



# Anti-Racism and Diversity Policy

*Of Firhouse Educate Together National School*

Address: Ballycullen Drive, Firhouse, Dublin.24.

Telephone: 01 406 1010

Email: firhouseetns@gmail.com

Roll Number: 20411J

## **Introduction:**

The purpose of this policy is to inform current and future parents and staff members about the efforts made in Firhouse ETNS, to promote diversity within the school community, to combat and reduce incidents of racist discrimination within the school and to achieve equality for all members of the school community. The school fully implements its Anti-Bullying Policy and all incidences of discrimination are dealt with according to the procedures outlined in that and these are also outlined below. This policy was devised by members of the Yellow Flag Committee. It was then discussed by all staff members and placed on the school website, Incoming and current parents were invited to give feedback on the policy. The policy was then discussed with the school's Board of Management and ratified.

## **Firhouse ETNS's Vision Regarding Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity:**

Firhouse ETNS is a multi denominational school that caters for children of all beliefs/faiths and none. The school takes an inclusive approach to education. Inclusive education affirms pluralism across differences in culture, gender, ability, beliefs/faiths, class, age, race, sexual orientation and family circumstances. Teaching diverse traditions and perspectives, questioning stereotypes, learning the appropriate cultural codes in order to function within a variety of settings, recognising the contributions of all groups in society (especially those who have been traditionally excluded) and eliminating negative biases are all seen as important daily practices within the school. Firhouse ETNS is an equal opportunities employer. Candidates for all positions in the school will not be discriminated against on any of these grounds.

At the centre of the ethos of Firhouse ETNS are inclusion and equality. All aspects of our children's identity are equally important. The school takes a sociocultural approach to

education, where teachers take into account the experiences and identity of their children when planning their lessons. The school also takes a proactive rather than a reactive approach against discrimination of all forms. It is committed to educating the children about the possible types of discrimination and the impacts they have on individuals.

Firhouse Educate Together National School acknowledges that racism can be an issue for all schools and the wider community of which schools are a part and does not tolerate or condone racism of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community, students, staff and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with racism. This policy guides action and organisation within the school and the school community for preventing and responding to racism as well as raising awareness and understanding of racism.

In Firhouse ETNS we know that, as human beings, it is natural to fear what we don't understand, what we're not familiar with and this can be related to: age, gender, marital & family status, additional needs, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and none, member of a minority group.

Therefore, we teach explicitly about all of these areas throughout our school and encourage families to be involved. Where any difficulties arise between people we take a Restorative Practice approach to ensure both parties learn to understand each other and each other's backgrounds and cultures so there will be no fear and there will be greater inclusion as well as celebration of each other's diversity.

### **Promoting Cultural Diversity in Firhouse ETNS**

In Firhouse ETNS we work with our whole school community to provide an equality-based and fun centre of learning, where children's rights and the Educate Together ethos are always to the fore. The school is multi-denominational and welcomes and embraces people of all faiths and none. We have a large number of children with additional needs in the school and two specialised classes which cater for children with autism within the school. All children in the school play together on the yard and no child is separated from another during yard time on a basis of differences of any kind. The teachers and children in the school are highly educated about the understanding and acceptance of those children with additional needs both within our school and within their wider communities. The school has a huge amount of families from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The school undertook an Intercultural Review for all families within our school to engage in. This helped to provide us with feedback about whether the school community was satisfied with how the school is working currently to prevent racism and whether they felt

that their child's culture has been explored and celebrated within the school. This allowed the school to gain a lot of important feedback from families about how well the school is performing with regard to diversity and anti-racism.

Firhouse ETNS has been engaging in the Yellow Flag Programme since 2018. The Yellow Flag programme works to support primary and secondary schools to become more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, celebrate diversity and challenge racism and discrimination. The school set up a Yellow Flag committee containing three teachers. This committee aims to further promote and celebrate diversity within the school. The Yellow Flag committee educates itself in the most up to date resources and ideas that could be implemented within the school to promote diversity and maintains contact with outside agents implementing and supporting the Yellow Flag Programme. They also work to communicate all ideas to other members of the school community and keep them up to date with upcoming celebrations and week's of importance surrounding diversity and anti-racism and might be upcoming in the school calendar. Firhouse ETNS also created a Diversity committee among students within the school. The diversity committee holds meetings based around educating their peers about diversity, sharing ideas of ways to promote diversity within the school, creating artwork, arranging school wide competitions centred on diversity and arranging celebrations within the school. The school also has a Yellow Flag notice board which is used to promote upcoming initiatives and celebrations and highlight the work that children are doing in the school based on diversity and anti-racism.

