

This scheme will apply from October 2008 until October 2012

Section 1 – How the Scheme was Developed

1.1 The purpose and direction of the school's scheme

Congleton High School is a large comprehensive of 1060 students and employing more than 100 teaching and support staff. The school has done a lot of work to facilitate wheel chair access and the entire school can now be accessed.

The school is able to employ staff with disabilities and makes all reasonable adjustments to allow these staff to fulfil the requirements of their posts and participate in the life of the school. There are a small number of students with disabilities and their access to the curriculum is supported by Teaching Assistants.

The proportion of staff and students from ethnic minority backgrounds is very small. The school delivers an anti-discrimination programme to students via the whole curriculum and in particular in PHSE, Citizenship and Assemblies. A racist incident log is kept by the school and this is reported to the Governors annually.

The school is mixed with the gender balance being roughly equal. Male and female staff and teaching assistants are in the ratio 30:70. The Senior Leadership Team has nine members, three male and six female which includes a Finance and Business Manager.

“Barriers”

The school is using the term barriers when considering how it can develop its policy on Equality and Diversity. People often face barriers in their lives that make it difficult for them to do everything they would like or need to do. These barriers may be caused by harassment, discrimination and bullying for reasons of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender (covered by legislation). But they may also have been caused by other factors not covered by legislation, for example, religious intolerance. The school wishes to remove or at least minimise the barriers staff, students and visitors to the school may face, in order to promote Equality and Diversity in the fullest sense.

Promoting Equality and Diversity: The school recognises that it is a part of an increasingly diverse society. To prepare pupils for the future the school believes that it is important that Equality and Diversity is actively promoted so that young people understand the richness that accrues from living and working with a wide range of different peoples.

Eliminating Discrimination: The school has worked for many years to eliminate discrimination. It is important that this work continues. As young people move through the teenage years they sometimes define their own sense of self by identifying others who are different. It is vital that we teach them that society as a whole is richer for having people with disabilities or from ethnic minority backgrounds or people who simply choose to dress in a particular style. Individuals vary enormously and their differences should be celebrated.

Eliminating Harassment: We believe the school is generally a happy and tolerant community. Incidents of bullying or harassment of staff or students are rare but are always dealt with swiftly. Again, the school is keen not to limit its thinking to race, disability, sexual orientation or gender (covered by legislation) but to consider that any reason for harassment is unacceptable. For example, a student may be harassed because he or she is overweight.

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Encouraging Participation in Public Life: We will continue to promote positive attitudes to other people through the curriculum and especially in citizenship by providing positive role models among the staff and student body. This will also be facilitated by ensuring that different groups are represented on student councils and the various staff groups.

Meeting Needs: The Learning Support Department takes the lead in ensuring that students who experience barriers or face difficulties receive appropriate support and guidance and the help they need. This way of working is a natural part of 'the way we do things here' and means that we would automatically look to provide additional help for staff and students who need it. There are also good systems and procedures in place to help us identify any help staff and students might need so that we can make reasonable adjustments.

1.2 Involvement of pupils, staff and parents

The school will write to all parents in September 2008 and send copies of the letter to the local press. Attempts will also be made to get onto local radio. The letter will also be published on the school web site.

Internally, the school's computer data base has already been used to identify staff and students with medical problems and from ethnic minority backgrounds. Students and staff with medical issues will encompass many who might be classified as disabled and is in keeping with the school's policy of addressing barriers for all who need it.

Interviews will then be held with a cross section of staff, students and parents including males and females. A copy of the letter asking parents for permission is attached as Appendix D. The areas covered in all interviews is contained in Appendix B and a list of interviewees is given in Appendix C.

1.3 Information gathering

Staff:

All applications are monitored for disability, ethnicity and gender. All staff on appointment complete an Occupational Health Unit (OHU) pro-forma. This may result in a telephone call to the employee from OHU or a visit by the employee to OHU. The school's Personnel Manager would be advised by OHU of fitness to work and any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

The school encourages employees to disclose information that may present 'barriers' for them at work. There is a clear whistle blowing policy and staff are encouraged to bring to the attention of senior leaders any improper conduct including harassment and discrimination. The Personnel Manager monitors recruitment and promotion ensuring that posts are offered on the grounds of relevant qualification, knowledge, skills and experience. There is a confidential exit interview process and any issues that are brought forward are used to inform policy revision.

There will be an annual review of the scheme which will be taken to the governors' personnel committee. An anonymised analysis of statistical information will be a part of this with any trends identified.

