



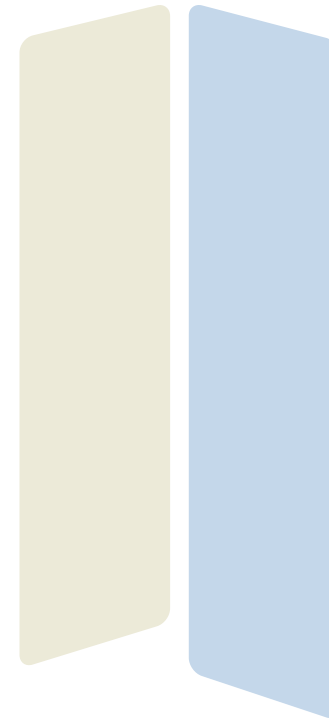
Beyond Equity: A Social Justice Framework for Education in East Renfrewshire



Education Department

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“One day
EVERYBODY
should have
ALL of their
rights met no
matter what.”

P7 pupil, Hillview
Primary School



FOREWORD

**Councillor Andrew Anderson,
Convener for Education and Equalities**



The Education Department's vision of ***Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*** describes its core ambition for every child and young person in East Renfrewshire to be supported to achieve their fullest potential in life.

Looking to the future, technological advances and changes to the way we work mean those lives may look very different - in terms of how people learn, how they work and how they engage in society - while climate change is bringing into sharp relief the interconnectedness of individuals, societies and the natural world.

Reflecting on the past, we can take pride in the Scottish education system's long-established values of equality and social justice. The planned incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots

law underscores the central position children's rights must have in creating conditions where every learner can flourish. However, we also know we need to continue to improve how well we equip all children and young people, regardless of circumstances, for success in their learning, life and work.

Crucially, although we seek to equip all learners equally for the future, the ways in which we do this must recognise their individuality, value their diversity and promote understanding and acceptance of difference. Building on the principles set out in [Advancing Excellence and Equity](#), this paper offers practical guidance on how teachers and early years practitioners can collectively promote social justice in East Renfrewshire schools and centres, while maintaining a relentless focus on achieving excellence through equity for every learner.



INTRODUCTION

‘Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities now and in the future.’ (GTCS 2021)

The GTCS Standards 2021 give prominence to social justice as one of the core professional values of Scottish education, which should be evident in our relationships and professional practice at all levels and in all parts of the system. All educators need to have an in-depth understanding of the political, cultural and socio-economic issues affecting learners and their families in order to create a school culture which promotes equality, respects rights and preserves human dignity.

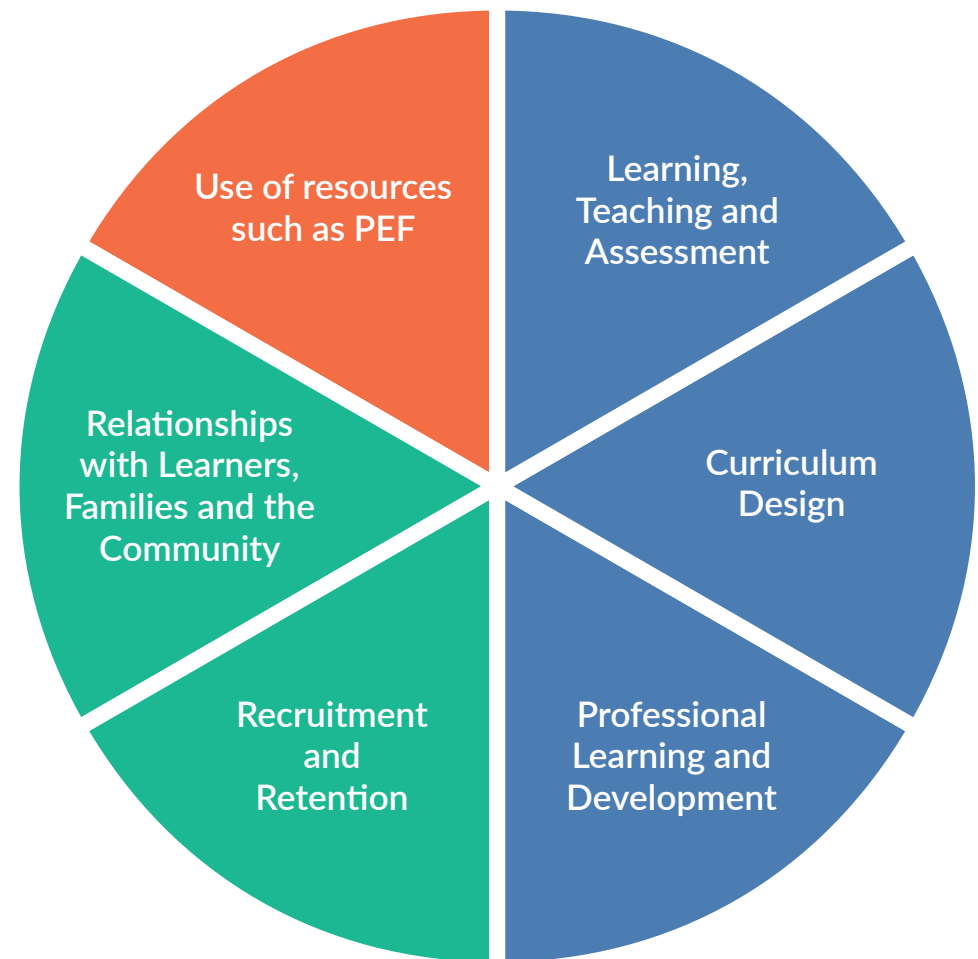
The GTCS definition above reflects sociologist Nancy Fraser’s theory of social justice, which identifies three dimensions:

- **Redistribution (= economic rights)**
- **Recognition (= social/cultural rights)**
- **Representation (= political rights)**

The Scottish education system has in place well-developed mechanisms for **redistribution** of resources to promote socially just outcomes, e.g. through Pupil Equity Funding, free school meals, or education maintenance allowance to name a few examples.

However redistribution alone is unlikely to have a lasting impact on social injustice¹: in order to improve outcomes we require to also focus on **recognition** – the ways in which we acknowledge, respect and include all people, cultures and identities; and **representation** – the extent to which all people can equally engage with services and participate in decision making.

The diagram opposite suggests six key areas of practice where we can work to promote social justice by improving redistribution, recognition and representation.



¹Olson, K (Ed) *Nancy Fraser Debates her Critics*. Verso 2008

1. **Use of Resources:** We support and empower schools to use resources to deliver activities, interventions and experiences which will improve equity in education outcomes.
2. **Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** We implement socially and culturally responsive Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices that reflect the experiences and perspectives of our pupils and reduce barriers to learning and attainment.
3. **Curriculum Design:** All children and young people see positive representations of themselves and diverse others in what they read, see, and hear. The curriculum recognises and reflects the diversity of society and takes account of global perspectives.
4. **Professional Learning and Development:** As educators we are able to recognise our own racial and social identities. We work proactively to understand our own bias and develop cultural competence, continually updating our practice to meet all learners' needs.
5. **Recruitment and Retention:** We are improving staff diversity to better represent and support our pupil population.
6. **Relationships with Learners, Families and the Community:** We promote family and community partnerships that value and involve all our pupils, parents and partners, and we work together to develop a socially just climate.

Evidence about the extent of inequality and its impact on children and young people's wellbeing and life chances is extensive:

- The average child poverty rate across East Renfrewshire is 16%, with this figure rising to over 30% in the west of the authority area.²
- Two thirds of children growing up in poverty in Scotland live in a household where at least one person works.³
- In 2016-19, 44% of Scottish children in minority ethnic families were living in relative poverty, compared to 24% of all children.⁴

² https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Child_poverty

³ https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Child_poverty

⁴ https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Priority_groups

⁵ Addressing Inclusion: Effectively challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. LGBT Youth Scotland 2020

- 92% of LGBT young people report experiencing bullying in school in Scotland.⁵
- A Scottish study of LGBT young people who experienced homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying found that 94% believed it had negatively affected their education.⁶
- 29% of those who live in a household with a disabled household member live in poverty.⁷
- In 2021-22 in East Renfrewshire, 31.9% of Primary and Secondary learners with an additional support need had an attendance rate of less than 90%, compared with 20.6% of learners with no recorded additional support needs in the same sectors.⁸
- The national poverty rate is highest for single women with children at 38%.⁹
- 1.8% of the teaching workforce comes from a minority ethnic background; this compares with a minority ethnic population of 4% in Scotland. Only 0.7% of promoted staff come from BAME groups.¹⁰
- The poverty-related gap in Curriculum for Excellence attainment ranges from 1 to 13 percentage points across core literacy and numeracy skills in the Broad General Education, and has grown for our most disadvantaged pupils over the last three years.
- 58% of East Renfrewshire young people living in SIMD 1-2 attained five or more SQA qualifications at Level 5 in S4 in 2022 compared with 90% of young people living in SIMD 9-10, indicating an attainment gap of 32 percentage points at this level.

The Education Department has gathered a range of evidence and worked with children, staff and parents to develop a strategy outlining our key commitments to improve social justice over a three-year period. The Social Justice Strategy includes a summary of consultation evidence from stakeholders and is available [here](#).

⁶ Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People. Lough Dennell, B.L., Anderson, G and McDonnell, D /LGBT Youth Scotland 2018

⁷ https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Priority_groups

⁸ https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Priority_groups

⁹ https://data.gov.scot/poverty/2021/#Priority_groups

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/teaching-diverse-scotland-increasing-retaining-minority-ethnic-teachers-3-years/pages/12/>

USE OF RESOURCES

We support and empower schools to use resources to deliver activities, interventions and experiences which will improve equity in education outcomes.

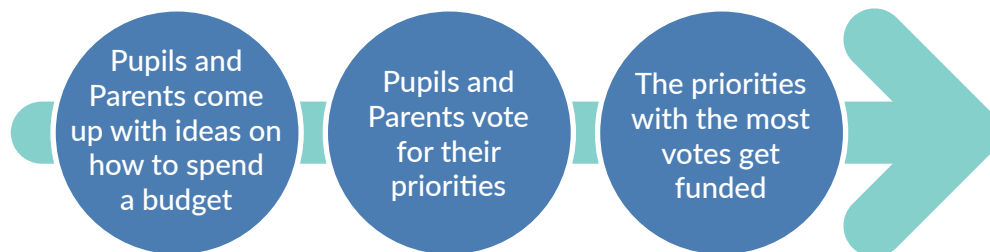
Pupil Equity Funding

As part of the national Scottish Attainment Challenge, the education department is allocated funding from Scottish Government to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people ([see Strategic Equity Funding Plan](#)) and schools are allocated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Although allocated on a formula linked to Free School Meal Entitlement, head teachers have discretion to decide who would most benefit from support through PEF, whilst keeping a clear focus on improving equity.

In targeting PEF resources, it is essential that head teachers consider all available intelligence about identified children, including intersecting inequalities, and ensure that the links between the attainment gap, attendance, inclusion, engagement and participation are considered as part of planned interventions. Local guidance for schools on using PEF to tackle the poverty-related attainment gap is available [here](#).

