

## **Guidance on Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

### **1. Introduction**

These Guidance notes are intended to help you understand how to carry out Equality Impact Assessments. Depending on whether you are impact assessing a policy, proposals, or an existing service or function, you may need to vary the steps outlined in this guidance.

### **2. What is an Equality Impact Assessment?**

Equality Impact Assessments have been developed as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up policies or proposals which affect the students, the carrying out of the school's functions and the employment practice of the school. They should help you:

- Determine how the school's policies and practice, or new proposals, will impact or affect different communities, especially those groups or communities who experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage;
- Measure whether policies or proposals will have a negative or positive effect on different communities;
- Make decisions about current and future practice in fuller knowledge and understanding of the possible outcomes for different communities or customer groups; and
- Develop ways of monitoring and reviewing the effects of new or changing policies or proposals if they are introduced.

### **3. Why do Equality Impact Assessments?**

You are required to carry out equality impact assessments because:

- There is a legal requirement to do so in relation to race and disability;
- You must carry them out for the Equality Standard for Local Government;
- They are helpful in identifying improvements;
- They help avoid adopting harmful policies or procedures;
- They help you to make better decisions;
- They will help you to identify how you can make the school's practice more accessible and appropriate; and
- They can help you to check whether there is anything you can do to support work on Community Cohesion.

### **4. Deciding what to impact assess**

All new or important policies, strategies, action plans and decisions should be equality impact assessed ahead of day to day existing policies or functions.

However, this should not prevent you from putting time aside to impact assess day to day facilities or an existing policy or function, where these clearly need to be reviewed and revised.

If you are planning to change the way you deliver your service, you should make time to impact assess your proposals, to test out that what you are planning to do will:

- Not result in discrimination for any group or community;
- Where possible, promote further equality;
- Promote social inclusion;
- Help promote cohesion between and within the school's different communities; and

- Contribute to work aimed at tackling health inequalities.

## **5. The main steps in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

There are 5 main steps to take when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments:

1. Identifying the purpose and aims of the policy or function, or any proposals being made;
2. Considering any information, data or research that is already available in relation to equalities and what this tells you;
3. Making an assessment of the impact or effects on different communities or customer groups and considering whether there is anything which could be done to mitigate against or to remove any adverse impact or effects, or to further promote equality, social inclusion or community cohesion
4. Consulting those affected for their views and ideas;
5. Writing up your assessment and forwarding it to Lorraine Barrow.

## **6. Major decisions and new or changing policies**

Equality legislation varies in relation to the requirement to carry out of impact assessments. You will need to try and help the school meet these different requirements. As more legislation is introduced requirements around impact assessments are becoming more practical, seeking coverage of the most important things rather than the coverage of every single new or changing policy, as required under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the first piece of law to introduce a requirement to carry out equality impact assessments.

There will be times when it is not practical or desirable to hold off making a decision or adopting a policy in order that you can complete a full equality impact assessment. In such cases a plan should be agreed for how and when the “policy” will be assessed, usually as part of the arrangements for monitoring and review. Effectively you will carry out a basic screening to identify what will need to be assessed and written into plans for future monitoring and review. Equality impact assessments are intended to aid good decision making, not to prevent decisions being made.

## **7. Completing an Equality Impact Assessment**

**Identifying the purpose and aims of the policy, proposals, service or function being assessed:**

- What are the policy or function, and any proposals?
- What are the aims, purpose, or objectives of the policy or function, and any proposals?
- Are there any other objectives or outcomes associated with the policy, service or function, or the proposals?
- Who defines or defined it/ them?
- Who carries it/ them out?
- What are you trying to achieve and for whom?
- Who are the main stakeholders?
- What do they want?
- Do these outcomes conflict with other policies, values or objectives of the school?
- Who might contribute or detract from the school’s ability to meet these outcomes?
- Are there any pupils or communities who are currently/ might be prevented from benefiting from the policy or function, and the proposals?

**Making an assessment of the impact or effects on different communities, customer and employee groups:**

- Does the data/ information point to, or highlight, any differential impact, and if so for whom?

- If there is a differential impact, does it amount to unlawful discrimination, whether direct or indirect?
- Is it trying to provide for the needs of a community which is already experiencing discrimination or disadvantage?
- If the results are that one or more community or group appears to benefit less, is there justification for this?
- Is there anything which could be done to remove adverse or unfair treatment?
- Could access be improved for any groups or communities, and if so how?
- Do you need to firstly understand more about the needs of communities and how these might be met?
- Could anything else be done to help tackle social exclusion?
- Could anything else be done to improve relations between or within communities to promote cohesion?
- Could the policy or function do more to promote healthy lifestyles, equality and well-being?

**Consider whether there are measures which might mitigate any adverse impact or other ways of achieving the same policy goals:**

- What are the options?
- How does each option affect different groups or communities?
- Will the alternatives help promote equality of opportunity, improved treatment and access?
- If one option is adopted what are the implications?
- How will people know about the new way(s) of delivery so that they can benefit?
- What are the costs associated with each option and how can they be resourced?
- Does the school have any statutory obligations which would be breached if any of the options were chosen and implemented?
- Do any of the options help promote social inclusion, community cohesion or improved health and well-being?

## Appendices

### Definitions

Ageism	Discrimination against people based on assumptions and stereotypes about age.
Anti-Semitism	Unfounded hostility toward the Jewish faith and people.
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)	Term currently used to describe range of minority ethnic communities and groups in the UK – can be used to mean the main Black and Asian and Mixed racial minority communities or it can be used to include all minority communities, including white minority communities. Please note that the definition currently used by the Government for BVPI purposes excludes white minority communities.
Disability	The legal definition for the purposes of the DDA 1995 is “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on an individual’s ability to undertake normal day to day activities”. However this definition sees people under what is known as the “Medical Model of Disability”. By contrast the “Social Model of Disability” which is supported and used by the school, views disability as caused not by impairment but instead by the way in which society fails to meet the needs of disabled people. Please

	ensure you try and apply the social model but recognise that some disabled people will themselves use the medical model – sometimes unaware of the medical model.
Discrimination	Treating an individual or group differently and less favourably than others under comparable circumstances. It may be based on a person's race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religious or other belief, or their sexual orientation. It may be unlawful and can include harassment.
Diversity	A term used to characterise the uniqueness of individuals and to acknowledge and value individual difference.
Hate crime	Any incident perceived by the "victim" or any other person to be motivated by prejudice due to their actual or perceived racial origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or gender etc.
Heterosexism	Discrimination against gay men, lesbians and bisexual people