

SSIS Public Sector Equality Duty

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as; the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003^[5] and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils or staff on the basis of the protected characteristics of: sex, race, age, disability, religion / belief, pregnancy / maternity, gender reassignment / sexual orientation or marriage / civil partnership.

The Equality Information and Equality Objectives document is a consequence of the two specific duties which schools have to undertake in relation to the Act.

- a) to publish information which shows they have due regard for equalities, as defined by the Act
- b) to publish at least one equality objective.

The document is updated annually and this includes an indication of progress on achieving the Equality Objectives which will be prepared and published every four years.

In summary, those subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or strands of the general equality duty and are incorporated in our Policy Statements viz.

Policy Statements

Eliminate Discrimination

- We do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone, be they staff or pupil, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the 2010 Equality Act, namely: sex, race, age, disability, religion / belief, pregnancy / maternity, gender reassignment / sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership

- In addition, we do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any pupil, on the grounds of their parent's or carers economic status
- We do not tolerate any forms of discriminatory behaviour, prejudice, bullying or harassment. Should an incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition. We have clear procedures for dealing quickly with incidents and do all we can to support the victim (s) in overcoming any difficulties it may have caused

Advance Equal Opportunities

- We promote the individuality of all our children, irrespective of race, disability, sex, economic status or religion/belief.
- We try to ensure that all staff recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide equal opportunities for everyone to achieve
- We believe that it is the right of all pupils to receive the best education we can give, with equal access to all educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards
- We promote the principles of equality, fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school and this will be reflected in our curriculum
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of discrimination that may form barriers to learning.

Foster Good Relations

- We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all. We will promote an understanding of different cultures and characteristics through the topics studied by the children, and we will reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school
- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community, show respect for all minority groups and promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all
- We try to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of our society and ensure that the education we offer fosters positive attitudes to all people
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance and we challenge it whenever it occurs
- We actively tackle discrimination and promote equality through newsletters to parents and displays of work
- We build self-esteem and confidence in our pupils, so that they can then use these qualities to influence their own relationships with others
- We have regular consultation with parents/carers and members of the local community, so that they are well informed of our equality policies and procedures
- We try to create an ethos in which all pupils and staff feel valued and secure
- We make it clear to our pupils what constitutes discriminatory behaviour and make them confident to challenge it.