Staff with temporary (short-term) or permanent disabilities

On appointment: Potential employees with disabilities are recognised from their application form. In addition, an alert to a person who has had a short-term disability, or who have a current disability, is raised from the medical form which accompanies their appointment. All steps required to enable the employee to work without exacerbating the condition are taken from the date of appointment. This may include, for example, a risk assessment carried out for working with VDU equipment.

Disability developed while employed: In all cases, staff are referred to the Occupational Health Unit with a specific request for feedback to include how to manage the disability in the workplace. This has included, for example:

- phased rehabilitation
- risk assessment meetings to enable withdrawal or minimising of certain physical activities as part of the job role (either temporarily or permanently)
- follow up meetings to assess effectiveness of systems put into place
- meetings with line managers to explain the nature of the disability and how this will affect work carried out
- negotiation to reduce working hours
- purchase of specialist equipment e.g. ergonomic furniture, keyboards and other software to reduce strain on a damaged part of the body
- liaison with outside specialist agencies to enable correct equipment to be supplied e.g. RNIB

Students:

The school already analyses exam results by gender and ethnicity. For the purposes of disability the school will use existing data about students in terms of their medical needs although we recognise that some students with disabilities may not be on this register. Encouraging disclosure of disabilities that present barriers for young people will, we anticipate, increase the number of students identified on the database. The wider definition of disability will mean that the majority of students with chronic problems will meet the definition in any case. This is compatible with the school's wide ranging intention to help anyone who faces barriers to learning. Additional analysis based on medical needs and disability will be required in future (see section 2).

In relation to sexual orientation, there is a difficulty with disclosure. Emerging adults can be unsure of their sexuality. Developing a suitable procedure is a development priority for the scheme. However, the school's commitment to support students who disclose is a necessary first step to eliminating discrimination and harassment.

1.4 Impact Assessment

The staff and students listed in Appendix C will act as an unofficial reference group. As the scheme is implemented we will carry out selected interviews to gauge the impact of our actions.

Analysis of exam results will be developed as described above.

Monitoring of progress with the action plan (see Section 2) will be undertaken annually in the summer term. A full policy review will be undertaken over the autumn and spring terms of the third year of the scheme.

Cheshire County Council has devised an Impact Assessment Tool Kit (Appendix E). This has been used to review our school policies with Senior Leaders, the Governing Body and the staff reference group (Appendix B). This is an ongoing activity. A review schedule will be set up so that all policies are reviewed in this way over a three year cycle rather than all at once as been the case in setting up this scheme.

Congleton High School Equality and Diversity Scheme

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft letter inviting parents to contribute to become involved in the formation of the scheme

Appendix B – Information capture sheet to be used with parents, pupils and staff

Appendix C – List of participants – to be completed after consultation in autumn term

Appendix D – Letter asking for parental permission to speak to students

Appendix E – Impact Assessment Tool Kit

Appendix F – First draft of Summary Action Plan

Equality and Diversity Scheme – Appendix A

Promoting Equality and Diversity in Congleton High School

Dear Parent / Carer

Promoting Equality & Diversity in Congleton High School

You may be aware that there is now new legislation which applies in all work places to **promote** equality and diversity. The change of emphasis in the new regulations is described below but a key feature is to consult with key individuals or groups on how practice can be improved. This letter asks for your help in this process.

Introduction

Congleton High School is developing an equality and diversity scheme and wishes to invite people who believe they can help the school to participate in the development of the new scheme.

Congleton High School's motto 'Achieving Success Together' is based on a mission statement that includes *"We are building a caring inclusive community which encourages students, parents, staff and governors to make a positive contribution to the common good"*

The school therefore welcomes and embraces the new emphasis in equality and diversity legislation which places a duty on employers to **promote** equality and diversity and not to simply react to issues as they arise.

Barriers

The school is using the term 'barriers' when considering how it can develop its policy on equality and diversity. People often face barriers in their lives that make it difficult for them to do everything they would like or need to do. These barriers may be caused by harassment, discrimination and bullying for reasons of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender (covered by legislation). But they may also have been caused by other factors not covered by legislation, for example, religious intolerance. The school wishes to examine the barriers staff, students and visitors to the school may face, in order to promote equality and diversity in the fullest sense.

