**St. Joseph’s Special School,**

**Thomas Hynes Rd, Newcastle, Galway.**

**Telephone 091 521895.**

**Email theoffice@stjosephspns.ie**

**Chairperson of the Board of Management: Audrey Pidgeon**

**Principal: Sarah McGinley**

# Timetable for Review

As necessary

**Equal Opportunity/Gender Equity Policy**

**Introductory Statement**

This policy document was originally drawn up at a whole school planning day on June 14th 2007 to ensure equality of access to all pupils and staff in the school environment.

**Rationale**

It is necessary to devise a gender equity policy in order to comply with legislation: *Employment Equality Act 1998, Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Equality Act 2004*

It is intended that this policy will:

* promote the principles of justice within the school community
* ensure a broad and balanced education for all pupils
* promote an awareness of gender issues for pupils and staff
* support the development of an inclusive school

**Links to School Ethos**

St Joseph’s School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities regardless of age, gender, race, religion, physical or learning needs. We also commit to promoting value and respect for all regardless of individual differences. The school’s mission statement promotes the spirit of inclusiveness and the principles of equality.

**Aims and Objectives**

* to build a school community committed to promoting gender equality
* to heighten the understanding of gender influences in school practice
* to encourage all pupils to reach their full potential irrespective of their gender
* to promote the principles of justice and equality for all
* to create an environment in which diversity is valued and celebrated
* to ensure that the school complies with legislative requirements and principles of good practice.

**Organisational Procedures**

**Enrolment**

All pupils with moderate general learning disabilities are welcome to enroll regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, family status. Arrangements are made on enrolment for families who do not wish their children to participate in formal religious instruction.

**Interviewing**

The Board of Management is an equal opportunities employer as per the *Equal Status Act 2000*, Equality Act 2004, and the *Employment Equality Act 1998,* and no discriminatory questions on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, family status at interview. Correct procedures for promotion will be strictly adhered to as per the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019 and circular 63/2017.

**Communication**

Where a family or a pupil have English as a second language, every effort will be made to ensure that information is presented in a way they can access. If necessary an interpreter can be used, this can be another family member or sourced externally should the need arise. The staff is also made aware of the different cultural practices of these parents / children and these will be respected where possible .

The school has a policy of communicating with legal guardians, or both parents, if possible, on pupil progress including if parents have divorced or separated unless a court ruling prescribes differently.

**Input of Parents**

Both parents or legal guardians are strongly encouraged to attend parent teacher meetings.

The school, together with the parents, strives for a gender balance in the Parents’ Association.

**Induction and Teaching**

On a pupil’s enrolment the school gathers all the information needed to address issues of equality, such as family background, medical concerns and learning or physical disabilities. There is regular communication between class teacher and parents prior to and during the pupil’s school life. All teaching materials acquired are chosen and used in a manner reflecting diversity. All teachers share information where appropriate.

**Curriculum Access**

The school endeavours to enable all pupils to access all curriculum areas. Department of Education grant is used to purchase books and materials for pupils whose parents are under financial pressure. Pupils are enabled to participate in sporting activities irrespective ofgender. In the senior school all pupils have access to classes held in the cookery room and woodwork room. All pupils are given opportunities to appreciate other cultures and languages through the curriculum and day to day experiences

SESE offers many areas where diversity and differences can be celebrated. Geography lessons will focus on people, food and the physical features of other countries. S.P.H.E strands such as 'Myself and Others' are also used to celebrate different cultures. The Junior Cycle curriculum also covers many outcomes which support pupils learning about equality.

**Evaluation of Policy**

The policy is subject to continual review under the following –

* All pupils accessing the curriculum at a level appropriate to their needs.
* Increased awareness of difference and acceptance of same.
* Maintaining a happy school atmosphere.
* Staff and parental satisfaction.
* Improvement in pupil attainment level in academic and social areas.

**Ratification / Review / Implementation**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 3/10/’07 and implemented immediately. Policy was reviewed in 2009 and again in April 2018. It was ratified at a Board meeting on 24th April 2018.

The Board of Management is aware that this plan was reviewed in September 2020. The amended document was presented for ratification.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)