

# Equality Information and Objectives

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## **1. History of most recent Policy Changes**

Whole Document Creation of new policy following review of existing policies and changes to legislation.

Lis Jolley, Principal

## **2. Legislative Compliance**

This Policy has been written as guidance for staff, parents or carers and young people with reference to the following guidance and documents:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty in Schools

### 3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

In response to The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Duty, this policy's aim is to provide a focused, intelligent and balanced approach to ensuring equality for all within our School. The Equality Duty is a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

The new Equality Duty supports good decision-making – it encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of our activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, Digitech Studio School Bristol is better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

In some circumstances this will require positive action and this will be applied fairly, though not necessarily equally. The Equality Duty does not require public bodies to treat everyone the same; rather it requires us to think about people's different needs and how these might be met. Neither does it require us to make services homogeneous or to try to ignore differences between people; the focus is upon making informed, intelligent decisions that allow diversity to be accommodated and celebrated, allowing individuals equality of opportunity and, where possible, of experience.

The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender. The new Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The new Equality Duty is designed to reduce bureaucracy while ensuring public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

It requires Digitech Studio School Bristol to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

At Digitech Studio School Bristol we aim to have a set of equality objectives which will allow us to continue to improve our core function; to provide a rich education for all students and take pride in and celebrate their success. The same also applies to the professional and career development opportunities for staff.

## 4. Digitech's Equality Objectives

**Equality objective 1:** *Reduce the gap in attainment and progress between students with an identified SEND need and their peers.*

Digitech Studio School Bristol recognises that for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), both nationally and in South Gloucestershire and Bristol, there is an achievement gap. This means that students with SEND tend to obtain fewer GCSEs or at lower grades than the average for their year group.

Our first equality objective is to reduce this difference in achievement for Digitech students at the end of year 11 to zero. That is, the % of students with SEND gaining good qualifications will be the same as the overall year group.

1. Invest heavily in intervention programmes across all year groups to ensure that students, particularly those with an identified SEND need get the additional support they need.
2. Invest in understanding and training for staff around the additional support students may be entitled to where an identified SEND need exists to ensure students can access public examinations in a fair way.

**Equality objective 2:** *Reduce the gap in attainment and progress between students who are classed as 'disadvantaged' and their peers.*

Digitech Studio School Bristol recognises that for children and young people who come from what is termed as a 'disadvantaged' background (students eligible for the pupil premium; those eligible for free school meals, children in care or children of service personnel), both nationally and in Bristol, there is an achievement gap. This means that students with this characteristic tend to obtain fewer GCSEs or at lower grades than the average for their year group.

Our second equality objective is to reduce this difference in achievement for Digitech students at the end of year 11 to zero. That is, the % of students with disadvantaged background gaining basic qualifications will be the same as the overall year group.

1. Invest heavily in intervention programmes across all year groups to ensure that students, particularly those with an identified disadvantaged background get the additional support they need to catch up with their peers.
2. Invest in understanding and training for staff around what barriers disadvantaged students may face along with strategies to overcome those barriers. As achievement is linked to many other factors this will include strategies around attendance, behaviour, motivation along with more traditional academic strategies.

**Equality objective 3:** *To narrow the gap in attendance rates between disadvantaged students and other students in the School.*

The attendance rates of Disadvantaged students will improve year on year to meet a target of 95% attendance by the end of 2017-18. This will bring their attendance in line with their

peers currently and would put their attendance significantly above their group nationally. Attendance is intrinsically linked to achievement outcomes at the end of a student's time in the School. It is also an indication of engagement and overall wellbeing.

1. Put a particular specific focus on the attendance of pupils from a disadvantaged background. Focus on engagement with both student and parent / carers. Routinely track their attendance intervening where attendance starts to slip.
2. Use mentoring and coaching programmes to improve attendance and reengagement in the School and education.
3. Where appropriate use legal avenues (penalty notice warnings, penalty notices and prosecutions) to enforce good attendance to the School.

**Equality objective 4:** *To train staff on how to respond effectively to prejudice-related bullying.*

At Digitech Studio School Bristol we believe all forms of bullying and harassment are categorically unacceptable. We deal firmly with any reported incidents and work to educate those involved as to the damage caused by bullying and harassment, both physical and emotional.

Of particular concern are incidents involving prejudice-related bullying or harassment.

Although reported incidences of such bullying is rare at Brunel, we feel they carry an additional level of damage as they are often not only targeted at an individual, but also at the wider community that that individual identifies with (or is believed to identify with).

1. Through assemblies and tutor programmes we will develop a range of resources to highlight the harm caused by all forms of bullying and harassment along with strategies to help those who may have been the target of any bullying or harassment.
2. We will deal robustly with anyone who is found to have been involved in bullying or harassing behaviours.
3. We will develop a plan of education to work with those who have been involved in bullying or harassing behaviours to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
4. By July 2018, all staff will feel confident in responding effectively to prejudice related bullying,
5. By July 2018, 100% of the staff will feel that incidences of the use of homophobic, sexist or racist language are rare or very rare, as shown by the annual staff survey.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Principal & School Council**

The Principal is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress of all students and for making strategic decisions which will maximise their opportunity to learn. The Principal and the School Council will delegate the day to day implementation of this policy to the Vice Principal. Day to day monitoring of Young people in Care will be delegated to the designated person for CiC, this is covered in the appropriate separate policy.

The Principal will be informed of the progress of all vulnerable learners and any issues with regard to the School's provision in this regard through:

- analysis of the whole-School pupil progress tracking system (devolved to Assistant Principal: Outcomes)
- maintenance and analysis of a whole-School attendance tracker (devolved to Attendance Officer)
- analysis of instances of bullying (devolved to Assistant Principal: Ethos)
- discussions and consultations with students and parents/carers

### **5.2 Designated Lead for Children in Care**

The School also has a named person who leads on issues relating to Children in Care of the Local Authority or those who are adopted or are care leavers. The responsibilities of this role are included in the Children in Care Policy.

### **5.3 All Staff**

All staff in the School should be aware of this Policy and their responsibility for promoting the educational and social inclusion of young people covered by this Policy, and training and briefings will be provided for them on best practice.

All staff have a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity for all students and to challenge discrimination, harassment or bullying of any student (or staff member, parent/ carer or visitor) on grounds of their protected characteristics (e.g. their ethnicity, 'race', religion or belief, disability etc.) They also have a responsibility to promote good relations between different groups of students.

## **6. Monitoring**

The Assistant Principal will take overall responsibility for implementation and monitoring of these Equality Objectives. This will primarily be achieved through the line management of the appropriate staff members responsible for items relating to each objective.

## **7. Links with Other Services**

Digitech Studio School Bristol recognises the need to link with other agencies to provide effective support for vulnerable students and to have a coordinated approach to meeting their needs.

Therefore effective working links will be maintained with:

Education Welfare Team:

- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/educationwelfare-service>
- Parent Partnership Service:
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/support-parentsand-carers>
- HOPE Virtual School for Looked After Children:
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/children-careeducation>
- Bristol City Council Local Offer:
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/local-offer-sendsupport->
- Findability
- Bristol Hospital Education Service
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/hospital-education-service>
- Bristol Educational Psychology Service
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/educational-psychology-service>
- Bristol First Response (Safeguarding Concerns)
- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/first-responsebristol-report-concerns-about-child-social-worker>

## **Appendix 1 – Digitech’s Equality Objectives Summary**

**Equality objective 1:** *Reduce the gap in attainment and progress between students with an identified SEND need and their peers.*

**Equality objective 2:** *Reduce the gap in attainment and progress between students who are classed as ‘disadvantaged’ and their peers.*

**Equality objective 3:** *To narrow the gap in attendance rates between disadvantaged students and other students in the School.*

**Equality objective 4:** *To train staff on how to respond effectively to prejudice-related bullying.*