

**New Cross College**

**Intercultural Policy**

***Introduction***

One of the primary aims of education is the preparation of young people for the

challenges of living in the world today. Therefore, in New Cross College

we believe Intercultural education is an essential part of that process. We also feel

that embracing other cultures/religions should not dilute the great pride we have in our own

Irish heritage or our school’s religious ethos.

***What is Intercultural education?***

* It is education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all

areas of human life.

* It is education which promotes equality and human rights, challenges and promotes the

values upon which equality is built.

* From a policy perspective, Interculturalism rather than Multiculturalism has been adopted as an underlying principal.
* “The term Multiculturalism is sometimes used to describe a society in which different cultures live side by side without much interaction… the term Interculturalism expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with, and experiencing other cultures and that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other” (Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School – Guidelines for Schools page 1

***What are the characteristics of Intercultural Education?***

* Intercultural education is for all students, as our students live in a world that is becoming increasingly diverse. We have a responsibility to prepare all our students for that world. It equips students to participate in an increasingly diverse Ireland, Europe and global society. Recognising that diversity is normal in humans is something that is appropriate at all ages.
* Intercultural education aims to raise student’s awareness of their own culture. All students have a culture and ethnicity. Learning to value their own culture and ethnicity is central to their self-esteem and sense of identity. It should help students speak for themselves and articulate their cultures and histories.
* Intercultural education is concerned with ethnicity and culture and not simply skin colour. It is equally concerned with discrimination against white minority ethnic groups such as people from Eastern Europe or members of the Travelling community.
* Intercultural education helps develop sensitivity in students and helps prevent racism.
* Intercultural education takes time. Building intercultural sensitivity and challenging prejudicial beliefs, attitudes and actions is a lifelong process. (Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School – Guidelines for Schools, pg.14 to 19)

***Rationale:***

Over the last number of years, the school’s population has grown to mirror the changing social environment in the country, an environment rich in cultural diversity thoroughly reflecting Irish society. Our school community is comprised of students from many cultures from across the globe including EAL students and members of the Travelling Community. New Cross College’s Intercultural policy is informed by the following pieces of legislation.

* Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
* The Education Act, 1998.
* The Equal Status Acts 2000/2004.

***Relationship to our Mission Statement***

* Our school is a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our school policy and practice.
* New Cross College is a partnership of students, staff, parents and guardians, Board of Management and our local and global communities. We value the on-going input of all these partners in the life of the school.
* We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their full potential.
* Through positive staff and student relationships and a broad extra-curricular programme, we aim to develop in each student a confident, healthy self-image and a sense of personal, local and global responsibility.
* We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important. We endeavour to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.

***Consultation***

A whole school approach was followed in the development of this policy.

***Aims:***

By adopting an Intercultural Approach to Education, we hope to

* Enable students to respect and recognise the normality of diversity.
* Promote a sense of equality and justice.
* Challenge discrimination and racism.
* Contribute to students’ awareness of their own culture.
* Promote critical thinking on equality and cultural issues.
* Ensure that all students irrespective of their ethnic group or religion feel part of the school community.
* Assist all students reach their potential and achieve high educational standards.
* Develop home and school links.

***Enrolment Procedures***

* All Parents/ Guardians are requested to complete an Application Form and submit a birth certificate.
* A copy of the Code of Behaviour is given to all applicants and must be signed by both the incoming student and by a Parent/Guardian.
* The Code of Behaviour will be translated into some of the languages of our International students.
* Uniform: It is understood that students choosing to enrol in the school accept that the full school uniform must be worn during the school day and to and from school. Parents are asked to show support by cooperating fully with the school in ensuring that students wear full uniform. (See Uniform Policy). In this context students of particular religious backgrounds who may wish to wear a different aspect of uniform are requested to seek written permission from the Board of Management. However, the wearing of clothing in the classroom which obscures a facial view and creates an artificial barrier between pupil and teacher is not recommended. Such clothing hinders proper communication. (See current Department of Education and Skills policy on clothing in schools).

***Religion***

New Cross College is under the joint patronage of Le Cheile and the Religious Sisters of Charity and has a Catholic ethos. We recognise the dignity of each individual. Religious education is compulsory and non-exam in New Cross College so it affords us the opportunity to fully engage in understanding those of all faiths and none. Important religious festivals are acknowledged within the school and opportunities are provided for students to understand other faith communities and religions.

***Induction***

Induction is held for all incoming first year students to help them adapt to their new school setting. During this induction, school policies and the Code of Behaviour are explained. This time is an opportunity to inform students of the English Language Support programme and the Pastoral Care programme available in the school. All Parents/Guardians of incoming First year students are invited to an information session in the school before the first day of term. Students joining mid-year are linked with a student from their base class to help adjust to the new school setting. Important information regarding International students is gathered about the student once the student enters the school in our effort to meet their needs. This includes how the name of the student is correctly pronounced, their nationality, the length of time the student has been in Ireland, their proficiency level in English, their religion if any and English proficiency level of Parent or Guardian. This information is distributed to Staff as early as possible in the school year and Staff are asked to make themselves aware of basic information included.

