

# Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide - Inclusivity Policy

Revision: 1

Effective date: 2020-Dec-13

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. It is the intention of the school that this policy will allow students of all abilities to have access to education through Gaelic.
- 1.2. It is acknowledged that due to limited resources, some of the following policy must be seen as aspirational in spirit. The school and working group see accessibility and inclusivity as primary 'goals'. The achievement of these goals is of vital importance to the institution. Meaning, that if there are no monetary or staffing impediments, there should be no deviation from the inclusivity policy as written.
- 1.3. The School delivers this inclusivity framework and policy as a means to address issues of inequity as it relates to the institution's students, their families and guardians, staff, the working group and the greater community. The school has a unique vision, mandate and perspective on primary education that has been carefully crafted and debated to create an environment where students can learn standard primary school curriculum through the medium of Gaelic, as well as forms of cultural expression and a worldview seated in the Nova Scotian Gaelic context. Although the institution accepts and encourages participation from families of all backgrounds, including origin, race, religion, creed, the school and its governance ultimately has authority over the direction of curriculum, programming and policy.

## 2. Policy Statement

This policy establishes a framework and procedures that will commit the school to being inclusive to all students regardless of their physical or mental ability. It is the goal of the school to build this inclusive capacity to such an extent so that all children and families can access Gaelic Medium Education provided by the school.

## 3. Students' Rights as they Regard Inclusive Education

- 3.1. Every student has the right to an appropriate education, meaning the right of every individual to have their unique learning needs responded to on an individual basis.
- 3.2. Every student has the right to receive a quality education in the company of their peers regardless of ability.

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- 3.3. Every student has the right to a physically accessible school. Meaning that the School building itself is accessible to children of all physical abilities.
  - 3.3.1. In regard to the school building being accessible to all individual's physical abilities, the school will maintain that all classroom, eating, play and office spaces will be accessible by stair, lift, chair lift or other such means to allow access.
  - 3.3.2. All hallways to access daily use spaces will be of a size and cleared of all obstacles and debris as to not obstruct or impede the movements of individuals with disabilities.
  - 3.3.3. Bathrooms or a designated bathroom will be accessible within a reasonable distance from common use spaces and the physical openings and fixtures must meet a high standard of accessibility.
  - 3.3.4. Parking must be reserved and available for individuals with physical disabilities in proximity to the closest and most convenient entrance to the building. These reserved spaces must have robust signage designating their intended use.
  - 3.3.5. Signage will be comprehensive, using standard universal symbols and Braille or raised lettering as applicable.
  - 3.3.6. Seating will be available in convenient locations for individuals that require it.
- 3.4. Every student has the right to belong (affirmed, validated, and nurtured), be safe, and feel welcomed in all aspects of their daily experience.
- 3.5. Every student has the right to an inclusive education. This includes a commitment to honour and respect each student's cultural and linguistic identities and knowledge systems.
- 3.6. Every student has the right to accessibility aids including personnel and support professionals.

## 4. Responsibilities of the School to it's Students

- 4.1. To provide thoughtful and meaningful learning supports and adaptations essential to all students achieving their goals and learning outcomes.
- 4.2. To ensure that all students are afforded the resources and opportunities to receive an appropriate education and be able to advance in their learning at their own pace while also meeting curriculum goals.