Young People

Schools exist to meet the needs of young people. Congleton High School is particularly concerned to consult with adults and young people who may have faced 'barriers to learning' at school. Barriers to learning may have been brought about by the things listed above but they may also have been caused by things that happen to young people at school, at home or in the community. For example, some young people are carers. Such a circumstance will not be covered by the new legislation but the school is keen to help young people overcome whatever barriers they may face. We do not want to limit our desire to help **all** young people by restricting this consultation to the required aspects. We want our consultation to be as wide as possible so that we consider any barriers to learning that may exist.

We believe that it is right that we place young people first in our consideration because we know that adults in the workplace have been covered by legislation for many years. Policy and practice therefore exists for employees, although we acknowledge that we need to shift our practice towards **promoting** equality and diversity for and among our employees. We will be consulting extensively with staff and visitors on these matters.

It is also the case that many young people find it hard to speak about the problems they are facing and have difficulty getting their point across. In the school situation and many others,

young people can be disempowered and disregarded simply because they are young. If we can find a way to listen and respond to young people we believe that it will help us do the same with the adults in the school community.

Six Elements

There are six elements to the general duty that the school wishes to consult upon. How can we best:-

1. Promote equality and diversity of opportunity?
2. Eliminate discrimination?
3. Eliminate harassment?
4. Promote positive attitudes?
5. Encourage participation in public life?
6. Take steps to meet disadvantaged people's needs even if this means more favourable treatment?

The first thing we want to do is to ask people who may have been affected by 'barriers' at school to help us in the consultation process. If you are able to help us would you get in touch? You can do this in several ways:-

By email: head@congleton.cheshire.sch.uk (Please put 'Equality and Diversity' in the subject line)

By telephone to the Headteacher's P.A., Stephenie Scattergood 01260 273013

By letter: Headteacher, Congleton High School, Box Lane, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4NS

By visiting the school and arranging to see me.

Thank you for reading this letter. I look forward to hearing from you or someone you know who may be able to help us.

Yours sincerely

David Hermitt
Headteacher

To promote accessibility for all, this letter can be made available in other formats on request.

Appendix B

Equality and Diversity Survey

In order to develop our Equality and Diversity schemes we want to consult with students, staff, parents and visitors to the schools about the 'barriers' they may have faced. For the purposes of our scheme barriers are anything that make it difficult for the person concerned to access all that the school has to offer. For students, the focus is likely to be around learning and social and personal development. For staff, the focus is likely to be concerned with their ability to work successfully and access appropriate professional development. Having said these things we are conscious that it is the student or colleague who defines the issues and the effects. We therefore approach this exercise with an open mind.

The following areas of enquiry do not contain lists of prearranged questions. The purpose will be to explore these areas with the individual / group so that the discussion is not led by the enquirer.

Physical Access

Are there parts of the school that you find it difficult to access? (Stairs, narrow doorways, narrow corridors, classrooms crowded with tables, toilets...)

Are there places where you find it difficult to do the things you need to do? (Bench heights, using tools, equipment, computer screens, sports activities...)

How does it make you feel when you can't access somewhere or find it difficult to do the things that others can?

Relationships with other people

Do other people treat you differently? In what ways and how does this make you feel?

Communication

Do people communicate with you appropriately?

Are you listened to? Are your views treated equally to other peoples?

Can you access all of the forms of communication available to others? (Height of signs, noticeboards, print sizes, email, etc.)

Inclusion

Tell us about situations in which you have felt included as an equal.

Tell us about situations in which you have felt excluded.

Appendix C

The school is grateful to the following people for their contribution towards the production of the Equality and Diversity Scheme.

Appendix D

Dear [*Name of Parent*]

I am writing to ask your permission to talk to [*Name of Student*] about their experience of Congleton High School.

As you may recall from a letter that was sent home in October, the school is developing an Equality and Diversity Scheme to try and improve its practice in reducing 'barriers to learning'. The following extract from the October letter said:

"The school is using the term 'barriers' when considering how it can develop its policy on Equality and Diversity. People often face barriers in their lives that make it difficult for them to do everything they would like or need to do. These barriers may be caused by harassment, discrimination and bullying for reasons of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender (covered by legislation). But they may also have been caused by other factors not covered by legislation, for example, religious intolerance. The school wishes to examine the barriers staff, students and visitors to the school may face, in order to promote Equality and Diversity in the fullest sense."

Over the next few weeks we want to talk to a cross section of students about their experience of school in order to understand better the barriers students may face. An action plan will follow these interviews in order to improve our practice and minimise problems for students.

All discussions will be on a one to one basis and responses will be kept confidential. A copy of the areas for discussion is attached for your information. It is expected that interviews may last about 15 minutes.

