

Equality Policy

This policy has been prepared to ensure that our school is inclusive and respectful of all members of our school community; students, staff and families. Equality is a core component of the Educate Together ethos and our school vision. Our Equality Policy takes into consideration the nine grounds of the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004.

School Details:

Name: Rochestown Educate Together National School

Address: Rochestown, Co. Cork

Telephone: 021 489 0122 / 085 2428753

Email: info@rochestownetns.ie

Roll Number: 20413N

Principal: Dr. Alan Sheehan

The school gates are located at the school fencing surrounding the classrooms and yard. Please note that the school gates are not the gates accessing Garryduff Sports Centre from the main Moneygourney Road. The school premises consists of the area within the school boundaries/fence at Garryduff Sports Centre. School start/end times are as follows:

	Start Time: End Time:
Garryduff Sports Centre	8.30 am 1.10 pm/2.10 pm

The school gates open at 8.20am in Garryduff Sports Centre. The school provides supervision of pupils within the school fencing only from 8.20am – 1.20pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 8.20am – 2.20 pm for all other classes. Please note that no responsibility is accepted for anyone in the areas outside the school fencing. Please also note that no responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.20am to Garryduff Sports Centre or for supervising pupils after 1.20pm/2.20pm in Garryduff Sports Centre.

General Information:

Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. It is based on four key principles: Child-centered, Co-educational, Democratic and Equality-based.

The school currently caters for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. It is a developing school and is co-educational and equality-based. Rochestown ETNS is a national school and as such operates in accordance within the Rules for National Schools and is dependent on such grants and teachers'

resources as are provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). All school policies must have regard to the resources and funding provided.

Rochestown ETNS follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Aims:

Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. This policy aims to:

- Support equality in our school community
- Reduce incidents of discrimination
- Provide clarity for all member of our school community about types of discrimination

Rationale

Rochestown ETNS is an equality-based school that caters for children of all beliefs/faiths and none. The school takes an inclusive approach to education. Inclusive education affirms pluralism across difference 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.

At the centre of the ethos of Rochestown ETNS is 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. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of children within our school; ● Children irrespective of gender

- Children who need support to learn English as another language
- Children with special educational needs
- Gifted and talented children
- Children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion
- Children from different ethnic and minority groups

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. To focus this commitment, we take into consideration the nine grounds of the Equal status Acts 2000 and 2004, namely:

- Gender Identity ()
- Civil Status
- Family Status
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity

- Religion
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Rochestown ETNS is an equal opportunities employer. Candidates for all positions in the school will not be discriminated against on any of these grounds. However, all potential employees of the school must hold the relevant academic qualifications and undergo a rigorous recruitment and Garda Vetting process.

Policy Content:

The Nine Grounds of Discrimination.

By using these nine grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate in Ireland, we show 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. In order to achieve this, the children in Rochestown ETNS are educated about each of the nine grounds during their eight years in the school through our Learn Together curriculum. The school will also continue to work with UNICEF Ireland to become a certified 'Rights Respecting School'. The school takes a spiral approach to the teaching about inclusion, diversity and discrimination, and we will endeavor to celebrate diversity in all its forms throughout the school year. The following are some of the practical ways we approach each of the nine grounds of discrimination in the school.

Gender (Including Transgender):

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, every person is entitled to equal treatment. 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 each individual are considered and valued equally. Gender equality is achieved when every individual enjoys the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making. Some of the measures we take to ensure this are:

- Rochestown ETNS is a co-educational school which offers equal access to boys and girls.
- All children/students are given equal access to all educational resources and extra-curricular activities.
- In SESE, children learn about both male and female key figures.
- In the arts, children learn about both male and female artists.
- From time to time, the school will undertake a 'gender audit' to ensure that gender equality is represented in both our formal and hidden curricula
- Children learn about stereotypes and how it is not appropriate to categorise people broadly.
- 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. 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.
- Our classroom libraries and resources will include families of different types.
- We look at different family types in our SPHE lessons.
- All family types are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. ● When teachers talk about diverse family types, they will do so by roughly following this outline:

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Some families have a mother, some have a father, some have a mother and a father, some have two mothers, some have two fathers, some children live with other family members like grandparents or aunts and uncles while some families have no children (just grown-ups). Some children are born into their family while others are adopted or fostered. Sometimes families live together and sometimes they might live in different places. A family is when people love and take care of each other.

