



DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES

1 Preamble

School policies and internal procedures are being developed and implemented in Maynooth Educate Together National School in order to ensure compliance with statutory requirements; to facilitate continuous improvement of the school's operation; and to support teaching & learning as well as practical implementation of Educate Together ethos. The aim of this policy is to provide agreed principles for development, implementation and communication of policies.

2 Objectives

The objective of this policy is to introduce and uphold an efficient policy development process with participation of relevant stakeholders, and to clarify related responsibilities and internal procedures.

3 Scope

This policy applies to the Board of Management, staff and other parties involved in policy development.

4 Definitions

Policy - a document setting principles, rules, responsibilities etc. Policies in general are available to the wider school community however some can be restricted to the staff only (such as policies governing career breaks, staff absences and similar).

Internal procedure - a document which includes instructions for practical implementation of policies and as such is for internal use only.

Register of policies – an excel spreadsheet with an up-to-date list of approved policies, procedures and forms.

5 General Provisions

Each policy has an "owner" who leads its development/revision. All officers are expected to participate in policy formation. A working group can be established for the development of individual policies.

Guidelines developed by the Department of Education and Skills are followed where available. Guidance documents from the Patron and other relevant bodies will be used where available. Other schools' policies can also be consulted. If other schools' policies are used as source, the Policy Owner must ensure that all definitions, clauses etc. are relevant, suitable, practicable in METNS, and in compliance with the applicable guidelines and framework documents.

Teaching & learning needs to be the main focus in the policy development process.

Policies should be clear, comprehensive, practical and conflicts between practice and policies must be avoided.

Agreed templates will be used for policies and forms.

All policies must be adopted by the Board of Management and the Board's decision must be minuted.

A register of policies, procedures and forms will be kept in dropbox and the school office.

6 Policy Development

6.1 Planning

- 1) Policy Owner is assigned
- 2) Other stakeholders identified (PA, staff, third parties?) and appropriate levels of their involvement is agreed.
- 3) A working group for the development/revision of the policy is established.
- 4) BOM agrees due date for first draft and expected approval date.

6.2 Preparation of first draft

- 1) Policy Owner provides BOM and other stakeholders with framework documents, applicable guidelines etc. The working group agrees key principles for the policy, or where it is desirable the working group can prepare a first draft policy.
- 2) Policy Owner presents the first draft/key principles together with justification of the approach taken to the Board. This should be done at BOM meeting based on documentation provided in advance to the Board by the Policy Owner, unless agreed otherwise.
- 3) Agreed templates are used for drafting of policies, internal procedures and forms.

6.3 Preparation of agreed draft

- 1) Board members familiarize themselves with the draft, framework documents etc., and provide comments to the policy owner & BOM.
- 2) Policy owner reconciles comments in consultation with the other members of the working group. Comments received need to be discussed and consensus reached initially between the Policy Owner/working group and the relevant stakeholder. Material comments should always be discussed with the relevant BOM member and

never ignored. It is acknowledged that this phase can be time consuming however it is crucial that all opinions are considered and consensus regarding the content reached.

- 3) It is the Policy Owner's responsibility to produce after a consultation with the working group a clean new version of the policy and circulate it to the Board as "agreed draft".

6.4 Preparation of final draft and approval of policy

- 1) If there are no further material comments, the agreed draft is provided for consideration to other stakeholders (staff/PA) as agreed initially. A deadline is given to receive feedback.
- 2) The Policy Owner/working group reviews feedback and recommends to the Board how to deal with individual comments - incorporate, incorporate in some modified form, reject.
- 3) If some feedback is to be incorporated, the Policy Owner makes changes in the agreed draft and circulates the resulting "final draft" to the Board for consideration.
- 4) The Policy Owner drafts a response to stakeholders' feedback summarizing reasons where feedback was not incorporated. Board reviews and comments.
- 5) The final draft is considered by Board members and approved at Board meeting.
- 6) Agreed response to feedback received is provided to the relevant stakeholders.

6.5 Revision of Policy

The Board will identify annually areas for new policy development and policy review, and includes these into the Board's annual plan. The staff and parents will contribute to this process via their representatives. If additional needs are identified based on staff/PA feedback, parental complaint, new legislation/circulars etc., the annual plan will be updated.

The Policy Owner will initiate and lead the process and ensures the following:

- 1) Initial plan as specified in 6.1 above is agreed and working group established if deemed desirable by the Board
- 2) Review of compliance with policy - practices, records etc. is carried out
- 3) Review of external framework (DES, ET, INTO....) is carried out
- 4) Feedback from stakeholders is sought, considered and consolidated
- 5) Training needs (staff) and/or needs for communication are identified
- 6) A proposal how to reconcile practice and policy if discrepancies are identified (where practice needs to be brought in compliance with the policy and were the policy needs to be changed?)
- 7) Policy Owner/working group prepares a revised policy, presents/circulates to the BOM
- 8) BOM members to comment
- 9) Comments are reconciled and agreed draft as per section 6.3 above produced.
- 10) Stakeholders are consulted, final draft of revised policy as specified in 6.4 above is prepared.
- 11) Actions to be taken to address training & communication gaps

6.6 Publication, Distribution and Archiving

6.6.1 Publication:

- A signed hard copy is kept in the office
- An electronic version is placed in Dropbox
- An electronic version is made available on the school's web site in policy section

6.6.2 Distribution:

- Staff will be informed about the new/revised policy via the report to the staff or Principal/staff rep
- Parents/Guardians will be informed via the report to the school community and key policies will be notified by a letter
- Distribution of policies will be done electronically via dropbox/school web.

6.6.3 Archiving and removal of older versions

When a new/revised policy is approved, the file is named to include the date, and the school's Register of policies is updated.

Electronic files

The previous electronic version is moved to the folder with outdated policies. Only the current version is kept in the folder with current policies.

Hard copy

Previous version is removed from the file and destroyed, with the exception of Enrolment policy which is marked as outdated and the date when the policy was superseded by a revised policy is recorded on the outdated document.

7 Roles and Responsibility

Policy Owner: Chairperson

All Board members are responsible for implementation of this policy.

8 Success Criteria

- Actual "time to completion" does not exceed significantly the estimated time
- All stakeholders are involved in policy development/review process
- The staff and parents/guardians are satisfied that they participate in the process
- Policies are developed, managed and reviewed in a straightforward, consistent and efficient manner.

9 Related documents

9.1 External

N/A

9.2 METNS

1. Policy template
2. Form template
3. Register of policies

10 Review and Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly.

Approved by the Board of Management:

Date: 13 April 2011

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Volley".