

*Ballyfin N.S*  
*Inclusion Policy*

# Ballyfin N.S. Inclusion Policy.

**Title: Inclusion Policy.**

- **Introductory Statement:**

This policy was formulated by the staff of Ballyfin N.S., the B.O.M. of Ballyfin N.S., the parents/ guardians of Ballyfin N.S. and the pupils of Ballyfin N.S.

The process initially involved a questionnaire for parents /guardians (See appendix 1), followed by a questionnaire for the pupils (See appendix 2) The information obtained from these questionnaires allowed us to analyse aspects of our attitudes to and strategies for inclusion, ie what was going well ?/ what needed improvement?. The policy was formulated in June 2012 following consultation with staff, B.O.M parents/guardians and pupils.

- **Rationale :**

We now have in Ballyfin N.S. a diversity of values, beliefs, customs, needs, language and traditions. It is important that the school community is aware of this diversity, respects this diversity and try to ensure we accommodate everyone in our school community in an inclusive environment.

- **Purpose:**

Our purpose is to ensure that -

- (a) "All students experience an education that respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" - Education Act 1998.
- (b) All the partners in education feel welcome in the school and have a sense of belonging to the school community.

- **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:**

The sentiments of our School Ethos and Mission Statement are intrinsically linked to the aims of our Inclusion Policy.

- (a) **School Ethos -**

Ballyfin N.S. aims to promote a happy positive and secure learning environment where each child can grow and develop socially, physically, academically, spiritually and emotionally. Our ethos reflects and respects the values and traditions of the community in which it is situated. It depends on the co-operation of pupils, parents, teachers, Board of Management, parish and the community.

- (b) **Mission Statement**

Our mission statement is to provide for the academic, physical, emotional, social and spiritual education of our pupils. The varying needs of the children, the talents, personalities and learning styles of both pupils and teachers will determine our delivery and approach. We endeavour to build on the children's strengths and support them when they encounter difficulties.

We recognise that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we depend on their support and co-operation together with that of the B.O.M., the D.E.S. and the wider community.



## **Aims :**

- To create an inclusive culture and environment.
  - To make the curriculum as accessible as possible for children from minority ethnic groups.
  - To raise awareness regarding increasing linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity.
  - To raise awareness of other religious beliefs.
  - To raise awareness of issues regarding children with special needs.
  - To list strategies/ initiatives which promote inclusion in Ballyfin N.S
  - To list other school policies which help promote an inclusive environment in Ballyfin N.S.
  - To assist teachers professional development in the area of diversity/ interculturalism/special needs.
- **Contents of Policy:**
    - Enrolment of newcomer pupils.
    - Induction of new children transferring/welcoming environment.
    - Home/school/Links/Parental Involvement.
    - Staff Development
    - Other Related Policies
    - Curriculum
    - Resources.
- **Enrolment of newcomer pupils (See Enrolment Policy).**
    - (a) Prospective parents/guardians are invited to make applications to enrol their child/children in Ballyfin N.S.  
This invitation is communicated through school newsletters and parish newsletters.  
Enrolment forms are available from the school office.
    - (b) The school enrolment form is an inclusive form which refers to ethnicity, first language, religion and country of origin.
    - (c) Parents of newcomer pupils are met and welcomed by the School Principal after the February 28<sup>th</sup> deadline for receipt of applications.  
An information meeting takes place with parents/guardians.  
Enrolment forms are checked and background information about the school is outlined. Parents/guardians are also given an information booklet (Ballyfin N.S. A Handbook for Parents.).  
Parents/guardians are given a tour of the school.
    - (d) A subsequent meeting with newcomer children and parents/guardians is held in June. The children are welcomed by the school Principal and introduced to their new class teacher, visit their new classroom and given a tour of the school and playground area
    - (e) Parents /guardians are also given an Information Pack which contains-  
Enrolment Policy.  
Discipline Policy.  
Recent Newsletter.  
Practical tips for preparing your child for school.  
School Booklist.

- (f) A representative from the Parents' Council may also attend and explain their role in the school and how parents/guardians can become involved in school-related matters.
- **Induction of new children transferring/providing a welcoming environment :**
    - (a) Information from previous school regarding new children transferring from another school is given to Ballyfin N.S .  
Relevant information about the new child is given to class teacher.
    - (b) Contact with previous school may also be made to gather any other relevant information.
    - (c) Class teacher will prepare children before new child joins the class.  
(Impart information about new child's country of origin for example).
    - (d) New pupil will meet with school principal in the company of his/her parents/guardians and be introduced to new teacher.  
Class teacher/school principal will discuss any relevant issues, e.g. Special Needs, healthy lunches, opening/closing times etc. with parents/guardians. The Ballyfin N.S. A Handbook for Parents can be given to parents/guardians.
    - (e) Psychological Reports, Speech and Language Reports, O. T. Assessments etc. may have recommendations for resource hours, S.N.A. support, assistive technology etc. The school will endeavour to secure these supports for a child with special needs.  
These supports will help a child integrate more easily into class environment.
    - (f) Class teacher/school principal will keep parents/guardians updated re child's integration into the school.
  - **Home School Links/Parent Involvement:**

All Parents/guardians are made equally welcome in the school.

    - (a) Newsletters are sent out to parents/guardians once a month (approximately).
    - (b) Text messages are also sent out to parents/guardians.
    - (c) All families receive the Ballyfin N.S Handbook for Parents. This booklet contains relevant and valuable information about the school and community.
    - (d) Tea/coffee afternoons are held for parents/grandparents as a social get-together in the school.
    - (e) **Parents/Teacher Meetings:** Annual Parents/Teacher meetings take place in November. We also encourage parents/guardians to make appointments to meet teachers to discuss their child's/children's progress at other times during the year.
    - (f) **Pupils Absences:** We ask parents/guardians to give a written note of explanation to the class teacher - under the Education Welfare Act schools are obliged to track school attendance and report absences of 20 days or more to the National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.). Schools are obliged to make parents/guardians aware once this 20 days rule is breached.

- (g) **Homework::** Homework is generally given to pupils in Ballyfin N.S. from Monday to Thursday.  
Amount of homework given and approximate time limits for completion of same is contained in our Homework Policy.  
Teachers also make provisions for children with special needs (Differentiation).
- was (h) **Grandparents Day:** An open day for grandparents and their grandchildren held in Ballyfin on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2012. This was a special day for both children and grandparents and a worthwhile initiative to welcome the senior members of our school community. It is an event the school hopes to host again.
- (l) **Guest Speakers/Sport Coaches:**  
Over the years our school has encouraged and welcomed guest speakers and coaching instructors to talk to and work with the pupils in our school. Parents/guardians have worked with the children in the area of football and hurling.  
Parents/guardians have assisted during some of our annual Sports Days. Some parents/guardians have also assisted teachers on school trips. Parents/guardians/grandparents have spoken to the children on various topics eg Water Conservation, School long ago, The Postman, The Guard etc.
- (j) **Parents Council:**  
The Parents Council in Ballyfin N.S. play an important role in involving parents/guardians in school related issues and events. They hold regular committee meetings and termly general meetings. The school principal attends all of these general meetings. School - related issues and initiatives are discussed and organised.  
The Parents Council liaise well with the Board of Management and school staff. Over the years the Parents Council have been involved in drawing up policies (eg Relationships and Sexuality Education, Special Needs Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Anti-bullying Policy etc.)  
The Parents Council in consultation with the Principal and Board of Management have agreed fund raising activities/ purchased resources identified.
- (k) **Board of Management:**  
The Board of Management of Ballyfin N.S. is the representative body of parents/guardians, teaching staff, patron and community coming together working on a voluntary basis to manage the school that educates all the children in the school community. The Board of Management works in conjunction with teaching/ancillary staff and the Parents Council to promote an atmosphere of openness and equality in our school.
- (l) **Celebration of Different Nationalities/Cultures :**  
Ballyfin N.S. celebrates the various nationalities in our school. (Class projects about the various countries, making and displaying of national colours and flags etc). It is important to acknowledge and promote the various different nationalities in our school and to celebrate and respect diversity that exists in Ballyfin N.S.
- (m) **Religious Status:**  
Ballyfin N.S. is a catholic school which is inclusive and welcoming to all pupils, regardless of religious status. Ballyfin N.S. has always been flexible and accommodating of children of other religions. While our school promotes a catholic ethos, that ethos is both inclusive and respectful to all

