

BRYN DERI PRIMARY

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
OF
EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**

Introduction

Institutional Discrimination sometimes occurs when an institution assumes that all employees and all people using its services are homogeneous or the same. This is sometimes known as 'ethnocentricity' or 'heteronormativity' (or by other terms).

Within schools it sometimes occurs when there is an unconscious assumption that all pupils, employees, parents, visitors, volunteers etc. have the same needs from/experiences of a school trip/educational visit.

It is often the case that although day to day practice and ethos within a school fully recognises a community's diversity, formal policy does not always fully reflect this. If this is the case this can sometimes result in a policy or procedure serving some groups of people less well than others. If this is related to an aspect of a person's needs or experiences being different from others due to their identity (e.g. being from a minority community, having different or additional needs, being within a historically oppressed community etc) then this can sometimes result in a 'negative differential impact'.

Aim and Purpose of Policy

The main purpose of the policy is to explain our school's policy position on the management of school trips/educational visits. It specifically aims to communicate how how such visits are planned, arranged and managed.

Is Equality Explicit/Clearly Referenced?

The policy does not contain any reference to the Protected Characteristics or Equality generally. Furthermore it appears to be a policy from the LEA for schools rather than a policy from the school for parents and so the audience is for school managers not parents and will be unsuitable for many parents. The only reference to Disability, for instance, is within a form stating that parents must inform the school of a child's disability (which should already be known to the school in any case) but there is no reference to the school's responsibilities in this regard. Beyond this, there is not currently any explicit recognition within the policy that people within the Protected Characteristics may have different needs in terms attending an educational visit or residential trip or that their experience of particular venues might be adversely affected.

Where is there *Unlikely* to be a Negative Differential Impact?

There is unlikely to be a negative differential impact in terms of

- Race
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity

NB although the policy itself does not impact negatively in terms of Race, the fact it is a business document for school managers from managers within the LEA may in itself have a negative impact in terms of Race due to the correlation between Ethnicity and Language. For instance, In total there are over 130 languages spoken by pupils and parents in Cardiff schools (Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Service) with literacy levels and English Language acquisition varying between Nationalities and Ethnicities. For instance research suggests illiteracy of 62% among Gypsy/Travellers (*Friends, Families and Travellers – A bit of background on Gypsies and Travellers briefing paper*). In some parts of Cardiff up to 20% of the population were not born in the UK.

The document as it currently stands has a Fleisch-Kincaid reading score of 24 meaning that you have to be a University Graduate fluent in English to be able to read it easily.

Where is there Likely to be a Negative Differential Impact ?

There is likely to be a negative differential impact on the grounds of

Disability
 Religion or Belief
 Gender
 Sexual Orientation
 Gender Reassignment

in terms of the both the procedural aspects of the policy as well as the aspects described in the section above.

Religion or Belief

Schools regularly take children on educational visits to Religious venues, or venues and events with a Religious or Faith based ethos and this is communicated to parents. Parents who choose to withdraw their pupils from such visits are entitled to do so (indeed, pupils themselves can choose to do so if they so wish).

However, rarely some educational visits or events are Faith based or Religious in nature even when they do not obviously appear to be.

(For instance, a particular Zoo near Bristol has welcomed 4,000 pupils from South Wales between 2013-16 on school trips according to the BBC. The Zoo has a Religious ethos which parents may not be aware of when granting consent for their child to participate. For example, The Zoo promotes a form of 'Intelligent Design' called 'Reconolisation' with the Zoo's own website dismissing fossils from before the 'antideluvian world' (ie before the Biblical Flood). Noticeboards around the zoo state that Apes and Humans are not related etc).

Leaving aside the fact that the teaching of creationism or intelligent design is not permitted in UK schools (and by extension on school organised visits). There are likely to be other venues or events that are in use by schools that are similarly founded on Religious foundations.

Freedom of Religion is a fundamental Human Right. However, so is the Right not to hold a particular Religion or Belief. The protected characteristic 'Religion or Belief' as defined in the Equality Act explicitly includes 'non-belief' and covers – among others – atheism, humanism, secularism and other similar philosophical beliefs.