Firhouse ETNS have previously and continue to celebrate Intercultural Day within our school. During this celebration parents and guardians are invited to come into the school to teach the children about a variety of customs and traditions that they may celebrate, expose the children to new languages through song-singing or reading a book written in a different language and show items which may be specific to their native countries. Each class is given a range of resources from which they can teach about other cultures, languages, religions, customs and communities. During this celebration we also highlight minority groups within or community and educate the children about such groups, such as the traveller community. The school works continually to create and foster relationships between minority groups and cultural leaders within the community and the school community. The school

## **Firhouse ETNS's Responsibilities to Ensure Diversity and to Prevent Incidents of Racism**

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of racism. The school's anti-bullying policy will be regularly reinforced by the class teacher(s) through the Stay Safe programme, the S.P.H.E. programme, the Learn Together Curriculum, the FRIENDS programme, the Stop Think Do programme, the Arts and/or Circle Time. However it is important that parents also regularly remind their children of what is appropriate behaviour and of their need to comply with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **The Board of Management will:**

- ensure that all members of the school community are enabled and empowered to deal effectively with racism.
- provide time and resources for the implementation of the policy.
- ensure that adequate supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent racism and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

### **School Staff will:**

- foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect, understanding and tolerance where students' self esteem will be developed through:
  - celebrating individual differences and achievements.
  - acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners.
  - providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.
- help students to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others/ look at things from another peer's perspective.
- base relationships with students on mutual respect and trust to ensure students will have confidence in the school staff.
- develop respectful relationships with parents.
- be vigilant and respond sensitively and caringly to students who disclose incidents of racism and investigate all disclosed incidents of racism
- record and log all instances of racism.
- discuss the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Positive Behaviour and Anti-Racism and Diversity Policy with the students and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable students to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.
- use the formal curriculum of the school to educate all students against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the Learn Together

Programme, the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the FRIENDS programme, the Stop Think Do programme, the Arts and/or Circle Time.

### **Students will:**

- be tolerant of and have mutual respect for each other.
- report incidents of racism to their parents and teacher(s).
- engage in positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour.
- solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- Share and be kind, caring, and understanding towards others.
- Share information on themselves and their backgrounds and cultures
- Engage in projects to promote inclusion and celebration of diversity

### **Parents and Guardians will:**

- encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- encourage children to share and be kind, caring, and understanding towards others.
- discuss the school's anti-bullying policy and anti-racism and diversity policy with their child.
- support the school in its efforts to prevent and deal with racism.
- develop respectful relationships with school staff.
- Share information on their family backgrounds and cultures by holding discussions with classes/presentations etc.

## **Procedures for Dealing with and Reporting Incidences of Racism in Firhouse ETNS**

### **Code of Positive Behaviour**

- When dealing with isolated or one off incidences of racism in Firhouse ETNS, we follow the procedure set out in the Code of Positive Behaviour. Racism is classified as a Serious Misbehaviour, as set out in 8.2.2. Of the Code of Positive Behaviour. Sanctions for Serious Misbehaviour are outlined within the code, but they include:
  - a discreet word with parents at the classroom door or a phone call.
  - a referral to the Principal. A Discipline Note is sent home for signing.
  - a second Discipline Note which will include notification that the next step is a Yellow Card (see page 23): A written Yellow Card

communication with parents to arrange a meeting with the Principal and Class Teacher.

- a discussion with parents and the child about implementing a supplemented behaviour system.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

- The Anti-Bullying Policy elaborates cohesively on Firhouse ETNS's stance on bullying. It outlines our commitment to raising awareness and prevention of bullying. It makes specific reference to identity-based bullying with-in the definition of bullying, which is defined as "*identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.*" A full definition of Bullying can be viewed on page 3 of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Specific and extensive procedures for dealing with bullying are outlined on page 9 of the Anti-Bullying Policy and are also outlined below.

### Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

- (a) All alleged incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school.
- (b) Students will be informed that by reporting incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- (c) A calm, unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- (d) Alleged incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher(s). Answers should be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why.
- (e) On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher(s) will first interview the victim/s and discuss the feelings which the victim/s experienced because of the alleged bullying behaviour. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). Members of a group should be met individually and as a group. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator/s and victim/s responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- (f) The teacher(s) will inform the Principal and contact the parents of the children involved.
- (g) When the teacher(s) has (have) formed the opinion that bullying has occurred, and by implication that the standards of behaviour required in our school have not been met, s/he will follow the strategies for managing behaviour as set out in the Firhouse ETNS Code of Positive Behaviour.