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- 4.3. The school and its stakeholders are committed and empowered to work collectively to identify and eliminate barriers that interfere with students' well-being and achievement.
- 4.4. Teachers are responsible for teaching all students. Teaching and interventions are expected to happen most often in a common learning environment, such as the classroom. Classroom teachers cannot do this alone.
  - 4.4.1. Teachers will be supported by teaching assistants or learning support teachers where and when appropriate.
  - 4.4.2. Teaching assistants support the teacher in conducting the entire class.
  - 4.4.3. Teaching assistants will provide collaborative support to the main teacher and will also focus on the individual needs of students. This may be on the class level or in a one on one capacity as is required.
- 4.5. As part of planning for students' success, the school will use evidence and data, to monitor and evaluate how students are doing and will respond with appropriate, timely supports.
- 4.6. The working group and teachers will work together on committees to ensure that all students are being supported. These will include:
  - 4.6.1. The working group will establish a Teaching and Learning Support Committee that will meet regularly with teachers to address immediate issues facing teachers and quickly identify resources, people, and strategies that can help those teachers more effectively support their students. The committee, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, will monitor and evaluate the success of these supports and interventions.
  - 4.6.2. The Teaching and Learning Support Committee will ensure that plans are flexible in terms of how and where programming and supports are delivered to best support well-being and achievement. The committee will be created in a way that makes the most sense within the school's unique context.
- 4.7. The school commits to a consistency in both its understanding and usage of the correct and most up-to-date language and best practices in regards to being an equitable and inclusive organization and learning environment. This commitment to consistency in language and communication will be reflected

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in the working group, staff and in our approach to educating our students. To achieve this understanding of the proper terminology and best-practices in all aspects of developing a fully inclusive learning environment the school commits to the following:

- 4.7.1. Completing training in a program about inclusivity best-practices, communication and language, accessibility considerations and adaptations.
- 4.7.2. Committing to a renewal of this training at an interval of no more than five years to account for new and emerging knowledge as well as new staffing and governance.
- 4.7.3. Seeking opportunities to include in the learning environment materials and individuals that speak to unique and diverse experiences and ways of being in the world.
- 4.7.4. Seeking ways to include experts in equitable business and education practices, diversity and inclusivity in working group meetings and planning sessions.
- 4.7.5. Committing to an active role in keeping up-to-date and current both the language we use as it relates to inclusivity as well as our documents, policies and procedures.
- 4.7.6. Changing incorrect or ambiguous signage as better and more current information becomes available.

## 5. Programming and Supports for Students

- 5.1. Inclusive education practices use evidence of students' strengths and challenges to determine a system of supports and monitor the effectiveness of those supports.
- 5.2. The school is required to provide appropriate programming for all students with special needs and must allocate resources for this purpose. This may include the following:
  - 5.2.1. Access to support or intervention that allows the student to remain in the classroom.
  - 5.2.2. Access to adapted curriculums/ways of learning to help each individual child find their way to success.
- 5.3. It is the goal of the school to support student well being in parallel to their

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academic achievement, believing that both are paramount to having an inclusive school and a safe environment for our students. This will be accomplished by:

- 5.3.1. Understanding the unique living situation, history and learning experience of each of our students and finding ways to acknowledge and support individual experiences.
- 5.3.2. Tending to the social, emotional and psychological wellbeing of our students and staff members through day-to-day actions as well as professional guidance and support when needed.
- 5.3.3. Using language that supports the current scientific understanding of personal well being, mental health, and physical health, and following best practices when introducing concepts, both simple and complex to students.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1. Students' Responsibilities

- Attend school and actively engage in their learning.
- Actively participate by communicating their preferred ways of learning, strengths, challenges, and interests.
- Actively work with teachers and other staff to communicate when they need help or support(s), or if there are barriers to their learning.

### 6.2. Parents/Guardians and Families

- Engage in and support their child's learning.
- Support their child in attending school.
- Maintain ongoing, regular contact with teachers about their child's well-being, including their strengths, challenges, and interests.
- Work with the teacher and Teaching and Learning Support Committee to seek clarification and collaborate on solutions when questions arise with respect to their child's education and to identify and eliminate barriers to their child's learning.
- Promote and value student voice and choice and provide opportunities for them to speak to their strengths and challenges.
- Act as active members of their child's individual education, as well as the broader school community and in some cases the Teaching and Learning Support Committee.

