St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon

EQUALITY & INCLUSION POLICY

'Achieving Excellence Together'

June 2026

1. Introduction

St. Patrick's Academy is committed to equality and inclusion.

We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed 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 school for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

St. Patrick's Academy is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people 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.

Over the past decade St. Patrick's Academy has seen a change in our pupil and school community demographic. Our community is now much more diverse. In particular, there has been a significant increase in the diversity of our pupils' race, ethnicity and cultural heritage.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying-type behaviour and harassment. As a school community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school; where appropriate making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation.

St. Patrick's Academy believes 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 and Values

St. Patrick's Academy has developed this policy as a statement of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our school community. It seeks to ensure that all members of the school are valued equally, regardless of religion or belief, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

3. Equality and Inclusion – School Policies

Through this policy, and the wider practices within St. Patrick's Academy we seek to empower our young people to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination. We equip our Governors and staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our school's safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school.

Inclusion underpins all our school policies.

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 Addressing-bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Curriculum Policy, Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy, Uniform Policy, Attendance Policy, Punctuality Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, Assessment Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Drugs Policy, E Safety Policy and Critical Incident Policy. Any arising incident will be dealt with by the appropriate policy. There should never be any grey areas when it comes to young people's safety and well-being.

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for our whole school community. It is our belief that equality and inclusion is central to **all** of our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all our pupils and their families feel valued and supported and making sure that equality and inclusion is evident in everyday school life.

4. Responsibilities

The ***Board of Governors*** of St. Patrick's Academy have 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 governors' role* (Department of Education NI, August 2019)
The Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

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 equality and inclusion;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying type behaviour;
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying type behaviour.

The ***School's Senior Leadership Team*** are responsible for:

- implementing the school's equality and inclusion policies and codes into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary.

The School's Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Teams (led by the Designated Teacher) will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal and Governors.

All School Staff (*teaching and non-teaching*) have a responsibility for the day to day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

Pupils/students are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following all of the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

5. How do we promote Equality and Inclusion?

St. Patrick's Academy promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

School /Centre Practices

- Developing a whole school approach.
- Having an inclusive mission statement.
- Using a range of resources and teaching approaches.
- Using appropriate terminology and language.
- Tackling stereotypes.
- Challenging homophobic, transphobic or any other type of bullying behaviour.
- Increasing the visibility/ role modelling of minority groups.
- Setting clear expectations about acceptable behaviour.
- Having Equality and Inclusion as a regular topic at Board of Governor meetings.
- Discussing uniform preferences with pupils, parents and carers.

Facilities/ Services

- Promoting and using interpreting services.
- Using translated documents, where available.
- Have allocated accessible parking.
- Having all accessible toilets/changing facilities.
- Having an accessible main entrance and building.
- Having signage, displays and resources reflecting the diversity of languages and cultures throughout the school.
- Considering flexible payment schemes and a hardship fund when planning trips and extra-curricular activities.
- Helping young people to access advice from support organisations including notice boards/plasma screens with clear and accessible information and contacts.

Curriculum

- Examining where and when themes around equality and inclusion might be embedded into topics within each curriculum area.
- Participating in Shared Education and other programmes.
- Ensuring that staff with specific areas of responsibility consider the implications of Equality and Inclusion with their teams.

6. Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods:

- Team meetings to have Equality & Inclusion as an agenda item;
- Governors to report on the successes and challenges in relation to inclusion;
- Number of bullying -type incidents by equality characteristic to be monitored and appropriate action taken as necessary;
- Embedding of equality and inclusion across curriculum areas to be monitored;
- Number of comments and complaints in relation to equality and inclusion to be monitored;
- Record of training/information presented to staff/pupils to be kept;
- Positive stories on equality and inclusion to be highlighted;
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents to be sought regularly.

7. Complaint's Procedures

The school has a robust and transparent Complaints procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the Complaints process will be fairly and systematically applied.

8. Evaluation and Review of policy

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed at least every two years. A review may take place sooner, if required.

Reviewed: June 2026
To be reviewed: June 2028