

School of the Holy Spirit

Inclusion Policy

Introduction

This Policy was drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, staff and parents in School of the Holy Spirit. It applies to all students in the school, to their parents/guardians and to all members of staff and management.

In School of the Holy Spirit, we value the individuality of our students, their families and their home setting. We are committed to giving all of our students every opportunity to achieve the highest standards and to ensure equality of access to all students in the school environment. We do this by taking into account our students' varied life experiences and individual needs. We offer a broad, differentiated and balanced curriculum at primary and secondary level. The school encourages students to see themselves as part of a community where all are entitled to exist peacefully. School relationships are based on respect and tolerance.

Aims and Objectives:

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual students, or groups of students. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our students. We make this a reality through: -

- Creating an environment where gender, ethnic, cultural, religious and sexual diversity is acknowledged, respected, understood and celebrated.

- Promoting positive initiatives towards an inclusive school.
- Promoting equal opportunities in an environment where diversity is respected and valued.
- Recognising that inclusive education includes the school structures, administration and curriculum.
- Supporting curricula that focus on equality and human rights.
- Inculcating an intolerance for discrimination and unfairness.
- A student centred approach to classroom learning.

The curriculum is our starting point for planning learning and teaching experiences that meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of students at both primary and secondary level. We meet these needs through:

- Planning and setting suitable learning experiences.
- Responding to student's diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.
- Writing an Individual Education Plan for each student annually which takes his/her learning styles, strengths and needs into consideration.
- Providing opportunities outside the Primary and Secondary Curricula to meet the needs of individuals or groups of students. This includes Play Therapy, Sensory Preparation, DIR/ Floortime, Visual Supports and Assistive Technology, engagement in initiatives, projects and the local community and access to speakers on a range of subjects and issues pertaining to the lives and experiences of our students.
- Liaising with external professionals and agencies to support students.

We achieve educational inclusion by continually reviewing what we do, through asking ourselves these key questions;

- Do all our students work to their potential?
- What do we do for those students whom we know are not achieving their best?
- Are our actions effective?
- Are we successful in promoting racial, cultural, religious, sexual and social harmony and preparing the students to live in a diverse and multicultural society?

Teaching and Learning Style:

We aim to give all our students the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement through whole-school and teacher planning. We monitor each student's progress and teachers use this information for future learning opportunities.

Teachers will ensure that the language used in school to mediate the curricula is gender balanced and that the language of the school, both spoken and written is bias-free and gender fair.

Each student's individual and specific needs are addressed through a teacher-designed IEP with contributions from the student, parents and professionals. Teachers enable the student to succeed by planning work that is in line with that student's individual needs and abilities, strengths and interests. Where the attainment of a student significantly exceeds the expected level of attainment, teachers use other materials, or extend the breadth of work within the area or areas for which the student shows particular aptitude.

Teachers are familiar and compliant with the relevant legislation governing equal opportunities, race, gender and disability.

Teachers ensure students:

- Feel secure, regulated for learning and know that their contributions are valued.
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others.
- Are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Experience success in learning.
- Use materials which reflect a range of social and cultural and religious backgrounds, without stereotyping.
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- Have adjustable targets which enable them to succeed.
- Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Ensuring Access to the Curriculum:

As School of the Holy Spirit is a special school, students enrol with a diagnosis of need and recommendations for teaching and learning. The Primary Curriculum is followed in all subjects except Irish and is differentiated to the student's level of ability in the Primary School.

In the Secondary School Junior Cycle Levels 2 or 3 and Leaving Cert Applied are taught. Courses are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students.

Our school is committed to providing an environment that allows students full access to all areas of learning. Students with physical disabilities are supported by specific equipment and technology recommended for them by therapists. Teachers, on behalf of students in Senior Cycle apply for Reasonable Accommodation where necessary to ensure equal access to state examinations.

Teachers use an eclectic approach to teaching and learning, drawing on extensive training in the areas of TEACCH, PECS, Studio III, DIR/Floortime, Wellbeing, Sensory Preparation and Trauma to support students to progress socially, emotionally and academically and to access curricula.

Teachers ensure that the work: -

- Takes account of the student's diagnosis and ability
- Is differentiated to the level at which the student can comfortably work
- Encourages social interaction
- Uses assessment techniques that reflect students' individual needs and abilities.

Racism and Inclusion:

The diversity of our society is addressed through our student-centred approach and schemes of work which reflect the programmes of study of the primary and secondary curricula. Teachers are flexible in their planning and offer appropriate challenges to all students, regardless of gender, ethnic, religious or social background. The Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies promote respect for all and apply to all students.

Summary:

In our school, the learning, achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of every student is important. We comply with legislation to ensure that all students' right to equality of access is enacted. We strive through policies, procedures and practices to maintain a warm, welcoming and inclusive school setting which maximises the learning potential for every student.

Success Criteria:

- Students feel safe and valued in school.
- All students access the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs.
- Students are aware and respectful of diversity.
- All stakeholders accept, respect and practice an inclusive mind set.

Implementation and Review:

This policy was implemented in the school year 2023-2024.

This policy will be reviewed in 2026-2027 or beforehand if deemed necessary.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Principal