

# **PRIMROSE HILL NATIONAL SCHOOL**

## **EQUALITY OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY**

### **Introductory Statement**

This plan was drafted by the staff of Primrose Hill National School (PHNS).

### **Rationale**

It is necessary to devise a policy on equality of access and participation to comply with:

- Equal Status Act 2000.
- Employment Equality Act 1998.
- Education Act 1998.
- To enable all our pupils to access and participate in education.
- To promote the principles of justice and equality for all.

### **Relationship to Characteristic spirit of the school**

PHNS is committed to the preparation of pupils for life in a multi-cultural society and to promoting the values of respect for all, honest and fairness as stated in the school ethos statement. PHNS is committed to enabling each person to participate in all school related activities on an equal basis.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.
- That each person in our school feels valued and respected.
- The creation of an environment where diversity is valued and celebrated
- The awarding of equal opportunities to all persons
- The preparation of our pupils for life in a multicultural society and with an understanding of the value of cultural diversity and pride in their own culture.

### **Guidelines**

All efforts are made by all staff members to ensure that all of our school community are treated equally and are not excluded on the grounds of

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Traveller community

### **Organisational Areas**

#### **Enrolment**

- All pupils are welcome to enrol in our school irrespective of race, religion, membership of traveller community, family status, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.
- All pupils are placed in age appropriate classes

- Pupils who do not wish to participate in religion classes may stay in the classroom but extra work is not given. The characteristic spirit of the school is explained to parents 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. This is done in our booklet for new parents and at an introduction meeting for new parents.
- The enrolment form takes into account that parents may be separated, divorced, same sex or single parent families.
- We have limited access to an English language support teacher

### **Staff**

- The board is an equal opportunities employer. i.e. does not discriminate against any application for a position (or continuation in employment, training opportunities, promotion etc.) in the school based on the nine grounds as set out in the Equal Status Act.
- Procedures for promotional posts within the school known to all (INTO Handbook/CD)
- The format outlined in the CPSMA Board of Management handbook for the advertisement and selection of staff is known and followed.
- Classes are assigned to teachers following an open and fair discussion among staff members.
- We have a fair and equitable procedure in relation to job sharing, secondment, staff development, career breaks, study leave, carer's leave, maternity and paternity leave applications.

### **Home School Communication**

Where parents are separated or divorced, discussions are held with the parents concerned on an individual basis to decide how they would like to receive communication from school. Because of the very individual nature of family situations, the school feels that each family should be catered for personally and confidentially, without prejudice of any sort. The school recognises and supports the rights of each family to rear their children in the manner they feel is correct. The school makes every effort to explain school procedures to parents who, for whatever reason, do not fully comprehend our communications.

### **Parental Involvement**

All parents are invited and welcome to take full part in our Parents Association. No differentiation is made between genders. The P.A. do, from time to time organise events to which all parents are invited. Parental help is sought on occasion. However, security is uppermost in our minds and free access to the school is not encouraged.

### **Uniform**

The school does not have a school uniform. However we do expect all pupils to dress in an appropriate and respectable manner for school business.

### **Attendance**

All parents are made aware of the Education Welfare Act (2000) and issues relating to it. Non-English speaking parents are made aware of its implications through constant communication with the school. Awards are given each year for those children who attain full attendance or miss one or two days.

## **Lunch**

The school does have a health Lunch Policy. However, the school recognises parents' rights to give their children lunches which they deem as suitable. Therefore, this accommodates the dietary requirements of all.

## **Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy**

Our code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy promotes respect for all.

## **Anti-Racism Charter**

Every person has the right to:

- Feel safe from mocking, threats, verbal and physical abuse.
- Be called by his/her own name.
- Be themselves and to be treated equally, regardless of appearance, race, colour, gender or religion.
- Be included in school activities and have friends.
- Have his/her beliefs and personal belongings respected.
- A good education without prejudice in a clean health environment.
- Give expression to his/her own opinions and feelings.
- Use and develop his/her own talents.
- Be listened to.
- Have his/her privacy, secrecy and confidences respected.

## **Induction of New Pupils/ Staff**

All new staff and pupils are met by the Principal to introduce them to other staff or pupils and show them the school. It is normal for both parents and pupils to familiarise themselves with the school and staff prior to starting. All staff members take responsibility for the induction of new staff, and act as mentor or guide.

## **Homework**

Pupils are given homework according to their own individual needs. Staff members are keenly aware of the need to differentiate. Children who are learning English for the first time are offered the opportunity to interact with our English Language support teacher. All staff members are made aware of any children who are learning English for the first time and therefore there is whole school support offered. Individual teachers' observations of such pupils play a huge role in assessing a child's ability and needs, regarding homework. Any homework given is done so on the understanding that all children have an equal opportunity to complete it.

## **Tours and School Organised Events**

Our pupils have equal opportunity to participate in school tours and school organised outings.

## **Staff Development**

Any visiting teachers are made aware of any special abilities or needs. Each mainstream teacher is obliged to stay with their own class whilst there are visiting teachers. This ensures fair and equal treatment of all pupils. All teachers are aware of equality issues within the school. Staff members are encouraged to participate in courses given in this area and are always made aware and have access to all available reference materials. All staff members are briefed about any pupil's/families history prior to coming to school and care and attention are paid by all staff members to make sure all families are welcome.

## **Assessment**

Appropriate assessments are used according to the needs of each individual pupil.

## **Transition to Post Primary**

All pupils are encouraged to continue their education to post primary level. All efforts are made to assist 'at risk pupils' to continue their education, trying to implement support facilities for them. Open discussions are held with parents to assist them in determining the most suitable school/ subjects for the children.

## **Curriculum**

Each curricular area is dealt with in each policy.

The success of our Equal Opportunities Policy can be seen in everybody's treatment of each other on a day to day basis, reduction in incidents of bullying/racist incidents, use of appropriate language, all inclusive curricular, improvement in curricular attained levels (especially literacy), parental satisfaction and an atmosphere where everybody feels valued.

All staff members and the Board of Management have responsibilities for ensuring all aspects of this policy, overseen by the Principal.

The policy will apply as of September 2008.

The operation of this policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Signed

Signed

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**Chairperson, Board of Management**

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**School Principal**

Issued: February 2008