

Intercultural/Inclusion/EAL Policy for Scoil Mhuire.

Introductory Statement

Scoil Mhuire is a Catholic primary school with mixed enrolment to first class (boys transferring to the local boys school) and girls from second to sixth. There are currently two English Language Support Teachers who are employed to meet the needs of the International pupils.

Rationale

International pupils are becoming a normal part of primary school population and are a very positive addition to our school. Many of the pupils have very little English when they arrive in school and are helped by the language support teachers to develop their English language skills quickly and effectively, so that they can participate more actively in their normal class activity. The principal aim in our school is that the holistic needs of international pupils be catered for, that they be included in all mainstream activities as quickly as possible and that the school would endeavour to develop a positive sense of self-esteem and confidence in these pupils. We aim to provide a happy, secure and effective learning environment, where all international pupils can reach their full potential and where all children learn to value diversity and individuality of both themselves and others.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Scoil Mhuire promotes the principles of equality and respect in all aspects of education and supports the concept of equal access to full education for all our pupils. As we aim to aid the full and harmonious development of each child we feel that this can best be facilitated by adopting an intercultural approach to education, which will span all curricular areas of school life. We deem this to be of value to all our children, parents, staff and community. Scoil Mhuire is an equal opportunity employer. It will employ any teacher that is suitably qualified taking cognisance of the nine grounds of discrimination.

Aims

- To enable international pupils to participate in all curricular areas to the best of their ability.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning.
- To develop effective whole school policies and parental involvement where possible.
- To provide intensive early English language support.
- To support international pupils using a team approach and in-class support.
- To develop and implement learning programmes for each pupil in receipt of English language support based on assessment of needs and specific learning targets for each pupil. These programmes are drawn up and implemented collaboratively by the pupils' class teacher and the Language Support Teacher using a thematic approach.

Guidelines

1.School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire promotes the principles of equality and respect in all aspects of education and supports the concept of equal access to full education for all our pupils.

2.Enrolment

International students are welcome to enrol in our school, provided there is a place in the appropriate class, in line with our enrolment policy. Parents of international students will be afforded help in completion of enrolment documentation, should they require it. Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment for overseas parents who approach the school to enrol their children.

3.Anti- Racism Charter

Every child has the right to:

- Feel safe from mocking, threats, verbal and physical abuse.
- Be called by his or her own name.
- Be themselves and to be treated equally regardless of appearance, race, colour, gender or religion.
- Be included in school activities and have friends.
- Have his or her beliefs and personal belongings respected.
- A good education without prejudice in a clean healthy environment.
- Give expression to his or her own opinions and feelings.
- Use and develop his or her own talents.
- Be listened to.
- Have his or her privacy, secrecy and confidences respected.

4.Racist Incidents.

Scoil Mhuire promotes the principles of equality and respect in all aspects of education and supports the concept of equal access to full education for all our pupils. Any breach of this ethos is in fact a breach of school rules as laid out in the Code of Behaviour. This Code of Behaviour has been reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in May 09.

5.Home-School Links/Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to continue the development of their child's first language. Parents may work with teachers to develop a plan for their child's language development for the future (i.e. plans for secondary education).

Considerable difficulties can arise in communicating with non-English speaking parents. Where interpreter facilities are not available and communication is difficult. Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT) have developed two report forms for use in parent-teacher meetings ("Up and Away" p.30 -33). Where possible, both the class teacher and the Language Support teacher will be involved in the meetings.

Parents will be encouraged to share their culture with the school and especially at the Intercultural Day. Parents will be encouraged to continue the development of their child's first (or additional) language. It is imperative that the children retain their first (or other) language.

Communication Strategies

Parent-Teacher meetings

Incidental meetings

Provision will be made in the classroom for collaboration between Language Support Teachers and class teachers when formulating plans and monitoring progress of the pupils.
Annual Intercultural Day (usually in/around May)
Induction meeting for new parents.

Language Acquisition

Children whose first language is not English are eligible for language support. The classroom teacher will refer children to English language support if they feel that the child is not able to fully interact with the curriculum because of their English language proficiency. Children will be placed into appropriate language groups based on age or language proficiency and may also be supported in the classroom.

Provision of support

The school currently has two teachers to support the language needs of international pupils. The amount of resource time allocated to any child will depend on his/her current command of the language. Resource time will be offered in a small group setting or in-class support including team teaching, depending on the needs of the child. The amount of time and setting will be determined by the Language Support team in consultation with Principal and class teachers. The resource time may be offered on a withdrawal basis or by the Language Support Teacher working with the pupil in his/her classroom. This will be decided by the teachers based on the needs of the pupil.

Language Support teaching should be based on individual strengths and needs of each pupil, using as a basis the *Language Proficiency Benchmarks* and the *European Language Portfolio* provided by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (see "Up and Away" p.38 - 40). The pictorial materials supplied by IILT have been developed to support pupils in learning and reflect the demands of the primary curriculum. We have also developed a wider range of thematic resources based on the 13 Themes in "Up and Away" p.42 - 54.

Themes used may include

Myself

My School

My Home

Hobbies and pastimes.

Seasons

Shopping

Food

Clothes

People who help us

Opposites

Shapes

Transport

Animals and plants

Holidays/Festivals

Weather

Support will be provided in a variety of different settings to include group work in the classroom, group work in the language support rooms, station teaching in the classroom and team teaching as well as supporting children's individual needs.

In general, as per Circular 12/96, if English is not the first language of the pupil, she may qualify for exemption from the study of Irish, and the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption at the request comes from parents. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in her class during Irish time.(Circular 12/96 which has recently being revised)

Homework

International children may be given homework suitable to their needs. Once the international children have attained a proficient level of English, they will be requested to attempt the homework as set out for that particular class.