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a process to enable people to have a direct say in how money is spent locally. PB supports [Article 12 of the UNCRC](#) and can ensure that children, young people and the wider school community are authentically and actively involved in decision making.



Schools should use PB and other means of consultation to involve stakeholders in determining the use of resources such as school budget, PEF monies and money raised through fundraising, whenever it is appropriate to do so. Establishing a PB group can help to ensure all groups within the school community are represented in decision making. Consideration should always be given to the diversity of PB panels and groups to promote equal representation. Full guidance for schools on Participatory Budgeting and links to support resources can be accessed via the [ERC Equality & Social Justice Teams page](#).

Financial Support and Entitlements

The range of financial supports and entitlements available to low-income families can be difficult to navigate. Many families will move in and out of poverty over time, and families experiencing hardship for the first time may not know how to access support. Schools are often in a unique position to know how families are coping and signpost financial support.

The following can help to improve financial equity in the school community:

- **Adopt Cost of the School Day approaches.** Cost of the School Day (CoSD) is aimed at reducing the cost of attendance and participation universally for all families, because poverty is often hidden. Many families who are struggling will never disclose this to the school, and children often live with the effects of deprivation without any outward visible sign. Meaningful consultation with parents and pupils, for example using the CoSD audit and action planning [toolkit](#), can help to identify challenges affecting children's learning which may not otherwise be known to the school. The CoSD collaborative self-evaluation strategies can also help schools to plan more effective targeted support for individual families.

- **Ensure all staff members have a sound understanding of poverty and its impact on children and young people.** High quality professional learning resources are available from organisations such as [Child Poverty Action Group Scotland](#) and [EIS PACT](#).
- **Access ongoing support, professional learning opportunities and key updates via the Equalities Coordinators Network.** School Equalities Coordinators have a key role to play in leading work to reduce the cost of the school day, raising awareness of the impact of poverty, and being an accessible contact for parents experiencing financial hardship. Further support for Equalities Coordinators is available through the [Equalities Coordinators Teams](#) page.
- **Promote Free School Meal registration.** All children in P1-5 have access to a free meal at school. However, free school meal registration is associated with a number of other financial benefits for families. It is therefore important that all eligible families continue to register for free meals, including those with children in P1-5, as registration is increasingly used as a 'passport' to other entitlements such as:
 - Help with meals during school holidays
 - Family support and bridging payments
 - PEF allocations for schools.
- **Promote financial entitlements through school communications regularly, and at key points in the school year.** In particular, it will be helpful to share links to online applications for [free school meals, clothing grants and Education Maintenance Allowance](#) in the summer term, and to re-share this information as part of the annual data check process. Financial entitlements are promoted regularly on the Council's social media pages and schools can use their social media pages and websites to share details of the available support widely.
- **Work with the Money Advice and Rights Team.** MART have developed a Financial Wellbeing service to offer confidential advice and support with applying for benefits and grants as well as debt advice. The team can work within schools to advise parents, either at planned events or by appointment. MART can work with establishments on making it easier for parents to access their advice at or through the school or nursery, in ways that avoid stigma and increase the likelihood of engagement with their services. Contact MART for more information [here](#).

- **Consult with people with lived experience of deprivation about any plans aimed at supporting families living with poverty.** Often, there can be reasons why multiple disadvantages can reduce the expected impact of interventions. There may be additional barriers to achieving equity that the school is not aware of and ongoing dialogue with families can help make anti-poverty approaches more successful.
- **Use the Professional Review and Development process** to identify learning needs around all aspects of equality and diversity and plan appropriate professional learning, either as part of collegiate time or within the 35 hours of personal CLPL.

Intersectionality

It is vital that individual equality groups are not considered in isolation. Children and families may be affected by multiple disadvantages at the same time, with the combined impact leading to significantly greater 'compounded' disadvantage.

For more information on intersectionality see GTCS Equality & Diversity Hub [Resources by Theme: Intersectionality](#).

Uniform

School and local authority policy on uniform can have a profound impact on the extent to which young people feel equal and included at school. The [Dressing for Excellence policy \(Standard Circular 6 \(Revised\)\)](#) outlines the Education Department's approach to school dress codes and schools should base their own uniform policies on this guidance.

In particular, school uniform policies should contain items which are inclusive of pupils of all religions, races, genders and abilities; are financially accessible to all; do not place additional burdens on any groups; and have been agreed with the school community through widespread consultation with learners, families and staff.

School and community uniform recycling/swapping initiatives can be an effective way to reduce cost, promote sustainability and protect dignity. Third sector organisations such as [East Renfrewshire Back to School Bank](#) and [Apparel Xchange](#) can also help families to access school uniform. Schools can make uniform more recyclable and accessible for all by promoting generic colours which are commonly worn across many establishments.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

We implement socially and culturally responsive learning, teaching and assessment practices that reflect the experiences and perspectives of our pupils and reduce barriers to learning and attainment.

Promoting equality should be understood as a way of leading learning, teaching and assessment - not as an additional task or a separate area of the curriculum.

'It is the responsibility of all colleagues in schools to promote and facilitate a culture and ethos of equality and diversity and to address individual and institutional discrimination.' ([GTCS Practitioner Guide to Equality and Diversity](#))

Social justice can be advanced through the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment primarily in two ways:

- By creating an environment where children learn through experiencing rights, equality and dignity in their own learning and teaching.
For example, when learning experiences are effectively differentiated to meet individual needs, and when the learning environment and positive relationships create a culture of equality and dignity.
- By delivering explicit learning and teaching about rights, equality and dignity.
For example, explicit lessons handling social justice themes which may often be delivered through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum or in PSHE.

Developing a culture of equality

Learning, teaching and assessment which promotes equality and social justice, must acknowledge and value the experiences, needs and rights of all learners and families. An inclusive approach *'not only allows children and young people to thrive in their community but also contributes to all children and young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity and helps to build a more just society.'* (Education Scotland: Embedding Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equality)

Schools should give careful consideration to the recognition and representation of people from all groups in the school's learning environment and throughout curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. The [ERC Self-evaluation tool for Diversity and Representation in Learning and Teaching](#) is linked to HGIOS 4 and was co-developed with Equalities Coordinators. It can be used by practitioners to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the ways that all learners and their families are included and represented in the learning environment, resources, policies and practices, and curriculum.

Effective differentiation

Effective differentiation is a central feature of high quality learning, teaching and assessment. Detailed guidance on effective differentiation is available in the guidance document [Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire](#).

Bilingualism should be valued as an asset and bilingual learners should be supported in ways that celebrate their linguistic identity and promote continued development of home languages. Detailed practical guidance can be found in the [ERC Guidance on Supporting Bilingual Learners](#) and [EAL Teams page](#).

'Children and young people have many 'differences', not just levels of ability - culture, social background, interests, stages of language acquisition, motivation levels, physical needs etc. A key technique teachers can use to effectively differentiate is to get to know their learners well and what they need.' Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire

Socially and culturally responsive learning and teaching

Socially and culturally responsive learning and teaching takes account of the general principles of differentiation with consideration for the entirety of learners' social and cultural differences, not only ability levels. Socially and culturally responsive pedagogies take account of the need to also be pro-active in promoting race, place, class and gender equity.

General principles of differentiation through a lens of socially and culturally responsive learning, teaching and assessment:

An environment that encourages and supports learning	<p>Do pupils of all ethnicities, genders and abilities see themselves and their families represented in the learning environment?</p> <p>Is the learning environment accessible to all, including those with additional support needs?</p>
Quality curriculum	<p>Is the curriculum inclusive, diverse and decolonised?</p> <p>Is it relevant to learners from all backgrounds, taking account of diverse perspectives and experiences in the choice of learning contexts and themes?</p> <p>Does it meet the needs of individual learners with consideration for the principles of effective curriculum design?</p>
Assessment that informs teaching and learning	<p>Do assessment practices take cognisance of student variance including cultural, linguistic, social and economic factors, as well as ability level?</p> <p>Does assessment take account of individual learners' communication needs?</p>
Instruction that responds to student variance	<p>Do teachers adapt approaches to learning and teaching to engage deeply with learners' readiness, interests and learning profile? Are pedagogical approaches well matched to how individuals and groups of pupils learn?</p> <p>Does instruction respond to learners' behaviour and support them to develop?</p>
Leading students and managing routines	<p>Does the classroom culture listen to and promote all voices, equally valuing the contributions and experiences of all learners?</p> <p>Are learners supported through classroom practices to ask questions, share different perspectives and take responsibility for their learning and progress?</p> <p>Do classroom routines focus on establishing effective relationships and achieving a sense of belonging for all learners?</p>



Some effective socially and culturally responsive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are:

- Culturally responsive teaching: Engaging with home culture on a deeper level, beyond the acknowledgement of festivals and celebrations, helps to make learners feel more connected to their teachers and to other pupils. This in turn enhances their ability to feel psychologically safe and learn effectively.

Sources of further information: [Learning for Justice](#)

Hammond, Zaretta L. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Corwin (2014)

- High quality additional support for learning: Making specific adjustments to the environment, resources, curriculum and learning and teaching to provide additional support for learners with identified additional support needs, reduces barriers to learning so that all learners can access meaningful learning experiences. Key considerations are:
 - Assessing and understanding the child or young person's means of communication and motivators so that teaching and learning approaches enable them both to understand and engage in learning activities;
 - Exploring ways of establishing a relationship so that they feel safe and so that they know who the key team around them is;
 - Helping them to achieve a sense of belonging through consideration of groupings and appropriate peer group; and,
 - Considering meaningful ways of obtaining pupil voice based on their relationships, and on their means of communication.

Sources of further information: [Healthier Minds website](#)
[Meeting Learners' Needs Website](#)

- Global citizenship education: When learning contexts are broadened out to include multiple perspectives, young people can deepen their understanding of their social, historical, cultural and political place in the world.

Sources of further information: [WOSDEC](#) [Global Citizenship Education SCOTDEC](#)

- Co-operative/collaborative learning strategies: Carefully structured collaborative activities which define pupil roles in a group, create positive interdependence between pupils, and explicitly focus on the development of social skills, can be effective in promoting inclusion by strengthening relationships and reducing the occurrence of in-groups and out-groups. In particular, co-operative learning can be an effective way to support bilingual learners.

Sources of further information: [Bell Foundation/EAL/collaborative activities](#)

'Teachers recognise, see and acknowledge the value in everyone and have a deep awareness of the need for culturally responsive pedagogies. They promote equality and diversity, paying careful attention to the needs of learners from diverse groups and in upholding children's rights.' GTCS 2021



CURRICULUM DESIGN

All children and young people see positive representations of themselves and diverse others in what they read, see, and hear. The curriculum recognises and reflects the diversity of wider society and takes account of global perspectives.

Inclusive

An inclusive curriculum must fully embrace the principles of personalisation and choice, relevance, challenge and enjoyment and progression to ensure that all children and young people have learning experiences which allow them to be motivated by their learning, progress at the pace that is right for them, and feel supported to achieve their fullest potential. The curriculum at all stages should be planned with enough flexibility to meet all learners' needs, including learners with additional support needs. [ERC Guidance on the Seven Principles of Curriculum Design](#) offers more detailed exploration and clarification of the design principles in practice.

