



COOK ISLANDS

Ministry of Education

Maraurau o te Pae Api'i

Policy ID No: EAP 02 002

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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REVISION RECORD

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2011	2	
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1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy is to ensure that the education system is inclusive, equitable, fair and just, and that the curriculum and programmes are accessible by all learners of the Cook Islands. It is a framework to inform practice for all those working with learners who require additional support or extension.

Inclusive Education (IE) is about changing the system to meet the needs of all – to strengthen the capacity of the Cook Islands education system to reach out to all learners.

“Education is not simply about making schools available for those who are already able to access them. It is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion.”

<http://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education/>

2. PURPOSE

In developing and implementing this policy the Ministry of Education (MoE) is committed to meeting the aims of:

- (i) 'Learning for Life' – Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008 – 2023.
Learning and Teaching. Focus: Equitable access to quality learning and the experience of success through a range of programmes that meet individual needs and celebrate individual talents.
Learning and the Community. Focus: A high level of community involvement in determining quality educational outcomes
- (ii) 'Te Kaveinga Nui' – National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 – 2020
Goal 7 – Improve health and promote healthy lifestyles
Goal 8 – Inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities.
Goal 9 – Accelerate gender equality, empower all women and girls and advance the youth, the elderly and the disabled.
Goal 15 – Ensure a sustainable population, engaged in development for Cook Islanders by Cook Islanders.
- (iii) Cook Islands Administration Guidelines – Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2002. Section One – Curriculum and Delivery.
3 - Barriers to Student Achievement
4 - Special Needs Students
- (iv) Equity, Access and Participation EAP 01 001
- (v) Fitness of Purpose Policy GMP 02 003
Student Progression Policy EAP 03 004
Assistive Technologies Policy EAP 03 006

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all early childhood education (ECE) centres, schools and tertiary institutions in the Cook Islands that are bound by the requirements of the Education Act (2012).

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES

Objectives

- Promote an inclusive society by providing advice, expertise and support for learners, families and teaching staff.
- Provide an inclusive approach to disability, focusing on the relationship between the person and environment.
- Ensure that all learners have equitable access to high quality learning programmes to meet their lifelong individual and collective needs
- Support and promote IE with a shared understanding of the respective areas for all agencies involved including clearly defined responsibilities for monitoring learner's progress and wellbeing.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Cook Islands education system through the development of IE policies specific to each education providers' needs

Outcomes

- Learners' diverse needs are identified in a timely way and met within the general classroom setting or learning environment, to enable all learners' to be included in all aspects of classroom programmes.
- Professional development is provided to promote knowledge of pedagogy for the diverse needs of learners, leaders, teachers and teacher aides.
- Education leaders, teachers and teacher aides are well informed about their responsibilities and respond effectively to all learners' needs.
- ECEs, schools and tertiary institutions are supported by the MoE, MoH, MoIA and other key agencies to provide seamless, inclusive education pathways for all learners.
- Learning environments are safe, accessible and suitably adapted.

5. POLICY DETAIL

5.1. Support for the Learner

- The roles and responsibilities of teacher aides may vary according to the context and the identified needs of learners. Their primary function is to assist the child by supporting the teacher. A supervising classroom teacher must be present at all times.
- IEPs will be facilitated by the teacher, who has sole responsibility for the class. Teachers and teacher aides will work collaboratively to support the learner.
- School wide IE policies will be overseen by school principal/head of learning, and include responsibility for the learner and appropriate implementation of the role of the teacher aide.

5.1.1. Early Identification

- Concerns about a learner's development are to be shared with principal/head of learning in a timely manner and discussed with parents/ caregivers.
- Schools/learning institutions are to provide access to current achievement data and any other relevant background information to enable a fair assessment be conducted by the Adviser/s. Referrals will be made as and when appropriate, in consultation with the Adviser/s and parents/caregivers of the learner.

5.2. Policies and Procedures

- With the support of relevant Ministry staff, each school or institution develops its own IE policies and procedures, tailored to its own context and aligned with this overarching policy.
- These will include procedures for applying for and managing assistive technologies (AT), as per EAP 03 006 Assistive Technologies.

5.3. Liaison and Communication

- Lines of communication about individuals and groups of learners are formally negotiated and documented within and between all parties responsible for the implementation of IE including principals/heads of learning, teachers, teacher aides, parents/caregivers, IE Adviser/s.

5.4. Resources

- The Adviser/s will gather and maintain a selection of key publications, resources and tools at the MoE.
- These may be borrowed or copied by schools and learning institutions as appropriate.
- A list of available resources and links to useful digital resources and tools are included on the MoE website.

6. RISK and MITIGATION

The table below lists examples of possible consequences, along with mitigating actions, that relate to this policy not being adhered to:

Issue/Risk - examples	Mitigation - examples
Learners are left out, left behind, marginalised or neglected, because of inequitable access to education.	Education leaders are held accountable for positive outcomes for all learners. They are required to compile a register, gather evidence of IEPs (Individual Education Plan) and report to the MoE Adviser/s.
Suitable teacher aides are not available when and where needed.	Communities are well informed about the ongoing need for teacher aides, about the work they do and training pathways for them. Their role is publicly valued and affirmed.
Teachers and others are inadequately	Education leaders ensure that teachers

prepared for learners with particular needs, fail to take responsibility for them, and/ or engage in harmful practices contrary to the principles of IE.	and all those in contact with learners with special needs have the necessary knowledge and skills to support inclusion.
Ability to meet training needs of teacher aides.	HRM Division and IE advisors continue to source programmes and support teacher aides through the training.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party/Parties	Roles and Responsibilities
Teacher aides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with learners under the supervision of teachers, to support teaching and learning. Contributing to IEP processes and working with the teacher to implement planned actions and strategies. Participating in professional development as required and implementing recommended strategies and approaches under the guidance of the teacher.
MoE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring a supply of trained or in-training teacher aides where and when required. Ensuring suitable alternative provision for the education of students who are not able to be included continuously in mainstream programmes. Working collaboratively under the MOU with MoH and MoIA to meet diverse needs, including access to specialists when available. Informing the community of new developments and initiatives in the education of young children and students with special learning needs.
CIIC (Cook Islands Investment Corporation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the MoE, ensuring ready access to buildings, classrooms, toilets and showers/ washing facilities.
Planning and Development Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and evaluating IE implementation by education leaders and providers, through education reviews.
Inclusive Education Adviser/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guiding principals/heads of learning in the development and implementation of their IE policies and procedures. Providing advisory services to education leaders to enhance the effectiveness of IE programmes and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategies for individuals and groups. • Sourcing external assistance in the form of expertise, professional development or resources as required to meet identified needs. • Liaising with other agencies and stakeholders to assist schools and tertiary education institutions to provide appropriate services to learners with special needs. • Taking a lead in the development of IE policy review and strategy. • Checking that ECE centres, schools and other providers have a current register of learners who require additional support to achieve and succeed. • Making resources available including current publications and materials to support implementation of IE policies and procedure • Facilitating the training of teacher aides in collaboration with HRM Division • Ensuring that schools are providing needs-based professional development in IE best practice. • To inform principals/heads of learning when appropriate medical specialists are available, and in-conjunction with families make decisions around medical referrals. May act as a support person for families.
<p>School Principals, Tertiary Heads of Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the IE policies and procedures developed for their school or institution. • Having oversight of IE provisions, liaising directly with and reporting to Advisers (OR formally delegating this responsibility to a suitable staff member). • Enrolling all students. • Leading and modelling expected practices and differentiated pedagogies in relation to learners with special needs. • Ensuring no learner is discriminated against in any way. • Ensuring that all learners have a respectful attitude and interact in supportive, positive ways. • Informing the community and the MoE about programmes in place, their outcomes, and the achievement of learners with special needs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a register of learners with identified needs, including strategies used to address these needs and progress over time. • With the consent of parents/ caregivers, referring learners to the IE Adviser/s, with details of actions already taken. • Principals to inform parents when appropriate medical specialists are available and in-conjunction with advisors and families make decisions around medical referrals. May act as a support person for families. • Promoting students with special needs through the education system with their peers as per the Student Progression Policy EAP 03 004 • Providing relevant professional development to support teachers' capability in inclusive education practice
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for all learners in their classroom • Ensuring that students with identified learning needs are included in their classroom within a culture of acceptance and understanding where they experience success. • Complete and return Inclusive Education Referral to IE Adviser/s in collaboration with principal/head of learning • Facilitating, implementing and regularly reviewing IEP's with the input of parents, caregivers, teacher aides, students and other key personnel. • Maintaining records of identification procedures, assessments and results. • Reporting this information to the principal/head of learning and Adviser/s (and to parents/ caregivers and students when appropriate.) • Regularly evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of programmes for students with identified learning needs. • Reporting to the principal/head of learning where special conditions or resources are necessary. • Fostering the active participation of parents and caregivers as partners in the students' learning. • Collaborating closely with teacher aides

	in weekly planning.
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8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Monitoring is to keep track of the enactment of expectations outlined in this policy. It is a formal process, which involves checking whether the policy is referred and adhered to by education providers.

Responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and review rests primarily with education leaders or a delegated person in each institution with oversight over IE. Review officers will ask for evidence of monitoring, evaluation and review of IE strategies and programmes during education reviews.

Evaluation of the policy is to provide feedback on the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy, with a review to include implementing any required changes to strengthen the policy.

This will include evaluation of the following indicators:

- Development and implementation of IE policies and procedures by individual education institutions. These will include systematic, documented processes for monitoring implementation, maintaining registers of students with diverse and special needs, conducting regular IEPs, evaluating learning outcomes against goals, and planning for improvement.
- Professional development that has been provided for leaders, teachers and teacher aides has been both timely and appropriate.

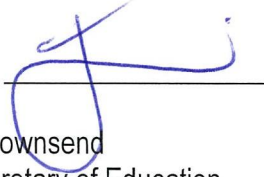
The Learning & Teaching Division will monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of this policy and report as required. This policy will be reviewed 1 year from the date of implementation and biennially thereafter.

9. DEFINITIONS and ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
ECE	Early Childhood Education
CIIC	Cook Islands Investment Corporation
IE	Inclusive Education means that all learners attend and are welcomed by schools and providers in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school
IEP	Individual Education Plan
AT	Assistive Technologies
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
HRM	Human Resource Management Division
Pedagogy	The method and practice of teaching

10. APPENDICES

- Inclusive Education Referral form
- MOU with MoH and MoIA (attached)



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G Townsend', written over a horizontal line.

G Townsend
Secretary of Education

2-10-17

Date