

# HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND TEACHER EDUCATION

A Supplement to –  
*Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual  
for Educators and Trainers*



**Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta  
an Duine agus Comhionannas**  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



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**Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**

First published in August 2015  
by  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission  
16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7, D07 CR20

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The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) was established under statute on 1 November 2014 to protect and promote human rights and equality in Ireland, to promote a culture of respect for human rights, equality and intercultural understanding, to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights and equality, and to work towards the elimination of human rights abuses and discrimination.

ISBN 978-0-9930197-7-7



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the PROGRESS Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission would like to acknowledge the support of the Advisory Committee and teacher educators who contributed to the development of this resource as follows:

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**Teresa Buczkowska**, Immigrant Council of Ireland

**Ruth Doggett**, Educate Together

**Dr Rose Dolan**, Maynooth University

**Hilary Harmon**, Pavee Point

**Conor Harrison**, Professional Development Service for Teachers

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**Sandra Irwin-Gowran**, Glen

**Audrey Johnson**, Church of Ireland College of Education

**Dr Karl Kitching**, School of Education, University College Cork

**Mags Liddy**, University of Limerick

**Paula Madden**, Irish Traveller Movement

**Dr Aoife Neary**, University of Limerick

**Sean O'Broin**, School of Education, University College Cork

**Pat O'Mahony**, Education and Training Board Ireland

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**Dr Shelagh Waddington**, Maynooth University

**Mary Geraldine Shevlin**, Teachers Union of Ireland

**Anne Walsh**, National Youth Council

**Tom Walsh**, Maynooth University

**Dr Máirín Wilson**, Church of Ireland College of Education

**Laura Maloney**, National Women's Council of Ireland

# INTRODUCTION

All human beings are born free  
and equal in dignity and rights.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

This resource takes as its starting point an understanding of equality based on our common humanity and common human rights. As education is concerned with the formation and holistic development of young people, it must necessarily include consideration of equality and human rights in relation to students, teachers and parents.

Schools and universities, as public institutions of the State, have certain obligations under human rights and equality legislation, both in regard to how education is provided and to what is taught. Human rights and equality are integral to education and therefore by extension to initial teacher education.

Teacher educators can promote equality and human rights by teaching *about* equality and human rights and teaching *for* equality and human rights. Although it caters for both, this supplement primarily focuses on teaching for equality and human rights in relation to student teachers in schools and in particular in relation to school placements.

This resource was developed through the delivery of a training programme for teacher educators and is designed as a supplement to be used in conjunction with *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*.

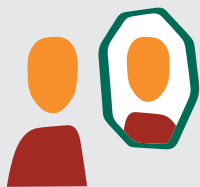


## OVERALL AIM

The aim of the supplement is to support teacher educators in the design and delivery of education for equality and human rights. To this end, the supplement is aimed at a range of teacher educators, including lecturers, methods specialists, tutors and supervisors.

## STRUCTURE

The supplement is divided into 3 sections, with each section having an explicit purpose and a set of supports.



### **SECTION 1: TEACHER EDUCATION, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS – A SET OF PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

This section is designed to support teacher educators to reflect on their role in relation to equality and human rights. It offers a set of reflective exercises to be used as a personal exploration of the core concepts of identity, discrimination, equality and human rights as preparation for introducing or developing an equality and human rights perspective within their practice. These reflections are also suitable for use as a group activity with other teacher educators.



### **SECTION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY – AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE**

This section sets out a framework for a short course on equality and human rights that can be offered to student teachers. The framework outlines a 6 week course and links each week to a series of activities from *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*.



### **SECTION 3: TOOLS FOR PROMOTING EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

This section provides a number of tools which teacher educators can use as part of their work in supervising and tutoring student teachers. The tools encourage teacher educators and students to examine and explore how human rights and equality relate to the classroom and the school placement experience of teachers and their students.



## APPENDICES

In addition there are 3 appendices.



### APPENDIX 1: RESOURCES

Appendix 1 provides links to a range of relevant teaching and learning resources. Teacher educators may find it helpful to share these with student teachers as they prepare for their school placements.