- (h) Any student who is involved in retaliation against a student who reports bullying will be subject to the Firhouse ETNS Code of Positive Behaviour sanctions.
- (i) Any member of the school community who is unhappy with the process should refer to the Firhouse ETNS Grievance Policy.
- (j) The needs of all concerned, the victim, the perpetrator and the bystander, will be addressed and individual support, training and education to help each of them understand our combined responsibility to be proactive against bullying will be initiated within the school, in consultation with their parents.
- (k) As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, FETNS will provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. Raising of self-esteem and resilience in both the victim of bullying and the perpetrator as well as potential bystanders (all individuals in the school) will be supported through discussion, mediation, circle time and mentoring as appropriate with an emphasis on understanding the causes and effects of bullying, learning assertive problem solving skills and developing tolerance of different perspectives.
- (l) Behaviour Contracts, when deemed useful, will be drawn up for individuals involved in bullying incidents and reviewed weekly with the child's chosen mentor on the staff. Parents may be involved in this process.
- (m) Sanctions as listed in the school's Code of Positive Behaviour may be used for instances of bullying.
- (n) The development of Peer Mediation throughout the school, which forms part of our School Development Plan, is making slow but steady progress.

### **Sharing the Anti-Racism and Diversity Policy with the School Community**

Firhouse ETNS's Anti-Racism and Diversity policy will be placed on the school website where it will be easily accessible for the wider school community. Incoming and current parents were invited to give feedback on the policy. All school staff members will be provided with a copy of the policy and take responsibility for familiarising themselves with it and implement the strategies outlined within it.

### **Firhouse ETNS' Approach to Discrimination:**

By using these nine grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate in the Republic of Ireland, we are sending a clear message that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated in the school and, in doing so, fulfil our legal obligation to the pupils, staff and parents of our school. All members of our school community have the right to feel safe and welcome and achieve to the best of their potential, regardless of their actual or perceived differences in ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, sexual orientation, belief/faith tradition or language. In order to achieve this, the children in Firhouse ETNS are educated about each of the nine grounds during their eight years in the school. The

school will have an Intercultural Day during the year in which children learn about the cultures and traditions of their peers along with some cultures and traditions that they may not have experienced previously. This day is seen as an opportunity to educate the children about different forms of diversity and discrimination. The school takes a spiral approach to the teaching about the nine grounds and previously covered work will be revised and developed. This is not done in isolation during Intercultural Day alone as Educate Together Schools celebrate diversity in all its forms throughout the school year. Please refer to Appendix 1 for some of the practical ways and strategies we use to approach each of the nine grounds of discrimination in the school.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians:**

Although this policy lists some of the ways that the various grounds are dealt with, none of the lists are exhaustive. Some grounds have been given more attention in this policy than others simply because some require further clarification than others and are more appropriate to be addressed in the primary school. The role of the parents and guardians in relation to this policy cannot be underestimated. It is expected that parents choosing to send their child to Firhouse Educate Together National School will adhere to this policy. Although some elements of this policy may not be in line with certain privately held beliefs, it is imperative that all members of the school community understand that prejudice or discrimination in any form will not be tolerated in the school. Although the school cannot accommodate people who discriminate against a person based on any, or a combination of these grounds (intersectional discrimination), we are happy to support any member of the school community in helping them to reflect on their own prejudices, with a view to helping them to support the inclusive ethos of the school.

### **Ratification and review of the policy**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Firhouse Educate Together National School on 10th May 2021.

It will be reviewed by the Staff and Board of Management once every two years.

Date of next review: May 2023.

A copy of the policy is shared with teachers and is available for parents on the school website.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Francis Fullen: Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Collette Dunne: Principal

## Appendix 1:

### **Strategies aimed at identity-based bullying:**

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of LGBT and of bullying, including its causes and effects, dealing explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. Firhouse ETNS will include LGBT posters on notice boards, discussions with parents about specific statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching about LGBT issues through the Learn Together programme, the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events so as to address homophobic and transphobic bullying.

### **Gender (Including Transgender):**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment whether they are a man, woman or a transgender person. Gender equality is the concept that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered and valued equally. Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making. By instilling in our children from a very young age a deep respect for the equal roles of both men and women, we are playing our part in closing that gap.

Some of the measures we take to ensure this are: Firhouse ETNS is a co-educational school which gives equal access to boys and girls. Girls and boys are given equal access to all educational resources and after-school clubs. In history, children learn about both male and female key historical figures. Children learn about stereotypes and how it is not appropriate to categorise people broadly, for example; girls like to play with dolls and boys like to play with cars, boys wear dark colours and girls wear bright colours. In Firhouse Educate Together N.S. we want our students to have the freedom to express themselves and at the same time we want to encourage safety and a child friendly environment where all pupils are free to pass through the various stages of their development without any unnecessary pressures. Firhouse ETNS allows children the freedom to choose the clothes they would like to wear to school (while adhering to the school's dress code). Inclusive language is used in the school e.g. firefighter instead of fireman, chairperson instead of chairman.