***EAL Support***

* Adequate language support is vital to ensuring that all students can fully engage with the curriculum and in school life.
* The Department of Education and Skills provides additional educational resources for pupils who are learning English as an additional language in post-primary schools.
* All EAL students will be assessed for language proficiency by the AEN Co-ordinator and assigned EAL classes with a trained EAL teacher in so far as hours and resources allow. The information collected on English language proficiency of our students will be distributed to all staff for inclusion in their class plans.
* Students who receive English language support classes are generally withdrawn during Irish class time, providing they have an Irish exemption. In exceptional cases, for example where students have very low proficiency levels, the student may be withdrawn from other classes.
* The Department of Education and Skills allows students in Ireland to apply to be excused from studying Irish in post-primary school. The circumstances in which a student will be given this exemption are very limited. In general students whose primary education up to 11 years of age was received in Northern Ireland or outside Ireland will be excused from studying Irish. Students who have no understanding of English, when enrolled, would only be required to study one language, either English or Irish.

***Attendance:***

* Issues discussed in the Education Welfare Act, 2000, are brought to the attention of all Parents in the school through the Code of Behaviour. Procedures for dealing with absenteeism in the school are standard for all Students. (See Attendance policy)

***Planning***

* Through curriculum planning and development, we will highlight Intercultural issues.
* An Intercultural section should be provided in all Subject plans and all Staff should familiarise themselves with the content of this policy.

***Resources***

* All Staff are encouraged to follow the Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School Guidelines.
* A teacher with additional responsibility for English Language Support has been provided along with a Maths teacher who is Ukrainian and works with students to help them integrate and understand.

***Communication***

* Translation of Reports/ documents when possible.
* This policy document will be available for view on our school website
* Students are encouraged to continue to use their first language and take their native language exam in Leaving Certificate when possible.
* Key words are translated for students when possible in conjunction with EAL teacher.

***Intercultural events***

* Intercultural education is integrated with all subjects and with the general life of the school.

Opportunity for assistance in this occurs by organising events such as:

* Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish week)
* Culture Day (new in 2024)
* Coffee Morning parents and members of the Parent-Teacher Association
* Opportunities in class to learn about other cultures.

***Staff development***

* We have a designated EAL teacher and AEN teachers. We also have a teacher from Ukraine who assists students in various subjects and guides them in integrating into school life.
* A whole school approach is very important to ensure the aims of the policy are fulfilled.

***Board of Management/Principal/Staff***

* The Board of Management has responsibility to ensure the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time and to consider reports from the Principal and staff on the implementation of the policy.
* It is the overall responsibility of the principal to ensure that teachers are reminded of the decisions agreed upon as laid out in this policy.
* It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy Principals to support Continued Professional Development and Inservice training available in this area.
* The class Year Head in conjunction with the class tutor has a particular responsibility for his or her class group.
* In the same manner they deal with all students in their year group, the Year Head should highlight issues or concerns they might have in relation to Students to the appropriate personnel.
* Teachers play a key role in implementing intercultural education and helping students develop open and respectful attitudes and behaviour:
* A key element of the success of this policy will be a continuation of the high level of cooperation shown by the teaching staff to date.
* The English as an Additional Language (EAL) students remain the responsibility of the subject specialist teacher at post-primary level. The teacher will work closely with the EAL support teacher.
* In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teacher, EAL/AEN support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils’ proficiency in English using the assessment material, devise appropriate language programmes and record and monitor pupils’ progress.
* The Guidance and Counselling service aims to provide a range of measures to help all students make personal, social, educational and career choices in their lives. In providing the Guidance programme, the Guidance Personnel ensure that each International student has access to a range of activities to help their integration into the school environment and help to provide information about subject choice and information on future careers. Chaplain

***Students***

* Students should avail of the opportunities to educate themselves about cultural diversity.
* They should respect themselves and others and seek to build an inclusive school community.
* Students should also report incidents of racism which they may experience or witness.
* Students should aim to become involved in school life.
* The student council should liaise with staff for example The Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads on Intercultural issues of concern to students.
* They should help to provide an Intercultural balance on the council when possible and help ensure International student’s views can be heard. The student council should be involved in mentoring of International students.

***Parents and PTA***

* All parents are encouraged to take an active part in our school community and the Parent Teacher Association.
* Parents of International students are encouraged to attend Parent-Teacher meetings or meet with Staff or Management if required regardless of English language ability. They are encouraged to have someone translate for them and where possible the school may assist in providing translation.

***Recording and reporting incidents***

* Any incident deemed to be of a racist nature by a member of staff or the victim themselves shall be considered a breach of the Code of Behaviour and shall be dealt with accordingly
* Racism is the belief that some people are inferior because they belong to a certain ethnic, racial or cultural group. This belief leads to attitudes of prejudice and discriminatory actions.
* An incident where verbal or physical aggression targets a person on the basis of colour, religion, ethnicity including membership of the Travelling Community and where the incident is felt by the victim to be racist it may be defined as a racist incident.

(See Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy)

***Success Criteria***

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

* The school community promotes an inclusive culture.
* Increased participation by International students in extra-curricular activities.
* Overall improvement in student interaction with both their teachers and peers.
* The curriculum is made as accessible as possible to all students.
* Racist incidents or remarks are not tolerated by Students or Staff in New Cross College. Students value similarities and difference.

Signed: 