- **Staff Development:**
  - Our aim in this policy is -
  - (a) To allow teaching staff to access in-career development in intercultural education.
  - (b) To make all teachers/staff aware of the philosophy and principles underlying an Inclusion Policy.
  - (c) To provide opportunities for staff to discuss best practice around language support for new pupils.
  - (d) To monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy.
  
- **Other Related Policies:**
  - (a) Code of Behaviour/Discipline
  - (b) Enrolment Policy
  - (c) Anti-Bullying Policy
  - (d) Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
  - (e) School Attendance Policy
  - (f) Special Needs Policy
  - (g) Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy.
  - (h) S.P.H.E. Policy.
  - (i) Homework Policy
  
- **Curriculum**

“Intercultural education is not confined to a single curriculum area, nor indeed to areas within the formal curriculum.  
It is embedded in the practices and dispositions that inform both the school and classroom climate and “hidden curriculum” -Intercultural Education in the Primary School.

  - (a) Pupils access all areas of the curriculum.
  - (b) Teachers endeavour, in as far as is possible, to include all pupils to achieve in academic, sporting and extra –curricular activities.
  - (c) Pupil may avail of the Text Book Library Scheme which is organised by our Parents Council. This allows pupils to use school books for a nominal fee.
  - (d) Teachers provide a differentiated programme to meet the variety of needs in their classroom.
  - (e) Sporting activities which incur expense (eg swimming, football/hurling matches etc) are partly subsidised by our Parents Council.  
Children, whose families cannot afford such activities can still avail of these activities. The Board of Management subsidises such eventualities.
  - (f) Teachers endeavour to include children with special needs in P.E./sporting events. Unfortunately, depending on the nature of the disability it may not always be possible to include the child/children in all of these activities.
  - (g) Learning resources, visual supports and manipulatives, particularly in the area of Maths and Science, are available to all children during the course of their learning.
  - (h) Children are given opportunities to express themselves and to demonstrate understanding (eg Project work, debating, drama, mime, art etc.)

(l) Our Special Education Team (S.E.T.) work in conjunction with our main-stream teachers, Speech and language therapist, Psychologists, etc. and parents/guardians to promote the English language for all children. An individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) is evidence of this collaboration.

- **Resources**

- (a) Intercultural Education in the Primary School.
- (b) Tool kit for Diversity in the Primary School.
- (c) The Right Start - (4 - 7 years old).
- (d) Lift Off - (8 - 10 years old).
- (e) Me, You, Everyone - Rights and Responsibilities- (9 - 11 years old.)
- (f) My Multicultural Classroom
- (g) Curricular Area eg.
  - S.P.H.E. Lessons
  - English Lessons
  - Drama Lessons
  - Art/Craft Lessons
  - S.E.S.E. Lessons
- (h) Circular 0015/2001.

- **Concluding Comment**

This policy statement has been prepared by teaching staff and ancillary staff, Board of Management, parents/guardians and the pupils of 5th/6th class.

It has been prepared based on conditions existing in the school at the time of writing, taking into account department guidelines and relevant circulars. It may be altered, revised or updated at a future date by the above partners.

All amendments will be recorded in the Inclusion Policy.

Signed : Patrick B. Hennessy.  
Chairperson Ballyfin N.S.  
Board of Management.

Date: 20/06/2012