

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Non-statutory	11 th March 2025	March 2025	June 2023	March 2029	Miss McErlane

Related Documents

1. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
2. Addressing Bullying Policy
3. Pastoral Care Policy
4. Attendance Policy for Students
5. Positive Behaviour Policy
6. eSafety and Digital Technology Policy
7. Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
8. Special Educational Needs Policy
9. Literacy Policy
10. Numeracy Policy
11. Health and Safety Policy
12. College Rules/Routines for Students

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock is committed to equity and inclusion and this policy sets out our commitment and approach to equity, diversity and inclusion. We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all students, staff and members of the College Community are welcomed, valued and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics. We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion in our College for all students, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and/or sexual orientation (LGBTQI+).
- 1.2** We are an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our students and where all members of our school community are of equal worth. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.
- 1.3** Over the past decade, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock has welcomed a change in our community demographic. Our College community is now much more diverse.
- 1.4** We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment. As a College community, we recognise the need to champion equity and ensure inclusion for all students in the full life of our school, where appropriate, making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation.
- 1.5** We believe that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to, and advancement in, employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment. All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities; this is evidenced in our practices and procedures.

2. Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Values

- 2.1** College Mission Statement - 'Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock cares for young people in a way that encourages them to develop to their full potential within a supportive Christian community. We seek to prepare our students to play an active and responsible role in society, and to use their talents for the service of others.'
- 2.2** College Vision Statement - 'Excellence through Care'.
- 2.3** Our six Key Values are: Care, Honesty, Respect, Inclusion, Safety and Trust. All our policies are based firmly on these Key Values and Statements of Principle.

3. College Policies

- 3.1** Through this policy, and the wider practices within the College, we seek to empower our young people to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination. We equip the Board of Governors and College staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our College's safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school. Inclusion underpins all our school policies.
- 3.2** As part of our overall school policy development, there are a number of policies that we must have in place and regularly review to ensure our school is addressing its statutory responsibilities. These include the Addressing Bullying Policy, Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Uniform Policy and Admissions Policy. Any incident arising will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policy.

3.3 It is our belief that equity and inclusion are central to all of our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all our students and their families feel valued and supported, and making sure that equity and inclusion are evident in everyday school life.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The **Board of Governors** has overall responsibility to:

- ‘Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school’ - *‘Every School a Good School - the Governor Role’* (Department of Education NI, August 2019);
- manage the implementation of equity and diversity in the College.

4.2 The **Principal** is responsible for:

- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation;
- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equity and inclusion;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising are undertaken with staff;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

4.3 The **Senior Leadership Team** is responsible for:

- putting the College’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the necessary support and training to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary.

4.4 The **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Coordinator** is responsible for:

- monitoring, evaluating and providing evidence of critical reflection by staff and young people on equity, diversity and inclusion across the Curriculum;
- playing a central role in developing equity and diversity through liaison with partner schools, offering a range of programmes, including Habitat for Humanity;
- selecting and leading a team of EDI Mentors to assist in various projects throughout the school year;
- encouraging students to participate in additional projects, such as the Ulster Project, the Old Rotarian’s TABU programme and Pramerica;
- managing and coordinating the GSA/Kaleidoscope student leaders in the College and supervising weekly meetings;
- working alongside the Student Council to ensure equity and inclusion are being promoted and respected within the student body;
- ensuring that relevant students are made aware of bursaries available for Third Level Education and providing support and guidance to these students.

4.5 The **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator** will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the **College’s Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team** (led by the Designated Teacher).

- 4.6 **The Learning Support Coordinators** will play a key role in ensuring an inclusive approach to the Curriculum for all students. They will coordinate the provision for students with Special Educational Needs, Newcomer Students and students with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- 4.7 **All School Staff** (teaching and support) have a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the College.
- 4.8 **Students** are responsible for:
- respecting others in their language and actions;
 - following all of the relevant College policies and Codes of Conduct in line with the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

5. Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

5.1 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion provision is integrated **within the College Curriculum**:

