

## INCLUSION [EQUALITY & DIVERSITY]

<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Inclusion</b>
<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	<b>018</b>
<b>Revision Number:</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Document Author:</b>	<b>Edenmore Early Education Centre with Canavan Byrne</b>
<b>Document Approved:</b>	<b>Sandra Cully</b>
<b>Date the Document is Effective From:</b>	<b>15 October 2017</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>October 2022</b>
<b>Number of Pages:</b>	<b>16</b>

Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 (Síolta Standard 3: Parents/guardians and Families, Síolta Standard 7: Curriculum, Síolta Standard 9: Health and Welfare, Síolta Standard 8: Planning and Evaluation) (National Standard 1: Information, National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents/guardians or Guardians, National Standard 5: Organisation and Management, National Standard 8: Care, Play and Learning, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour, National Standard 15: Children with Disabilities, National Standard 16: Equal Opportunities)

**This policy has been developed according to the principles outlined in The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (see Appendix C)**

### Mission statement of Edenmore Early Education Centre

At Edenmore Early Education Centre, we are committed to providing a quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) service to all children, families, staff and our community. We support children to flourish and reach their full potential by providing meaningful early learning experiences and nurturing interactions within an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum. Edenmore EEC value partnership with children and families in our mission to provide inclusive and meaningful experiences and environments to all. We adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to ECEC by working with relevant stakeholders in the best interest of children and families.

### Our Value and Beliefs

Edenmore Early Education Centre will ensure an inclusive culture, recognising that every child is an individual and has their own learning style, interests and needs. Edenmore Early Education Centre believes that all children are unique, but share many similarities, thus promoting equality and diversity throughout the early childhood service. Edenmore Early Education Centre will promote and nurture the identity of each child attending the service and ensure that their emotional and physical well-being is of paramount importance at all times.

## Our Approach to Inclusion

At Edenmore Early Education Centre, we achieve inclusion in education by continually reviewing an anti-bias approach that is implemented by the early childhood service, and by working in partnership with families, children and the early childhood team, both individually through reflective practice, and in consultation with children and their families, so as to ensure that the education and care provided is fully inclusive of all children, families and agencies that attend and use our service. We achieve inclusion in education by adapting our strategies, environments and practice to meet a child's needs, developmentally and culturally.

## Policy Statement

This policy represents the agreed principles and commitments for inclusion, in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education National Inclusion Charter. Edenmore Early Education Centre will implement this policy to support and develop an inclusive environment for children and adults within our early childhood service.

'Inclusion' refers to: A process involving a programme, curriculum or education environment where each child is welcomed and included on equal terms, can feel they belong, and can progress to his/her full potential in all areas of development (National Childcare Strategy 2006–2010).

## Role of Inclusion Coordinator

The Inclusion Coordinator within our service is Karen Moroney.

## Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

Where a child's needs require additional resources in order to provide a meaningful preschool experience, we will approach families to apply for supports through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

## Core principles

Edenmore Early Education Centre actively seeks to support learning and participation that does not hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all children attending the service. This is achieved by using a child-centred equality and diversity approach to create an inclusive learning environment.

Core principles of this strategy are:

- » Work in partnership with parents.
- » Support children's ability, identity, cultural background and sense of belonging.
- » Support children to become respectful of differences.
- » Foster each child's critical thinking in order to confront bias and discrimination.
- » Implement a curriculum that meets the individual needs and emerging interests of the child under *Solta: The National Quality Framework (2006)* and *Aistear: The National Curriculum Framework (2009)*.
- » Respond to children's diverse and individual learning needs and styles through individual care plans and responsive curriculum.
- » Support continual development for all early childhood Teachers, so as to ensure that they are trained in an equality and diversity approach to providing care and education to all.

### Early childhood Teachers work to ensure the following:

- Children feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- Children know they belong and are valued as unique individuals.
- All children's cultural backgrounds are respected and valued.
- Children feel strong and confident about their identity.
- Children are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- Children use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Children have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- Children are encouraged to participate fully, having particular regard for and being cognisant of children with a variety of abilities.
- If a child uses an aid or assistive technology to communicate, that device is used solely for this purpose.

### Responsibilities of management and early childhood Teachers at Edenmore Early Education centre

- All families and children are encouraged to participate, accessing learning experiences through the curriculum on offer.
- At Edenmore Early Education Centre, we promote children's individual learning according to their stage of development in line with the Child Care Act, 1991; Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2016; Disability Act 2005; Equal Status Acts 2000–2012; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular attention to Articles 29 and 30; and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.

