

WHAT ARE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR OUR SCHOOL?



Where do protected characteristics come from?

The term 'Protected Characteristics' was first introduced in The Equality Act 2010. This act defined nine specific characteristics that are protected from discrimination. These are listed below:

1. Age

Discrimination based on age is unlawful, and everyone should be treated equitably, regardless of age.

2. Disability

Reasonable adjustments must be made to provide equal opportunities for those with disabilities.

3. Gender reassignment

Discrimination against transgender individuals is illegal, and they must be treated with dignity and respect.

4. Marriage and civil partnership

Married and civil partnered individuals must not face discrimination.

5. Pregnancy and Maternity

Discrimination against pregnant individuals or those on maternity leave is illegal.

6. Race

Discrimination based on race or ethnicity is illegal, and everyone should be treated equitably.

7. Religion or belief

Discrimination based on religion or belief is illegal, and individuals' beliefs must be respected.

8. Sex

Discrimination against men, women, and non-binary individuals is illegal.

9. Sexual orientation.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is illegal, including discrimination against individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or any other sexual orientation.

WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS?

As a school we have embraced our legal obligation to promote equality and tackle discrimination based on these characteristics. It's essential to ensure that all children and adults at Charlton have equal access to opportunities and resources, regardless of their background or identity.

This means that sometimes it is necessary to take active steps to ensure that all children and adults are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities and resources, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The following action steps help ensure that we actively promote equality and tackle discrimination.

Creating a positive school culture that values diversity and inclusion

Promoting a positive school culture that values diversity and inclusion helps to create a sense of community and belonging for all.

Examples of positive action at Charlton

- Making our school values clear, easy to understand and central to our school ethos and climate (*Kindness, Responsibility and Happiness*)
- Incorporating diverse literature and educational resources into the curriculum.

- Teaching children about stereotyping and bias - discussing these, and where they have seen them, will help equip them in how to deal with these in the future.

Being a Rights Respecting School (RRS)



Being a UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools Award supports Charlton to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture.

Through RRS we are putting the [UN Convention on the Right of the Child](#) (CRC) at the heart of our practice to improve wellbeing and help all children realise their potential.

RRS is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

Curriculum design and implementation

At Charlton we feel that designing and delivering an inclusive curriculum is key to making all children feel seen, valued, and engaged in their learning journey. We are making a conscious effort to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into lessons and experiences. For instance, when teaching any aspect of history, they explore the contributions of individuals from different races and backgrounds, shedding light on often overlooked narratives, perspectives and significant people.

Staff training and awareness

By providing staff training, induction and development on protected characteristics, unconscious bias, and inclusive practices is helping us create a more aware and knowledgeable school community. This in turn is leading to more inclusive teaching practices and a greater sense of belonging for all children.

Inclusive policies and procedures

At school and Trust level we are developing and implementing policies and procedures that are inclusive and promote equality for all, ensuring a safe, positive and welcoming school environment. This include policies on bullying, gender guidance, Equality information and objectives as well as policies that support children who may require additional adjustments.

Support for children who experience discrimination or inequality

Providing support systems for children who experience discrimination or inequality based on protected characteristics (in and outside of the school environment) is an important part of our work around protected characteristics.

We organise awareness events and assemblies to educate about the importance of empathy, respect, and inclusivity. These initiatives help foster a culture of understanding and support, making it clear that discrimination or inequality based on protected characteristics is not tolerated.

Encouraging open and respectful communication

Promoting open and respectful communication among children and staff is crucial for building trust, understanding, preventing discrimination or exclusion and ensuring that everyone feels respected and heard. As a whole school ethos and approach, we always look to address conflicts and misunderstandings constructively.