

Equality and Inclusion Policy

Mission Statement

Our college is a vibrant learning community where students, parents and teachers are encouraged, supported and challenged in pursuit of the highest standards of achievement and academic excellence. We foster equality, respect and integrity in our college.

We embrace diversity and recognise that everyone is unique and has a positive contribution to make.

The inclusion in our Mission Statement of the words “equality”, “diversity”, and “integrity” emphasise the importance of this policy for our whole school community and the commitment we have as a vibrant learning community to foster these ideals.

Differences are acknowledged and valued in Coláiste Pobail Setanta. The college endeavours to take account of the specific needs of all, will assess the impact of decisions on all and will create a positive environment for all, across the nine grounds enshrined in equality legislation.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our

- Enrolment Policy
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Learning Code
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHERE Programme
- CSPE Programme

All complaints pertaining to the nine grounds enshrined in equality legislation will be treated with fairness and sensitivity in as confidential a manner as possible. Any person who believes that the spirit or letter of this policy has been breached within the College should, in the first instance, contact the Principal.

This Draft Equality and Inclusion Statement reflect our commitment to meeting the obligations set out under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008.

This statement is designed to provide guidance to the college community on how the school endeavours to uphold the values of equality, inclusion and integration.

We, as a college, emphasise a positive approach in the context of a vibrant learning environment. This policy will reflect this perspective.

Aims

To provide a commitment to:

- combat discrimination, xenophobia and racism,
- accommodate diversity and promote equality across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation and to endeavour to meet the needs of all concerned,

- make reasonable accommodation for members of the community with disabilities,
- benefit the whole community by promoting equality and implementing positive action measures where necessary

Rationale:

This policy statement outlines the college's role and approach to equality and inclusion. It endeavours to do so in practical manner.

Content

Gender:

This coeducational college provides for both boys and girls taking a range of subjects and does not enter into gender differentiation or gender segregation in any subject area. All subject areas are equally welcoming of both genders.

Staff are a mixture of male and females with posts of responsibility being allocated to both sexes based on qualifications.

Civil status and family status:

Coláiste Pobail Setanta endeavours to accommodate all and supports all students, staff and parents.

Civil status covers a person who is single, married, separated, divorced, widowed or in a civil partnership.

Family status is defined as being as parent (or a person in *loco parentis*) for a child under eighteen years old.

Employment issues, such as maternity leave, are dealt with by VEC policy procedures.

The college offers support to students through the curriculum, guidance and counselling staff and through necessary review meetings where necessary.

The college offers support to parents in terms of information meeting held for incoming first year parents helping them make the transition from primary to post primary education.

The college offers support to staff through monthly 'think-tank' meetings, regular pastoral care meetings and through a staff-mentor programme.

Sexual orientation:

Our anti-bullying policy covers the area of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The guidance and counselling staff offer support where necessary.

The senior modular SPHE programme addresses this issue and offers a safe secure environment for discussing issues relating to sexual orientation.

Religious belief:

As the college is a non-designated community college under the patronage of County Dublin VEC it does not endeavour to express religious faith explicitly. It does endeavour to foster an atmosphere of friendliness, openness and tolerance to people of all faiths and no faith.

It provides for Religious Education at both Junior and Senior cycle through the Department of Education and Skills syllabi.

It also addresses a values based approach through the Transition Year Programme and through the SPHERE programme at senior cycle.

Age:

Coláiste Pobail Setanta advocates that students of a similar age or developmental level are best suited to learning together.

Disability:

The college provides reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of any person with a disability of any kind whether physical, intellectual or otherwise.

Our Learning Centre and Language Centre provide support and encouragement to students having special learning needs to access the curriculum and to help with integration and socialisation issues.

The college's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community. The physical building provides a lift to help with difficulties moving from one floor of the building to the next.

The Croi Centre provides specialist care to those students with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Race:

Coláiste Pobail Setanta's Mission statement promotes good relations between different racial and cultural groups within the college and within the wider community.

The college is committed to ensuring that all students and staff are encouraged and able to achieve their potential.

The college makes sure it is a place where everyone, taking account of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and are valued. Our visual imagery around the building incorporates students from the entire college population.

The CSPE, SPHE and SPHERE Programmes endeavour to teach students how to respect and value differences between people.

Our anti-bullying workshops and our Show Racism the Red Card Programme acknowledges the existence of racism and helps students to understand the take steps needed to prevent it happening.

The Traveller community:

All persons are welcome in Coláiste Pobail Setanta. Therefore people who are commonly called Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life are welcome in this college also.

To date students from this community actively participate in the college and integrate to a satisfactory level.

Roles & Responsibility

All members of the college community have a responsibility to ensure that no one is discriminated under any of the nine grounds.

The Board of Management and Principal will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equality legislation.

The Board of Management and Principal will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.

The Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

Review & Evaluation

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Coláiste Pobail Setanta will actively seek feedback from students, parents and staff on the implementation of this policy annually.

Documents consulted

- Diversity at School
- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Employment Equality Act 1998
- Equality Act 2004
- Equality and Education
- Equality Status Act 2000
- Employment Equality Act
- Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School
- Schools and the equal status act

The Policy Committee
May 2012