### Admissions Policy

Please see Edenmore Early Education Centre Admissions Policy

### Working in Partnership with Parents

As children and families are the most knowledgeable about their background, culture, language, and physical and developmental needs, Edenmore Early Education Centre will ensure that families are consulted when developing and implementing care plans and policy.

An effective diversity and equality approach will ensure that ability and diversity are recognised and celebrated, and that discrimination, inequality and exclusion are addressed.

### Dealing with discriminatory incidents

- The first step in handling incidents involving discrimination is to recognise and acknowledge what is happening.
- All children need to know that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- Discuss with the children in a democratic and sensitive manner that name-calling or physically hurting someone is unacceptable.
- When an incident occurs (hurtful remarks made by one child to another), both children learn from the incident.

- Always determine the real reason for incidents involving exclusion or conflict. It may not be a discriminatory incident, so be careful not to make assumptions.
- Some issues may be brought into the early childhood service by the child, arising from comments made by adults outside the setting. Recognise when it is an adult issue, and identify appropriate actions for addressing the issue with the child's parents or guardians.
- An incident should be considered from the perspective of all individuals involved as well as those who witnessed it. Appropriate actions need to be taken, at circle time or in group discussion, in order to address incidents witnessed by children who were not involved. This does not mean singling out children in the group.
- By showing empathy and expressing our feelings, we help children to express their feelings.
- It is important to be aware of how our own attitudes can shape how we respond to a given situation. Be mindful that early childhood Teachers are role models for the children and the early childhood service. Children will do as we do (see the éist manual – Murray and O'Doherty (2010)).

#### Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented

If you, as a staff member or a parent, feel that this policy is not being implemented, you can follow Edenmore Early Education Centre's Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

#### Monitoring and reviewing the policy

The above policy will be re-evaluated at regular intervals throughout the year. We at Edenmore Early Education service value your input. If you have any queries in relation to the policy, please contact the Inclusion Coordinator: Karen Maroney

#### **Favouritism:**

Staff should not develop favouritism or become over involved with any one child. The children should be comfortable in the care of any of our staff as there may be different staff working each day with groups or individual children. Children can feel resentful or isolated if staff always favour one child and a child who is always over indulged or favoured can be led to feel that he or she can do no wrong and grow up to have a feeling of entitlement which may affect future relationships and behaviour as an adult.

#### **Meetings:**

We will convene meetings at a time and venue that enable most parents/guardians to attend and to ensure equal access to information and involvement in the service.

#### **Access:**

Everyone in the community regardless of religious affiliation, political background, race, culture, linguistic needs, disability, sexual orientation or age, has access to the service.

#### **The Curriculum:**

- All children are to be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.

- Activities and the use of play equipment will offer children opportunities to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Through the proactive use of planning and curriculum development opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.
- It is important for children to experience a variety of cultures at an early age so that they realise that cultural diversity is part of everyday life.
- We ask families to share their own cultures, religions and traditions with our staff so that all values are respected and celebrated in the service.
- It is our objective to support and encourage each child in their experience and guide them to embrace their own values and the values of others. These experiences help set the child's foundations and potentially shape the people they will become.

#### **Resources:**

All materials are to positively and accurately reflect cultural and racial diversity. These materials will help children to develop their self-respect and respect other people by avoiding stereotypes. We use a range of books, images, music and songs and experiences that reflect diversity. Boys and girls are to have equal opportunity, and be actively encouraged to use all activities.

#### **Discriminatory Behaviour/Remarks:**

Any discrimination (language, behaviour or remarks) by children, parents/guardians or staff/volunteers is unacceptable in the service. Discrimination will be positively challenged by supporting the victim and helping those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices.

#### **Festivals:**

We aim to show respect for and awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families and wider society. Without indoctrination, we aim to acknowledge festivals celebrated by all families in our community and wider society through stories, activities, special food and clothing which reflect diversity of life. We have a sensitive approach to Father's/Mother's Day etc. and welcome parents/guardian's contributions.

#### **Language:**

It is important that all children and their parents/guardians feel welcome and encouraged to be involved. To help children with little or no English we will:

- Ensure inclusion in the group and staff will talk to the child, speaking slowly and simply, demonstrating what is meant by the words.
- Support child and parents by staff member who will try and learn some key phrases in the child's language, e.g. 'hello' 'goodbye' 'hungry' 'thirsty' 'do you need help?'
- We encourage children to use their home language whenever they are so inclined. Dual language books are helpful to encourage the use of other languages.
- Make it easy for the child to settle into the setting, we encourage other children to talk to non-English speaking children in the same way as usual.
- Parents are invited to help with key words and phrases in home language.
- Staff will ensure that they correctly pronounce and spell children's names.

