

Inclusion, Diversity and Rights of the Child

Overview Description

Inclusion means welcoming and respecting the diversity of Manchester's children and young people in all its forms:

- **Neurodiversity**
- **Linguistic, cultural and religious diversity**
- **Diverse life stories including attachment and trauma**
- **Diverse sexualities, identities and personalities.**

Manchester is lucky to be a thriving multicultural city which is one of the most linguistically diverse, relative to its size, in Europe. Some 40% of Manchester's children speak more than one language (United Nations, 2023). Our children come to our educational settings from a diverse set of backgrounds and with a huge range of preschool experiences and familial and cultural influences.

When considering the potential vulnerabilities and differences of our population, it can be helpful to consider the protected characteristics of the Equality Act (2010) plus wider characteristics that shape lived experiences of discrimination, inequality and privilege such as socio-economic disadvantage, occupation and care-experience. Having a protected characteristic means that you have a right not to be treated less favourably, or subject to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic. The protected characteristics relevant to children include:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity (pregnant young women would be covered by this).

As far as possible, rights of different protected groups should be balanced as there is no hierarchy of protected characteristics. Where rights clash, this should be treated sensitively, on a case by case basis, and in a way that ensures all interested parties feel heard and understood.

In many settings, steps are being taken to ensure that all children are more likely to see themselves represented in the curriculum. Using books by non-white authors, including non-white role models in history, science and politics is important. Those with physical and developmental disabilities, chronic illnesses, and neurodivergent students, should also see themselves represented in print and as role models. An acceptance of different sexualities is also increasingly embedded in PSHCE curricula.

As well as being aware of the protected characteristics of their students, those working with children and young people are also increasingly being asked to

understand the impact of early life experiences and trauma on children's development. This is because it is now understood that children with unmet attachment needs and/or adverse childhood experiences (including trauma) are much less likely to thrive in education.

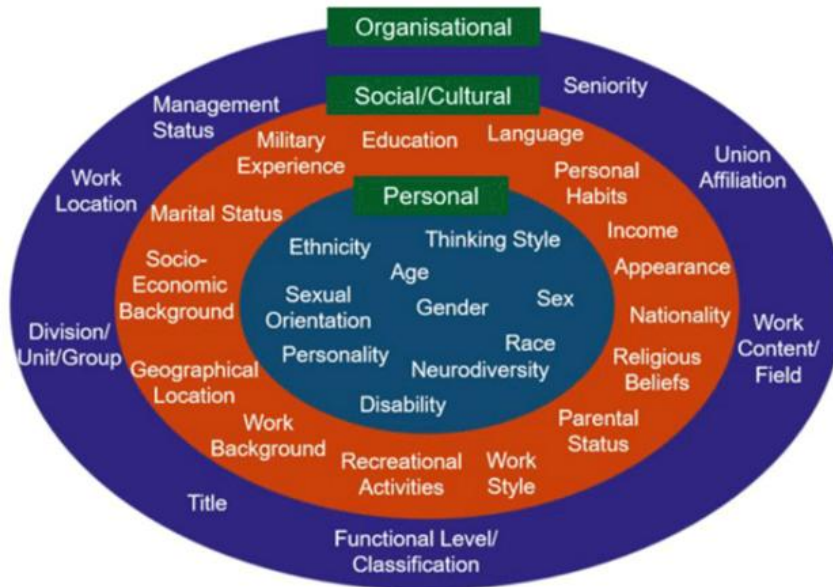
This toolkit offers specific additional information on various aspects of diversity, including but not limited to:

- Neurodiversity – incorporating:
 - autism
 - ADHD
 - dyslexia and dyscalculia
 - Developmental coordination disorder (Dyspraxia)
 - selective mutism
- Race, language and culture
- LGBTQ+
- Medical needs
- Conditions that impact learning and development
- Other disabilities such as hearing or visual impairments
- Attachment and trauma

It is important, however, to recognise the individuality of all children and young people's experiences (see discussion of [intersectionality](#) overleaf). Although this toolkit aims to support you in your work, **nothing is as powerful as professional curiosity and empathy; listening, being flexible and demonstrating empathy when working with children and their families.**

Intersectionality: considering layers of influence:

In 1990 Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener¹ developed a framework for thinking about the different dimensions of diversity within individuals and institutions, known as the diversity wheel. This is a useful tool for thinking about how different characteristics intersect with systems and structures to shape a person's experience.



