

Guidelines For EOTC Policy Developers

Charter Writing

As an integral part of all curriculum areas, EOTC has a place within every school and centre's charter. EOTC can help meet both National Education Guidelines requirements and the specific goals and objectives set out for chartered early childhood centres in A *Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices* (supplement to the *Education Gazette*, 14 December 1990). Both of these require that all activities be designed so that all students receive an education that enhances their learning, builds on their needs, respects their dignity, and enables them to reach their full potential. EOTC activities like those suggested on pages 26-39 can make a major contribution to this kind of education.

EOTC is implicit in all syllabuses, prescriptions, and course statements. School charters may make specific mention of EOTC in the section on Local Curriculum Goals and Objectives; early childhood centres could include it under The Learner, Curriculum, and Programme and/or Health, Safety, and the Environment.

Here are some sample statements.

- The school/early childhood centre will provide a wide range of learning activities both in and beyond the classroom.
- The school/early childhood centre will enhance learning by providing all students with a range of well-designed EOTC experiences.
- By (date) our school/early childhood centre will develop an EOTC policy based on the *EOTC Curriculum Guidelines*.

Charter writing is followed by policy development, which in turn provides the framework for programme review and operation.

A Plan for Policy Development

Schools are required to develop specific policies, which give details of how they will deliver the curriculum.

For early childhood centres, a management plan is required in charter guidelines. Some of the Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1990, which apply to all licensed early childhood centres, relate to EOTC. The Kindergarten Union and the Playcentre Federation each have their own policies on outdoor activities and trips or excursions, and other early childhood organisations may also have guidelines for members. Early childhood centre staff should look through the sample policy on page 11 and decide whether this format would be useful to them.

The EOTC policy should be a brief statement, which identifies the EOTC objectives of the school or centre, and sets out guidelines for staff members. These guidelines may cover resources, time allocations, options and progressions available for learners, staff training or preparation, administrative and professional practice requirements, and procedures for evaluation.

Before EOTC policy development begins, certain steps should be taken. An EOTC coordinating person or committee should be selected. Their area of responsibility should be discussed and identified, and they should become familiar with the framework of their institution's charter.

Steps in developing an EOTC Policy

Staff and management select a person or committee to co-ordinate EOTC.
The EOTC coordinator's areas of responsibility are discussed and identified.
An EOTC statement is included in the school or centre's charter.

A rationale statement is written.

The coordinator gathers information about EOTC. (Refer to page 43 for sources.)
Staff, advisers, the community, and learners (if appropriate) are consulted.
A statement of goals is drafted. (Refer to EOTC Goals on pages 5-6.)
The draft is circulated and discussed with staff, parents, and learners.

A statement of goals is decided on.

School or centre policies on curriculum subjects are checked, to see how EOTC could be applied in each area, and where a cross-curriculum approach could be used.
Guidelines are drafted. (Refer to the sample policies on pages 11-13 and to Appendix III.)

Broad guidelines are written.

Other policies that are closely associated with EOTC are identified.

A concluding statement, which names related policies, is written.

The complete EOTC policy statement is circulated to staff for comment.
The complete EOTC policy statement is submitted to management for approval.

When this process is complete, coordinators and other staff members can start developing programmes to put the policy into effect.

There is no set format for policy writing. The model given here simply identifies aspects that need to be considered. In this model, policies have four parts: a rationale, goals, guidelines for achieving those goals, and a conclusion.

Rationale

This is a succinct statement in which curriculum requirements are identified, learner's needs are recognised, and community aspirations are acknowledged. EOTC coordinators need to ensure that the rationale is in accord with curriculum goals and with the objectives identified in their charter.

Goals

Goals provide a focus for planning, implementation, management, and evaluation. When identifying EOTC goals, coordinators should consider learners':

- intellectual, physical, social, cultural, and emotional needs,
- environment and heritage,
- experience, skills, and abilities.

They should consult widely with staff, advisers, learners (if appropriate), parents or care givers, and the community about their expectations for EOTC programmes. Refer also to the EOTC goals identified in the Introduction.

Guidelines

Guidelines suggest ways of achieving goals. They should cover:

- resources -people, equipment, and places, within the institution and beyond, that could be used for EOTC;
- time allocations for EOTC in all curriculum areas;
- the options available to each group of learners for both stand-alone outings and activity progressions;
- staff training and preparation for EOTC activities, including professional practice requirements -safety, supervision, and risk management;
- administrative requirements, such as funding for trips and parental consent forms for outings;
- evaluation procedures.

Conclusion

The conclusion should express the school or centre's commitment to the use of EOTC in its learning programmes, and link the EOTC policy to other policies. EOTC should be related to specific curriculum policies, as well as other relevant policies, such as those on transport, funding, and the care and supervision of students.