

Scoil Ursula

- **Title**

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION POLICY

- **Introductory Statement**

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management of Scoil Ursula in line with current guidelines and best practise. It was set out in this format in accordance with the guidelines of the School Development and Planning Support Service. It was disseminated to the wider school community through the Board of Management and ratified by the board on _____.

- **Rationale**

Ursuline Schools strive to nurture a community where Christian values are respected, lived and taught. They are based on the Gospels and the teachings of St Angela Merici. In a context where Ireland is an increasingly multicultural society, Catholic Education values tolerance and inclusiveness. It is open to generous dialogue with Christians of other traditions, and those of other faiths and none, while remaining true to its own distinctive ethos. Catholic Schools are open to children of all denominations consonant with their Admissions Policy.

- **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

- Scoil Ursula is a Catholic, co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy, safe and supportive environment where the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of the children are provided for.

- While Scoil Ursula is a school with a Catholic ethos, it promotes an atmosphere where difference is respected and it welcomes children of all religions and none.

- Scoil Ursula does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, race, disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation or against members of the Travelling Community when enrolling pupils or appointing staff.
- Scoil Ursula uses a positive climate to motivate its pupils. Every effort is made to enhance the self-image of all pupils and promote in them a respect for people, property and environment.

• **Aims**

Mindful of the principles of our ethos in recognising the uniqueness of each one and creating an environment that is pleasant and caring for all

We aim:

- To respect, celebrate and recognise the normality of diversity in all parts of human life
- To promote the values upon which equality is built
- To recognise that there is more than one culture in a country and in so doing the school contributes to the development of Ireland as an intercultural society
- To value inter-culturalism – where all will become enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures

These aims are in the context of the Mission Statement of the school where there is “a pleasant and caring environment for all”, where “the uniqueness of the individual” is respected and most importantly where Christian values are lived and taught. .

OBJECTIVES

The school endeavours to be an inclusive school at all times by:

- Ensuring equality of access and participation in its Enrolment Policy
- Promoting intercultural education in the classroom
- Creating a conducive physical and social environment in the school
- Developing a communication policy: within the school, between school and home and between home and school
- Providing language support where possible (DES)
- Developing a School Charter that celebrates diversity and promotes equality
- Encouraging the Student Council to actively support the idea of interculturalism

• **Guidelines (*content of policy*)**

ENROLMENT POLICY

The Schools clear Admission Policy states that they are Catholic Schools and establish definite criteria for enrolment. Assuming that students of other faiths can be accommodated within the criteria set down, the following points should be considered:

- Religious Education is a core subject on the Curriculum and an integral part of the school ethos
- All incoming parents should be given the appropriate literature including Mission Statement, Code of Behaviour and documents outlining the Ethos and expectations of the school. It is advisable to set up formal meetings with each set of parents so that they can be left in no doubt as to the expectations of the school, thus avoiding possible future conflict.

UNIFORM

Boys: Brown V-Necked jumper with school crest, yellow long-sleeved shirt & brown & yellow striped tie, brown trousers, sturdy flat shoes.

Girls: Brown V-Necked jumper or cardigan with school crest, yellow long-sleeved shirt & brown & yellow striped tie, brown pinafore/skirt/trousers, white or brown ankle socks, heavy brown tights in Winter, sturdy flat shoes.

PE: Blue jumper with school logo, white polo shirt, plain navy blue tracksuit bottoms and runners.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

« 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 – Guidelines for Schools

The majority of young people are naturally friendly and social and interact well with one another. They often embrace differences, - cultural, religious, social - more easily than adults.

In Junior Cycle, students are based in class groups and most of their socialising occurs within this group. At this level, what has gone on in the classroom will be of paramount importance when it comes to students of a different culture. Through investigating the differences, students can move towards a deeper understanding and appreciation of how belonging and integrating can mean different things to different students.

In exploring the differences between students through modules of active learning methods, the S.P.H.E. class is central.

- Explore how we are different and how we are similar

- How we behave towards one another
- How can we be **respectful** in our interactions with one another
- Gain an understanding and appreciation of how different cultures deal with different emotions

Once there is an understanding of the cultural differences between students, social interaction and integration become easier. The friendships that are formed will encourage participation in all aspects of school life. In this respect, involvement in extra curricular activities is crucial and is in line with our Ursuline ethos, namely:

- Sporting Activity
- Musical Activity: choirs, orchestras, shows
- Debating, public speaking
- Involvement in activities that require group work: Young Scientist/CSPE projects
- School Council

Through encouraging participation, natural talent will be observed and commended, thus a higher level of understanding and respect will follow.

Beyond the class group, it is also important that schools actively promote inclusivity. This can be done in many ways:

- Organising an **Intercultural Week** in the school on an annual basis
- Organising **Song and Dance** “sessions” which demonstrate the impact of different cultures
- Demonstrations on how different cultures celebrate different events and festivals e.g. Christmas
- Cookery – tasting of foods from different cultures

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ISSUES

In line with the Mission of Ursuline Education which states that “ we nurture a community where Christian values are respected, lived and taught”, all students in our schools are expected to support and respect this thrust. Likewise, we welcome students of other faiths and we are enriched by their presence and contribution to the life of the school.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Religious Education for all classes at Primary and Secondary levels is in line with the Diocesan programmes of the Catholic faith and the national Curriculum for Junior and Leaving Certificates in line with the Department of Education Guidelines.
- Students of other faiths may participate in the R.E. classes but are expected to do so with respect for the school’s ethos. Junior Certificate Religious Education may be taken by all students with freedom to focus on the tenets of the individual’s faith in relevant areas
- Students of other faiths whose parents do not wish them to participate in R.E. classes have a statutory right to withdraw, but are expected to comply with the school’s regulations for supervision at this time.

- The school respects the wishes of such parents if they not wish their children to attend Liturgical functions in the school or local Church. In such instances, parents may be asked to take them out of school for the duration of the Mass/Liturgy, or the school may choose to provide a supervised study area for them.
- Religious images and symbols appropriate to a contemporary understanding of a Catholic School should be placed in prominent places around the school. This is an example of where the Catholic School has a distinctive characteristic. Catholic worship and Sacred Spaces are very visual, appealing to our senses and are a distinctive feature of our religious tradition. If students of other faiths have a problem with this, the context may need to be explained and that their removal would be equally offensive to the Catholic.
- The school supports students of other faiths in the observance of special Feast Days of their particular faiths or the fast of Ramadan, or in providing a conducive environment at lunchtime for example, Muslims to read the Koran or other such activity. The school cannot, however, undertake to educate students of other faiths in their own faith.

All Ursuline Schools are Catholic Schools (with a capital C) with a commitment to pass on the faith which is central to our heritage and tradition. We are also catholic schools (small c) implying universal and we welcome students from many cultures and traditions. Through mutual respect and support, we enrich one another and enable the school community to become a vibrant example of Gospel living.

• **Success Criteria**

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our aims and objectives. We will use staff observation and parental feedback as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy.

• **Roles and Responsibility**

The Principal and all staff members will play their part in ensuring the successful implementation of the policy. The pupils will also play their part in the achievement of our aims.

• **Timeframe for Implementation**

The policy will be implemented in September 2011.

• **Timeframe for Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2013.

• **Responsibility for Review**

The school principal and staff will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

• **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the _____ of _____.

Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

Scoil Ursula does not have adequate resources to disseminate all of its policies to all the concerned members of the wider school community. The policy is communicated to the members of the BOM and is available to the wider school community through the parents' representatives on the BOM. All Scoil Ursula policies are available for inspection in the school and on scoilursula.com.