

Policy No: 42

Ratified By BoM Date: 14/11/23

Review Date: Nov. 26



St Francis National School

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Inclusion Policy

Introduction and Rationale:

This policy has been developed in partnership with management, staff and parents to provide a framework for addressing diversity and equality issues in St. Francis NS. The policy will help to regulate how discriminatory situations are dealt with, avoid misunderstandings and ensure that procedures for inclusion are followed. It will provide evidence of the commitment to comply with the Equal Status Acts 2000–2012 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998, 2004 and 2011. It is clearly linked to our complaints policy and procedure. It is a working document that provides a basis for critically reflective practice and will be subject to regular review.

Our Mission Statement

The three spirals on the St Francis National School crest represent the school community: the pupils, the parents and the staff. We work hard supporting each other to bring out the best in each child.

We are a vibrant, friendly and welcoming school that values friendship, trust and openness in a safe working environment.

We prepare our pupils for their place in a multicultural society by actively promoting equality and by celebrating the diversity we have within our school community.

Our school rule is "Be Safe, be a friend" (*Bí slán, bí cairdiúil*) which is further developed in the senior classes to be "I have respect for myself, for others and for the environment" (*Tá meas agam orm féin, ar dhaoine eile agus ar an domhan timpeall orm*).

Catholic Ethos

St. Francis National School is a Roman Catholic School. We promote the spiritual development of the pupil, including a living relationship with God.

St. Francis National School provides Religious Education for the pupils and promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic faith, including participation in occasional religious celebrations.

While St. Francis Primary School is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also gives due recognition to children of all other religious beliefs and value systems. (See our website for further information).

At St. Francis NS, we achieve care and inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach, by working in partnership with families, children and outside agencies and professionals, both individually through reflective practice, and in consultation with children and their families, so as to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that are involved in our school.

St. Francis NS will ensure an inclusive culture, recognising that every child is an individual and has their own learning style.

St. Francis NS believes that all children are unique, but share many similarities, thus promoting equality and diversity throughout their Primary school years.

St. Francis NS will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending this school and ensure that their emotional and physical well-being is of paramount importance at all times.

Policy Statement

This policy represents the agreed principles and commitments for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter. The community of St. Francis NS will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our school.

'Inclusion' refers to:

A process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development (National Childcare Strategy 2006–2010).

Core Principles

St. Francis NS actively seeks to support learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children attending our school. This is achieved by using a child-centred equality and diversity approach to create an inclusive learning environment.

Core principles of this strategy are:

- Work in partnership with parents.
- Support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging.
- Support children to become respectful of difference.
- Foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination.
- Implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under The Primary Curriculum Framework (2023).
- Respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through an emerging curriculum.
- Support continual personal and professional development for all staff, so as to ensure that they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

Our staff will work to ensure the following:

- Children feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- Children know they belong and are valued as unique individuals.
- All children's cultural backgrounds are respected and valued.
- Children feel strong and confident about their identity.
- Children are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- Children use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Children have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- Children are encouraged to participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities.
- A child who uses an aid or assistive technology to communicate, may, where appropriate or advantageous also use this to access learning in curricular areas

Responsibilities of staff and management at St. Francis NS

All families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through the curriculum.

At St. Francis NS, we promote children's individual learning according to their stage of development in line with the Child Care Act, 1991; Disability Act 2005; Equal Status Acts 2000–2012; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular attention to Articles 29 and 30; and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.

Admissions Policy

See also the St. Francis NS Admissions & Enrolment Policy regarding procedures for admissions and enrolment in this school.

Working in partnership with parents

As children and families are the most knowledgeable about their background, culture, language, and physical and developmental needs, St. Francis NS will ensure that families are consulted when developing and implementing policies.

Discrimination

An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.

Dealing with discriminatory incidents

- » The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- » All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable (see also our Anti-Bullying policy & procedures and our Code of Behaviour).
- » Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- » When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident. Refer back to the anti-bullying procedures and code of behaviour where appropriate.
- » Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so care must be taken that assumptions are not made.

- » Some issues may be brought into the school by the child, arising from comments made by people outside the setting. Recognise when it is an "outside" issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- » An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
- » By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- » It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. We must be mindful that we, St. Francis NS staff, are role models for the children in our school. Children will do as we do.

Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow the St. Francis NS Complaints Procedures to make a complaint.

Communication

This policy will be available in the Plean Scoile and on the school website.

Responsibility for Review:

All members of staff, Parent Association and Board of Management

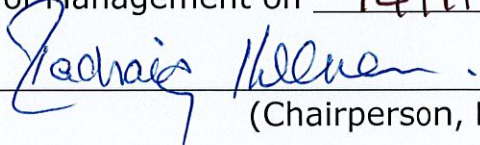
Timeframe for Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required to meet the needs of the school.

Next review: November 2026

Inclusion Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on 14/11/2023 (Date)

Signed:  (Chairperson, Board of Management)