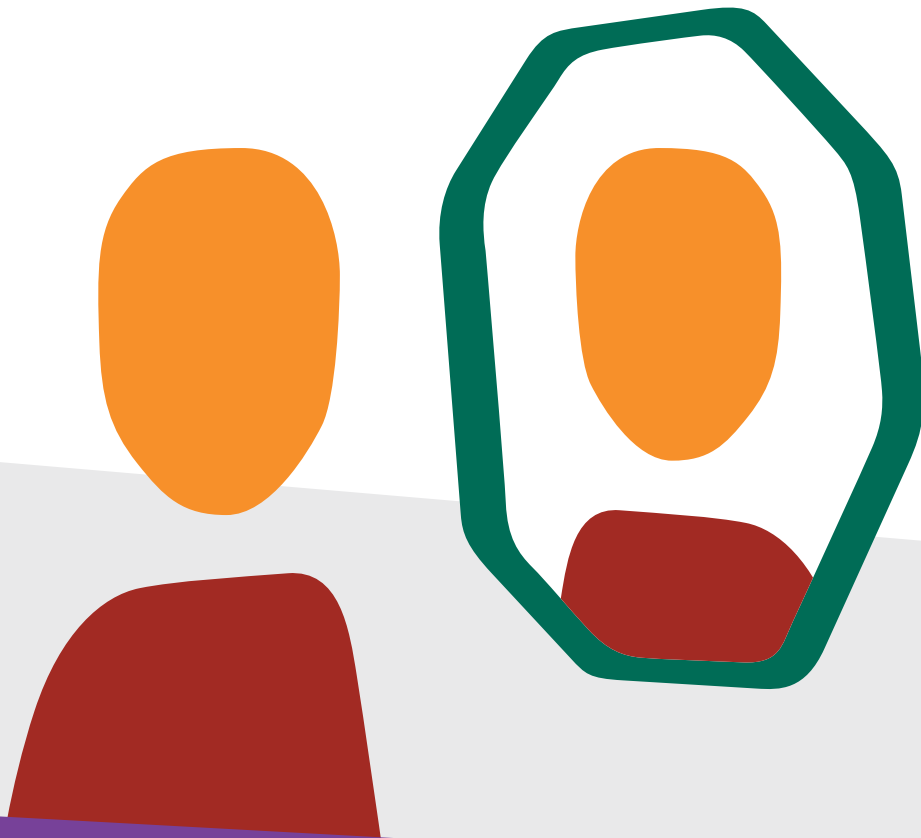
### APPENDIX 2: UNDERSTANDING EQUALITY – THE FOUR DIMENSIONS

Appendix 2 provides additional discussion of some concepts of equality that are used throughout the resource.



### APPENDIX 3: HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY – THE LEGAL CONTEXT

Appendix 3 provides a brief overview of the legal context in which human rights and equality are situated.



**SECTION 1:  
TEACHER EDUCATION,  
EQUALITY AND HUMAN  
RIGHTS – A SET OF  
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

The Teaching Council sets out the requirements for teachers and teacher education. Its Standards are based on a set of ethical values – Respect, Care, Integrity and Trust – which involve equality and human rights:

*Teachers uphold human dignity and promote equality and emotional and cognitive development. In their professional practice, teachers demonstrate respect for spiritual and cultural values, diversity, social justice, freedom, democracy and the environment.<sup>1</sup>*

This commitment to equality and human rights is articulated further with explicit reference to the importance of inclusion as well as respecting and accommodating differences across the nine grounds covered under current equality legislation:

*Teachers should...be committed to equality and inclusion and to respecting and accommodating diversity including those differences arising from gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, membership of the Traveller community and socio-economic status, and any further grounds as may be referenced in equality legislation in the future.<sup>2</sup>*

Teacher education colleges and faculties subscribe to this commitment to equality and human rights. For example, one aim of a teacher education programme is to enable student teachers to:

*Combine respect, understanding and empathy in their professional disposition which is cognisant of diversity, inclusion and the consequent necessity for differentiation, discretion and professional judgment in building trust, promoting equity and justice amongst peers, students, parents and the wider public.<sup>3</sup>*

This section of the supplement asks teacher educators to reflect on their own commitment to and understanding of equality and human rights. In so doing, it acknowledges that the starting point for exploring a human rights and equality perspective with student teachers is the self.