Yours sincerely,

David Hermitt
Headteacher

Appendix E

Framework Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Tool Kit for Schools

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Introduction

Schools are committed to Equality and Diversity to help improve the quality and inclusiveness of their educational services and to have an effective measure to monitor and improve their performance.

Schools recognise that although inequality, disadvantage and discrimination exist in society, its aim is to ensure that no one who deals with the School in any capacity receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of: age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental impairment.

This approach is all encompassing. The approach focuses, not just upon the need to comply with the wide ranging legislation introduced to promote equality and diversity, but also on identifying best practice and applying this flexibly and proportionately within the school. The Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment is a key part of this.

The toolkit is designed to assist schools who will have to undertake an EIA in the course of their work.

What is an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment?

In the context of Section 71 of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Equality and Diversity Standard for Local Government, an EIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is written or unwritten, formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy or size of the function.

The primary function of the EIA should be to determine the extent of differential impact upon the relevant groups within the school environment and in turn whether that impact is adverse, that is whether it has a negative impact on groups or individuals in relation to one or more of the equality and diversity categories (gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, offending past, transgendered and transsexual people. People with dependants). In the light of this assessment, if it is decided that the policy has an adverse impact, the School must consider alternative policies which more effectively achieve the promotion of equality and diversity of opportunity or measures which might be employed to mitigate the adverse impact.

In conducting an EIA there are certain methods and procedures that must be considered:-

- ◆ Assessing how the proposed policies are likely to affect people from relevant groups; this should include collecting and analysing relevant data;
- ◆ Consulting people who are likely to be affected by our proposed policies; and
- ◆ Reviewing and revising the proposed policies in light of the assessment and consultation.

To assess the impact of a proposed policy it is important to have as much information as possible about how the proposed policy will affect people. How this is assessed will depend on the nature of the policy itself but may include some of the following:

- ◆ Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings
- ◆ Available research findings
- ◆ Comparisons between similar policies in our School and other Schools.
- ◆ Survey data
- ◆ Equality and Diversity monitoring data
- ◆ One off data gathering exercises
- ◆ Specially commissioned research

Carrying out an EIA can be a positive exercise for the school. In many ways the school may be carrying out an Equality and Diversity Assessment in an informal way and in taking into account equality and diversity issues. The EIA is a more formal process to help support the schools decision making process in terms of identifying adverse impacts on particular groups.

Glossary of Terms

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

A framework designed to measure, uncover and rectify different outcomes between people of different groups and identify whether these different outcomes have a diverse effect.

Policy

The term policy includes adopted or localised school policies, procedures, custom and practices over implementation, plans or functions. This is not an exhaustive list.

Initial Assessment

A relatively straightforward process to identify policies, describe their aims and objectives and who is intended to benefit from the policy and to determine if there is an adverse effect on different groups. Assessment needs to be recorded to determine any further action and priority.

Full Assessment

This is a more detailed review and required further investigation into the impact. It should take into account the views of all relevant stakeholders. It may involve formal consultation with the people and groups most likely to be affected. If this process turns up further evidence of adverse impact then an action plan, priorities and timescales is required including arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the policy and tracking its impact at a later date.

Direct Discrimination

When someone is subject to detrimental treatment because of their social identity i.e. race/ethnicity, gender, disability etc.

Indirect Discrimination

When a rule or regulation such as selection for a job is applied to everyone but has a detrimental or **Disproportionate Negative Impact** on one group than another e.g. black people v white people, women v men, younger people v older people.

Adverse Impact

Some policies/arrangements that may inadvertently have an adverse impact on some groups who are more likely to get a lesser opportunity or be excluded all together.

Different Impact

Some policies/arrangements are designed to target particular groups e.g. 'children of travellers' within the community so it is by intention that some groups will be affected differently by the policy.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

This document should be completed in accordance with the EIA Guidance.

The term 'Policy' includes: policies, procedures, practices, plans or functions.

Stage 1 – Defining the Scope of the EIA

What is being assessed and who is responsible for carrying out the Assessment?					
1.1	Policy being assessed				
1.2	Policy Aims and Objectives				
1.3	Lead Officer carrying out the Assessment				
1.4	Other internal groups to be involved, including in a 'Challenge Role'				
1.5	External Partners – Stakeholders / Equality and Diversity Groups				
Assessing potential issues (Refer to 'Equality and Diversity Flowchart' for initial assessment)					
1.6	The equality and diversity groups to be considered and level of relevance (Identify groups as appropriate)	High	Medium	Low	Notes
	(a) Particular racial groups				
	(b) People with particular disabilities				
	(c) Particular gender groups				
	(d) People of particular sexual orientation				
	(e) People of particular age				
	(f) People with particular religion or faith				
1.7	What are the main issues relating to equality and diversity within the Policy?				

