

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS: A GLOSSARY

Disability	A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities. This includes illnesses like cancer and multiple sclerosis as well as conditions such as dyslexia and mental health issues. There is also a social model of disability. It says disability is caused by barriers that arise because society is not designed to accommodate people who have impairments. It is these barriers that disable people who have impairments. Find out more at https://inclusionscotland.org/get-informed/social-model
Diversity	Understanding that each individual is unique, and has individual differences. The differences can range from the colour of eyes to race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disability, gender identity, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.
Equality	Having the same rights, opportunities and status as other people, regardless of individual differences.
Equity	Ensuring that everyone has what they need to have similar quality experiences. Equity is about meeting individual needs, instead of treating everyone who has a particular difference in the same way.
Inclusion	Inclusion is seen as a universal human right. The aim of inclusion is to embrace and welcome all people, irrespective of difference. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance.

Protected characteristics	Aspects of a person protected under the Equality Act 2010. This is designed to protect people against discrimination because of a protected characteristic. The nine protected characteristics are: • age • disability • gender reassignment • marriage and civil partnership • pregnancy and maternity • race • religion and belief • sex • sexual orientation. Intersectionality is when there may be more than one protected characteristic ie we are all multi-facted individuals.
Shared Parenting	This is when parents/carers share care of a child: parents may be separated or divorced, or simply have separate homes. Shared parenting means that schools should include and make arrangements for all parents to be involved and engaged in the child's school life and learning.
We can avoid discrimination when we think positively about difference. Discrimination involves treating people less favourably than you would treat others because of a real or perceived difference (see Diversity). Discrimination may be direct or indirect and can be about one person or group of people. Example of direct discrimination: a parent with Tourette's Syndrome is not made to feel welcome at Parent Council meetings. Example of indirect discrimination: a Parent Council holds all meetings in a pub, which would make it difficult for people who do not drink alcohol for religious reasons to attend.	

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

August 2025

Connect, www.connect.scot

Email us at info@connect.scot



[ConnectScot](https://www.facebook.com/ConnectScot)



[@connect_scot](https://twitter.com/@connect_scot)



[@connect_scot](https://www.instagram.com/@connect_scot)



[@connect.scot](https://www.facebook.com/@connect.scot)