You will now find a set of five reflections, each with three component parts:

- Reflective Theme
- Questions for Consideration
- A Written Reflection

{Please note that each reflection can also be done with a group of colleagues.}

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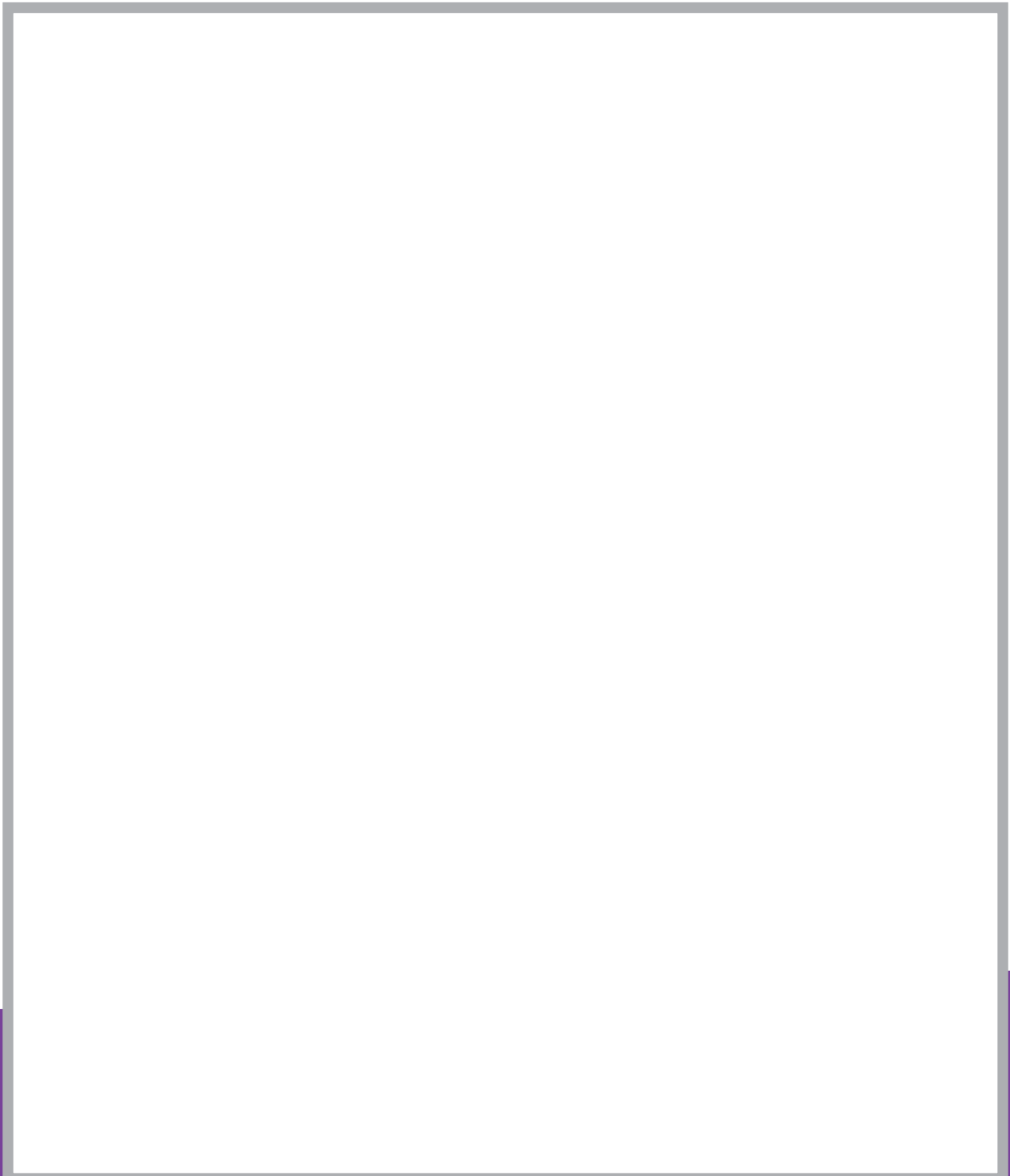
1 Teaching Council (2012) Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. (2nd Edition) Dublin: The Teaching Council. <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/professional-standards/code-of-professional-conduct-for-teachers.1425.html>

2 Teaching Council (2012) Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. (2nd Edition) Dublin: The Teaching Council. <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/professional-standards/code-of-professional-conduct-for-teachers.1425.html>

3 UCD Overview of the PME course accessed at <http://www.ucd.ie/education/courses/programmes/course-nameshort,233948,en.html>