### **Spiritual, Cultural, Social and Moral Values:**

Growth in spiritual, social and cultural values is encouraged by:

- Providing an environment where children feel safe and secure.
- The constant implementation of the services rules.
- Learning to share and respect the property of others.
- Learning to accept the rules of play and the rights of others.
- The celebration of festivals from a variety of cultures.

Parents/guardians from ethnic minorities and religious communities may wish to be absent to celebrate religious events. We will support such occasions.

### **Actions to be followed if the policy is not implemented.**

If a staff member or a parent/guardian, feel that this policy is not being implemented, we have a Complaints Policy and Procedure to make a complaint.

### **To meet diverse needs Teachers should:**

- Plan opportunities to build on an extend children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills and should develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Use a wide range of teaching practices based on the children's individual learning needs
- Provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support development
- Provide a safe, stimulating and supportive learning environment where all children are valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged
- Use materials that positively reflect diversity and are free from stereotyping and discrimination.
- Plan challenging opportunities
- Monitor children's progress, identify areas of concern and act to provide appropriate support.
- Differentiate activities for children who have additional needs to allow for full participation and integration.
- Provide opportunities for children where English is their second language, to hear and see their home language.
- What we provide and how it is presented influences children's identity. All children have the right to grow up feeling proud, self-confident and sensitive to the feelings of others.

### **APPENDIX C: PRINCIPLES OF AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE (taken from the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education)**

An inclusive culture involves:

- Working in partnership and openly communicating with the child's family.
- Working in partnership with outside agencies that may be involved with the family. (Consent must be given by the child's parents.)
- Actively promoting equal opportunities and anti-bias practices, so that all children and families feel included and valued. (Derman-Sparks and ABC Task Force, 1989)
- Having robust policies and procedures – inclusion policy, equal opportunities policy.

- Recognising and valuing that all children are unique and will develop and learn at their own rate.
- Utilising the AIM programme to meet the needs of children and recognising that not all children with disabilities will require additional support.
- Encouraging children to recognise their individual qualities and the characteristics they share with their peers. » Actively engaging children in making decisions about their own learning.
- Respecting the diversity of the child, their family and community throughout the early childhood service.
- Understanding that children have individual needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect and represented throughout the early childhood services.
- Reflecting on your own attitudes and values

## APPENDIX D: AIM-ACCESS and INCLUSION MODEL

### What is AIM?

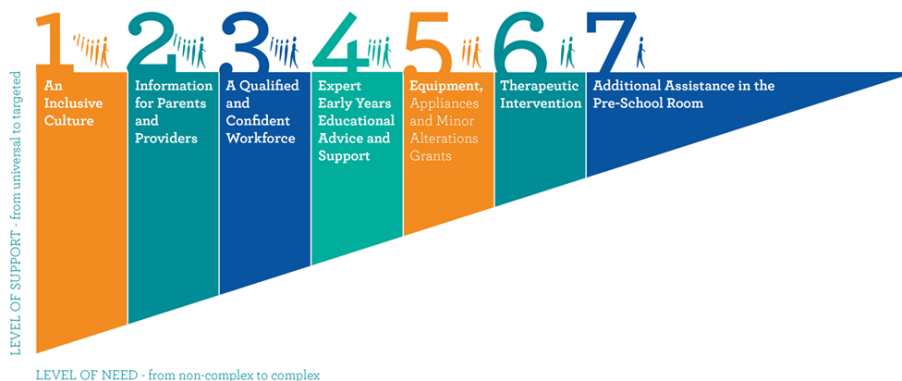
The **Access and Inclusion Model** (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to empower pre-school Teachers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

AIM is a child-centred model, involving seven levels of progressive support, moving from the universal to the targeted, based on the needs of the child and the pre-school service. For many children, the universal supports offered under the model will be sufficient. For others, one particular discrete support may be required to enable participation in the ECCE Programme, such as access to a piece of specialised equipment. For a small number, a suite of different services and supports may be necessary. In other words, the model is designed to be responsive to the needs of each individual child in the context of their pre-school setting. It offers tailored, practical supports based on need and does not require a formal diagnosis of disability.