### **Civil Status:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment whether they are single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, in a civil partnership or previously in a civil partnership. Families in Ireland today are very diverse, consisting of mother and father headed families, single-parent families, families headed by members of the extended family, step-parent families, adoptive and foster families, families headed by cohabiting couples, bereaved families, adult-only families, families from different cultures and ethnicities, mixed-belief/faith families and same sex headed families. The children in our school come from all different types of families. They will also grow up to form different types of families. Families are central to the formation of children's identity and are the primary lens through which they view the world. 'Myself and My Family' is a core strand unit of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum, as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills (DES, 1999). It is vitally important that all children see their families represented in the school.

Some of the ways we try to ensure that all families in our school are equally respected are as follows: We address different family types through age-appropriate discussions and activities that help promote a more respectful environment in our school. We look at different family types in our SPHE lessons. All family types are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula.

### **Family Status:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment whether they are pregnant, a parent of a child under 18 years, or the resident primary carer or parent of a person with a disability. Even though legally children under 18 years old are not entitled to the same treatment as an adult, our aim in school is to promote the valuable voice of children.

Some of the ways the children are taught about this ground are: Children are taught at an age-appropriate level about how people may experience discrimination because of their family status. Different family circumstances are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula.

### **Age:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment if they are any age over 18 (The age ground only applies to young people under 18 if they hold a driver's licence and are buying car insurance.)

Some of the ways the children are taught about the value of all people of all ages are: They are taught from Junior Infants how they grow and change throughout their lives.

They discuss, in a positive manner, the different roles people can play in society at different stages of their lives. The focus here is that children begin to understand that very few roles are age specific. The children are taught that even though they are young, they are equally as important as those who are older than them. The types of discrimination that all members of society could possibly face are discussed with the children at an age appropriate level. People of all ages in all types of roles are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. We invite older relatives and friends of the children into the school on different occasions. Our various school committees and initiatives include adults and children from all year groups. The children are active agents in the development of school rules and charter.

### **Race/Ethnicity:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment no matter what their race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin is. Firhouse ETNS values the richness that comes from children being educated in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The school takes a proactive rather than a reactive approach to teaching children about race and ethnicity. Children are taught from Junior Infants the value of all forms of diversity. Children of all ethnicities are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. Every effort is made to ensure that different ethnic groups are not essentialised by these books and images. Teachers are mindful of showing the diversity that exists within ethnic groups in their classrooms. Dual language books are available in the school library. We will have an Intercultural Day in the school where children look closely at what they are most proud of in relation to their own cultural heritage and their shared Irish cultural identity. Firhouse ETNS recognises the importance of a child's first language.

### **Religious Education:**

Firhouse ETNS is a multi denominational school that caters for children of all beliefs/faiths and none. Within the Learn Together curriculum that is being taught daily by teachers is a section regarding the teaching about world religions. The school ensures to mark important religious celebrations that occur within all major world religions. The teachers teach about each faith for an equal amount of time. The school also engages in a Winter Show before the school holidays in December. A religious theme may be selected for a particular year group and each year the school decides on what religious celebration to choose, taking into account the religious themes that have been chosen the years previous.

**Disability:** According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment including those who have a disability, for example, physical, intellectual,

learning, cognitive or emotional. Disability could also mean that someone suffers from a particular medical condition.

Firhouse ETNS ensures that children develop positive attitudes towards people with disabilities in the following ways: Children with all forms of disability are given equal access to the school. Once enrolled in the school, every effort is made to ensure that the children have equal access to educational resources, activities and after-school clubs. Children discuss a disability of a child in the school in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner. The children learn to empathise with children with disabilities and treat them with the same dignity and respect as all other children in the school. Where possible we aim to make the school building accessible to people with a physical disability. People with various physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. Members of the school community are mindful of the language they use around children with a disability. The fact that they are a child always comes first.

#### **Sexual Orientation:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment whether they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. Training has been and will continue to be provided to staff members on addressing homophobic bullying. All members of staff have a copy of the 'Respect' resource pack which was devised to help primary school teachers in all schools to develop a positive classroom climate for LGBT people.

#### **Members of the Travelling Community:**

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment including members of the Traveller community that share the traditions and culture of Travellers in Ireland. Part of the reason for the reduced engagement from Irish Travellers in education is their lack of representation in the school environment.

We promote a positive attitude towards Travellers in our school in the following ways: Our enrolment policy welcomes Members of the Travelling Community. Children engage in discussions and projects around Members of the Travelling Community. Members of the Travelling Community are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. Teachers are mindful of the external factors that may affect the educational attainment of Traveller children. However, they have high expectations of children from the Travelling Community and every effort is made to ensure that they reach their full potential. Every effort will be made to give the children of Firhouse ETNS an understanding of Traveller culture and customs. If possible, members of the Travelling Community will be invited in to speak with the children.