## **REFLECTION 1: IDENTITY**

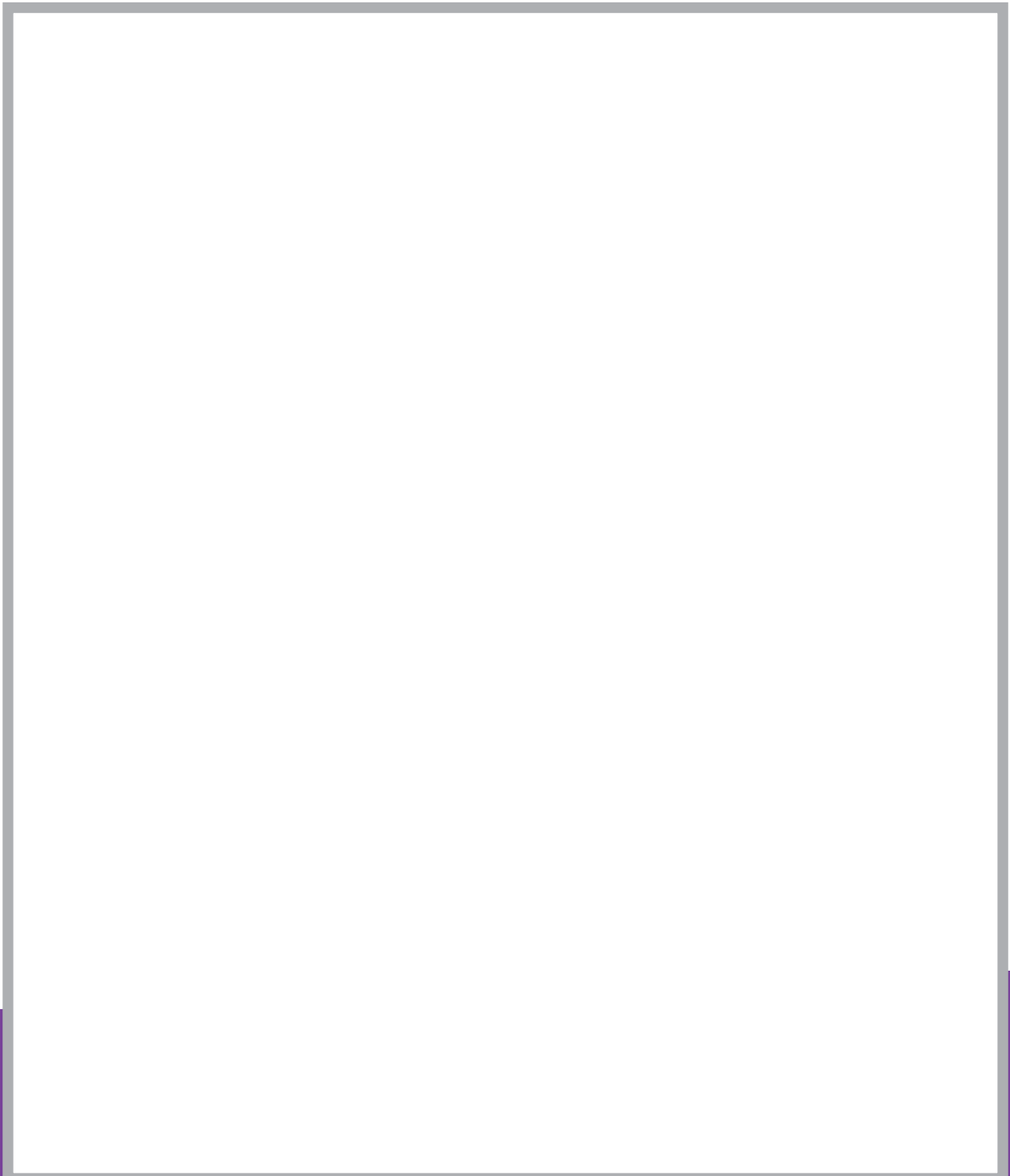
Take a few minutes to map your own identity, listing all those aspects that you think define you as a person, e.g. daughter, brother, mother, father, lecturer, religious person. When complete, circle 2 aspects that you consider have influenced significantly 'who you are'. Remembering that our identity is never static and that it changes throughout our lives, you may wish to also circle aspects of your identity that you consider are currently influencing 'who you are becoming'.

