

# **Scoil Muire an Croí gan Smál**

**Leenane**

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

### **Introductory Statement**

All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfill this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school. Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism.

This policy document was drawn up:

- a. To ensure equality of access to all pupils and staff in the school environment
- b. 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.

### **Rationale**

The policy was drafted because:

1. Legislation in relation to equality of access has been activated , such as the
  - Employment Equality Act 1998
  - Education Act 1998
  - Equality Status Act 2000
2. To promote the principles of justice and equality for all in accessing and participating in the curriculum as provided by Leenane national school.

### **Links to School Ethos**

Leenane N.S. endeavors to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities regardless of physical disability, gender, race, religion or learning disability. We also commit to preparing each and every pupil for life by promoting value and respect for all. The schools ethos statement promotes the spirit of inclusiveness and the principles of equality.

## **Aims and Objectives**

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

## **Organisational Procedures**

### **Enrolment**

All pupils are welcome to enrol regardless of Race, Religion, gender, family status, disability, or membership of the 'Travelling Community'.

### **Interviewing**

The Board of Management is an equal opportunities Employer as per the Equal Status Act 2000, and the Employment Equality Act 1998, and no discriminatory questions on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, family status etc. will be asked at interview. 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. will be implemented.

### **Communication**

While the school has no children of foreign nationals at present, in the event of such enrolments, every effort will be made to ensure good communication is established with the parents of these children. The staff will familiarize themselves with the different cultural/religious practices of these parents and will develop contacts with relevant agencies to ensure all available supports are used.

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 of the school have an input into the formulation of the Equality policy.

The school will make all parents aware of supports which may be available to them. (i.e. grants for school books etc...)

### **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 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 adventure sports, music, football, etc. in a manner favorable 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 endeavors to enable all children to access all curriculum areas engaging them in appropriate intellectually stimulating work. All children are given opportunities 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 may be sought for children of non-nationals who enroll 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 and school principal.

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 one part-time learning support /resource teacher. Children with Special Needs in mainstream have access to Learning Support and Resource hours in addition to full time mainstream integration. We actively encourage and facilitate the maximum possible integration and participation of all children with special needs

### **Evaluation of Policy**

The policy is subject to continual review under the following –

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

## **Ratification / Review / Implementation**

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management of Leenane National School on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007 for immediate implementation.

It will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

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Fr. John Kenny  
Chairperson

This policy was formally reviewed on the following date.

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Chairperson