### 6.3. Teachers

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- Value student voice and choice and provide opportunities for them to speak to their strengths, challenges, and preferred ways of learning.
- Work with parents/guardians to help them feel welcome in the school community and to empower them to be a key team member in regard to adaptations and supports for the child, including, but not limited to, participating on the Teaching and Learning Support Committee.
- Promote students' well-being and achievement in collaboration with other staff.
- Work collectively with all staff and the working group, as appropriate, to deliver instruction and interventions to their students.
- Communicate regularly with students, parents/guardians, and other teachers and school staff with respect to student progress.
- Work with the Teaching and Learning Support Committee to meet the strengths and challenges of the students in their classrooms.
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional strategies.

## 6.4. Teaching Assistants

- Value student voice and choice and provide opportunities for them to speak to their strengths, challenges, and preferred ways of learning.
- Work with parents/guardians to help them feel welcome in the school community and to empower them to be a key team member in regard to adaptations and supports for the child, including, but not limited to, participating on the Teaching and Learning Support Committee.
- Provide direct support to classroom teachers to meet the identified needs of their students.
- Promote students' well-being and achievement by developing and implementing strategies with teachers and other staff.
- Provide specific interventions and support(s), primarily in classrooms or common learning environments, to individual students or small groups of students who may require additional supplemental and intensive interventions.
- Maintain regular communication with students, parents/guardians, and other teachers and school staff with respect to students' progress.
- Work with the Teaching and Learning Support Committee to meet the needs of teachers and students.
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of their practices.

## 6.5. Working Group

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- Value student voice and choice and provide opportunities for them to speak to their strengths, challenges, and preferred ways of learning.
  - Work with parents/guardians to help them feel welcome in the school community and to empower them to be a key team member in regard to adaptations and supports for the child, including, but not limited to, participating on the Teaching and Learning Support Committee.
  - Work with teachers to support effective instructional strategies as evidenced by student growth socially, emotionally, and academically.
  - Ensure that teachers are following appropriate processes, as described in this policy and accompanying guidelines.
  - Ensure teachers and school staff have access to information and opportunities for professional learning that aligns with teachers' assessments of students' learning strengths and challenges.
  - Ensure teachers and the working group have qualified and up-to-date inclusivity training.
  - Provide documents and resource materials to every individual in the school community as it pertains to diversity and inclusion at first point of contact.
  - Communicate the inclusivity policy and the school's commitment to an inclusive environment and education in an easily accessible and apparent location on the school website.
  - Lead the Teaching and Learning Support process in the school to gather data and set goals to improve student well-being and achievement.
  - Establish and lead the Teaching and Learning Support Team for the school.
  - Monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy in the school.
- 6.6. Teaching and Learning Support Committee
- Work with individual teachers to identify opportunities where additional interventions, professional learning, and/or resources may be needed to support student well-being and achievement.
  - Encourage and enhance collaboration among peers.
  - Strengthen the capacity to support student well-being and achievement by assisting teachers in developing strategies to meet the core, supplementary, and intensive needs of their students.
  - Create cultures where teachers feel comfortable seeking advice from their peers and from specialists on effective teaching practices to meet the needs of their students.
  - Identify opportunities, strategies, and resources to support all school staff in meeting the needs of students.

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- Collaborate on decisions regarding instruction, interventions, and evaluation needed to best support individual students in Teaching and Learning Support Committee meetings, as well as the support(s) needed to assist the student's teachers in meeting the student's strengths and challenges.
- Monitor and evaluate the success of the supports and interventions designed for individual students and adjust them as needed.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. It is the hope of the School that the above policy will serve in creating an inclusive Gaelic medium education experience for all students who attend the school.
- 7.2. The policy will be reviewed and updated annually or as required to ensure that the policy is as effective in achieving its goals as it can be.

## Revision History & Approval

| Revision | Date        | Approved by   |
|----------|-------------|---------------|
| 1        | 2020-Dec-13 | Working Group |
|          |             |               |