

# EQUALITY PLAN - MODEL TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOLS

## Introduction and Context

*This Equality Plan template is designed to enable schools to develop their Plan for the four year period 2021-2025.*

Schools are required to review all equality objectives at least once every 4 years, to publish an Equality Plan every 4 years and to update their published information at least annually. In addition, schools must report **annually** on progress towards fulfilling objectives and collecting relevant information and must publish this information by 31<sup>st</sup> March. Previous Equality plans covered the periods 2012-2016 and 2016-2020 with the next Plan covering the period 2021-2025.

The purpose of Equality Objectives and Equality Plans are to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes which improve the lives of individuals and communities and to demonstrate what the school will do to achieve them. They must also demonstrate that the school collects relevant information and evidence on which to base its decisions. The Plan is also required to outline processes for monitoring progress and assessing the impact of proposals.

In developing their Equality Plan, schools need to ensure that their plans reflect the principles of relevance and proportionality. In other words, the actions taken by a school should be proportionate to the equality issues within the school and relevant to the school's plans and policies, both currently and what is anticipated could become relevant at some time in the future. When considering capacity and resources, it makes sense for schools to take direction from authority-wide or national research and engagement exercises as well as work which they can do themselves. There is significant scope for common objectives occurring in a range of individual plans. Similarly, equality objectives should be linked to existing strategies and approaches to inclusion, anti-bullying, positive behaviour management, improving attainment, pupil voice, Powys' Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy, Welsh Government framework and pupil support. Whilst building their own curriculum in line with the Curriculum for Wales Framework, schools should ensure questions of equality and fairness are considered in the mainstream of activities.

In addition to the above, some of the equalities objectives included in schools' plans will emanate from issues identified as a result of engagement with pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, external agencies and members of the wider school community. These combined objectives, together with issues arising from analysis of the school's data and context will form the basis of the equality objectives within the school's Equality Plan for the next four years.

**Should a school decide not to publish an equality objective covering each of the protected characteristics, it must publish robust and justifiable reasons why not.**

A reminder that schools are no longer required to prepare Disability Equality and Race Equality Schemes but the requirement to prepare an Accessibility Plan remains and can be included as an Appendix to the Equality Plan.

The requirement to record, monitor and report on all racial incidents remains the same. (Link accessible from the Hwb Network 'Addysg Powys Education' – under Files or via this link

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=4Z4dwLAOVEeZrgOuinMrUA8Vcz-48kdCj13bikUNFAhUMkc3WVQzWjNRVkg5N0NaVVBYNzY0OFIQTiQIQCN0PWcu\)](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=4Z4dwLAOVEeZrgOuinMrUA8Vcz-48kdCj13bikUNFAhUMkc3WVQzWjNRVkg5N0NaVVBYNzY0OFIQTiQIQCN0PWcu)

**Sections bracketed, italicised and highlighted draw attention to what schools will need to 'personalise' for their own contexts. None of these sections should be left in as they are.**

**This model template should not be adopted wholesale but used as a starting point.**

## Equality Plan 2021 – 2025

### Model Text

*(Your school logo?)*

**Equality Plan agreed by Governors:**

..... (Signed by Chair)

..... (Date)

**Plan due for review: ..... (Date) (Every four years)**

## Contents of our Equality Plan (EP)

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# 1. Our Distinctive Character, Values, Priorities and Aims

