

Appendix D - Equality and Human Rights Screening Template

PART 1 - POLICY INFORMATION

Note: This proposal is at publication stage and the information contained is based on information gathered to date. The responses to the pre-publication consultation will be analysed and this document reviewed in light of responses received.

Policy Title

Note: This option is to discontinue Knocknagor Primary School 31 August 2028 or as soon as possible thereafter.

The proposal complies with the following policies and guidance:

- *Department of Education Area Planning Guidance 2022-2027;*
- *'Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools' (Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP) 2009;*
- *Every School a Good School (ESAGS) (2009);*
- *'Providing Pathways' 2017-20 Strategic Area Plan for School Provision 2017-20;*
- *Planning for Sustainable Provision: Strategic Area Plan 2022-27 Primary and Post-Primary Schools 29 June 2022;*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1990);*
- *Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998);*
- *Rural Needs Act (2016); and*
- *The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.*

1.1. Description of policy or decision

Aim of policy

The aim of the policy is to improve educational sustainability in the area. The policy is being carried out in line with the above policies and guidance, in particular, the terms of reference for area planning, *Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools* and *Every School a Good School*. The outcome is to ensure:

- every learner fulfils his or her full potential at each stage of development;
- efficient and effective provision of education;
- improved educational outcomes for pupils;
- provision of a broad and balanced curriculum;
- a network of sustainable schools within reasonable traveling distances;
- an enhanced quality of provision and the raising of standards; and
- a reduction in duplication of provision.

One impact of this proposal is to advance the aspirations, aims and objectives of the SSP, "*It is important that children in rural communities have access to a quality education in cost effective provision.*" (p27)

1.2. Who are the main stakeholders impacted? (Internal and external as well as actual and potential)

The main stakeholders are as follows.

- The Clogher Diocese.
- The St Michael's Educational Trust.

- Staff, Board of Governors, parents, pupils and future pupils.
- Schools in the area.
- CCMS.
- The Education Authority.
- The Department of Education.

1.3. Is the policy likely to impact people living in rural areas?

Yes	x
No	

If yes, please complete the rural sections of the template

1.4. Other policies or decisions with a bearing on this policy or decision?

- Review of SEN and Inclusion (2012).¹
- EA Transport Policy.²
- Terms and Conditions of Employment (Staff).³

PART 2 – EVIDENCE AND MITIGATION

2.1. What information did you use to inform this screening? E.g. census data, Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), consultation reports, service level data?

- Census data. DE Statistics in relation to gender, religion, and ethnic origin are available from DE Statistics. The source is - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/school-enrolments>
- Consultation with Knocknagor PS BoG prior to pre-publication consultation.
- Information relating to Section 75 from Department of Education in relation to: gender; religion; and ethnic origin. They are available from the DE website statistic section. <https://education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/school-enrolments>

2.2. Quantitative Data

What is the profile of the people that are impacted by this policy or decision?

Please provide a statistic breakdown of the people impacted by this policy or decision. Note, if the policy or decision impacts both staff and service users, please provide data on both.

Section 75 Group	Make up of affected groups? <i>Note: Census Data recorded below has 32 pupils. Since Census data completed, an additional pupil has joined the school.</i>
Age	Children primarily aged 4-11 and parents of these children. The most recent available census (2025/26) recorded 46 pupils aged 4-11. Staff – Information on the age profile of staff is not available at school level.
Dependents	Children primarily aged 4-11 and parents/carers of these 46 children. Staff – Information on the dependents of staff is not available at school level.
Disability	The most recent available census (2025/26) recorded that seven pupils have a statement of educational needs.

¹ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/review-sen-and-inclusion-ministerial-presentation-education-committee>

² <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/home-to-school-transport>

³ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/overview-teachers-terms-and-conditions>

	Staff – Information on staff disabilities is not available at school level.
Religious Belief	The most recent available census (2024/25) recorded fewer than five pupils from a Protestant background. The number of pupils recorded from a Protestant background has been suppressed by DE (DE statistics) to prevent the disclosure of information about identifiable individuals. The majority of the pupils are from a Catholic background. Staff – Information on the religious beliefs of staff members is not available at school level.
Gender	The most recent available census (2025/26) recorded 25 pupils as female and 21 pupils as male. This figure does not include reception children.
Marital Status	There is no data held on the marital status of the parents. Staff – Information on the marital status of staff is not available at school level.
Political Opinion	There is no data available on the political opinion of those affected by this proposal.
Ethnicity	The most recent available census (2025/26) recorded the number of pupils classified as white (excluding members of the travelling community) as 45 pupils (including reception pupils). The number of pupils classified as “other” is one.
Sexual Orientation	There is no information available on the sexual orientation of those affected by this proposal.
Rural Impacts	All 46 pupils (Year 1-7) are attending a school which serves a rural area. The staff are working in a school which serves a rural area.

