

Lisneal College

Equality and Inclusion



Policy Document

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Introduction

Lisneal College 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 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.

At the centre of the school's ethos is a culture of inclusion for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and/or sexual orientation (LGBTQ+). 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.

Lisneal College 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.

In recent years the school's model of inclusion for Special Educational Needs has been recognised as a model of good practice by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Enrolment of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs has risen steadily and the Education Authority has approached the school requesting an extension of its current provision with the addition of Autistic Special Classes in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

In addition to this our community has become much more diverse as a significant number of parents and pupils from different religious and ethnic backgrounds are choosing Lisneal College for their Post-Primary education.

Mission and Values

Lisneal College has developed this policy as a statement of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our school community. We will work hard to ensure all members of our school community are valued equally regardless of religion or belief, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation or transgender identify. Whilst socio-economic status is not a specified ground under the equality legislation, we recognise barriers and inequalities experienced can be exacerbated by poverty and social exclusion. As a school we will seek to ensure all efforts are made to overcome such inequalities.

As laid out in the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, "Lisneal College actively promotes inclusion in every aspect of school life and encourages respect, tolerance and the celebration of diversity in all relationships across school."

The school Aims:

- To promote a culture of self-respect, respect for others and to build good relationships across the entire school community;
- Pupils should display tolerance, empathy and be considerate towards the needs of others;
- To ensure all pupils receive equity of provision and are supported and nurtured appropriately in accordance with individual needs;

We believe that we can best achieve our school aims through the promotion of our agreed core values:

Teamwork - to work together and support one another in achieving success.

Respect - treating others as we would like to be treated, showing consideration and good manners, valuing the opinions of others and recognising each other's' qualities.

Integrity - being honest, having high standards of behaviour and choosing right over wrong.

Responsibility - taking responsibility for one's own actions and behaviour and recognising that there are consequences for everything we do.

Hardworking - applying yourself fully to all tasks in the pursuit of achieving and becoming the best that you can be, not accepting anything less.

Kindness - to demonstrate thoughtfulness, care, empathy, compassion and helpfulness at all times towards others.

Resilience –the capacity each of us have to cope with and recover from inevitable adversity and difficulties we will face.

Lisneal College also supports the wider values of the Education Authority of Openness, Respect, Reflection, Responsibility, Excellence and Equality.

Equality and Inclusion Linked Policies

Through this policy, and the wider practices within Lisneal College 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.

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:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Safeguarding AND Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for our whole school community. As a school we see it as essential that inclusion underpins all of our policies and practices.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors have the 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)
- approve this policy and ensuring its appropriateness.
- 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 Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team (led by the Vice-Principal Pastoral and Designated Teacher for Child Protection) are responsible for:

- managing the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

Staff are responsible for:

- the day to day operation and implementation of this policy.
- contributing to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.
- demonstrating the Core Values of Lisneal College.

Parents have the responsibility to:

- make themselves aware of the Equality and Inclusion Policy.
- make contact with appropriate staff with any queries or questions.
- support the school as we work hard to promote a culture which celebrate diversity and promotes equality and inclusion of all.

Pupils have the responsibility to:

- respect others in their language and actions.
- follow all of the relevant school policies, standards and expectations in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.
- demonstrate the Core Values of Lisneal College.

How does Lisneal College promote Equality and Inclusion?

Lisneal College promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following practices:

- *School policies and procedures which promote Equality and Inclusion.*
- *Celebration of diversity.*
- *Ensuring staff use a range of resources and teaching methodologies.*
- *Ensuring staff use appropriate terminology and language.*
- *Ensuring resources are differentiated as necessary.*
- *Addressing stereotyping explicitly.*
- *Having clearly defined Core Values which are clearly presented within the school.*
- *Exploring the meaning and importance of each Core Value through Personal Development.*
- *Having clearly defined standards and expectations for our staff (The Lisneal Staff Way).*
- *Having clearly defined standards and expectations for our students (The Lisneal Way).*
- *Consulting with students regarding school's standards and expectations.*
- *Consulting with staff regarding school's standards and expectations.*
- *Having standards and expectations on display.*
- *Promote activities that value the commonalities and differences among young people.*
- *Participating in and promoting a positive message of our Shared Education Partnership.*
- *Encourage our students and staff to be curious and not judgemental of others.*
- *Provide opportunities for all to learn about different cultures.*
- *Provide opportunities for all to learn about different religions*
- *Provide opportunities for members of different cultural groups to become involved in the school.*

Lisneal College promotes equality and inclusion through our school facilities in the following ways:

- *Having allocated accessible parking.*
- *Having accessible toilets.*
- *Having accessible changing facilities.*
- *Having an accessible main entrance and building.*
- *Facilitating flexible payment schemes when planning trips and extra-curricular activities.*
- *Helping young people to access advice from support organisations including noticeboards with clear and accessible information and contacts.*
- *Promoting and using interpreting services as necessary.*

Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy

This policy will be monitored via a range of methods including:

- Monitoring comments and complaints in relation to equality and inclusion.
- Monitoring bullying incidents relating to equality characteristic and take appropriate action as necessary.
- Promoting positive stories on equality and inclusion.
- Celebrating diversity as much as possible.
- Feedback from pupils. Staff, parents and the wider community to be sought regularly.

Complaints 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 by contacting the school.

Review Cycle of Policy

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed and updated every three years.

This process will include a self-audit and involve consultation with all stakeholders including staff, governors, parents and students.

The policy will be made available on the school website, www.lisnealcollege.com. Alternatively, a paper copy can be issued if required upon request.

This policy has been adopted by Board of Governors

Signed: _____
Chairman of Board of Governors

Date: _____

Review Date: 2024-2025

Appendix I

Equality means ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities regardless of their abilities, their background, and their lifestyle or personal characteristics. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same.

Inclusion is about valuing and respecting our differences and so creating a welcoming and productive environment where diversity is celebrated and all can flourish. It is the richness of others ideas, backgrounds and perspectives that creates value by broadening our minds allowing us to innovate and anticipate the needs of our diverse communities.

Diversity means all the ways we differ. It includes visible differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability, as well as invisible differences such as thinking styles, sexual orientation and nationality. It recognises that all these characteristics interact and influence our sense of identity and how we behave and make us each the unique people we are.

Direct Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than others in the same or similar position based on a protected characteristic, for example their gender.

Indirect Discrimination is where an organisation unjustifiably operates a rule or policy that looks the same for everyone but in effect disadvantages people from a particular protected group. An example of this would be prohibiting the wearing of headgear as part of your uniform policy. If this policy is applied to every pupil equally some minority groups with differing cultural values (often religious) could potentially be indirectly discriminated against.

Disability-Related Discrimination is essentially a form of direct discrimination. It is very closely linked with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Disability-related discrimination is much less likely to occur when the reasonable adjustment duty has been complied with.

Harassment and bullying are terms used to explain certain types of unacceptable behaviour that pupils may sometimes be subjected to such as name-calling, unacceptable comments, intimidating text messages, deliberate exclusion, pushing / shoving or more aggressive physical contact.