## 1.1 School values

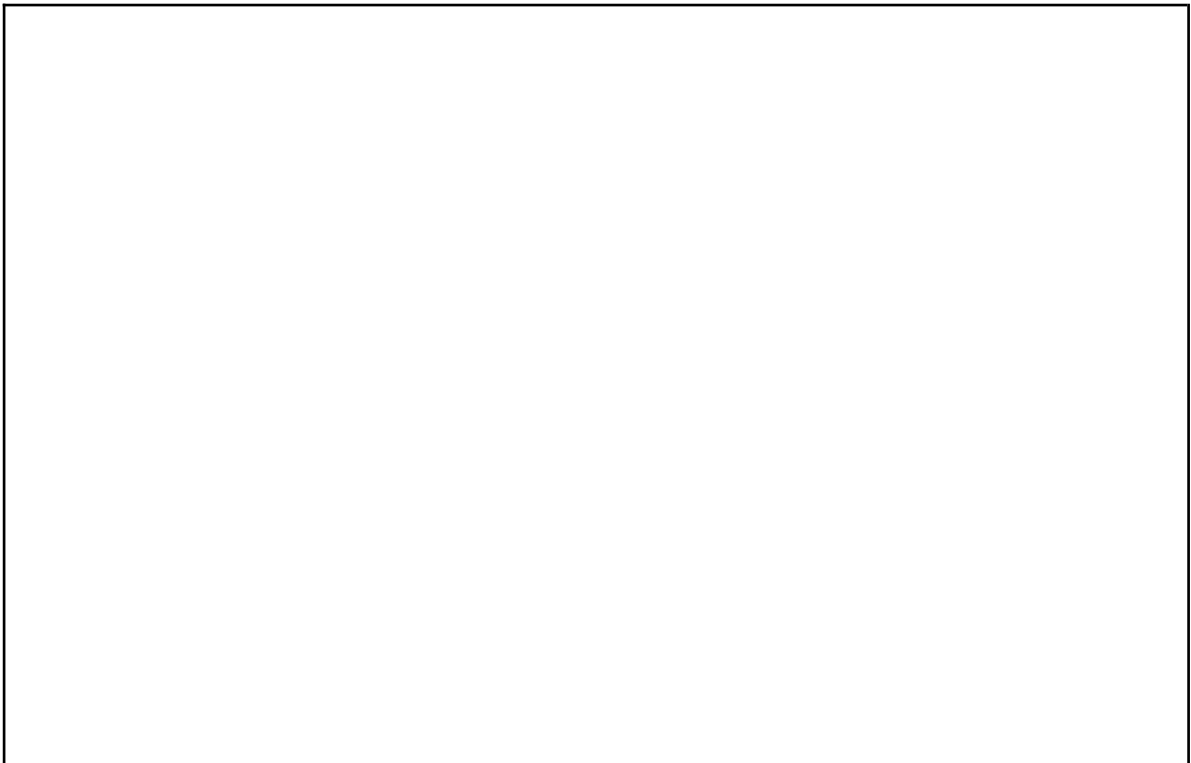
*Example mission statement below – amend or replace to reflect your school's own vision.*

At **(NAME OF SCHOOL)** we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, marriage and civil partnership. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement and progression of pupils will be monitored and we will use this information to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At **(NAME OF SCHOOL)**, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## 1.2 Characteristics of our school

*This section provides the opportunity for you to outline the profile of your school, the distinctive characteristics relating to equalities issues and your understanding of the diversity of your school's population. Factors worthy of note are likely to include % of children and young people in various groups, selected data from Teacher Centre/SIMS /TYFU, information gleaned from parents or via partnerships, e.g. School Nurse service, School counsellors, etc.*



### 1.3 Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

*You may wish to use extracts from your current Equal Opportunities Policy here*

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this Plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- use contextual information to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- monitor progress and achievement information according to the various protected characteristics and action any gaps
- take account of the progress and achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population, and local community in terms of the various protected characteristics, without stereotyping
- promote attitudes, values and ethics that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other religions, values, and ethics in the Curriculum for Wales Framework
- seek to involve all parents / carers in supporting their child's education
- encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equity and equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations, and the impact on learning
- include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils

*(Delete any of above / add own school priority contexts)*

### 1.4 Setting our equality objectives (including pay objectives)

We recognise our duty and responsibility to establish equality for all pupils, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

The purpose of our **Equality Plan (EP)** is to fulfil the duties to promote equality for people with 'protected characteristics' and embed fairness and equality at the heart of the school community and in all aspects of school plans and policies.

In setting the equality objectives for the school, we will take due regard to the Equality Act general duty to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not; this means
  - a. removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic

- b. taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not
  - c. encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

**Our Equality Plan and Equality Objectives are set in the light of:**

- The local authority equality objectives identified in **Appendix 2**
  - views expressed by stakeholders who have been involved in the development of the plan
  - issues arising as a result of an analysis of pupil information / progress
- (Delete any of above / add own school priority contexts)*

The delivery of the Equality Plan will contribute to all of the school's actions and commitments to improve the attainment and progression of all pupils.

Our school Equality Objectives are set out in **Section 5 (p.10) and Appendix 3.**

## 2. Responsibilities

### 2.1 Governing Body

The governing body has set out its commitment to equality and diversity in this Plan and will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils and responsive to their needs based on the various protected characteristics.

The governing body will:

- seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at the school
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strives to make communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils
- ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in the school

*(Delete any of above / add own school priorities)*

In order to meet its reporting responsibility, the governing body will report on the progress of the Equality Plan annually, as part of its Annual Report to Parents.

