



## **Policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity**

### **Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa**

### **Ballymurn**

This policy document was drawn up;

- To ensure equality of access to all pupils and staff in the school environment
- To ensure that no condition be allowed hinder a persons participation in school life

Policy formation was a collaborative exercise between staff, Board of Management, parents and children.

In line with its legal obligations under:

- THE EQUAL STATUS ACT 2000
- THE NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY ACT 1999
- THE EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT 1998

the staff and management of Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa have created its Equality Policy, consisting of an overarching Statement and individual Equality Policy for Race, Disability, Gender and Disadvantage.

### **Overarching statement**

Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa respects the human rights and pledges to provide equal opportunities for all its pupils, staff and other members of the school community. This is in accordance with our mission statement, ethos and our statutory obligations.

### **School's Strategic Priorities**

Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa is committed to raising achievements and standards for all children, and where necessary to making extra provision to ensure that children from particular groups are able to access the curriculum equally. In this way all will flourish.

We are working to ensure that children are healthy and safe, that they enjoy and make a positive contribution, and achieve well-being in school. Gender equality plays an important role in ensuring that all children have equal access to these aspects of the curriculum.

We aim to be socially inclusive and to support a positive community life among the pupils, their families and the wider network of the local communities.

Our commitment to work well in partnership with parents means that we need to take account of the needs of each individual to ensure that all parents are able to support their children and all are equally respected.

As far as possible we will ensure meetings are in an evening to make them accessible particularly to working parents. When events are held the school encourages as many men as possible to offer support and demonstrate good role models of men involved in citizenship activities.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To instil a sense of pride in our own culture whilst simultaneously cultivating an understanding of the value of cultural diversity
- Ensuring compliance with all requirements of legislation
- Promoting equal opportunities in an environment where diversity is respected valued and celebrated

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **All members of the Board of Management are responsible for:**

- ✚ making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation; and
- ✚ making sure the school Equality Policy and its procedures are followed.

#### **The Principal is responsible for:**

- ✚ making sure the school Equality Policy and its procedures are followed;
- ✚ making sure the race, disability and gender equality plans and plans to combat discrimination on the grounds of disadvantage are readily available and that the Board of Management staff, pupils, and their parents and guardians know about them;
- ✚ producing regular information for staff and Board of Management about the plans and how they are working;
- ✚ making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out; and
- ✚ taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying and bullying related to gender or disability or disadvantage.
- ✚ dealing with reports of hate-incidents.

#### **All staff are responsible for:**

- ✚ dealing with racist, homophobic, gender bias and other hate-incidents;
- ✚ being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- ✚ promoting equal opportunities,
- ✚ avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnicity, disability, gender or disadvantaged status
- ✚ keeping up to date with the law on discrimination;
- ✚ taking up training and learning opportunities.

#### **Visitors are responsible for:**

- ✚ knowing and following our Equality Policy

This Scheme was agreed and adopted at a meeting of the full Board of Management. The individual plans were agreed at a Board of Management meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2012.

## **Organisational Procedures**

### **Enrolment:**

All pupils are welcome to enrol regardless of race, religion, gender, family status, disability or whether or not they are a member of the 'Travelling Community'. Arrangements are made on enrolment for families who do not wish their children to participate in religion, R.S.E or other curriculum areas.

### **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 the CPSMA handbook and fair and equitable measures in relation to post of responsibility, maternity leave, career breaks, etc.

### **Communication:**

While the school has a very low percentage of foreign national children, verbal contact with parents of these children is the preferred mode of communication. The staff is also made aware of the different cultural practices of these parents/children through verbal communication. The school does not have an anti-racism charter at this point in time.

The school has a policy of communicating with both parents on pupil progress where divorce or separation is an issue, unless a court ruling prescribes differently.

### **Input of Parents:**

The Parents Association of the school have an input into the formulation of the Equality Policy. The BoM and Parents Association refers all parents to the Education Welfare Act 2000 at regular intervals through monthly newsletters and circulars which highlight issues such as;

- School attendance, the Education Welfare Board and absenteeism
- Multi-culturalism, drug awareness, obesity etc. through organising talks for parents

The school will also identify parents on low income who are unable to afford books/uniforms/school outings/P.E. and music and refer them to where they can source assistance.

### **Induction and Teaching:**

The school infant enrolment form gathers all the information the school will need to address issues of inequality, such as family background, medical concerns and learning or physical disabilities. This enables the school to access relevant supports such as language teachers, SNA'S and teaching materials. There is regular communication between the class teacher and parents

prior to and during the child's early school life. All teaching materials acquired are chosen and used in a manner reflecting diversity.

All teachers share information which is updated annually. The school promotes non academic activities such as football, camogie etc. in a manner which is favourable to all sexes, races and religions. Special efforts are made to avoid stereotyping when designating tasks and presenting classroom materials. Each teacher also conducts formal sessions on equality and gender equity.

### **Curriculum Access:**

The school endeavours to enable all pupils to access all curriculums which shall enable pupils to engage in appropriate intellectually stimulating work. All children are given an opportunity to engage in integration and appreciate other cultures and languages.

Special arrangements are made for children of non-nationals and children with specific learning difficulties in relation to the teaching of Irish. Exemptions are sought for children of non-nationals who enrol in 3<sup>rd</sup> class or higher and for children with a psychological report recommending exemption from Irish, subject to parental consent and in keeping with the professional recommendation of the class teacher.

SESE offers many areas where diversity and differences can be celebrated. Geography lessons will focus on people, food and the physical features of other countries. S.P.H.E strands such as 'Myself and Others' are also used to celebrate different cultures.

### **Special Needs:**

The school has a complement of three special class teachers and 3 LST/RT. Children with special needs in mainstream have access to learning support and resource hours in addition to full time mainstream integration.

Children in the special autism unit will have access to mainstream integration for social subjects. They will also engage with mainstream children in reverse integration and through the operation of a "Buddy System".

### **Evaluation of Policy:**

The policy is subject to continual review under the following;

- All pupils accessing the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs
- Increased awareness of difference and acceptance of same
- Maintaining a happy school atmosphere
- Staff and parental satisfaction
- Improvement in pupil attainment level in academic and social areas

## Appendix 1

### Policy On Equality of Opportunity

#### - for male and female staff and students. [Education Act '98.9(e)]

- The Equal Status Act 2000 precludes discrimination on the gender ground in the provisions of services (including education).
- In Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa it is our policy to give both boys and girls equal opportunities in curricular and sporting areas.
- The Employment Equality Act '97 precludes discrimination on the gender ground in the employment of staff. Nothing will appear in an advertisement which will indicate a preference for one gender over the other. Neither will any questions be asked at interview which could be interpreted as discriminating on the gender grounds.

The school's policy in this regard would be enshrined in a statement that "This school is an Equal Opportunities Employer".

#### **Ratification/Review/Implementation:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2012 and implemented immediately. It will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Signed: *Nick Byrne*

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2012

Nick Byrne  
Chairman  
Board of Management