2.3. Qualitative Data

What are the needs and experiences of the groups that are impacted by this policy or decision?

Are there different needs and experiences for any of the equality groups and what equality issues emerge from this?

The SSP specifies a minimum of four teachers in a school to recognise the needs of the pupils and demands on teachers. There is no indication that the pattern of low enrolment at Knocknagor PS will change in the future. The discontinuance of provision at Knocknagor PS will ensure pupils benefit educationally because they are more likely to:

- be taught in a class with fewer year groups in one classroom;
- have increased peer interaction;
- participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; and
- benefit from a wider range of specialist teachers.

If the school were to close all the pupils attending the school at the time of closure would transfer to another school. The details of available provision are included in the consultation documentation.

A sustainable school can allow for efficient use of educational resources including the deployment of teaching and support staff. It can also provide increased opportunities for the professional development of all staff as a larger staffing complement allows for increased interaction with peers and can facilitate more opportunities for training/development.

Section 75 Group	What are the needs and experiences of the groups as they relate to the policy or decision?
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Age	The pupils in the school are all 11 years old and under. Any change to provision will impact on them to a degree either negatively or positively as they would have to change school. Pupils may experience both positive and negative impacts. The educational benefits of the proposal are noted in the consultation document as are the steps that would be taken to ensure a smooth transition for pupils if the proposal was approved.
Dependents	The proposal to close the school will impact primarily on those with dependents. If the proposal is approved parents/guardians of pupils in the school will be required to identify alternative schools for their dependents. This proposal means that parents/guardians have opportunities for their children to attend a school with fewer sustainability challenges. Information is not available regarding staff with dependents.
Disability	Information on staff regarding disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is not available. There is no evidence there would be any negative impact from this proposal on pupils or staff regarding disability. Pupils with a disability may need to travel further to school, given the proposal to close the school. The entitlement to additional support and reasonable adjustments based on the pupils' educational needs will not change. This proposal will ensure pupils have opportunities to be educated in a school with fewer sustainability challenges. Transport assistance may be provided for pupils with a statement of special educational needs if: a special transport need has been identified during their statutory assessment process; and they are attending their nearest, suitable grant-aided school or provision. Examples of a special transport need would include where a pupil's mobility is impaired and their ability to walk longer distances is restricted, or they require the use of a wheelchair, or a pupil has a medical condition/severe learning difficulty which means they require transport assistance to facilitate their attendance at school. "Nearest, suitable" means the closest school/provision to your home that the Education Authority believes is suitable for your child. Where parents choose to enrol their child somewhere further away, this could render their child ineligible for transport assistance. The DE Policy Team has previously confirmed <i>"Attendance at a sustainable school underpins the fundamental principles of the special educational needs (SEN) Code of Practice which focuses on the continuum of needs and a continuum of provision which may be made in a variety of forms. Children with SEN require the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education, including the Northern Ireland Curriculum."</i>
Religious Belief	If the proposal to close the CCMS school in Knocknagor is approved, pupils will be supported to access an alternative CCMS school if they choose to. If pupils who are Catholic attend a school from another sector, it will be for the school to determine the support provided for the pupils. In addition, the pre-publication consultation documentation highlights Knocknagor PS is in a shared education partnership with its neighbouring controlled school, Queen Elizabeth 2 PS. Pupils engage in shared curricular/extra-curricular activities. Should the proposal for closure of the school be approved, it will impact upon the current shared education partnership.