### 2.2 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- implementing the school's Equality Plan, supported by the governing body in doing so:

- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and are fully informed of the school's Equality Plan and equality objectives
- ensuring that all appointment panels give due regard to this Plan, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities
- promoting the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promoting respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life
- treating all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, according to the Authority's and school's policies

*(Delete those above that do not apply / add own school SLT actions. Equalities is a whole school priority rather than a function expected of one member of staff, often the ALN Co-ordinator. Only note specific staff roles if they are needed to clarify the procedures and agreed demarcation of responsibilities)*

## 2.3 Staff – teaching and non-teaching

The school regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of staff contribute to ensuring that the school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- ensuring that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and by maintaining awareness of the school's Equality Plan
- striving to provide material that gives positive images based on the protected characteristics and by challenging stereotypical images
- challenging any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and recording any serious incidents as prescribed in the LA's and school's policies, e.g. reporting of racial incidents (link available within the Files section of the 'Addysg Powys Education' network on Hwb)
- supporting the work of ancillary or support staff and encouraging them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents

*(Delete those above that do not apply / add own 'all staff' actions)*

## 3. Information Gathering and Engagement

### 3.1 Purpose and process

The collection of information is crucial to supporting the school in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community. The information also helps the school to review its performance, so it needs to be detailed enough to enable the school to measure how it is delivering on equality duties. The information also helps the school to carry out accurate impact assessments and to identify which of the school's aims have been achieved and what needs to be improved.

Engagement is based on information gained through collaboration with people who the school considers represent one or more of the protected groups and who have an interest in how the school carries out its functions. In addition, the school also formally consults with stakeholders e.g. people from one or more of the protected groups who

have an interest in the way the school carries out its functions. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different protected characteristics. We take particular steps to ensure disabled children and young people, parents and carers are involved as is their entitlement. The reason that this progress is important is to understand the full range of needs of the school community.

## 3.2 Types of information gathered

The wide range of information gathered to support planning and action to promote equality and eliminate discrimination includes the following:

- an analysis of the responses received from pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and community groups following the distribution of a questionnaire to determine equality issues. The questions included in the questionnaire do not highlight specific protected characteristics, but seek to obtain stakeholders' views across the board
- identification of children and young people, parents, carers, staff and other users of the school representing the different protected groups, if possible and appropriate. This helps the school to develop and monitor the Equality Plan. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information in line with data protection requirements, in addition to the school's duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language
- pupil attainment and progress information relating to different groups
- children and young people's views are actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution
- information about how different groups access the school's curriculum and how they make choices between disciplines
- sports and activities choices of all groups
- uptake of enrichment activities by group
- exclusions data analysed by group
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue
- data on the recruitment, development, and retention of employees
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and others who have been identified as difficult to engage.

*(Delete any of above / add own school types of information)*

## 3.3 Engagement

The school involves **stakeholders** including children and young people, staff, parents/carers, governors and other users of the school in relation to all equalities duties. We take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom we are consulting e.g. translated materials or interpretation facilities for disabled people or those for whom English is an additional language or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders and other equalities related groups are genuinely considered when we set priorities.

For your school, set out a statement of how you have involved stakeholders (i.e. pupils, staff, parents, governors and community representatives) in the preparation of the Plan including:

- who you consulted with in regard to all the protected groups
- how have the protected characteristics groups been supported to access this consultation? (For example, people with various disabilities, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people from Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender Queer (LGBTQIA+) and faith groups)
- How you have accounted for issues of language, literacy and communication, venues, including virtual co-construction and times of meetings when carrying out consultation
- What consultation you have carried out with partners and local stakeholder groups

## 4. Equality Impact Assessment

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed plans and policies in order to help the school act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by school activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the school's plans and policies are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

As part of the school's compliance with the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, we will continue to assess the impact of all new policies and plans prior to them being implemented. Similarly, we will assess the impact of existing policies and plans whenever they are reviewed. The results of any such assessments will be addressed, where possible. Impact assessments are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy.

## 5. Objectives and Action Plans

Our chosen Equality Objectives are  
(list your agreed objectives)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

....

We have action plans covering all relevant protected characteristics (**Appendix 3**). These describe how we are taking action to fulfil both the general and specific duties. (you could make reference here to any action plans for other vulnerable groups that you have identified)

Our action plans are cross referenced with (or incorporated into) the School Development Plan, which ensures that they are checked, monitored and evaluated systematically.

The action plans show:

- objectives and specific actions
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria)
- clear timescales
- who has lead responsibility
- resource implications
- specified dates for impact assessment and review.

The school evaluates the effectiveness of its Equality Plan on a regular basis, through the governing body and with Estyn when the school is inspected.

## 6. Publication and Reporting

The school provides a copy of its Equality Plan and action plans to meet its equality objectives in a range of formats and actively makes it available to parents/carers and others, including those identified as difficult to engage. The school prospectus includes a reference to the Equality Plan and the values underpinning it. *(Will it be referenced elsewhere in your documentation/information systems?)*

The school reports annually on the progress made towards fulfilling its equality objectives and the impact of the Equality Plan itself on the school ethos and practice within the school. This is undertaken as part of the Governors' Annual Report to parents / carers.

All information collected will be used solely for the purpose of analysing trends by protected groups in performance, take-up and satisfaction with services offered by the school or local authority. Such information will be stored separately from personal information which identifies the individual. In order to protect the identity of individuals when trend information is published no counts containing less than 5 individuals will be published.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

As part of our responsibility to monitor the Equality Plan, we commit to:

- revisiting and analysing the information and information used to identify priorities for the Equality Plan and action plans. This incorporates use of the overview of progress
- using the impact assessments to ensure that actions taken have a positive impact across all protected groups, that the promotion of equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being eliminated effectively.

The review of the Equality Plan informs its revision, the setting of new priorities and action plans. This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders
- be evidence based - using information that the school has gathered and analysed
- use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which inform priorities.

*(delete or add as appropriate)*

We will undertake a full review of our Equality Plan every four years.

# **Equality Plan 2021–2025**

## **Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Protected Characteristics</b>
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### Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

- Age\*
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

\* Schools do not have to consider the protected characteristic of **Age** when providing education to pupils or when providing benefits, facilities or services to them. This exception does not apply in relation to other functions, for example when acting in its capacity as an employer.

## Local Authority Equality Objectives

The Council has developed seven Equality Objectives, the first of which relates to education

### Objective 1 - Close attainment gaps in education

The *Is Wales Fairer?* report identified this as one of the seven key challenges that needs to be addressed in Wales over the next 5 years to help improve equality and human rights.

Powys County Council's engagement exercise gave very specific and detailed information in relation to each protected characteristic and each domain.

Disabled, older, transgender, Lesbian Gay and Bisexual (LGB) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people are considered to have the worst education experiences. LGB and BME people reported significantly worse experiences of education than other respondents thought they would have. Comments highlighted issues with prejudice and access.

#### 1. Close the attainment gap by raising standards of children receiving free school meals, children with special educational needs and Gypsy Traveller children

##### Actions to fulfil this objective

- Support schools in improving the quality of teaching and learning through specific, bespoke menus of support
- Provide advice and guidance to schools on effective use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant to raise the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals
- Support schools in ensuring that Personal Education Plans for Looked After Children are of good quality, ensuring effective use of the CLA Pupil Deprivation Grant
- Roll out the Person Centred Planning approach to ensure pupils with special educational needs have appropriate targets for improvement
- Use of TYFU to record support and share information with parents / carers
- Monitor the performance of vulnerable groups, identifying any underperformance and signpost to good practice

**Actions to fulfil this objective**

- Review support for children and young people with emotional, social and mental health issues
- Develop and embed a whole-school approach for emotional and mental wellbeing as outlined in the Welsh Government's statutory Framework (2021) and Powys' Mental Health and Emotional Well-being Policy (2022). Include links to WG Framework and Powys Policy?

## School **Equality Plan 2021–2025** **Equality Objectives and Action Plans**

<b>Equality Objective 1</b> <i>(Title)</i>					
<b>Our Research:</b> <i>(Indicate research undertaken and identify the main findings)</i>					
<b>Information from Engagement:</b> <i>(Indicate improvements suggested by stakeholders)</i>					
<b>Data Development:</b> <i>(Indicate what data needs to be gathered to provide further information on the issues identified above)</i>					
<b>This objective will be judged to be successful if...</b>  <i>(Complete) e.g.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There is an increase/reduction in x</i></li> <li>• <i>There is evidence to demonstrate improvement in y</i></li> </ul>					
<b>Actions:</b>					
	Description	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Start date	Review date
1.1					
1.2					
1.3					

***Repeat this page for each of your Equality Objectives***

## School Accessibility Plan

[ INSERT ]