[ERC Curriculum Design Vision for 2025](#) and [online resource](#) provide guidance and support on the roles and responsibilities of all teachers and practitioners in leading the curriculum, including the responsibility to deliver a curriculum which **meets the needs of all learners and is focused on their human rights**.

A wide range of professional support focused on meeting additional support needs, including regular CLPL opportunities, can be accessed via the [Support for Inclusion section of the Meeting Learners' Needs website](#). Education Scotland's [Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities wakelet](#) also links to a wide range of resources to help practitioners plan appropriately inclusive learning experiences for all learners. School ASN Coordinators have a key role to play in promoting and supporting the inclusion of all learners. Information, support and professional learning for ASN Coordinators can be found via the ERC [ASN Coordinators Teams page](#).

The department's Developing the Young Workforce ([DYW](#)) Action Plan outlines a core commitment to **promote diversity, inclusion and equity** through DYW at all levels of the curriculum in East Renfrewshire. From the earliest stages children should be supported to make natural links between the skills they are developing through their current learning, and possible future career paths. Children from some key equity groups may have less access to knowledge about different learning and career pathways and this

can limit the personal goals they are able to identify. High quality careers education in line with the [Career Education Standard 3-18](#) should be a prominent feature of schools' work to promote equity. The availability and effective promotion of vocational learning opportunities and bespoke pathways are essential components of an inclusive curriculum.

Diverse

[How Good Is Our School? 4](#) and [How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?](#) highlight the importance of placing the needs, rights and diversity of learners at the centre of curriculum design and development so that all children are included.

Through the entitlement to high quality [Learning for Sustainability](#) all children and young people should have learning experiences which help them to understand the interconnectedness of diverse people, societies and environments. Global citizenship education is a key element of Learning for Sustainability. Engaging with the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) can help ensure the curriculum builds learners' understanding of global diversity.

OECD's framework for developing learners' global competence, [Big Picture Thinking](#) (2022), collates many 'case study' examples of how schools in different international contexts have created learning experiences which are whole, relevant, deep, social, transformational, and in the world.

Foreign language learning experiences can create opportunities to explore shared commonalities as well as differences to foster tolerance and a positive understanding of diversity, for example through opportunities to compare children and young people's lives in Scotland and in other countries. An emphasis on small culture (meals, routines, relationships etc) as well as large culture (festivals, tourism etc) can help learners to identify how much people have in common, rather than emphasising differences which are often based on stereotypes.¹¹ The ERC [Lingualab](#) website has a range of [resources for professional learning](#) about intercultural education and [curriculum resources](#) linked to global citizenship.

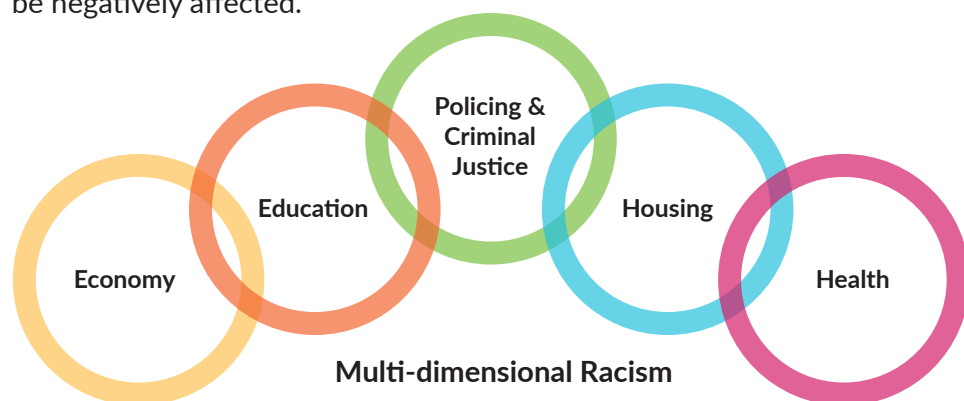
All schools are required to provide [LGBT inclusive education](#) so that all children, young people and families see positive representations of people of all gender identities and sexual orientations and are able to participate equally in the life and work of the school. [Professional learning modules](#) are available on the [national LGBT Inclusive Education platform](#) to support all practitioners to adopt LGBT inclusive practice.

Decolonised

Education Scotland's [Anti-Racist Education resources](#) highlight the importance of working to [decolonise](#) the curriculum.

There is significant evidence¹² that the curriculum has historically promoted a male, white, heterosexual, able-bodied worldview, and that this has led to other perspectives being marginalised and excluded. 'Decolonising' describes the process of adapting traditional Eurocentric contexts and themes for learning to include multiple perspectives and diverse identities. This can help to reduce bias and forms of discrimination such as sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism by increasing the recognition of different identities through the curriculum.

When pupils and families do not see their culture and lived experiences represented equally in school life, a wide range of factors such as parental engagement, pupil motivation, achievement and ultimately life chances can be negatively affected.



¹¹ See Holliday, A. Small Cultures. Applied Linguistics, Volume 20, Issue 2, June 1999, Pages 237–264 <https://adrianholliday.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/holliday-99-smal-cultures.pdf>; also Kramsch, C. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, v1 n1 p57-78 Jan 2013 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1127430.pdf>

¹² For a useful summary see Bhopal, K. White Privilege: The myth of a Post-racial Society. Policy Press (2018)

'In the context of school education, the concept of coloniality explains how Western and Eurocentric perspectives have become 'the norm', partly because of lack of diversity in the education workforce and more generally because of power imbalances in society that have existed since colonial times. These power imbalances determine which viewpoints are regarded as valuable, and which types of information schools have traditionally focused on teaching.' Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER): [Introduction to Anti-Racist Curriculum Development](#)

Often, decolonising can be achieved by simply expanding the scope of curricular themes to better reflect the diversity of Scotland's population.

