



The Yellow Flag Programme

Yellow Flag

ni hao
namaste

bonjour

namaskara

guten tag

konnichiwa

assalamualaikum

Aloha

salut

Hello

hola

o

sat sri akaal

bon jour

allo

cia

Promoting
Inclusion &
Celebrating
Diversity in
Irish Schools



The Yellow Flag Programme is a progressive equality and diversity initiative for primary and secondary schools in Ireland which promotes and supports an environment for interculturalism. Started in 2008 with four schools, The Ireland Funds *Promising Ireland* Campaign has provided funding to expand the programme.

“What I liked about the Yellow Flag was that we got the chance to express our feelings and talk about where we come from. I loved the Intercultural Day. I want to have something like that again this year. I liked all the national costumes. They were beautiful.” — *Ogheosa*

“The Yellow Flag is important to me because it tells me not to be racist and it also tells me that even if someone is not from the same country as you, you can still be friends. The people from different countries can tell us all about their country and what they eat. I find that very interesting.” — *Elma*

“The Yellow Flag is important to me because without it racism would spread around like a virus. So thank you to all our teachers for making the Yellow Flag so special to me.” — *Fahad*

As the face of Ireland has changed

over the last few years, many teachers and schools have felt adrift in addressing how to make children from other cultures and countries feel welcome and included. Often, schools have expressed a desire for more training in how to promote not just tolerance but celebration of this cultural diversity. The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) created the Yellow Flag Programme out of its own past experience with prejudice and exclusion in Irish society. As an indigenous minority group present in Ireland for centuries, many Travellers have been subject to segregation and discrimination within Ireland's school system. 'As Ireland became more diverse, there was an awareness that some of the immigrants arriving in Ireland may be experiencing some of the same challenges of the Traveller community. And this is where the idea for the Yellow Flag programme was born. And this is where the idea for the Yellow Flag programme was born.

The Yellow Flag programme provides a proven method of 8 steps that schools adopt and implement in all aspects of school life. It does not simply teach children about multiculturalism, it also trains teachers and staff how to engage with parents and local community groups to ensure that the programme becomes an action plan in the life of the school. At the end of the year-long programme, the school is awarded a yellow flag which is flown above the school signifying their achievement and completion of the programme.

"Today's Ireland is much more diverse and we need to encourage the children of Ireland to be open-minded people who can grow up to work in a global community," says Paula Madden, Coordinator of the Yellow Flag Programme. "While we want to ensure that racism doesn't occur, we also want to teach schools how to respond to it when it does. Children should feel affirmed and safe in their schools. Our vision is to see a Yellow Flag flying at every school in Ireland so that parents and teachers and children know that difference and diversity is a positive thing."



Paula Madden, Coordinator of the Yellow Flag Programme

"Thanks to The Ireland Funds grant we have been able to impact over a thousand children."





The aims of the Yellow Flag Programme are to:

- Provide practical assistance and support to schools in intercultural education initiatives
- Improve the whole-school environment for all: students, staff and parents
- Promote diversity in the school and wider community
- Involve the local community, particularly, local community groups
- Gain local publicity and prestige for schools and students

This is done with the following 8 steps:

1. Intercultural and Anti-Racism Training for Staff and Management
2. Going Beyond the School Walls: Engaging with the Community
3. Creating a Diversity Committee
4. Intercultural Review
5. Action Plan for a Diverse School
6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Information Dissemination
7. Curriculum work
8. Diversity Code and Anti-Racism Policy

“We don’t just read about other cultures in a book. We get to talk to people about their experiences; we get to try food from different places. Once, we went to a Sikh temple where we took off our shoes and learned about another religion. Now we understand things better. It’s not strange, it’s just different.”—
Students from the Gaelscoil Riabhach School in Co Galway participating in the Yellow Flag Programme



The programme has shown remarkable results in pilot schools. Incidents of bullying have decreased and children from other countries have gone from feeling shy about explaining their backgrounds to proudly sharing aspects of their culture in the classroom. Residents of all cultures are looking at each other differently as community celebrations of food, song, and fashion have taken place beyond the schools, thanks to Yellow Flag.

“The Ireland Funds grant allowed us to take on four more schools by allowing us to say to local Government that we could match their funding with The Ireland Fund grant,” explained Paula. “Thanks to The Ireland Funds grant we have been able to impact over a thousand children.”