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. Some of the ways the children are taught about the value of all people of all ages are: ● Our Student Council and Rights Respecting Schools Team will work closely together and will consist of students from each class (2nd to 6th Class), with these students making regular visits to speak with our younger students too. This team will also include up to five adult members. ● Children 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.
- Student Voice will be central to decision-making across our school.
- 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.
- The children are active agents in the development of school rules and charters.

Race/Ethnicity:

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment no matter their race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Rochestown 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 in the following ways:

- 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 the books and images used within our school.
- Teachers are mindful of showing the diversity that exists within ethnic groups in their classrooms.
- Teachers have access to a variety of resources to help them create a welcoming classroom for all pupils, including children from ethnic and linguistic minorities.
- We will have an annual Identity Week where children look closely at what they are most proud of in relation to their own cultural heritage and their shared Irish cultural identity.

Religion:

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment no matter what their religious beliefs, including those who don't hold any religious belief.

Rochestown ETNS is a multi-denominational school that aims to cater for children of all beliefs. The children are taught about the diversity of religious and secular beliefs in the following ways: ● Children of all beliefs/faiths and none have equal opportunities of gaining a place in the school as per our enrolment policy.

- The children are taught the Learn Together ethical education curriculum for Educate Together schools.
- In our permanent building we plan to create a multi-belief noticeboard/ wall space where symbols of the various religious and belief traditions in our school are represented. This will help to demonstrate the school's commitment to the inclusion and celebration of families of all beliefs/faiths.
- Children are given opportunities to engage in inter-belief dialogue with their peers. This enables children to develop the skills necessary to engage with those who may have different beliefs/faiths and worldviews than their own in a respectful manner.
- Children from different belief/faitth traditions are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula.

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. The school is committed to providing an environment that allows these children full access to all areas of learning.

Rochestown 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 extracurricular activities.
- 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.
- Teachers modify their teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to children with disabilities to complete certain activities. They speak clearly and slowly as required, use a range of communication techniques; arrange the classroom furniture for optimal accessibility, incorporate technical aids as part of the educational experience.

In response to the Disability Act 2001, the Board of Management is continually reviewing how the school can be made more accessible for disabled children.

Sexual Orientation:

According to the Equal Status Act 2000/2004, everyone is entitled to equal treatment regardless of their sexual orientation.

In order to ensure that current and future members of the LGBTQ+ community feel fully welcomed and respected, the school does the following:

- We will specifically address homophobic bullying both in our 'Anti-Bullying Policy' and our SPHE lessons.
- Members of the school community will be supported in learning and using the appropriate language in terms of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Children are taught from Junior Infants the value of all forms of diversity.
- LGBTQ+ people are represented in the school's formal and hidden curricula. Every effort is made to ensure that members of the LGBTQ+ community are not essentialised by the books and images used within our school.
- Children learn about stereotypes and the impact this can have.
- Some classes in our school may get involved in projects such as 'Different Families, Same Love' run by the INTO.

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.

We promote a positive attitude towards Travellers in our school in the following ways:

- Children of the Travelling Community have equal opportunities of gaining a place in the school as per our enrolment policy.
- 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 Rochestown ETNS an understanding of Traveller culture and customs. If possible, members of the Travelling Community will be invited in to speak with the children.

Identity-Based Bullying

Bullying is any behaviour that is:

- Hurtful
- Repeated
- Intentional

Identity-based bullying is any form of bullying based on a person's actual or perceived social identity/identities, is rooted in discrimination and reflects an actual or perceived power imbalance. (Brinkman, 2015)

Identity-based bullying, of any type, is unacceptable in Rochestown ETNS and is treated as a very serious matter. All members of our school community have the right to feel safe and welcome. Any incidents of identity-based bullying will be addressed in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour and/or Dignity at Work Policy.

Ratification and Review:

The policy was approved by the Board of Management on **18 May 2022**

Communication:

The policy has been made available to school personnel via the school website (www.rochestownetns.ie). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education

and Skills and the patron (Educate Together) if requested.

Signed: 

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)