	CCMS would work with neighbouring schools to support the transition of pupils who would be continuing primary education. Following this, CCMS and EA officers would support any receiving schools to develop existing or new shared education partnerships within the local area.
Gender	There is no evidence there would be any negative impact from this proposal on pupils or staff according to their gender. The positive impact for pupils, regardless of their gender, is included in the consultation documents and throughout this screening document.
Marital Status	Information on the marital status of staff is not available. It is not anticipated there would be any negative impact from this proposal depending on the marital status of the parent/guardian. The positive impact for pupils, regardless of the parents' marital status, is included in the consultation documents and throughout this screening document.
Political Opinion	There is no evidence there would be any negative impact on people according to their political opinion. The positive impacts, regardless of political opinion, are detailed in the pre-publication consultation document and throughout this screening document.
Ethnicity	There is no evidence there would be any negative impact on people according to their ethnicity. The positive impacts, regardless of ethnicity, are detailed in the Case for Change document and throughout this screening document.
Sexual Orientation	The proposal will not have an impact on individuals based on their sexual orientation.

What are the social and economic impacts of the policy of people living in rural areas?

Please consider positive and negative impacts around issues such as access to education or youth provision, transport, broadband accessibility and employment impacts

Rural Impacts	Please see Rural Needs Impact Assessment.
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2.4. Policy / Decision changes

Based on the equality issues that have been identified, what changes (mitigation) can you make to the policy in order to better promote equality of opportunity?

In developing the policy or decision, what changes did you make, or do you intend to make to address any equality issues that you identified?

Currently there are a number of schools in Northern Ireland that do not meet the SSP. The Sustainable Schools Policy aims to create a network of schools located in the right places to meet demand.

The intention of this proposal is to advance the aspirations, aims and objectives of the SSP: *"It is important that children in rural communities have access to a quality education in cost effective provision."*⁴ The proposal meets this requirement, and it benefits people in each of the equality groups.

⁴ Schools for the Future – A Policy for Sustainable Schools (DENI 2009) p27.

In relation to additional resources, this will be a matter for any receiving schools dependent on the number of additional pupils that move to that school, any special needs of the pupils, and in line with how they make resourcing decisions generally. Schools can address an increase in their numbers, within the approved admissions/enrolment number for a school.

Communication from the Board of Governors indicated their concerns about a proposal progressing, and this included a number of concerns relating to the different equality groups.

Age

- The negative impact of this proposal on young people, particularly those with additional needs - including grief, trauma, or attachment issues.

CCMS comment: Support would be provided for those with additional needs, if the proposal progressed and was approved.

Religious Belief

- The potential loss of access to Catholic education for some families.
- It has the potential to impact local links to sacraments, parish life and the faith-based community.
- Some families may move to non-Catholic education.
- Alternative schools are geographically inaccessible for the Catholic population.

CCMS comment: There are already a number of Catholic pupils and those that do not identify as Protestant within one local controlled school, Irvinestown PS. There are also nearby Catholic primary schools with available space for pupils. If the proposal proceeds, CCMS will engage with receiving schools to explore transitional support for affected families and ensure continued access for school provision.

Marital Status and Dependents

- There are people with a range of additional needs this will impact.
- It will impact single parent families or those pupils with kinship carers and grandparents providing travel to and from school.
- It reduces flexibility for those reliant on wider support.

CCMS comment: It is understood this has the potential to impact networks including access and transport to school provision. This is mitigated by transport assistance provided by the Education Authority for those living further than two miles from their nearest suitable school.

Disability

- Pupils with a statement of educational needs and pupils with additional needs will be negatively impacted by this proposal.
- The school is recognised as being exemplary in providing support for those with special educational needs and additional needs.
- The removal of the school will negatively impact those with special needs and additional needs.

CCMS comment: Knocknagor PS and alternative schools cater for pupils with different needs, including those with a disability, those with Special Educational Needs and with additional needs. Alternative schools have expertise in addressing the needs of all pupils and this would not change if the proposal progressed. CCMS and the Education Authority would support the schools, as appropriate, for any transition.

Good Relations

- The shared education partnership provides opportunities and experiences for pupils and staff.
- The partnership has brought together people from all backgrounds and faiths.

CCMS Comment: If this proposal proceeds, CCMS and EA would work with alternative schools to support shared education partnerships. This is detailed in the pre-publication consultation document.

Based on the rural impacts that you have identified, what changes (mitigation) can you make to the policy?