While it is perfectly right and proper that schools organise visits to venues with of a Religious Nature, parents should be made aware if that is the case when it is not immediately obvious. Schools should be aware of any such venues when planning visits so as to present parents with an informed choice. This is particularly important if the venue is likely to be presenting information that does not fully support the UK legal views in terms of equality (eg gender equality, sexual orientation equality etc).

Disability

According to the Equality Act 2010 schools are required to put in place reasonable adjustments when planning school trips so that any Disabled pupils can participate. Additionally, schools are required to treat Disabled pupils more favourably than other pupils when planning such trips. Schools that do not do so are at risk of putting Disabled pupils at a disadvantage which amounts to Disability Discrimination.

In practice, this means that the school should put in place extra measures when an educational visit is planned when there are Disabled pupils among the cohort that are eligible for a school trip. This might mean ensuring that the venue is accessible for Disabled pupils, or putting in place extra support for the Disabled pupils. It is not acceptable to rely on parents to provide that additional support (ie it can not be a condition that a parent or guardian attend the trip before the school allows the pupil to participate – although a parent of a Disabled pupil may prefer to do so in which case it would be acceptable) and the school must meet the cost of any additional support rather than passing the cost on to the parents or carers.

The school should satisfy itself that a proposed venue for an educational visit is accessible for a Disabled pupil. If it is not, an alternative venue should be found.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is the Government Body charged with legal compliance for schools around equality legislation. They state two examples in their guidance relating to school trips

“A primary school plans a school trip to a local history museum in its town to undertake some activities. One of the pupils in the class is deaf and, because the museum does not have a hearing loop installed, she will be unable to participate in the trip. The school decides to change the trip and attend a museum in a neighbouring town, which has a hearing loop. Although this will cause some inconvenience to the other pupils because the travel time to and from school is longer, the school decides that this is a reasonable adjustment to make given the substantial disadvantage faced by the disabled pupil if she is

unable to attend the trip”.

“A secondary school takes its year 7 pupils on a week-long outdoor activity course every year. The school always goes to the same place, which offers a wide range of exciting activities in which the pupils can participate. This year, one of the year 7 disabled pupils has to have kidney dialysis on a daily basis, so needs to be able to return home every day. In deciding on what adjustment to make for the disabled pupil, the school considers cancelling the trip and seeking an alternative, such as day trips closer to the school. The school weighs up whether denying pupils the opportunity to attend the week-long trip is reasonable and decides to stick with the planned trip to the outdoor activities centre so that pupils do not miss out on this valuable residential experience, and are not required to travel to and from activities each day. But, to minimise the disadvantage faced by the disabled pupil, the school arrange for transport from his home to attend the centre for day visits on three days of the week, so that the pupil has the benefit of being able to participate in the activities with his peers. If the school had not made this adjustment, he would not have been able to participate at all. This is likely to be a reasonable step for the school to have to take. It is unlikely to be reasonable for the school to have to alter its decision to undertake the week-long activities course”.

Currently our policy does not mention Disabled pupils except in relation to a consent form, which asks the parents to inform the school if their child is Disabled. In reality, schools should already know which of their pupils are Disabled and should be proactively considering the barriers to that pupil's participation and planning to remove the barriers before advertising the trip. Any contact with the parent should be targeted toward working with them to come up with practical solutions to removing barriers to participation.

In addition, there are implications for Disabled people in terms of the Fleish-Kincaid reading score which means that you have to be a University Graduate to be able to understand it.

Recommendations

- 1) Add an explicit element to the policy that references Equality (perhaps from the Strategic Equality Plan).
- 2) Make specific reference to Disabled pupils within the policy, including the general policy position that Disabled pupils will not be excluded from school trips and the school is aware of its responsibilities to remove barriers to participation
- 3) Include a statement around clarity of venues if there are Religious associations so that parents can make informed choices
- 4) Draft a policy for use by parents. The current document is a verbatim copy of a guidance document prepared by the LA for school managers. The audience for the document is professionals. It has a Fleisch Kincaid reading score of 24 which means it requires a degree to understand it. Consider the audience when producing another draft.