

Equality and diversity

"My son's learning fast. He doesn't need me to tell him that everybody's different. But I do want him to understand that everybody's equal too.

- Diversity is all about differences
- Everyone is different - physically, socially, culturally, sexually.
- Equality is when we are all treated the same no matter who or what we are
- There are a number of languages spoken in Wiltshire besides English
- Disability - Research suggests that children with special needs are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect therefore such concerns should be shared

different and equal

Britain has experience over centuries of enriching its society through many gifted and talented people making their homes here. Diversity is all about differences. We are all different - physically, socially, culturally and sexually. Diversity means variety, it means a rich and vibrant culture. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society. Discrimination is when you are treated differently just because of who you are. You could experience discrimination from an individual or from a business, a service, an agency or even a school. Although we're all different we all have the right to equal respect, opportunity and justice, so there are laws in the UK to prevent discrimination on all levels. If you feel you or your child has experienced discrimination, your local authority, local organisations and the legal system are there to help you.

Racism

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 means all public bodies have a clear duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity and good relations between 'racial groups'. This includes schools, so that the curriculum and teaching should celebrate diversity, raise racial awareness of our diverse communities and promote race equality through the monitoring of pupil progress. Reporting and recording racial incidents and having in place clear procedures for handling racist incidents.

Homophobia

Diversity in Wiltshire is changing and should be welcomed and reflected across all services in the county. It is unacceptable that anyone is targeted for abuse or discrimination because of their sexuality or indeed the sexuality of their parents, carers or family members. To that end, sex education in schools places an emphasis on respect for sexual orientation - whether straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less favourably than other people because of their disability. It also requires them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Sexism

Sexism arises out of common stereotypes that exist regarding male and female roles in society. It can be based on experiences some people have of relationships between adults of both genders. Sexism can be experienced in the home, in social situations or in the workplace, leading to discrimination in a variety of situations, including serious forms of physical or psychological abuse. The Sex Discrimination Act is there to provide a legal framework for promoting equality between genders.

Make contact

On the opposite page you'll find list of contacts that you may find useful. You and your child have the right to be different and equal, so make contact today and get the support you need.

WARNING SIGNS

Children notice difference all the time, in everything in everyone, everywhere. They need to know diversity is important, that equality is everyone's right, and that difference should not be met with hostility, suspicion, envy or fear..

ACTION

You should expect every setting your child is in to have made a visible commitment to equality and diversity. All should listen and act immediately if something happens or you have worries.

WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents, including parents of vulnerable children or children from minority communities. Contact them.

PREVENTION

All parents have a right to expect a safe environment and support for their child whatever their individual needs, experiences or background. Schools are becoming more inclusive with diversity and equality expected in all areas of school life.

CONTACTS

- **DIAL UK**
(National number)
01302 310123
- **Wiltshire Racial Equality Council (WREC)**
01225 766439
- **Children's Disability Teams:**
North & West Wiltshire
01225 709777
Salisbury & Kennet
01722 327551
- **Wiltshire Family Support (Disabled Children)**
0800 1696 321

*Check the Wiltshire ACPC website for the latest phone numbers:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk*