

Whole School Inclusion Policy

Coláiste Na Toirbhirte Bandon

MISSION STATEMENT

Coláiste Na Toirbhirte, Bandon, is a Presentation School under the Trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust), providing second level education for girls and boys, in the traditions of Nano Nagle, Foundress of the Presentation Congregation. Catholic Christian principles underlie the philosophy of education in the School. Our school is a community seeking to develop the full potential of each student – intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social.

The **Core Values of C.E.I.S.T.** are:

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

To achieve this Coláiste na Toirbhirte seeks:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum suited to the needs of each individual and the demands of a changing world.
- To recognise and affirm individual skills and abilities through curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- To encourage positive interaction and good communication among students, staff, parents/guardians and the wider community.
- To continue to develop and provide a framework of support and care which meets the needs of individual students and staff.
- To continue to provide religious education and spiritual development enabling the students to celebrate the Christian vision of life.
- To maintain and foster our willingness for and openness to ongoing staff development.

Inspired by these values, we dedicate ourselves to the ongoing development of our school.

Rationale

The purpose of the Whole School Inclusion Policy is to ensure that:

- The school is a place where everyone, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, ability, disability and social

circumstances, feels safe, feels a sense of belonging, is respected and valued and has their individual needs understood and met as far as resources allow within the context of the service provided.

- In line with DES guidelines, the curriculum reflects the identities of all children and recognises their abilities and interests.
- All children are enabled to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the curriculum/programme, and learning is extended to challenge and promote the individual child's abilities and development.
- School planning and provision embraces the needs of all children and works to deliver an inclusive and accessible environment for all.
- The school commits to continuing our journey towards a more inclusive education system at all levels and as part of our everyday practice. We have high expectations of all students, recognising that, with the right support, all students can succeed. Our commitment means that young people from all social, cultural, community and family backgrounds, and of all identities and all abilities are able to:
 - attend school and be welcomed
 - access and participate in a high-quality education and fully engage in the curriculum along-side their similar-aged peers
 - learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination or harassment
 - achieve academically and socially with reasonable adjustments and supports tailored to meet their learning needs
- The school works in partnership with parents, families and the wider community to promote equality of opportunity and to oppose all forms of bias, oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
- The school provides opportunities that help develop children's sense of personal and group identity so that they can become confident, open to difference, receptive to change and respectful towards other identities.
- The school enables children and staff members to have the confidence and skills to challenge instances of prejudice and discrimination.
- Children and staff members are equipped to understand that reason, logic, respect and sensitivity have to underpin ways and means of resolving arguments and conflicts.
- Equality of opportunity is an integral part of all planning and decision making within the school.
- The school operates inclusive recruitment practices

The Whole School Inclusion Policy has implications for most aspects of school life including:

- The Workplace – diversity among the workforce and interaction between staff members.

- Employment - advertising; recruitment; selection; interviewing; promotion; access to training and other employee benefits
- Admissions – Considering content and wording of application forms; offers of places; waiting lists; criteria.
- Resources – Carefully evaluating all the materials and equipment in the setting for messages about diversity – omissions; stereotypes; accuracy; knowledge of appropriate uses of resources. Determining which materials stay; which need to be sourced to ensure inclusion and a sense of belonging; which need to be modified and which should be taken out because of their stereotypical or inaccurate content.
- Pedagogy and Learning Styles – Taking account of the different learning styles which the children in the group use to concentrate, process and retain information when planning activities and programmes.
- Curriculum – Ensuring equal access to the curriculum for all children. Considering the physical layout of rooms; visible representations of diversity; the individual needs of children with physical and/or intellectual disabilities; the needs of children learning English as an additional language – valuing home languages and dialects, understanding bilingualism. How the curriculum incorporates an anti-bias approach and a way to counter the learning of negative attitudes and behaviour towards difference, talking openly about differences. Considering whether specific action needs to be taken to address inequalities. Ensuring that there is a basic understanding and knowledge of the beliefs and faiths of the children and families in the setting, considering whether specific action is needed to involve everyone, questioning and evaluating the purpose of celebrating festivals relevant to the users of the service.
- Guiding Behaviour – Addressing issues such as bullying, inappropriate body language, harassment, name-calling.
- Communication – Ensuring that all parents/guardians and staff members are able to communicate clearly with one another (Plain English/translation/interpretation etc. where necessary).
- Assessment – Ensuring no form of assessment discriminates unjustifiably.
- Funding – Identifying any funding that may be available to implement the policy and/or to ensure there is no discrimination.
- Training – Ensuring that all training needs relevant to Whole School Inclusion are identified and included in the budget and that appropriate training is provided for all staff members.

Legislation and regulatory requirements

- Tusla: Quality and Regulatory Framework
- U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in particular Article 2 (UNCRC, 1989) Education (Provision in Respect of Children With Special Educational Needs) Act 2022

- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Equal Status Act 2010-2018
- Irish Constitution (Bunreacht na hEireann) in particular Articles 40.1, 40.3.1, 40.3.2 and 44.3.3.
- Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015

Children's needs

Children need:

- A safe, accessible environment that facilitates, supports and encourages a positive individual and group identity.
- Well-trained and informed staff who understand their individual culture, identity, needs and interests.
- Equal access to a differentiated and full curriculum/programme that caters for their individual and particular needs.
- A policy that ensures that they can learn to be comfortable with difference, to identify what is fair and unfair and to be able to stand up for themselves and others.