### What supports are provided under AIM?

AIM provides a suite of universal and targeted supports across 7 levels.

A Model to Support Access to the ECCE Programme  
for Children with a Disability



### Universal Supports (Levels 1 – 3 of the Access and Inclusion Model)

Universal supports are designed to promote and support an inclusive culture within pre-school settings by means of a variety of educational and capacity-building initiatives. Specifically:

- A new **Inclusion Charter** has been developed for the pre-school sector. Pre-school Teachers are invited to sign-up to this Charter by producing and publishing their own Inclusion Policy. To support this process, updated Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education have been produced and a national training programme on the Inclusion Charter and the Guidelines is being delivered by the City and County Childcare Committees. The Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines can be accessed [here](#).
- A **new higher education programme**, “Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years” (LINC), commenced in September 2016. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will fund approximately 900 places per annum, over 4 years, on this programme. Pre-school settings employing a LINC graduate (who has agreed to take on the role and responsibilities of Inclusion Co-ordinator within their pre-school setting) will attract an increase of €2 per child per week in the rate of ECCE capitation payable to that setting.
- Finally, a broad **multi-annual programme of formal and informal training** for pre-school staff in relation to disability and inclusion will be funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and will be delivered by a number of agencies (e.g. the City and County Childcare Committees, Early Years Specialist Service, Health Service Executive) and other agencies.

### Targeted Supports (Levels 4 – 7 of the Access and Inclusion Model)

The supports at levels 1 to 3, when appropriately developed, have been found internationally to be sufficient to support many children with disabilities. However, where a pre-school provider, in partnership with a parent or guardian, considers that some further additional support may be necessary to meet the needs of a particular child, they can apply for one or more of the following targeted supports:

- **Expert advice, mentoring and support** is available from a team of 60 specialists in early years care and education for children with disabilities. These experts, termed Early Years Specialists, are based in the Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Service.
- A scheme is available for the provision of **specialised equipment, appliances and grants towards minor building alterations** which are necessary to support a child’s participation in the ECCE Programme.
- **Therapy services**, which are critical to a child’s participation in the ECCE Programme, are available through AIM and will be provided by the HSE.
- Finally, where the above supports are not sufficient to meet the needs of a child, pre-school Teachers, in partnership with parents or guardians, can apply for **additional capitation** to fund extra support in the classroom or to enable the reduction of the staff to child ratio.



## How do I access AIM supports?

Applications for AIM remain open throughout the year. In the case of children with more complex disabilities, parents and pre-school Teachers are encouraged to apply early.

### **Universal Supports (Levels 1 – 3 of the Access and Inclusion Model)**

Early Years Teachers can apply for the new higher education programme, “Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years” or LINC, at [www.lincprogramme.ie](http://www.lincprogramme.ie).

National training programmes in relation to the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines, as well as in relation to disability and inclusion more generally, will be advertised on the websites of all City and County Childcare Committees [here](#). Pre-school Teachers and Teachers will be able to apply for places on these training programmes via their local City or County Childcare Committee.

### **Targeted Supports (Levels 4 – 7 of the Access and Inclusion Model)**

Advice and support from the Early Years Specialist Service can be accessed by phone (**01-511 7222**), e-mail ([EYPC@pobal.ie](mailto:EYPC@pobal.ie)) or via the AIM online application form through the Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP). This form only needs to be completed once to access supports across levels 4, 6 or 7. For information purposes, a copy of the form can be accessed [here](#).

To apply for specialised equipment, appliances or a grant towards minor alterations, pre-school Teachers, in partnership with parents or guardians, should complete the relevant part of the online application form on PIP. For information purposes, a copy of this part of the form can be accessed [here](#).

To apply for therapy services or additional capitation to fund extra support in the classroom, pre-school Teachers, in partnership with parents or guardians, should complete the online application form on PIP, including the Access and Inclusion Profile section of the form. It is estimated that only 1 to 1.5% of children in ECCE will require, and therefore be eligible for, the Level 7 additional capitation.

Finally, while the Access and Inclusion Model was introduced in June 2016, full implementation will take time as capacity is built across the sector.

## How can I find out more information?

For more detailed information on AIM, please refer to our dedicated webpages [For Parents](#), [For Service Teachers](#), [News](#), our [Frequently Asked Questions](#), [key documents](#) and our [resources](#) page.

Your local [City or County Childcare Committee](#) will also be able to provide further information and guidance.