



Shared Education Policy

A POLICY FOR SHARED EDUCATION

What is Shared Education?

Shared Education is described as the organisation and delivery of education so that it:

- meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes inclusion in terms of equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Specifically, Shared Education involves the sustained provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community, as well as social and economic, backgrounds to learn together. It is expected that Shared Education will be organised and delivered in such a way that promotes equality of opportunity and social inclusion by providing opportunities for children from differing Section 75 groups (e.g. children from different religious backgrounds, children from different racial backgrounds, children with and without disabilities, children who are carers or school age mothers) and from differing socio-economic backgrounds to learn together at school and in less formal education

Who are we working with?

St. Teresa's and Shaftsbury Nurseries will be working together through, 'Sharing From The Start project'. The project is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). 'Sharing From The Start' involves early years settings throughout Northern Ireland and the Southern Border counties forming cross-community partnerships, and the children taking part in joint curricular classes, improving educational outcomes and promoting good relations. We are looking forward to teaming up with Shaftsbury Nursery and sharing best practice. Through this project we will be in receipt of a robust package of supports which will include, training and mentoring from a Senior Early Years Specialist. It's a fantastic opportunity for the children and our setting to access a Shared Education Initiative which will support the achievement of quality standards and the delivery of the early years curriculum in both Northern Ireland and the Southern Border Counties.



What will taking part in Shared Education Project mean?

Shared Education provides an environment where innovation, imagination and creativity can flourish. Our vision for Shared Education is one of vibrant, self-improving education communities delivering educational benefits to learners, encouraging the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. Re-building a strong and vibrant society is a role for the Executive but education has a key role to play – one which is challenging but one that we must achieve

It is the aim of St. Teresa's and Shaftsbury Nursery Schools to:

Create a community: in which all staff and pupils feel safe, valued, supported and happy to learn about themselves and others, develop tolerance, show respect and open-mindedness through understanding similarities and respecting differences between people in the local community and beyond in order to help them address the challenges and opportunities they may encounter in society.

In addition all areas of the Pre-School curriculum provide opportunities for teachers to design learning programmes that explore identity, diversity and promote reconciliation, developing the attitudes and dispositions.

Our vision for Shared Education,

Reflects the DE's wider vision: • raising standards for all; and • closing the performance gap. To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of her or his development

This policy has been guided and shaped by many informed contributions, in particular the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education, which reported in March 2013 (further information, including the report is available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/shared_education/shared-education-ministerial-advisory-group.htm).

BACKGROUND

Our education system largely reflects traditional divides in society. The vast majority of children and young people in primary and post-primary schools (92.0%) attend controlled schools that are mainly attended by Protestant children and young people in voluntary schools that are either Catholic managed or other managed.



CURRENT AND FUTURE CONTEXT

Shared Education is developing within a wider legislative and policy context that is designed to promote equality and good relations. This includes both an overarching government commitment to develop a more shared society in the future and more specific education goals. The policy will be both supportive of and supported by this.

For almost two decades, society here has been on a journey from conflict and division to peace and there are many tangible signs of social, political and cultural progress. Whilst our education system reflects historical divisions in society, the benefits of educating children and young people together are increasingly recognised. In recent years, the concept of Shared Education which provides opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together, has developed. Public and political attitudes have evolved to the degree where moving to a more inclusive educational system is a distinct possibility. Society is changing rapidly and we must respond to that change to best meet the needs of our children and young people.

Core Principles Underpinning the Delivery of Shared Education

- Support of leadership, staff, children and young people, parents and the wider community;
- Clearly defined vision and outcomes for all experiences;
- Effective planning and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation; (this will be embedded in the School Development Plan);
- Adequate training for teaching and support staff;

What will it look like in Practice?

- Shared educational facilities – children from each school will spend 30 hours with children from partner school
- Enhanced educational opportunities – funded activities to enhance learning experience of both schools

Shared planning and costs to ensure viable programme of events. SEE Share Education Notice Board and Website for a list of events.

Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.