- The **Religious Education Programme** is a key element in shaping belief, identity and culture of all students. The programme promotes the human dignity of all and helps bring about a tolerant and mutually respectful world, both locally and nationally. Students visit local churches and participate in retreat programmes which promote inclusion. Church leaders from the local community visit KS3 classes. Students also investigate world faiths, e.g., Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, as well as the issues of prejudice, discrimination and human rights.
- The Year 8-14 **Personal Development Programme** encourages learners to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically effective; to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives; and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens who make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives. Issues covered range from anti-bullying, drugs and alcohol prevention programmes to mental health provision.
- **Local and Global Citizenship** is taught as a discrete subject in Key Stage 3. The programme includes a specific focus on exploring the range and extent of diversity in both local and global societies. It has four strands: diversity and inclusion; human rights and social responsibility; equality and social justice; and democracy and active participation. Local and Global Citizenship provides young people with opportunities to explore issues such as diversity, prejudice and racism, promoting inclusion, reconciliation and mutual respect; and investigate how identity, stereotyping, sectarianism and racism can contribute to conflict. It also enables young people to develop the necessary skills to manage and resolve conflict peacefully.
- **CCEA GCSE Learning for Life and Work** is compulsory for all Year 11 and 12 students. It develops the four themes undertaken in KS3 Local and Global Citizenship, as well as Personal Development and Employability.
- **KS3 History** deals with the causes and consequences of Partition. This provides a unique opportunity to explore the complexity of Irish History and how differing perspectives and traditions have emerged which have conflicted with varying degrees of trauma resulting. A balanced and well-informed view of such events is clearly a key element in providing an educational dimension to the overall solution of resolving such issues.
- **English Language and Literature** use specific texts, both factual and fictional, to provide a significant element in allowing young people to engage with their culture, the culture of others and how such life experiences have developed historically and in the present day. Composition and free writing by young people enable them to explore similar themes, while at the same time allowing them to express their own opinions and perspectives.
- **Music, Art and Drama** provide mediums for exploration of cultures.
- **Physical Education** facilitates the exploration of a range of games, both local and global, which provide an enriched learning experience.

- **Languages** are an integral part of understanding the experience and culture of others, while having strong links to tradition and identity. The Language Department marks the European Day of Languages with events for Junior School students.

5.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are integrated **within College Policies and Practices**:

Student Voice

- The College Student Voice is meaningful and viewed as an essential part of real delivery of child-centred provision, including issues of rights, equity, democracy and student voice. It is made up of two elected representatives from each year group. It meets eight times a year and reports back to the student body through Focus of the Week.
- Junior, Senior and Upper School Councils are made up of two representatives from each tutor group.
- Students are also involved in a range of initiatives to promote student participation in decision making.
- A Mentor Programme is in place for Year 13 students. The Programme provides opportunities for students to participate in activities based on the themes of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Newcomer Students

- The College is committed to protecting the existence and the national, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities. The Learning Support Team will work alongside the Pastoral and Curriculum Teams to:
 - outline additional strategies which are in place to support the individual needs of Newcomer Students;
 - ensure staff are aware of both pastoral and curriculum support strategies in place to guarantee that Newcomer Students receive the support needed to ensure integration and access to the curriculum, and fulfil their potential;
 - provide Newcomer Students with a welcoming environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate;
 - ensure that students can see their languages, culture and identity reflected in the classrooms and the wider school;
 - assess, record and monitor the language development and proficiency of each student;
 - ensure effective communication with the parents of Newcomer Students.

Home Languages

- A positive attitude to home languages should be encouraged through:
 - encouraging students to use home languages to help with curriculum understanding;
 - provision and use of bilingual dictionaries;
 - encouraging students to enter for public examinations in a home language (if available).

Racism

- Racism of any kind will not be tolerated in the College.
- Any student found to be responsible for any racist comment or behaviour towards another student/member of staff will be sanctioned in accordance with the College Positive Behaviour Policy.
- The topic of Racism is addressed in various areas of the curriculum.
- EDI Mentors will deliver annual workshops addressing the issue of Racism to Year 9 students.

Sectarianism

- Sectarianism of any kind will not be tolerated in the College.
- Any student found to be responsible for any sectarian comment or behaviour towards another student/member of staff will be sanctioned in accordance with the College Positive Behaviour Policy.

Intercultural Awareness

- Within the College there is a high emphasis on embracing the cultural identities of each student. This is very evident in Citizenship and LLW classes at KS3 and KS4 which focus on developing the student's sense of identity within a multicultural school and society.
- Opportunities for promoting and celebrating diversity include:
 - Displays throughout the school
 - Making accommodations across areas of the curriculum, where possible
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - International links
 - Annual activities for Culture Week
 - Assemblies and celebrations (e.g., European Day of Languages)
 - Focus of the Week
 - Celebration of Black History Month

LGBTQIA+

- The College follows guidelines set out in 'Love Rejoices in the Truth: Relationships and Sexuality Education (Accord 2002) that, *'the ideals of respect and dignity for every person regardless of their race, creed, or sexual orientation are to be recognised'*.
- The College also follows guidelines set out in 'Amoris Laetitia' (The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family) where Pope Francis (April 2016) states that, *'there is a need to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations'* and *'it is a matter of reaching out to everyone, of needing to help each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesiastical community...'* (AL 297).
- The College recognises the diversity of modern families. Teachers should acknowledge that many students come from backgrounds which may not reflect their own values and experiences. Teachers must approach these issues with sensitivity and aim to avoid causing hurt and offence to students and their families. The development of a student's self-worth and confidence is essential. All teachers must be empathetic to the personal and emotional circumstances of individual students as outlined in Section 9 of the College RSE Policy.
- The College is committed to supporting all students through the Pastoral Care System so that they can fulfil their potential.
- Any student found to be responsible for any negative comment or behaviour towards another student/member of staff will be sanctioned in accordance with the College Positive Behaviour Policy.
- The GSA and Kaleidoscope are student-led groups that provide a safe space and weekly meetings for any student who identifies as LGBTQIA+ and allies of the community. Student leaders prepare weekly presentations and discussions on various topics around the history of the LGBTQIA+ community. The GSA Committee also promotes some fundraising events for the annual Trócaire Campaign.

Young Mothers

- The College will support young women of school age who may be pregnant or who are parenting through the School Age Mothers Programme (SAM) which aims to facilitate continuing education.

Young Carers

- The College is committed to ensuring that Young Carers do not become marginalised from their peers and that they attain their full potential, personally, socially, emotionally and academically. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the College of the caring responsibilities of the student.

Admissions

- Primary 7 pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability may apply for access arrangements for the SEAG Entrance Assessment. Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs may apply through EA. Disabled provision seeks to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

School Environment

- Ramp or direct access to the building is available on all levels with appropriate signage indicating entrances. Accessible toilets and changing facilities exist in the school on all levels. Disabled students have direct access to all areas of the school and access by lift to all areas.

Accessibility of the Curriculum

- There are no areas of the curriculum from which students with disabilities or special educational needs have been excluded. Special provision for changing facilities and shower arrangements are provided in Physical Education. The Learning Support Coordinator meets with students who have identified special educational needs and their parents in order to ensure adequate access to all subject areas. Any special needs are discussed with Year 8 students and parents at meetings in May/June prior to their enrolment in the College. eLearning facilities, such as laptop computers or iPads, are accessible for students with identified physical, visual or motor needs or specified educational needs as appropriate.

5.3 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are promoted via Connections with the Local Community

EBALC

- The College is committed to working with the East Belfast Area Learning Community to deliver the Entitlement Framework and share best practice. This will ensure that all students have the opportunity, where feasible, to access a broader and more balanced curriculum.

Shared Education

- The College is committed to participation in Shared Education and building on our existing links with partner schools. We aim to provide curriculum opportunities for students so that they may develop friendships with students from other schools.

Local Community

- Appropriate local connections are sought where possible and relationships developed:
 - St Vincent de Paul
 - Kirk House and Towell House
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - The Justice Group

Confucius Project

- A Chinese teacher visits the College weekly to teach Mandarin to students.

6. Monitoring the Effectiveness of the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Board of Governors, in consultation with the Principal, is responsible for promoting equity, good relations and diversity and managing the implementation of equity and diversity in the College. To this end, the Board of Governors will:

- Identify trends and patterns to inform future policy and practice development and review.
- Record written responses to relevant students, parents/carers, when appropriate.

7. Review of the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed in consultation with all school community stakeholders:

- at intervals of no less than four years
- following any complex incident which highlights the need for such a review
- when reviewing other associated policies, such as the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate
- following new guidance as directed by the Department of Education

A copy of this policy is available online at www.knock.co.uk. Parents/guardians can also request a hard copy by contacting Reception on 028 9040 1184 or by emailing info@knock.co.uk.

8. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at www.knock.co.uk. Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Complaints Procedure.

Signed: Mr Leo O'Reilly
(Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Date: 11th March 2025

Signed: Miss Deborah McLaughlin
(Principal)

Date: 11th March 2025