Taken from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/using-intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence-synthesis/pages/3/>

Intersectionality was first coined by Dr Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1987 to introduce a frame through which the intersectional discrimination faced by black women could be made visible. E.g., that potential marginalisation from being black and from being a woman adds up to more than the sum of both alone. Today its meaning has broadened. It is a framework for understanding how a person's various identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality recognises multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage.² An intersectional approach to diversity and inclusion is one where interweaving identities are recognised. **Every child is seen as a unique, multifaceted individual with rights and we have a responsibility to consider how the various aspects of their identity interact to affect their lived experiences.**



This is an important part of becoming an 'child friendly city!'

¹ Loden, M. & Rosener, J. (1990) *Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource*, McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing

² Runyan, A.S. (2018). What Is Intersectionality and Why Is It Important?. *Academe*. 104 (6).

Putting children's rights at the heart of all we do!



Fundamental to Manchester's understanding of 'inclusion' is ensuring that we recognise and promote children's rights. Manchester has embarked on work towards international recognition as a **UNICEF UK Child Friendly City**.

“A child-friendly city aims to create equal opportunities for all children. This entails identifying the most marginalized and vulnerable children, the barriers to inclusion that they face and removing these barriers”.

<https://childfriendlycities.org/guiding-principles/>

A child-friendly city is one which implements the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** at the local level. As such, the guiding principles of building a child-friendly city mirror the overarching principles of the Convention. These principles include:

Non-discrimination: The rights of all children are respected, without discrimination of any kind irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

Best interests of the child: The best interests of children are a primary consideration in decisions that may affect them with the government assuring the care and protection necessary for their wellbeing.

The inherent right to life, survival and development: Children have the right to life, with the government committed to ensuring the maximum extent possible, their right to survival and healthy development.

Respect for the views of the child: Children have the right to voice their opinions and have these be taken into account in decisions that affect them.

These principles align closely to those already outlined as Manchester's guiding principles for inclusion.



A summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found here: https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf

A SUMMARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ARTICLE 1 (definition of the child)
Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

ARTICLE 2 (non-discrimination)
The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

ARTICLE 3 (best interests of the child)
The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

ARTICLE 4 (implementation of the Convention)
Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

ARTICLE 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)
Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and ensure that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

ARTICLE 6 (life, survival and development)
Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

ARTICLE 7 (name, nationality, care)
Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

ARTICLE 8 (protection and preservation of identity)
Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

ARTICLE 9 (separation from parents)
Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests. For example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child, Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

ARTICLE 10 (family reunification)
Governments must respect quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

ARTICLE 11 (abduction and non-return of children)
Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

ARTICLE 12 (respect for the views of the child)
Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during investigation proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)
Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)
Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their children as they grow up.

ARTICLE 15 (freedom of association)
Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not risk other people from enjoying their rights.

ARTICLE 16 (right to privacy)
Every child has the right to privacy. This should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

ARTICLE 17 (access to information from the media)
Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

ARTICLE 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)
Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by covering support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

ARTICLE 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)
Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

ARTICLE 20 (children unable to live with their family)
If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respecting the child's culture, language and religion.

ARTICLE 21 (adoption)
Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that a parentless child's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

ARTICLE 22 (refugee children)
If a child is a refugee or has special status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

ARTICLE 23 (children with a disability)
A child with a disability has the right to live a full and secure life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

ARTICLE 24 (health and health services)
Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 25 (review of treatment in care)
If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

ARTICLE 26 (social security)
Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

ARTICLE 27 (adequate standard of living)
Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

ARTICLE 28 (right to education)
Every child has the right to education. Primary education must be free and of a certain quality. Secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 29 (goals of education)
Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

ARTICLE 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)
Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

ARTICLE 31 (leisure, play and culture)
Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in cultural and artistic activities.

ARTICLE 32 (child labour)
Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

ARTICLE 33 (drug abuse)
Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

ARTICLE 34 (sexual exploitation)
Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

ARTICLE 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)
Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

ARTICLE 36 (other forms of exploitation)
Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

ARTICLE 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)
Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

ARTICLE 38 (war and armed conflict)
Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

ARTICLE 39 (recovery from trauma and stigmatisation)
Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, trauma or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

ARTICLE 40 (juvenile justice)
A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

ARTICLE 41 (respect for higher national standards)
If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

ARTICLE 42 (knowledge of rights)
Governments must actively work to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

ARTICLE 45
Unifac can provide expert advice and assistance on children's rights.