A policy on homework is being developed at present by a team within the school and when completed this policy will be cross referenced with the intercultural policy.

Attendance

The procedure for dealing with absenteeism and our strategies for encouraging attendance are laid out in our Attendance Policy.

Uniform

All children are requested to wear the full school uniform at all times.

School Booklet Information

Our school booklet is issued to all parents at enrolment. It is written in English. We consider the booklet an essential reference book for parents as it contains information on:

Opening/closing times.

Uniform.

Code of Behaviour/Bullying

Attendance Policy.

Illness.

Healthy Lunch Policy.

First month arrangements.

Preparing for school.

How parents can best help their child with educational matters.

Contacting the school.

INTO tips for parents now available in a number of languages

The Jesuit Refugee Service has also published a booklet : Your child and schools in Ireland which is available in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian and Russian.

NCCA DVD for parents available in different languages.

Induction of New Children

It is the policy of Scoil Mhuire to place new pupils in age appropriate classes, regardless of linguistic ability in English. The class teacher may prepare the pupils of the class to receive new pupils in some of the following ways.

Buddy system

Circle time focused on feeling new, change, etc.

A specific request for each child to make an effort to help the new child settle in.

The parents and child may be invited into the school at the end of a school day prior to the child starting to meet with the class teacher. The class teacher and the principal may show the new child various 'points of interest' in the classroom/school. We hope this will alleviate some of the anxiety felt by both the parents and the pupil.

Resources

Intercultural toys may consist of dolls of different skin colour, eating utensils from a variety of countries items in the toy shop which are reflective of the intercultural theme.

Posters and charts may have an intercultural theme. A selection of maps is available to be used when required. (These are stored on the top corridor)

The school has begun purchasing pictures for the school corridors which show images of various countries, peoples, etc.

Particular emphasis is placed on the library stock. Both English and dual language books are available. Reference: Cross Currents : a guide to multicultural books for young people is available in office.

The internet may also be used as a class resource.

The school also has a number of resources for teacher information which is stored in the EAL classrooms.

Staff Development

The school has a number of resources e.g. "Toolkit for Diversity", "Up and Away" and " Intercultural Education in the Primary School" - for teacher information which are stored in the EAL room.

Scoil Mhuire will liaise with the local education centre to access training for teachers as provided by the Department of Education and Science. During this year a one day training day will be provided for principals.

Special Needs

The staff of Scoil Mhuire appreciate the culture shock that international children face and the challenge of assimilation into the Irish Educational System. It is further acknowledged that children who flee from their home country are dealing with added trauma.

Where a psychological assessment is deemed necessary the procedure as laid out in the Special Needs/Learning Support Policy will be followed.

It is hoped that through strong home-school relations, parents may trust staff members with such information when they are comfortable. Such information will be treated in confidence and relayed only to staff members concerned with the child (e.g. principal/class teacher, language / learning support teacher).

Curriculum

The school will provide opportunities for children have access to all areas of the curriculum..

No child will be eliminated from activities, competitions or projects due to their race or religious belief.

Each curricular plan has an intercultural component, mentioned under 'Content and Methodologies'.

Assessment and Reporting

International pupils will be assessed using the PSAK (Primary School Assessment Kit).

The Language Proficiency Benchmarks, which reflect the themes and content of the primary curriculum are the starting point in deciding what the pupil needs to learn in order to engage with the classroom and social demands at the level of the peer group.

An initial interview assessment ("Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School" p.20 - 21) will be used to provide the Language Support Teacher with a broad view of the pupil's English language proficiency. This enables the Language Support Teacher to draw up a timetable for support taking the age, class and English language proficiency of the pupil into account.

A set of formalised assessment tools has been distributed by the Department of Education (PSAK). These tests are used to do an initial assessment, provide ongoing formative assessments, will provide guidelines on placement of children already in the school and form the basis for planning a programme of work for the children.

The question of the initial socialization and integration of the new pupil will be observed. It will be observed whether the pupil is confident in the school environment, mixing with other pupils, participating in activities, joining in during class and trying to communicate with the teacher and others. The checklists on p.22, 23 and 25 (Toolkit for Diversity) are useful as feedback at intervals throughout the school year.

The well being of the child of the pupil is of the utmost importance and any concerns should be reported to the principal and support may be sought from the Child and Family service.

Monitoring Progress

Progress will be monitored using the PSAK. This provides an individual pupil record which will be used to monitor pupil progress and development. Maintenance of an individual record allows both the class teacher and the language support teacher to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of a pupil and to provide additional support where there is evidence of a problem developing or persisting.

Success Criteria

We will deem this policy successful if the following criteria is fulfilled:

- That the children will become proficient in the acquisition and use of the language.
- That the children become fully integrated in to life of the school and participate in all activities
- An increase in the numbers of international parents attending parent teacher meetings/ school meetings
- An increased instance of varied language usage within the school: posters, labels, notices, songs, poems, conversations in languages other than English.

Roles and Responsibility

As this is a whole school policy all staff members are responsible for the implementation of this plan. The post-holder, with responsibility for Intercultural supports the implementation of the plan and is responsible for the purchase, distribution and monitoring of resources.

Timeframe for implementation

The decisions as laid out in this policy take effect from Nov. 2009.

All relevant policies will be adapted before Nov 2009.

All teachers will plan accordingly for the school year 2009-2010 taking account of the decisions laid out in this policy.

Timeframe for review

This policy and all related policies will be reviewed during the school year 2014/2015

Responsibility for review

The principal teacher will ensure each staff member has a copy of the policy prior to the review day.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM