

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS EVERYONE MATTERS

Why should we think about Equality and Fairness?

Parent Councils / PTAs 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 / PTA 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	Gender	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 PTAs should be aware they should try to represent *all* those 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
- Those families with a parent in prison
- Kinship, foster, adoptive parents / carers

Why should we have an Equality & Fairness Policy?

This would show the Parent Council / PTA:

- 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 & 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 is more about meeting the general principles rather than having a fixed set of rules. Your 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 exclude or discriminate against certain groups / people in the school?
- **Access** – is your group and are its activities accessible to all parents / carers?
- **Are your 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?

Useful Connect leaflets:

- Equality & Fairness – a template policy for Parent Councils / PTAs
- Equality & Fairness – a glossary.
- Constitutions Made Easy
- A Model Constitution

We would like to know

Did you use this leaflet? Did you find it helpful? Please give us your comments.

About Connect

You may be interested to know that we offer our members a range of benefits including our membership-linked insurance. Other benefits include:

- Free Information & Training Sessions
- Access to online meetings and surgeries
- Our Backchat newsletter and E-Updates
- Access to the member's-only section on the Connect website
- Regional Events and Annual Lecture
- Telephone and email helpline
- A wide variety of leaflets and other resources

You are welcome to use information from this leaflet however, if you do we ask that you acknowledge Connect.

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