



School policy of Ísafjarðarbær

By law each municipality is responsible for forming and implementing school policy in their area. The policy of each municipality is based on the national curriculum published by the Ministry of Culture and Education, but each municipality has considerable autonomy in forming school policy and organising schoolwork in their districts. On the 14th of September 2010 the Ísafjarðarbær municipality committee on education decided to revise its policy on both kindergartens and grade schools with the aim of having a unified policy and organization on both levels of education within its authority.

The autumn months of 2010 were used to look at school's reports, taking a closer look at exam results and visiting schools. Parents and staff took part in electronic surveys with regard to their attitudes towards the schools and public meetings were held, children and adults alike attended those meetings.

School policy needs to be in tune with both the legal framework and the national curriculum, but it also needs to address the needs and expectations of both children and adults. Ísafjarðarbær's new school policy aims to fulfil the expectations the residents of the municipality have towards their schools, and the core values expressed in the public meetings: respect, responsibility, ambition and joy.

An introduction of our school policy

Schools are important part of each community, they have an important role to play in their student's development and also to prepare students to take part in ever changing democratic society. They need to fulfil this role in close cooperation with student's parents.

School policy needs to be clear and in step with the community so that the students are ready to take the next step forward when they leave school. The core values of Ísafjarðarbær's school policy are: respect, responsibility, ambition and joy. By respect we mean that everyone has the right to feel well at school and have an opportunity to express themselves as individuals doing work that is appropriate to them. Each person has the responsibility to treat their fellow students, members of staff and in fact everyone associated with their school with respect.

Each person has to conduct themselves in a responsible manner, in their actions and their schoolwork, in accordance with their level of cognitive and personal development.

Ambition and schoolwork go hand in hand and it is our policy that we use the best methods available to us. Quality in schools is difficult to measure but we do use the national examinations as a benchmark, we aim to be above the national average when our grade schoolers are examined.

Joy should be a permanent feature of our school community, where people enjoy their work ambition and responsibility are easy to achieve.

We need to ensure every child enjoys being with us and taking advantage of the educational opportunities we provide. Education about the diversity of human life and different lifestyle choices should be an integral part of schoolwork on all levels.

Teaching methods

It is our goal that all work in our schools is both ambitious and progressive. We need to utilize the excellent access we have both to the nature that surrounds us and the institutions and businesses in our community. We need to take into account the different needs of each pupil as much as possible, and the school environment needs to be as supportive and inspiring as possible. The evaluation of our schools needs to be multi layered, valid, dependable and must include all features of our schools.

In our schools:

- We use diverse teaching methods and emphasize a variety of studies.
- We have clear and measurable objectives.
- We have the flexibility to address current issues in our classrooms.
- We promote exercise and healthy lifestyle choices.
- We emphasise cooperation between different classes and people working together in a broad sense.
- We take advantage of the environment as much as possible.
- Our students have the opportunity to take part in projects that inspire them to think creatively and out of the box.

Environment and organization

We strive to have a spot available for every child older than 18 months in one of our kindergartens. We emphasize continuity in every child's day at school. Working conditions for staff and pupils must be good. We aim to have good access to library services. We try to instil respect in our pupils for their surroundings so they may help keep their environment tidy.

In our schools:

- We emphasise safety in work and play
- The school grounds inspire our pupils to play
- We try to enhance pupil respect for their environment
- We emphasise protecting the environment and sustainable development

Health and exercise

It is very important to begin educating pupils about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle right from the beginning and schools need to emphasize that in everything they do. It is very important that every student has access to organized physical activities every day. Healthy nourishment is very important.

In our schools:

- We organize each day with the need of our students for physical activity in mind
- We follow the surgeon general's guidelines on nourishment for young people.
- Outdoor activities are an important part of schooling.
- We have a proactive policy on drugs and alcohol
- We do not tolerate the use of alcohol, tobacco or other recreational drugs

Respect and democracy

We strive to foster mutual respect between staff, pupils and parents. We feel it is important to support each individual to express their opinions and feelings. It is our policy that an emphasis should be placed on teaching each person to take responsibility on his or her actions, to make use of the educational opportunities presented to them and to use the different forms of assistance offered to them. We also like to create opportunities for our students to have an influence on their school environment. Our schools have procedures in place to deal with bullying, trauma and other unforeseen incidents.

In our schools:

- We work systematically on pupil self-respect and responsible behaviour.
- We do not tolerate bullying
- There is an emphasis on tolerance and individuality
- There is an emphasis on student well being
- We strive for a positive and joyful school environment
- There is an emphasis on self-discipline and punctuality

Co-operation amongst schools and other institutions

The schools within the Ísafjarðarbær district are independent but we feel it's important that they cooperate with each other and other institutions that influence schoolwork. Participation in art, sports and other organized activities is a very important part of children's lives and cooperation between schools and the providers of these activities, both the institutions and their

management is imperative. A good continuity between levels of education is crucial, schools on different levels must cooperate with each other.

In our schools:

- We communicate regularly with parents
- We have a consistency of school holidays within our districts
- We try to improve our students' ability of working together
- We have good cooperation between classes and years

Professionalism and professional development

Good staff is the foundation of good schools. Good management paves the way for respectable, good and disciplined schools, for the benefit of pupils and staff alike. We strive for staffing our schools with qualified people. The modern school environment is ever evolving, staff members must have the opportunity to further their education and honing their skills. In this respect we must take advantage of the opportunities presented to us by the new emerging information technologies. We also place an emphasis on ambition on the behalf of our staff and that they enjoy their work.

In our schools:

- We promote professionalism
- We use varied methods to measure the quality of schoolwork
- We measure job satisfaction regularly
- We use the results of school and job satisfaction measurements to improve our schools.
- We use staff resources in the most efficient way
- We offer staff members the opportunity to further their skills and education

In our school policy we outline the main objectives but each institution must set their own goals for each school year. Each institution must explicitly and measurably state their goals and use an evaluation plan. The goals for each institution must be submitted to the Ísafjarðarbær municipality committee on education for approval. Each spring the schools must submit a progress report to the committee, since the committee is ultimately responsible for school policy. Following a report from the Ísafjarðarbær division of education and leisure the school policy itself must be revised yearly.