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Assessing Consultation, Service Delivery and Practical Outcomes	
2.1	Issues raised from other data, research or consultation
2.2	Measures to be considered to help reduce adverse impact for particular groups
External Challenge and Consultation	

2.3	List consultation undertaken with appropriate stakeholders and equality and diversity groups	
2.4	Issues raised and feedback from stakeholders and equality and diversity groups	
2.5	Main issues that may hinder effective implementation of measures	
2.6	Likely impact on particular groups	

Stage 3 – Options and Decisions

3.1	Main conclusions and recommendations of EIA	
3.2	Feedback to stakeholders and equality and diversity groups / Review of EIA	

Stage 4 – Implementation and Review

The Action plan arising from the development of the Scheme may be described as a part of the School Development or Improvement Plan. If so, please indicate here:

Action Plan is a part of the SDP/SIP _____ (Please tick)

If not a part of the SDP/SIP please complete the following table:

Action Required	Timeframe	Resources / Cost	Lead Officer Responsible	Relevant Performance Indicator/Target

Stage 5 – Publishing Results

5.1	Where are published results available?	
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Signed
Date

Questions to consider when undertaking an EIA

The following questions may help to provide some assistance when you are undertaking an EIA.

Initial Assessment

It is suggested that the following questions could be considered when carrying out an initial assessment:

- What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?
- Are there associated objectives of the policy? If so, what are they?
- Who defines or defined the policy?
- Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy including:
- What outcomes do we want to achieve with this policy and for whom?
- Who are the main stakeholders in relation to this policy?
- Who is intended to benefit from this policy and in what way?
- How do these outcomes meet or hinder other policies, values or objectives of school?
- What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?
- Are there any groups which might be expected to benefit from the policy but which do not or that the policy could adversely affect?

Sources of Data

It is suggested that the following questions could be considered:

- What do we need to know about this policy?
- What information is needed to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account?
- Who should be involved in determining what information is needed?
- What existing quantitative data is available, in-house and externally?
- What existing qualitative or evaluative research is available, in-house and externally?
- What additional data is needed?
- Is there a need to generate primary data?
- Is there a need for secondary analyses of existing data?
- Who will be partners in information gathering/provision?
- What processes are required to consult effectively with these partners?

Assessment of Impact

The following questions may help guide the assessment process:

- Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory?
- If the policy is indirectly discriminatory can it be justified under the Acts?
- If the policy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory, does it still have an adverse impact?
- Is the policy intended to increase Equality and Diversity of opportunity by permitting or requiring affirmative or positive action or action to redress disadvantages? Is it lawful?
- Is there any alternative measure which would achieve the desired aim without the adverse impact identified?
- Is there any mitigation which would alleviate the adverse impact identified?
- Are there additional measures which can be adopted which would further Equality and Diversity of opportunity in the context of this policy?

Consideration of Measures of Impact

The following may be of assistance in considering the impact:

- How does each option further or hinder equality and diversity of opportunity?
- How does each option reinforce or challenge stereotypes which constitute or influence equality and diversity of opportunity?
- What are the consequences for the group concerned and for the School of not adopting an option more favourable to equality and diversity of opportunity?
- How will the relevant group be advised of the new or changed policy or service?
- What are the costs of implementing each option?
- Will the social and economic costs and benefits to the relevant group of implementing the option outweigh the, costs to the School?
- An evaluation of net social benefits achieved by adopting each option must be considered. Does the school have international obligations which would be breached by, or could be furthered by, each of the options?

Questions to Consider in Guiding Consultation

The following questions may be of assistance in guiding consultation:

- Who is directly affected by the policy?
- What relevant groups have a legitimate interest in the policy?
- How do we ensure that those affected or with a legitimate interest in the policy are consulted?
- What methods of consultation will be used and at which stages of the EIA?
- How will information be made available to those consulted?
- Will the information be accessible to minority groups?
- What measures can be taken to facilitate effective consultation in light of any barriers that may exist?
- Have previous attempts at consultation with particular groups been unsuccessful? If so, why, and what can be done to overcome any obstacles?
- What resources are available to encourage full participation by marginalised groups?
- If meetings are to be held, where will they be held and at what time of the day?