

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) to:

- Ensure equality of access to all pupils and staff in the school environment.
- Ensure that no condition be allowed to hinder a person's participation in school life.

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 in accessing and participating in the curriculum as provided by Primrose Hill National School.

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 apply for enrolment in our school subject to the terms of our Admissions Policy.
- All pupils are placed in age appropriate classes
- The Church of Ireland ethos 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 induction meeting for new parents and parents of incoming Junior Infant pupils.
- The enrolment form takes into account that parents may be separated, divorced, same sex or single parent families.

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 Circular 0044/2019 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 (See Leave of Absence Policy).

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 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. The school operates and implements an Attendance Policy which outlines the sequence of events regarding non-attendance at school. All parents are made aware of its implications through constant communication with the school.

Lunch

The school does have a Healthy Lunch Policy.

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 and confidences respected.

Induction and Teaching

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.

The school's enrolment application form gathers all the information that the school will need to address issues of inequality, such as, family background, medical concerns and learning or physical disabilities. This enable the school to access relevant supports such as Support 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 that reflects diversity.

All teachers share information which is updated annually. The school promotes non-academic activities in a manner which is favourable to all sexes, races and religions. Classes are split on a non-academic basis (See Class Allocation Policy). Special efforts are made to avoid stereotyping when designating tasks and presenting classroom materials.

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.

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 Special Education Teacher (SET). 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.

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 Access

Each curricular area is dealt with in each policy.

The school endeavours to enable all pupils to access all areas of the curriculum 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.

Exemptions from the learning of Irish may be sought in specific circumstances (see Circular 0054/2022).

SESE offers many areas where diversity and differences can be celebrated. Geography lessons 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 one full-time Special Education Teacher and access to one part-time Special Education Teacher. Children with special needs in Primrose Hill have access to support from SET through withdrawal and in-class support in addition to full-time mainstream integration.

Evaluation and Success Criteria

The success of our Equal Opportunities Policy can be seen through the following:

- 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 curriculum,
- 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 November 2023.

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

Signed

Signed

Chairperson, Board of Management

School Principal

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