



St. Louise de Marillac Primary School, Drumfinn Rd.,
Ballyfermot, Dublin 10

Equality of Opportunity and Gender Equity Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in consultation with the staff and parents and ratified at a Board of Management meeting.

Rationale

- 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.

Aims

Our school hopes to achieve the following by introducing this policy:

- The promotion of equal opportunities for all persons in the school
- To create and/or maintain an environment where diversity is valued and celebrated
- That each person in the school feels valued and respected
- To prepare our pupils for life in an intercultural society with an understanding of the value of cultural diversity and pride in their own culture
- To ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.
- To commit ourselves to ongoing links with the community and other support agencies for the development of our school, e.g. FamiliBase, Barnados.

Vision, Mission and Ethos

- The principles of equality of access, opportunity and participation are promoted through our Catholic ethos, and validated by the vision/mission, and aims of the school
- St. Louise de Marillac Primary 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. The school's Catholic ethos and mission statement promotes the spirit of inclusiveness and the principles of equality (See school Mission Statement/ Ethos/Motto)
- We promote equal opportunities in an environment where diversity is respected, valued and celebrated.
- We commit ourselves to value and respect each child in a happy and safe learning environment.
- In the school year 2015-2016 our school registered to participate in the INTO Global Citizenship Schools initiative which promotes the three pillars of justice, equality and sustainability throughout the school.

ORGANISATIONAL AREAS

Enrolment

- On request for enrolment parents are supplied with application forms and are invited to attend an information meeting in May/June, where they are given the school's information pack. All pupils are welcome to apply to enrol in our school, irrespective of race, religion, membership of traveller community, family status, gender (males up to First Class), sexual orientation, disability, family or social circumstances. The school community is familiar with the Equal Status Act 2000.
- Admission to St. Louise's Primary School is in accordance with our Admission policy. The Patron and the school will support the principle of equality of access and participation in the school - no child will be refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special needs, disability, language/accent, gender, traveller status, asylum seeker/refugee status, religions/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.
- The school's ethos statement is on display in the school building and contained in the school information pack.
- Pupils are placed in age appropriate classes.
- There is scope on the enrolment form for parents to inform us of their marital status, i.e. separated, divorced, same sex or single parent families.

Staff

- The Board of Management is an equal opportunities employer as per the Equal Status Act 2000, and the Employment Act 1998.
- Appointment procedures comply with the Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure, DES (2007).
- Staff members are informed of developments in equality issues e.g. new legislation and guidelines are made available to the staff.
- Staff members are aware of organisations that can provide information or offer support.

Parental Involvement

Supports for parents whose first language is not English / have literacy difficulties / are from various cultural backgrounds include:

- Visit by Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher to homes to fill in relevant forms
- Special Education Needs (SEN) co-ordinator(s) meet(s) parents to explain the procedure in relation to the services offered to the child.

The school encourages broad representation in relation to gender, ethnic groups, international community, socio-economic groups in the following ways:

- Parents' room available to all parents
- Courses run by HSCL open to all parents
- All parents can nominate themselves for election to the Board of Management
- All parents are encouraged to become a member of the school's Parents' Association and diversity is encouraged in the formulation of the Parents' Association committee
- All parents are encouraged to volunteer for involvement in school activities.

Parents are informed of the school's approach to equality issues by the following means:

- The equality policy is available in the school office for all parents to view
- All policies, where appropriate, contain an equality statement and are available for viewing in the secretary's office.

Uniform

- The uniform policy is outlined in school's information pack. Support systems are in place at the discretion of the Principal if a parent/guardian is experiencing financial difficulties.

- The uniform is suitable for both genders as the girls can choose to wear trousers or a skirt.
- Cultural and religious considerations are taken into account (refer to Religion Policy).
- Jewellery and hairstyles are discussed in the Code of Behaviour policy. Stud earrings and watches are the only jewellery permitted. (See Code of Behaviour)

Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy

- The Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying policy and Anti-Bullying Resource Pack, as well as the Religion policy, promote respect for all. Through the SPHE and Religion programmes, respect for all is taught.
- The Code of Behaviour outlines procedures for dealing with racist incidents which are considered a serious offence.

Homework

- The homework policy accommodates children with special needs in relation to their homework. Teachers consult to make sure that some children are not overloaded with homework.
- Children who do not have English as a first language are accommodated.
- The homework policy provides parents with tips on how to best support homework. This information is also available in the school information booklet and on the school blog. Meetings may be organised at the start of each year to outline the class teacher's expectations in relation to homework.

Resources

- Posters/projects around the school support the principle and practice of equality e.g. - the school celebrates a multicultural week/day on a regular basis.
- Each class is fully equipped through displays, books, toys, etc.
- All toys are available to boys and girls in the classrooms and there is also a wide range of resources available for special needs children.
- Resources available are listed in curriculum plans.
- Outside agencies that promote issues of equality and justice may be invited to visit classrooms and work with pupils e.g. Fair Trade, Trócaire, anti-bullying drama workshops, etc.

Playground and Physical Education

- The school provides a wide variety of playtime and curricular experiences as well as extra-curricular activities that may challenge prevailing gender biases such as basketball, football, skipping, hopscotch, rounders, hip-hop, etc.
- The playground is divided into age-grouped spaces and the green spaces are available for football and other appropriate sports.

Tours and Extra Curricular Activities

- All pupils have an opportunity to participate in school tours and other outings organised by the school. The school shall at all times endeavour to ensure that cost or access does not impinge on participation.
- There are some extra-curricular activities open to certain classes depending on pupils' ages and availability of resources from the School Completion Programme such as basketball, rowing and football.

CURRICULUM

- All pupils have equal opportunities to experience all aspects of the curriculum, to participate in all activities, to use resources etc.
- Many teaching methodologies are used to ensure that all pupils have equal chance to participate (see individual subject plans for list of methodologies)
- On enrolment, parents are asked to consent to their child participating in Religious Education and Relationship and Sexuality Education if they wish. Arrangements are made for those who do not wish to participate, in consultation with the parents/guardians, class teacher and principal.
- Special consideration is given to some pupils when standardised tests are administered.
- Some subjects allow the opportunity to celebrate difference, promote cultural awareness and tolerance e.g. - SPHE / Religion / Intercultural Day/Week
- Areas of the SESE curriculum focus on the work and achievements of scientists, historians and geographers of both genders.
- Many aspects of the SPHE curriculum explore equality, diversity and multiculturalism.
- Opportunities are provided to explore the teachings and values of other religions and cultures.

- Sports coaches and specialist teachers are made aware of the obligation on schools to include pupils with special educational needs at a level appropriate to their abilities e.g. after-school basketball coach.

Evaluation of Policy

- All pupils accessing the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs/ability
- Increased awareness of the concepts of equality and justice
- Maintaining a happy school atmosphere
- Staff and parental satisfaction
- Improvement in pupil attainment level in academic and social areas

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management, the Principal, staff, pupils and parents have shared responsibilities for aspects of this policy. School Completion Staff also play a vital role in identifying and providing support for children who are at risk of being unable to access the educational opportunity available to them.

The school community of St. Louise de Marillac Primary School has an agreed systematic cycle of review of policies whereby new policies are reviewed after one year and subsequently every three years.

In line with the above, this policy will be reviewed during the academic year 2019-2020 and subsequently every three years, unless changes are required by legislation or other needs arise before then.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by

Chairperson: Sr Claire McKiernan, DC

Date: 17/01/2017