The Convention has 54 articles in total. Article 42 sets out how adults and governments must actively work to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS
There are three agreements, called Optional Protocols, that strengthen the Convention and add further unique rights for children. They are optional to sign up to these Optional Protocols. They are the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts and the Optional Protocol on a Complaints Mechanism for Children (called Communications Procedures).
For more information go to unifac.org.uk

Becoming a Rights Respecting School



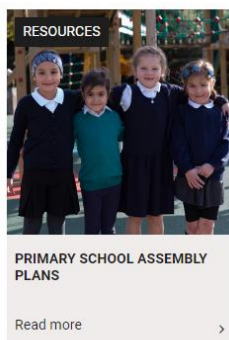
In line with Manchester's goal of becoming an accredited child friendly city, many schools in Manchester are already working towards their UNICEF Right's Respecting Schools bronze, silver, gold or sustaining gold award. This is something Manchester is very proud about.

Information about this award can be found here:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/getting-started/>

Unicef also provide really helpful free resources which can support any setting working with children:

ASSEMBLIES AND TEACHING TOOLS



These can be found here: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/guidance-assemblies-lessons/>

Particularly useful is Unicef's 'Article of the Week'

This is a regular set of learning activities centred on a specific article. It is a flexible resource intended to provide easy-to-use, rights-related learning for primary and secondary learners, their families and the adults who work with them. Each topic contains PowerPoint slides with lesson and activity ideas. Examples of topics this year are:

2022/23 Sets

- Knowledge of Rights – Article 42 – 25 August (Scotland only)
- Views of the Child – Article 12 – published 1 September
- International Day of Peace – Articles 38 & 39 – published 8 September
- Making Rights Happen – Articles 1, 4 & 41 – published 15 September
- Black History Month – Articles 2 & 30 – 22 September
- Right to Education – Article 28 – published 29 September
- OutRight 2022/23 – Articles 24 & 13 – published 6 October
- Right to Privacy – Article 16 – published 13 October
- Law and Justice – Articles 37 & 40 – published 20 October
- Remembrance – Article 38 – published 27 October
- Anti-Bullying Week – Articles 19, 15 & 2 – published 3 November
- World Children's Day – Article 45 – 10 November
- International Day of People with Disabilities – Articles 23 & 2 – published 17 November
- Human Rights Day – Articles 4 and 41 – published 24 November
- Social Security and Adequate Standard of Living – Articles 26 & 27 – published 1 December
- Freedom of Thought – Article 14 – published 8 December
- Identity – Articles 7 & 8 – published 12 January
- LGBT History Month – Article 2 – published 19 January
- Safer Internet Day, Articles 19, 17 & 34 – Safer Internet Day – published 26 January
- Freedom of Expression – Article 13 – published 2 February
- Best Interests of the Child – Article 3 – published 9 February
- World Book Day – Articles 17, 29 & 31 – published 16 February

Other helpful places to find information and resources relating to the UN Convention of the rights of the Child are:

<https://rights4children.org.uk/contact/> : this is a site for children so they can access the information they need to support them in ensuring their rights are considered.

<https://crae.org.uk/our-guide-childrens-rights-and-law/laws-protecting-childrens-rights> : The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE), part of Just for Kids Law, promotes children's rights and monitors government implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<https://academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/221/an-introduction-to-child-rights> : a free 90-minute webinar which introduces Children's Rights.

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/eyfs-best-practice-all-about-children-s-rights> : a site dedicated to considering children's rights in the EYFS age group



Inclusion Top Tips

Our systems and settings are often tailored to the needs of the 'majority' group, to those with more powerful positions in society, and to those who share experiences or identities to ourselves.

The views, experiences, and needs of individuals and groups who are marginalised in our society are often overlooked (see chapter 1 for protected characteristics). For example, students with minoritised racial, cultural, or ethnic identities have reported school experiences and outcomes that differ significantly from 'white British' students who identify. Similarly, neuro-diverse individuals often face stigma and discrimination, as a result of an ableist society's view of what is and is not 'normal' or 'typical'. This stigma can impact how some young people view the label they have been given.

We have, therefore, recommended some key points for you to consider after reading any and all of the chapters within the remainder of the Toolkit.

- ❖ Consider the communities you and your setting serve (e.g., who makes up your student and staff populations? What aspects of individual's identities are important to them or influence their experience? Who is represented currently?)
- ❖ Seek and listen to the voices of those communities and individuals. It is only by listening to each other that we can begin to understand and tailor the support required, and uncover any barriers or blind-spots (e.g., barriers to access, power imbalance, relationships, linguistic barriers).
- ❖ What beliefs, values, experiences, knowledge, and influences might you bring to this topic? How might these differ or be similar to the communities you are serving? How might you use these to help to have a positive impact?
- ❖ How can we promote the sense of self-worth and confidence of all young people we work with? How can we help young people to understand and have a positive view of their possible differences (e.g., social communication differences) and identities?