Traditional	Decolonised
Class charter discussion focused on what people will do to respect rights	Class charter discussion focused on what people will do to respect rights AND identities, explicitly discussing home languages and heritage in order to understand everyone's rights better
World War 2 as experienced by British and French citizens	World War 2 as experienced by British, French and Commonwealth citizens, exploring the significant contributions and perspectives of communities of different heritage e.g. Indian Army
Celebrate St Andrew's Day with Robert Burns poetry	Celebrate St Andrew's Day with Scottish poetry by diverse Scottish writers of varied ethnicity

Organisations and websites offering support for inclusive, diverse and decolonised curriculum design can be found via the ERC [Equality and Social Justice Glow page](#), [Equalities Coordinators Teams page](#), Education Scotland's [Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Wakelet](#) and the Education Department's [online curriculum guidance](#).

'Engaged, reflective, empowered and skilled teachers and learners acknowledge Scotland's place in the world, our history, our differences and diversity, our unique natural environment, and our culture based on social justice.' GTCS 2021

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

As educators we are able to recognise our own racial and social identities. We work proactively to understand our own bias and develop cultural competence, continually updating our practice to meet all learners' needs.

Staff at all levels have a responsibility to pro-actively promote social justice, and to understand the impact of all forms of inequality on outcomes for learners by:

- Demonstrating a commitment to motivating and including all learners, understanding the influence of gender, social, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds on experiences of learning, taking account of specific learning needs and seeking to reduce barriers to learning;
- Embracing global educational and social values of sustainability, equality, equity, and justice and recognising children's rights;
- Committing to social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive, and sustainable policies and practices in relation to protected characteristics, (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation) and intersectionality; and,
- Understanding and challenging discrimination in all its forms, particularly that which is defined by the Equality Act 2010.

GTCS SFR, SCLPL, SML, SH (1.1) 2021

As well as social justice values, practitioners also need a good intellectual understanding of the complexities of social inequalities such as poverty, racism, homophobia, sexism and ableism. **Schools can support this by:**

- Supporting staff to analyse attainment data for equity groups;
- Including explicit discussion of social justice, equality and rights in professional dialogue meetings;
- Signposting professional learning opportunities about social justice and equality;
- Sharing good practice in learning and teaching about social justice and equality e.g. effective approaches to learning for sustainability, global citizenship, wellbeing, PSHE, UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- Ensuring effective sharing of information and professional learning opportunities by Equalities Coordinators and ASN Coordinators; and,
- Encouraging open and honest dialogue about discrimination, bias and inequality.

'Values, and the connections between values and actions, require regular reflection over the course of teachers' careers as society and the needs of learners change and as understanding develops.' GTCS 2021

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

We are improving staff diversity to better represent and support our pupil population.

It is the department's aim to have a workforce which reflects the diversity of society. Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people are greatly underrepresented in the teaching workforce and this has a negative impact on children and young people's learning. Rowena Arshad's 2018 report for Scottish Government, [Teaching in a Diverse Scotland: Increasing and Retaining Minority Ethnic Teachers in Scotland's Schools](#) outlines the urgent need for increased representation of BAME people in the teaching profession and the ways in which a lack of representation leads to poorer experiences and outcomes for learners and communities.

When children and young people see their communities and cultures represented amongst their teachers, they are more likely to feel connected, understood and able to succeed in school. Representation of diverse groups in the education workforce can help to improve the inclusivity of the curriculum, the learning environment and learning and teaching practices, and in this way contributes to improving attainment and achievement.

Schools and centres can help to increase diversity in the workforce by:

- Being aware of the potential for bias in recruitment procedures and pro-actively seeking to build a diverse team;
- Actively encouraging BAME members of staff to work towards promotion;
- Ensuring bilingual staff are valued for the full range of skills they bring, including but not limited to their bilingualism, and that they experience the same breadth of opportunity as other staff;
- Engaging with and promoting CLPL opportunities for all staff and senior leaders to develop a deep understanding of racism in all its forms;
- Developing a school anti-racist action plan;
- Promoting and demonstrating ongoing self-reflection on bias;

- Promoting teaching as a career choice to young people from diverse backgrounds; and,
- Promoting culturally responsive approaches to learning and teaching amongst all staff: when learners can see and feel that all aspects of their identity are included and valued in school, they are more likely to view teaching as a career where they can succeed.

'Professional values help to develop our professional identity and underpin a deep commitment to all learners' cognitive, social and emotional growth and wellbeing. They provide the foundation to support and encourage teachers to see the whole child or young person and their needs.' GTCS 2021



RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEARNERS, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

We promote family and community partnerships that value and involve all our pupils, parents and partners, and we work together to develop a socially just climate.

Parent Equalities Groups

It is vital that particular efforts are made to hear the views of those who have lived experienced of inequality. The [Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy](#) outlines a commitment to improving diversity and representation in school parent forums. Parent Equalities Groups can be an effective way to engage parents who are interested in equality and social justice, but who may not wish to be involved in the wider Parent Council. Parent Equalities Groups often take a lead role in partnership working in the community to reduce the cost of the school day and promote other aspects of equality and social justice. A range of resources and support for establishments to establish parent equality and diversity groups is available to Equalities Coordinators via the [Equalities Coordinators Teams](#) page.

Connect's [Equality and Equity Toolkit](#) provides useful practical guidance to help school communities (parents, pupils, staff and others working alongside and with the school) to think about equity and equality and how they can work together to support these principles in their school community.

