Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy

School Address*: Our Lady of Good Counsel School,*

Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork. P31FH22

Phone number: *0214878370*

Roll number: *18208A*

School Patron: *Brothers of Charity*.

Principal: *Aisling Power*.

Deputy Principal: *Nollaig Moynihan.*

Chairperson: *Harold Brooks*

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Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is committed to cultivating a workplace culture where all staff are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. The school recognises and values the diversity of its employees and is committed to promoting equality, inclusion and positive working relationships.

This policy sets out the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity and to preventing discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation in all aspects of employment. It reflects the values of the school and supports compliance with Irish equality legislation.

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2. Policy Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive working environment where every staff member feels respected, valued and supported.

The school will promote equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on any of the nine protected grounds identified under Irish equality legislation:

- Gender
- Civil Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

The school also recognises the value of diversity in terms of socioeconomic background, cultural identity, language, educational experience and individual perspectives.

This policy applies equally to all employees, including teaching staff, special needs assistants (SNAs), administrative staff, support staff, contractors, volunteers and any individual acting on behalf of the school.

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3. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Employment Equality Acts 1998-2021
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2018
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Relevant Department of Education Circulars and Guidance

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4. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- To ensure equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection, promotion, training and professional development.
- To foster a positive and inclusive culture where all staff are respected and valued.

- To support diversity as a strength that enriches the school community.
- To meet the school's legal obligations under Irish employment and equality legislation.
- To encourage mutual respect and positive working relationships among all staff.

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5. Scope

This policy applies to all employment-related activities including:

- Recruitment and selection
- Induction and probation
- Assignment of duties
- Training and professional development
- Career progression and promotion
- Performance management
- Workplace interactions and communications
- Access to facilities and resources
- Participation in school-related activities and events

The policy applies during working hours, at school-related events and training activities, and in all work-related communications, including electronic communications.

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6. School Commitments

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

The school will:

- Operate fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures.
- Select candidates based on qualifications, skills, experience and suitability for the role.
- Ensure that recruitment practices comply with equality legislation.
- Encourage applications from suitably qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds.

6.2 Equality of Opportunity

The school will:

- Provide equal access to training and development opportunities.
- Ensure decisions relating to promotion and career progression are objective and fair.
- Avoid practices that directly or indirectly disadvantage individuals or groups.

6.3 Reasonable Accommodation

In accordance with the Employment Equality Acts, the school will provide reasonable accommodation for staff members with disabilities, where practicable, to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

6.4 Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

The school maintains a zero-tolerance approach to:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Victimisation
- Bullying

Any such behaviour will be dealt with under the school's relevant grievance, dignity at work and disciplinary procedures.

6.5 Training and Awareness

The school will:

- Promote awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion issues.
- Provide training and guidance where appropriate.
- Support staff in understanding their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

6.6 Inclusive Workplace Culture

The school will:

- Encourage respectful communication and collaboration.
- Recognise and value different experiences and perspectives.
- Promote participation and engagement by all staff.
- Foster an environment where concerns can be raised safely and respectfully.

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7. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.
- Supporting the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the school.

Principal and School Leadership

School leadership is responsible for:

- Implementing and monitoring this policy.
- Addressing concerns promptly and fairly.
- Promoting a culture of inclusion and respect.
- Ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities.

Employees

All staff members are expected to:

- Treat colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Support an inclusive workplace culture.
- Refrain from discriminatory, harassing or bullying behaviour.
- Report concerns where appropriate.
- Cooperate with investigations where required.

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8. Reporting and Resolution

Employees who believe they have experienced discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any breach of this policy are encouraged to raise their concerns promptly.

Reports may be made to:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The Chairperson of the Board of Management (where the concern involves the Principal or Deputy Principal)

All complaints will:

- Be handled sensitively and confidentially, insofar as possible.
- Be investigated promptly, fairly and impartially.
- Be addressed in accordance with the school's procedures.

Retaliation against any person who raises a concern or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

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9. Monitoring and Review

The school will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy through:

- Periodic policy reviews

- Staff consultation and feedback
- Review of complaints and workplace concerns
- Consideration of legislative developments and guidance

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislative or organisational changes require it.

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10. Communication of the Policy

A copy of this policy will be made available to all staff and will form part of the school's employment and governance framework. Staff will be informed of any amendments following policy review.

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11. Contact Information

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Principal.

Where concerns relate to the Principal or Deputy Principal, staff should contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Policy Approval

Policy Title: Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy

Approved by the Board of Management:

Date of Approval: 21 Jan 2025

Review Date: Jan 2028

Chairperson, Board of Management: Harold brooks

Principal: Aisling Power