Please see the Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

PART 3 – GOOD RELATIONS

3.1. Are there any changes to the policy or decision that you would make to better promote good relations?

GROUP	Impact on Good Relations	Policy / Decision Changes
Religion	N/A	
Ethnicity	N/A	
Political Opinion	N/A	

PART 4 – SEC 75 EQUALITY SCREENING DECISION

This section is only relevant to the Section 75 Equality Duties

4.1. How would you categorise the impacts of the policy or decision?

Please refer to guidance notes on categorising impacts

Please select:

Major Impact	
Minor Impact	X
No Impact	

4.2. Does the policy or decision require a full Equality Impact Assessment?

Please select:

Yes	
No	X

Please provide reasons for your decision

This proposal improves the educational opportunities for the pupils in the area. The benefits of this proposal are detailed in the pre-publication consultation document and in this screening document.

One minor impact is that pupils with a disability may need to travel further to a school, given the proposal to close the school. The entitlement to additional support and reasonable adjustments based on the pupils' educational needs will not change. This proposal will ensure pupils with a disability have opportunities to be educated in a school with fewer sustainability challenges.

The provision of an estate of sustainable schools improves the provision across Northern Ireland. If the proposal is approved CCMS and the school representatives will work closely with the Education Authority, and other agencies as required to meet their needs of transferring pupils.

PART 5 – DISABILITY DUTIES

5.1. Does the policy or decision encourage the participation of disabled people in public life? Or is there anything you can do within the policy or decision to encourage participation of disabled people in public life?

<i>How does the policy encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?</i>	<i>Is there anything further you can do to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?</i>
Where pupils have a disability, their ability to attend a school with fewer sustainability challenges may have a number of pastoral and educational benefits for them. They will be exposed to larger number of peers with a wider range of needs, with the certainty a sustainable school admissions/ enrolment number provides. This exposure to a wider range of peers could encourage participation in public life.	Expanded pupil opportunity in a school with fewer sustainability challenges could, over time, encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

5.2. Does the policy or decision promote positive attitudes towards disabled people? Or is there anything you can do within the policy or decision to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

<i>How does the policy promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>	<i>Is there anything further you can do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>
Where there are disabled pupils, they will be exposed to a larger number of peers with wider range of needs, with the certainty a sustainable school admissions/ enrolment number provides. Pupils, whether they have a disability or not, will benefit from pupils with a disability being in their school. This proposal facilitates a greater opportunity for pupils to attend a school with less sustainability challenges.	Not through this proposal.

PART 6 – HUMAN RIGHTS

6.1. Are Human Rights Relevant?

Article		Relevant Yes/No
Article 2:	Right to Life	No
Article 3:	Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	No
Article 4:	Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced compulsory labour.	No
Article 5:	Right to liberty and security of person.	No
Article 6:	Right to a fair & public trial in a reasonable time	No
Article 7:	Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law	No

Article 8:	Right to respect for private & family life, home & correspondence.	No
Article 9:	Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion.	No
Article 10:	Right to freedom of expression.	No
Article 11:	Right to freedom of assembly & association	No
Article 12:	Right to marry & found a family.	No
Article 14:	Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights	No
Protocol 1, Article 1	Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property	No
Protocol 1, Article 2	Right of access to education	Yes

If you answered 'no' to all human rights considerations, please go to section 7 – monitoring

6.2. If you have answered yes to any of the Articles, does the policy or decision have a potential positive impact or does it potentially interfere with anyone's Human Rights?

Article number	Positive impact or potential interference?	How?	Any legal issues arise?
Protocol 1, Article 2	Positive impact.	Increased access to more sustainable education in the area, with increased numbers in an alternative suitable school and transport assistance for those that are eligible.	No.

PART 7 – MONITORING

7.1. What data will you collect to monitor the impact of the policy in terms of equality of opportunity, disability duties or human rights compliance?

Section 75	Disability Duties	Human Rights
One year after the implementation, CCMS will write to the Board of Governors of receiving schools and request information as to whether there was any unforeseen impact in relation to the protected categories. If there is an unforeseen impact, this information will	One year after the implementation, CCMS will write to the Board of Governors of receiving schools and request information as to whether there was any unforeseen impact in relation to Disability Duties. If there is an unforeseen impact, this information will be	One year after the implementation, CCMS will write to the Board of Governors of receiving schools and request information as to whether there was any unforeseen impact in relation to Human Rights. If there is an unforeseen impact, this information will be utilised to improve future projects.

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