.S. we aim to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning process. We believe that an effective Policy on Equality of Access and Participation will help to do this.

The principles of equality of access, opportunity and participation are promoted through the vision and aims of the school (See the school Information Booklet and display in the School)

4. Aims:

This policy aims to: -

- The promotion of equal opportunities for all persons in the school
- Create and/or maintain an environment where diversity is valued and celebrated
- Ensure that each person in the school feels valued and respected
- Ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.

5. Content

This policy will be broken down in to the following areas:-

- Organisational
- Curriculum

Each of these areas will be looked at in turn

5.1 Organisational Areas

5.1.2 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.

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- Arrangements can be made for pupils whose parents do not wish for them to participate in Religion Classes and events such as attending Mass, choir practice and visits to the Church.
- The characteristics spirit of the school is explained to parents through the School Information Booklet and at Induction Day, so that they are aware of the religious denomination of the school and its reflection in the curriculum offered and the organisation of the school.
- When admission 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.

5.1.2 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 are informed of developments in equality issues e.g. new legislation, guidelines.
- The school has policies in relation to harassment and bullying.
- Classes are assigned to teachers in a fair and transparent manner in line with the school policy on allocating classes.

5.1.3 Home School Communication

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

5.1.4 Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

The school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy promote respect for all.

5.1.5 Homework

The homework policy of St. Joseph's Mxd. N.S. Leitrim Village addresses issues in relation to: -

- pupils with special needs
- pupils whose first language is not English
- the involvement of parents

5.1.6 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

5.1.7 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 B.O.M. of Leitrim N.S, Sports Council, Leitrim County Council, the GAA and the Arts Council.

5.2 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 inform the school of their decision in writing. The child will be accommodated in another class setting and invited to participate in the work of that class.
- 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 e.g. P.E. Religion and S.P.H.E.

6. 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

7. Roles and Responsibility

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

8. Ratification, Implementation and Review

This policy was presented to the Board of Management in early 2017 and will be implemented immediately. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner, should the need arise. The next review is due in December 2018.

9. Communication

Once ratified every teacher will be given a copy of this policy and it will be made available to parents on request.

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