



Delegation of the Republic of Cyprus

Policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus regarding the inclusion of Turkish Cypriots and other non-native language speaking students in the Cypriot Educational System

The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus offers free and accessible education to all students regardless of their legal status, gender, language, color, religion, political beliefs or ethnic background. The general aim of education in Cyprus is the development of free and democratic citizens who contribute to the promotion of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect among individuals and peoples for the prevalence of freedom, justice and peace.

These priorities of the educational system are stressed by the following objectives of the Educational Reform, which is currently in progress:

- A democratic school that functions for the social inclusion of all children and for combating dropping out of the system and social exclusion; a democratic school of inclusion and not for exclusion.
- A school system / education that respects difference and cultural, language and religious pluralism.

The Ministry of Education and Culture demonstrates its commitments in educating pupils whose first language is other than Greek, and their religion is not Christian Orthodox, by including them in the Cypriot Educational System and not by assimilating them.

The majority of schools with high registration of non-native language speakers operates as “Zones of Educational Priority” (policy derived from the relevant UNESCO strategy). The criteria used for the determination of the Zones of Educational Priority are: the large proportion of Turkish Cypriots, Roma and immigrant students, and the high rates of school failure and drop-outs.

Empirical and theoretical research have guided the Ministry of Education and Culture in developing and implementing programs for non-native language speaking students where the emphasis is based on the following:

- Extra tutoring, in subjects as Language Arts, Math and Science, is provided to children who are less than fully proficient in the language used in school, in order for them to derive full academic benefit from their educational experience.
- Instruction in the native language of students allows them to participate in school and acquire the skills and knowledge covered in the curriculum while also learning Greek. The Ministry initiated the employment of Bilingual Teachers, especially in Elementary schools.
- Instruction in Greek as a second language is an integral part of all bilingual education programs.

With regard to the education of Turkish Cypriot children residing in the government controlled area and contrary to claims by the Turkish Cypriot teachers union, the Government of the Republic has consulted parents of Turkish Cypriot children, who are happy with current arrangements. The establishment of a Turkish school in Limassol remains under consideration, having due regard to parental wishes.