

# Ballyclare Secondary School



## Equality & Inclusion Policy

*"The community of Ballyclare Secondary School strive to provide an inclusive learning and teaching environment in which all can reach their full potential. We aim to do this by fostering the core values of respect, kindness, compassion and joy."*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Equality and Inclusion Policy</b>
<b>Summary</b>	This policy sets out your commitment and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.
<b>Purpose</b>	To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of this policy and its application in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all pupils and staff.
<b>Operational Date</b>	August 2024
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Every 3 Years
<b>Date last Reviewed and Approved by Board of Governors</b>	October 2024

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## 1. Introduction

**Ballyclare Secondary School** is committed to equality and inclusion.

We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics.

We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion in our School for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and/or sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

**Ballyclare Secondary School** is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are of equal worth.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.

In recent years Ballyclare Secondary School has seen a change in our pupil and school community demographic. Our community is now much more diverse. In particular, there has been an increase in the diversity of our pupils' race, ethnicity and cultural heritage.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment. As a school community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school; where appropriate making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation.

**Ballyclare Secondary School** believes that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities; this is evidenced in our practices and procedures.

## 2. Mission and Values

**Ballyclare Secondary School's** Vision & Mission Statement/School Values/School Ethos are aligned with equality and inclusion....

**Our vision** for the pupils of BSS is to develop independent learners who are prepared, motivated and resilient. They will be active citizens, equipped with the core values which will enable them to thrive.

**Our mission** is to: -

- Encourage every member of the school community to be ready, responsible and respectful in all of our actions
- Build positive relationships characterised by kindness, joy and compassion
- Provide access to high quality learning and teaching responsive to the needs of each learner

- Know our pupils and encourage their diverse talents and interests
- Foster a climate of high expectations for all pupils
- Support a positive home/school partnership which encourages parental involvement and recognises the importance of working together.
- Instil in our young people, through the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, a knowledge and understanding of their role and the impact they can make.

**Our Ethos:** is to strive to provide an inclusive learning and teaching environment in which all can reach their full potential. We aim to do this by fostering the core values of respect, kindness, compassion and joy.

### **Diversity Statement**

Ballyclare Secondary School has developed this policy as a statement of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our school community. It seeks to ensure that all members of the school are valued equally, regardless of religion or belief, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

## **3. Equality and Inclusion – School Policies**

Through this policy, and the wider practices within **Ballyclare Secondary School** we seek to empower our young people to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination. We equip our Governors and staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our school’s safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school.

Inclusion underpins all our school policies.

As part of our overall school policy development there are a number of policies that we must have in place and regularly review to ensure our school is addressing its statutory responsibilities. These include Anti-bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Curriculum Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Uniform Policy and Admissions Policy. Any arising incident will be dealt with by the appropriate policy. There should never be any grey areas when it comes to young people’s safety and well-being.

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for our whole school community. It is our belief that equality and inclusion is central to **all** of our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all our pupils and their families feel valued and supported and making sure that equality and inclusion is evident in everyday school life.

## **4. Responsibilities**

The Ballyclare Secondary School **Board of Governors** have overall responsibility to:

‘Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school’ *‘Every school a good school – the governors role’* (Department of Education NI, August 2019)

The Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation;

- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

The **School's Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for:

- putting the school's equality and inclusion policies and codes into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary.

**The School's Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team** (led by the Designated Teacher) will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

**All School Staff (teaching and non-teaching)** have a responsibility for the day to day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

**Pupils** are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following all of the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

## 5. How do we promote Equality and Inclusion?

**Ballyclare Secondary School** promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

### **School/Centre Practices**

- An inclusive ethos statement
- Policies
- A range of resources and teaching approaches
- Use appropriate terminology and language
- Tackle stereotypes
- Challenge homophobic, transphobic or any other type of bullying
- Set clear expectations about acceptable behaviour

### **Facilities/Services**

- Have allocated accessible parking
- Have accessible toilets
- Have an accessible main entrance

## **6. Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy**

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods:

- Number of bullying incidents by equality characteristics to be monitored and appropriate action taken as necessary
- Number of comments and complaints in relation to equality and inclusion to be monitored
- A record of training/information presented to staff/pupils to be kept
- Feedback from pupils, staff, parents and the wider community to be sought regularly

## **7. Complaint's Procedures**

The school has a robust and transparent Complaints procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the Complaints process will be fairly and systematically applied. Access to the Complaints procedure can be found on the school's website.

## **8. Review cycle of policy**

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed by all stakeholders and, if required, updated every **three** years in line with our school policy review cycle.