



Rationale

The development of an Equalities framework is underpinned by legislative requirements, namely the ASL Act (2004) and the Equalities Act (2010), as well as the moral responsibility to ensure all children and young people are treated with dignity and respect, and treat others likewise, throughout their day-to-day experiences.

Within the context of our school, over the course of this current session, upto and including February 2025, there were 52 recorded episodes of bullying. Of these:

- 3 were due to sexual orientation
- 8 were due to ASN/Disability
- 20 were due to body image/physical appearance
- 1 was due to Race

When questioned about their experiences of Equalities issues, of the 47 (3%) parents/carers who responded:

- 64% were familiar with the term Protected Characteristics and what these are
- 74% were familiar with the Equalities Act, the legislation that the Protected Characteristics are framed within
- 72% responded that neither they nor their child had experienced any equalities-based discrimination
- 2% responded that they/their child had faced discrimination because of age
- 13% responded that they/their child experienced discrimination because of a disability
- 9% responded that they/their child experienced discrimination because of sex
- 11% responded that they/their child faced discrimination as a result of sexual orientation

A large-scale questionnaire of the pupil body, which included a cross-section of pupils across S1-S6, was conducted. Of the 376 respondents, which represents 26% of the pupil cohort, only 9% identified as understanding the Protected Characteristics, with 13% intimating that they have some awareness of the term. However, when asked to explain the term, of the numbers above, only 6% were able to articulate the meaning.

According to the pupils and their own observations and experiences, breaches of the rights associated with the Protected Characteristics that are most prevalent within school are, in order of prevalence:

- Sex (30%)
- Race (24%)
- Disability (18%)
- Sexual Orientation (14%)
- Religion (11%)
- Gender Reassignment (4%)

The others – namely Age, Pregnancy & Maternity and Marriage & Civil Partnership – were not referenced by our young people.



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Pupil focus groups for all year groups were conducted, which demonstrated that pupils were not familiar with the Equalities Act and the Protected Characteristics contained within it. When the characteristics were highlighted, the pupils, based on their own experiences, felt that **Disability** and **Race** were most prevalent within the school and were able to evidence this position with either their own direct experience or as a witness to the experiences of others.

The focus groups did, however, understand equality, and their responses included things like “everyone treated the same”, “having the same opportunities” and “no one excluded for being different”, all of which are good foundations on which to build.

When we asked our young people for impact statements on how breeches of the Protected Characteristics had on them (as a victim or a witness), they noted:

“Uncomfortable. And depressed”

“Confused.”

“Embarrassed and annoyed.”

“It made me feel worthless.”

“They shouldn’t have to go through that as they can’t help it.”

“It’s more like “casual” so it’s normalised even though it shouldn’t be.”

“Disappointed in others.”

“Degrading.”

“I stopped valuing others’ opinions”

“Annoyed.”

“Not bothered.”

“I felt sad that people need to do that.”

“It made me feel disgraced.”

“It made me feel bad about myself.”

“I heard one person talk about another person who had trouble moving their legs and I didn’t like how that sounded or how they were being treated.”

“I hated being in public, I feel hated and left out. I hate coming to school and being in classes”



When staff were asked about their in-school experiences on issues around the Protected Characteristics, 47% had not witnessed, or had rarely witnessed discrimination perpetrated by young people, with 53% noting that this happens either sometimes or often. For staff, the most common issues are:

- Sexual Orientation (specifically the use of the word “gay” as a joke to describe a friend)
- Sex (misogyny)
- Disability-based discrimination
- Racism

Analysis

- Pupils understanding of “equality” as a general term is sound
- Across all baseline data sources, Disability, Race, Sex and Sexual Orientation are the most undermined of the Characteristics
- Across all year groups, ongoing awareness of the Protected Characteristics is necessary, so young people understand that these groups are vulnerable to discrimination within our context
- Workshop-based approach required to build detailed knowledge of the characteristics, and to encourage reflection, discussion and education around the impact of discrimination – legal, emotional, social, moral and practical
- Ongoing focus on ASN requirements of the school population to increase knowledge and understanding, and to increase tolerance. This is pertinent to all stakeholders

Development Plan

Protected Characteristic	Action	By Whom? When?
Race	Show Racism the Red Card	Support team
	Diversity celebration <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. presentations of country factfile – Pupil Leadership Group leading learning 2. creation of flags representing pupil body 3. “Take it and Leave it” book scheme 4. S3 Jumbled cooking activity 5. Country of the month – celebrated and highlighted 	P. Morris Pupil Leadership Group A Jones K. Gibb S. Akers
	S2 Workshop	K. Gibb Staff Inclusion Lead Pupil leadership group Support team
Disability	S3/S1 Workshop	K. Gibb

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		S. Akers Pupil leadership group
	Ongoing House assembly snapshots – different ASN pertinent to our context	Support team
	Aide Memoires published and publicised – to staff and young people	G. Broadway Support team
Sex	MVP	A Farquharson R Christie
	Whole school focus	All staff Various partners MVP (Mentors in Violence Prevention) Leads
Sexual Orientation	S3 workshop	K. Gibb S. Akers Pupil leadership group Support team
All Characteristics	House assembly Programme – throughout the session	Guidance team – as per school calendar
All Characteristics	Continually highlight the bullying process for all stakeholders	K. Gibb
All Characteristics	Review bullying policy and processes to ensure they concur with new guidance	K. Gibb Equalities Group Interested Staff Support team
All Characteristics	Audit of work ongoing in faculties/where Protected Characteristics are covered	K. Gibb PTCs/PTs