Parents/Families' needs

Parents/guardians need:

- To know that their child will have their individual learning and development needs met and that their family culture and identity will be recognised and valued.
- To be communicated with clearly and effectively, and be able to communicate effectively, with the people who they trust to care for and educate their children.

Parents and other family members also need to have equal access to and participation in the school environment and to feel a sense of belonging when visiting the school.

Staff needs

Staff members need:

- To know and to ensure that all of the school's processes are fair, open and transparent and not discriminatory.
- To work in and be involved in providing a safe, anti-bias, accessible environment.
- Be supported to be comfortable with difference and to engage effectively with parents/guardians and families; to be able to critically think about and confidently engage in dialogue around issues of equality, diversity, inclusion, bias and discrimination.
- Be able to have effective two-way communication with all of the children they care for and educate, and with their parents/guardians and families.

Management needs

Management needs:

- To know that all those who use the school or who work in it have their individual needs met as far as possible within the context of the school and that staff members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet the diverse needs of all of the children who use the school and their families.
- To ensure through this policy that:
 - The school does not discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly, that all relevant legislation and regulation is fully complied with.
 - All of the school's policies and procedures reflect a commitment to equality and inclusion and that the school promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.
 - All staff members and management contribute to the development and review of policies.
 - Steps are taken to enable the contribution of the children to the development of policies and procedures.
 - Parents/guardians are facilitated to contribute in whatever ways suit them best.
 - The review and evaluation of policies is used to identify specific actions to address equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
 - Interactions with children and curriculum/programme content are monitored to ensure appropriate content and breadth of content.

Policy Statement

Coláiste Na Toirbhirte is a school where everyone - irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, ability, disability and social circumstances - feels safe, welcomed, respected and valued and has their individual needs understood and met.

The school community embraces the following principles of an inclusive education where:

- education for all is considered a human right
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student
- every educator is an educator of all students
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities

- all learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
- full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
- assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
- multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right and a resource
- all students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are taken into account
- diversity is understood to include all members of a community
- all students experience success as a key component of learning

When issues of discrimination arise:

- Students can report the issue to any member of staff or management
- Parents can report the issue to the relevant Year Head or management
- Staff can report the issue directly to management
- Management will act swiftly to understand the issue, and resolve the issue using a restorative justice framework.

Communication Plan

All parents/guardians are to be informed of the policy and procedures regarding Whole School Inclusion on enrolment. Staff members will check with parents/guardians that they have read and understood the policy and provide any assistance needed.

The Policy Statement will be included in the Student Journal. This policy will also be reviewed every two years.

A copy of all policies and procedures will be available during all hours of operation to staff members and parents/guardians in the Policy Folder available from reception.

This policy will be shared with new staff at their induction, and with all staff members at staff induction on return to school each year.

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

AntiBullying Policy

Dignity in the Workplace - AntiBullying

Dignity in the Workplace - Harrassment

Who Must Observe This Policy

a) Board of Management

- Ensuring the service complies with all relevant legislation, guidelines and the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion National Charter.
- Ensuring the policy and its related procedures and practices are implemented.

b) Principal and Deputy Principal

- Implementing the policy and its related procedures and practices.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support.
- Taking appropriate action in any cases of discrimination.

c) The Year Heads and Student Support Team

- Supporting senior Management in providing a leadership role on inclusion in the setting and ensuring the appropriate implementation of this policy through their work with students.

d) All Staff Members

- Knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping and dealing with any related incidents.
- Promoting equality and good relations and not discriminating on grounds of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability or social circumstances.
- Keeping up to date on diversity, equality and inclusion issues by attending training and information opportunities.

e) Parents/Guardians

- Being aware of and complying with the school's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy and understanding that it applies to all children and all those involved in and with the school.
- Supporting staff members in developing a shared understanding and an appreciation of the benefits of an anti-bias/anti-discriminatory approach.

f) Students

- Being aware of and complying with the school's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Promoting equality and good relations in all interactions with other students

g) Relevant Agencies (such as Tusla, HSE, Pobal)

Supporting the service in the development and implementation of the policy. Being aware of and complying with the service's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy.

h) Visitors

Being aware of and complying with the service's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy.

Actions to be Followed to support students

Victims of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination will be given every support. Those responsible will also be supported by appropriately challenging the behaviour, by providing accurate information on the issue, by giving the person an opportunity to think about the effects of their actions and by being clear that such behaviour is not accepted in this school. Where the principles outline above are not implemented, the following interventions may be used as appropriate:

- Teacher speaks with all pupils.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
- Counselling both parties.
- Mediation.
- Targeted educational intervention.

These interventions are similar to those in the Anti-Bullying Policy, as discrimination against a student is by its nature a bullying offence.

Ongoing actions to foster inclusivity:

- Culture club to embrace the cultures of students from different backgrounds.
- Neurodiversity week to ensure there is a greater knowledge and acceptance of students who are neurodiverse.
- Autism Awareness month.
- Standup week
- Friendship week
- Lunchtime activities

Recent Actions taken to foster inclusivity:

- AsIAM Autism Awareness programme completed by all teaching staff.
- Welcome pack developed for any students transferring into Coláiste Na Toirbhirte from another school.
- Dignity in the Workplace Anti Bullying and Dignity in the Workplace Harassment Policies developed. Workshops completed with staff on these.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 23.03.26