UNCRC

The Education Department promotes a children's rights-based approach to all aspects of education. The [GTCS Professional Guide: A Children's Rights Based Approach](#) gives an overview teachers' role in supporting and promoting children's rights, and professional responsibilities to promote rights are fully defined in the [GTCS Standards 2021](#) and [SSSC Codes of Practice](#).

Article 12 outlines children's right to have their views heard on matters which affect them. In planning work to reduce inequality and promote social justice, the views of children and young people who have experienced disadvantage

should always be sought, in ways which protect their human dignity and can meaningfully influence change and improvement.

[Children's Parliament](#) offers free practical resources for working with children and young people to improve how they experience their rights. [The Dignity in School Hub](#) contains templates and activity kits for practical sessions to build understanding of dignity and rights with children of all ages.

Other useful resources and information to support schools to work in ways that promote children's right to be heard can be found via [Unicef](#), [Scottish Government](#), [Together](#) and [Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland](#).

Participation in [Rights Respecting Schools](#) provides a useful framework to help schools advance children's rights. What really matters is that every adult in the school or centre understands how to make children's rights real and that this is reflected throughout their practice. East Renfrewshire's Family Friendly Framework also supports schools and early learning and childcare settings to adopt rights-based approaches to working with children and families. Parent Club's [Guide to Children's Rights](#) may be useful when working with parents and carers to promote children's rights.

'The individual professional person who engages with children day-to-day is a key ally in the delivery of the experience of rights for children whether at school, within service provision or in the community.' [Children's Parliament](#), [How Professionals Make Rights Real](#)

'Starting with teachers as individuals, values extend to our learners, our colleagues and community and to the world in which we live.' GTCS 2021

SELF-EVALUATION FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

A variety of self-evaluation resources are available to support schools to identify strengths and areas for development in their approaches to social justice. In particular see:

- Reflective questions within GTCS Guides for Teachers: [A Children's Rights-based Approach](#) and [Equality and Diversity](#)
- [LGBT Inclusive Education Implementation and Evaluation Toolkit](#)
- [ERC Self-evaluation Tool for Diversity and Representation in Learning and Teaching](#)
- [Cost of the School Day Reflective Questions](#)
- [Improving Gender Balance Self-evaluation Framework](#)
- [The Key: Anti-racism Curriculum Review Tools \(primary/secondary\)](#)
- [Tiney Guide to Becoming an Inclusive Anti-racist Early Educator](#)

The **school improvement plan** is an important means of promoting a culture of equality. In particular, school leaders should consider how improvement activities impacting different equality groups are prioritised, the **diversity of the staff who are leading** prominent initiatives, and the involvement of **diverse children and young people in pupil leadership roles**. Where improvement activities involve a changing policy or establishing a new policy, an Equalities, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment should be completed at an early stage in policy development.

Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment

Where a new policy or practice is developed at school or local authority level, [an Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment](#) must be undertaken to assess the potential impact of the policy on those in protected characteristic groups, on those living with poverty, and on children's rights and wellbeing. The assessment is designed to ensure three essential processes:

1. Screening - who will the policy affect?
2. What will be the impact of this policy on promoting or damaging equality, fairness and rights?
3. Planning mitigating actions.

The Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment ensures public organisations meet legislative requirements to consider the impact on protected groups with respect to the **Equality Act (2010)**, **Fairer Scotland Duty, UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (2020)**, and **Children and Young People (Scotland Act) (2014)**.

The impact assessment must be carried out at the policy development stage and well before the new policy is finalised, so that any inequalities identified through the process can be acted upon and changes made before the new practice is adopted.

'Upholding the professional values of social justice, trust and respect and integrity requires a commitment to leadership that inspires confidence and encourages aspiration. This commitment underpins leadership of learning in all contexts and change for improvement. It values the contribution of others, challenges biases and assumptions and applies critical thinking to make effective decisions, in the interests of maintaining and improving the quality of education and leading to improved outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland.' GTCS 2021

Establishment Equality Policies

This document provides a practical framework to guide all schools and centres in their ongoing work to promote equality and social justice.

School handbooks should contain a statement on the importance and centrality of equality and social justice to all areas of practice, along with the name of the member of SLT who is the school's Equalities Coordinator. To avoid duplication schools may find it simplest to link their own equality statements or policies directly to this framework, which will be available to parents, carers and partners.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF HYPERLINKED REFERENCES

East Renfrewshire:

[Advancing Excellence and Equity](#)

[Strategic Equity Funding Plan](#)

[PEF Guidance for Schools](#)

[Dressing for Excellence policy \(Standard Circular 6 \(Revised\)\)](#)

[Money, Advice and Rights Team \(MART\)](#)

[Application page - free school meals, clothing grants and Education Maintenance Allowance](#)

[Equality & Social Justice Teams page](#)

[ASN Coordinators Teams page](#)

[Equalities Coordinators Teams page](#)

[Excellent Experiences for All: A Framework for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in East Renfrewshire](#)

[Guidance on Supporting Bilingual Learners](#)

[EAL & Supporting Bilingual Learners Teams page](#)

[Self-evaluation Tool for Diversity and Representation in Learning and Teaching](#)

[Healthier Minds website](#)

[Meeting Learners' Needs Website](#)

[Support for Inclusion section of the Meeting Learners' Needs website](#)

[Guidance on the Seven Principles of Curriculum Design](#)

[Curriculum Design Vision for 2025](#)

[Online Curriculum Design Resource \(Thinglink\)](#)

[Lingualab](#)

[Lingualab resources for professional learning](#)

[Lingualab curriculum resources](#)

National:

[Developing the Young Workforce](#)
[Education Scotland Anti-Racist Education resources](#)
[Education Scotland Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities wakelet](#)
[Education Scotland Improving Gender Balance Self-evaluation Framework](#)
[GTCS Equality and Diversity Hub Resources by Theme: Intersectionality](#)
[GTCS Professional Guide: A Children's Rights Based Approach](#)
[GTCS Professional Guide: Equality and Diversity](#)
[GTCS Standards 2021](#)
[How Good Is Our School? 4](#)
[How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?](#)
[Learning for Sustainability](#)
[LGBT Inclusive Education Platform](#)
[LGBT Inclusive Education Implementation and Evaluation Toolkit](#)
[Scottish Government UNCRC](#)
[SSSC Codes of Practice](#)

Third Sector:

[Apparel Xchange](#)
[Bell Foundation](#)
[Child Poverty Action Group Scotland](#)
[Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland](#)
[Children's Parliament](#)
[Children's Parliament Dignity in School Hub](#)
[Children's Parliament How Professionals Make Rights Real](#)
[Connect Equality and Equity Toolkit](#)
[Cost of the School Day Toolkit](#)
[Cost of the School Day Reflective Questions](#)
[CRER Introduction to Anti-Racist Curriculum Development](#)
[Decolonisation_The Anti-racist Educator](#)
[East Renfrewshire Back to School Bank](#)
[EIS PACT](#)
[Global Citizenship Education](#)
[Learning for Justice](#)
[OECD Big Picture Thinking](#)
[Parent Club Guide to Children's Rights](#)
[SCOTDEC](#)
[The Key: Anti-racism Curriculum Review Tools](#)
[Tiney Guide to Becoming an Inclusive Anti-racist Early Educator](#)
[Together](#)
[WOSDEC](#)
[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
[Unicef Rights Respecting Schools](#)

GLOSSARY

Ableism	Unfair treatment of people who have been socially constructed as unable to do things that others can. ¹ Policies or practices are ableist when they fail to take account of the needs of people with disabilities.
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.
Bias – Implicit and Explicit	Bias is a prejudice in favour or against one thing, person or group compared with another. Biases may be held by an individual, group or institution and can have negative or positive consequences. There are different types of biases: conscious bias, also known as explicit bias, and unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias. Implicit bias is far more prevalent than explicit bias and is often incompatible with one's conscious values.
Bilingual learners	Bilingual learners are individuals who function in more than one language in their daily lives. The term emphasises that learners already have (at least) one other language besides English. The term does not, however, imply an equal or specified level of fluency.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic.
Colonialism	The practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.
Culture/Cultural	The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. ² Everyone has a culture which may include factors such as language, social class, religious beliefs and practices, traditions, values, dress and food.
Cultural Competence	Cultural competence builds on the concepts of cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness and refers to 'a set of behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together... that enable effective work in cross-cultural situations.' ³ In education, this means applying knowledge about cultural diversity appropriately while working to improve outcomes for children and young people. Cultural competence includes awareness of one's own cultural positionality.
Culturally Responsive Teaching	Culturally responsive teaching is practice which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises and values the diverse ways in which young people demonstrate their learning across cultures • 'responds positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold, to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content'⁴ • prioritises the inclusion of culturally relevant contexts for learning, using these to connect with learners and build supportive relationships.
Decolonisation/ Decolonising	Decolonisation is the deconstruction of colonial oppression and active resistance to colonial power. In education, the term refers to the process of interrogating the curriculum, questioning the source of content and the viewpoints represented, and planning a curriculum which represents a more balanced worldview.

¹ *Leading in Colour: The Fierce Urgency of Now*. The Staff College 2021

² Oxford English Dictionary

³ Cross, Terry L *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care* 1989 https://www.eri-wi.org/download/conference/2013-conference/20_h_WhyDoesntEveryone_chart.pdf

⁴ Hammond, Z.L. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Corwin 2014

Differentiation	The process by which teachers adopt a range of approaches and strategies to match learning and teaching to the individual needs of each child or young person, with consideration for the different ways each individual learns best.
Equity	Equity in education is concerned with understanding the individual circumstances of every learner and providing the support each individual needs in order to achieve fair and equal outcomes.
Ethnicity	'A multi-dimensional concept which includes culture, language, religion, migrant status and physical appearance (race).'
Eurocentric	Practices or policies are Eurocentric when they ignore or undervalue non-European experiences or viewpoints.
Global Citizenship	'The umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale. The term can refer to the belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies.'
Inclusion	'An ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.'
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, religion, ability, sexuality, ethnicity and gender, which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination, disadvantage or privilege. Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better understand power, privilege and the different experiences people have within a society.
Learning for Sustainability (LfS)	LfS weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning. It emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals, societies and the natural world. LfS is an entitlement for all learners in Curriculum for Excellence.
LGBTQIA+	An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
Pedagogy	The theory and methods of practice in learning and teaching.
Race	Not a biological reality, but a social construct and system of categorisation used to privilege some groups and oppress others based on skin colour and physical features.
Racial literacy	'Racial literacy, also known as racial consciousness, refers to an individual's deeper awareness and understanding of race. With racial literacy comes the tools and vocabulary to discuss more complex ideas about race and a growing understanding of how racism operates in its multiple forms.'
Racism	There are many definitions of racism. At the simplest level, racism is prejudice based on skin colour. However, racism should also be understood as a systemic, social and institutional problem which privileges and oppresses groups of people based on race.'

⁵ SAGE Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture 2003

⁶ UN <https://www.UN.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship>

⁷ UNESCO-IBE page 3, as cited in *Introduction to Inclusive Education*. Education Scotland 2018

⁸ Theantiracisteducator.com

⁹ Dismantleracism.org