

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY Updated March 2024

What is the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) came into effect in April 2011 as a result of the Equality Act 2010. It requires public bodies to promote equality and replaced three pre-existing duties relating to disability, race and gender equality.

The PSED applies to all maintained and independent schools, including academies, and maintained and non-maintained special schools.

Protected Characteristics

The Department for Education (DfE) has published **non-statutory advice** that sets out schools' obligations under the PSED.

Paragraph 5.1 explains that the PSED extends to the following **protected characteristics**:

Race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment

Three Main Elements

Paragraph 5.1 of the document explains that the PSED has **three main elements**. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, and between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Due Regard

Paragraph 5.4 of the DfE's advice says that '**due regard**' has been defined in case law and means giving "relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty".

For schools, this means:

- Decision makers must be aware of the duty to have due regard when making a decision or taking an action, and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics
- Schools should consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis
- The PSED has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school's functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind

Specific Duties

The PSED introduces secondary legislation in the form of **specific duties**. The duties require schools to:

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED. This information must include, in particular, information relating to people who share a protected characteristic
- Prepare and publish equality objectives

Schools are required to update this published information **at least annually** and to publish objectives at least **once every four years**.

What does our school do to eliminate discrimination?

We have set a clear Rights respecting vision and values which expect all our stakeholders to act in a non-discriminating manner and be mindful to avoid actions that will be deemed as such to the public and our wider community. This is embedded within the culture of our school.

We have up-to-date and ratified policies which set out a clear message that discrimination is not tolerated: staff code of conduct, Rights Respecting behaviour, anti-bullying, safeguarding, school uniform policy and online safety.

We understand that it is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. Our school culture reflects our inclusive nature and enables all pupils to access and enjoy learning and socialising in our school. Our RRSA Gold award, ELKLAN award and Nurture Schools UK Accreditation reflects this, as does our Inclusion Toolkit training and our individual school pathways for our resource provision pupils.

Through our Unicef Rights Respecting School Gold status we have developed and embedded a culture where pupils appreciate and value difference and diversity.

The governing body and school leaders involved in recruitment will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Through a structured PSHE Coram Life curriculum offer and specialised SEND PHSE curriculum, weekly Rights Respecting assemblies, whole school Rights Respecting days and visits, equalities will be discussed with and taught to the children, exemplifying the British Values and school values that we believe in.

We have a dedicated pastoral support team to support families and ensure they are sign posted to relevant help organisations, give them help filling in forms etc, so that no family feels discriminated because of circumstances. We also work closely with the Ashbury Meadow Surestart centre to support families in our locality.

Please see our equality objectives for this year.