

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO EQUALITY & FAIRNESS: EVERYONE MATTERS

With support from Scottish Government, Connect has created the Equality and Equity Toolkit for use by school staff, parent groups, pupils, parents and the wider community. You can find the Toolkit here <https://education.gov.scot/resources/equality-and-equity-toolkit/> and additional case studies here <https://connect.scot/resources/equality-and-equity-toolkit-and-case-studies>

Why should we think about Equality and Fairness?

Parent Councils (PCs)/Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)/Parent Staff Associations (PSAs) work in schools with families from diverse backgrounds. An Equality & Fairness Policy will show people your group is thinking about its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is aware of the need to involve parents of all backgrounds in the school community and children's learning.

An Equality & Fairness Policy also shows your PC and PTA/PSA respects everyone and believes all families have something to bring.

What is the Equality Act?

The Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

What does the Equality Act say?

There are nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

A person could make a complaint if they believe they have been subject to less favourable treatment because of any of these characteristics.

As well as the protected characteristics, Parent Councils and PTA/PSAs should be aware they should try to represent *all* those parents and carers in the school community. Other areas you may want to consider are:

- Those families in poverty or facing financial difficulties
- People who don't read or write well
- Separated/divorced parents or people who are sharing parenting
- Those families with a parent in prison
- Parents/carers with a child with additional support needs
- Black and ethnic minority families

- Families with English as an additional language
- Travelling families
- LGBTQ+ parents/carers
- Armed Forces families
- Kinship, foster, adoptive parents/carers.

Why should we have an Equality & Fairness Policy?

This would show the Parent Council or PTA/PSA:

- is working to include all the school community
- is aware of diversity
- has respect for all
- believes everyone matters.

What should an Equality & Fairness Policy say?

There is no one single Equality and Fairness Policy that your group can simply download and adopt unchanged, though Connect does have a sample policy to use as a guide. Equality and fairness are more about meeting the general principles rather than having a fixed set of rules. Your Parent Council/committee should be working to make sure it remains open and inclusive for everyone.

Things to consider:

- **Diversity** – does your group try to represent all social groups in the school community?
- **Inclusion** – does your group work to include all types of families in the school?
- **Accessibility** – is your group and its activities, including communication, accessible to all parents/carers?
- **Are your Parent Council/committee members and volunteers aware of your policy?**
- **Constitution** – does your constitution include messages about equality and fairness?
- **Reviewing the policy** – how often will this be done?

You are welcome to use information from this resource. However, if you do, please acknowledge Connect. We welcome your comments and feedback.

August 2025

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