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## **REFLECTION 2: ASSUMPTIONS**

Imagine that you get word from your neighbours that they are selling their house. All they tell you is that a number of people have expressed an interest in buying it - a religious minister, an ex-prisoner, a married couple and an old age pensioner. Take a few moments to consider your immediate picture of each of them and note down some of the images/characteristics/behaviours and so forth that you associate with each.

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**REFLECTION 3: DISCRIMINATION**

Describe a moment when you first became aware of inequality, discrimination or the lack of human rights and what impact, if any, it had on you at the time.

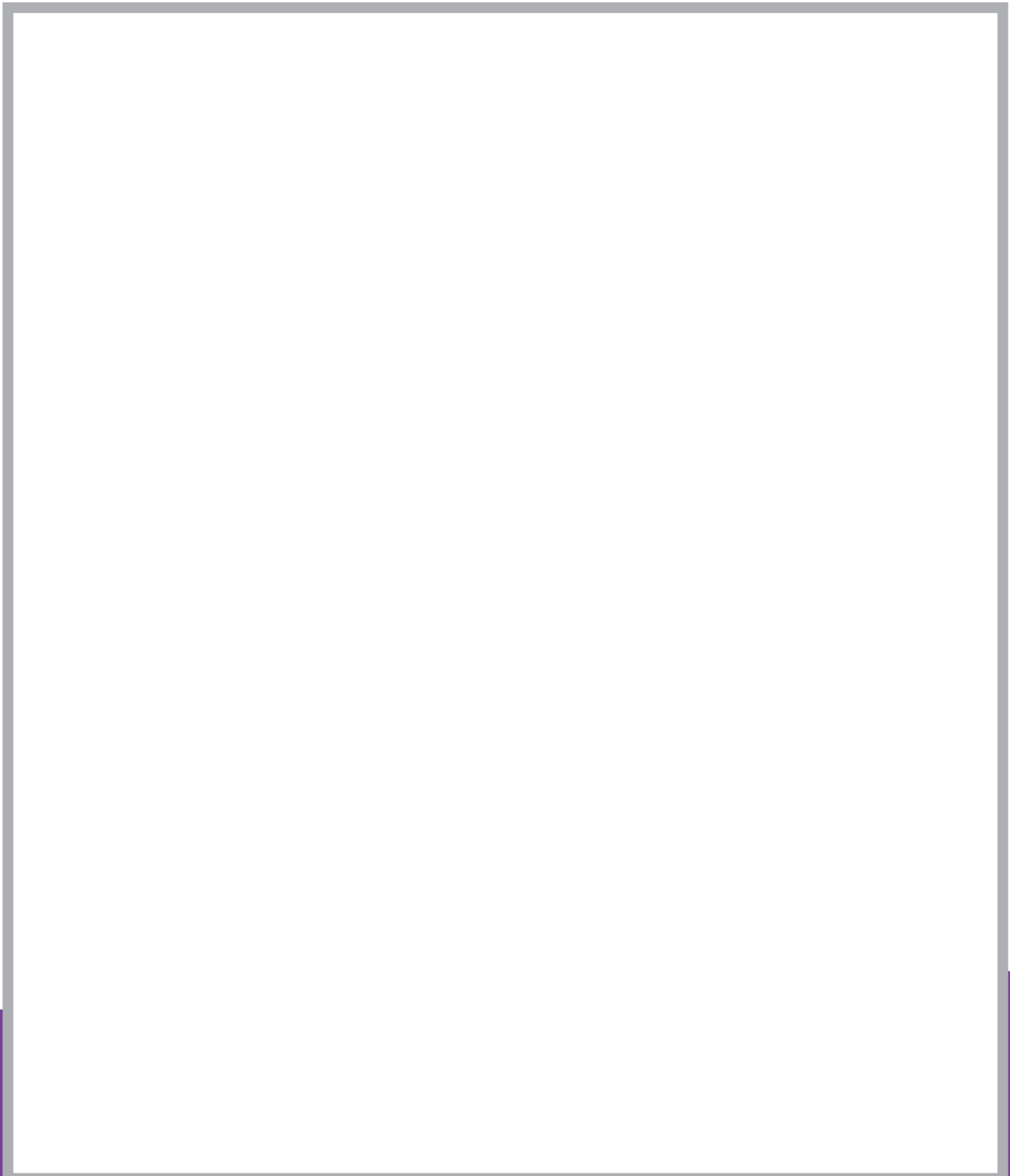
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## REFLECTION 4: HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY

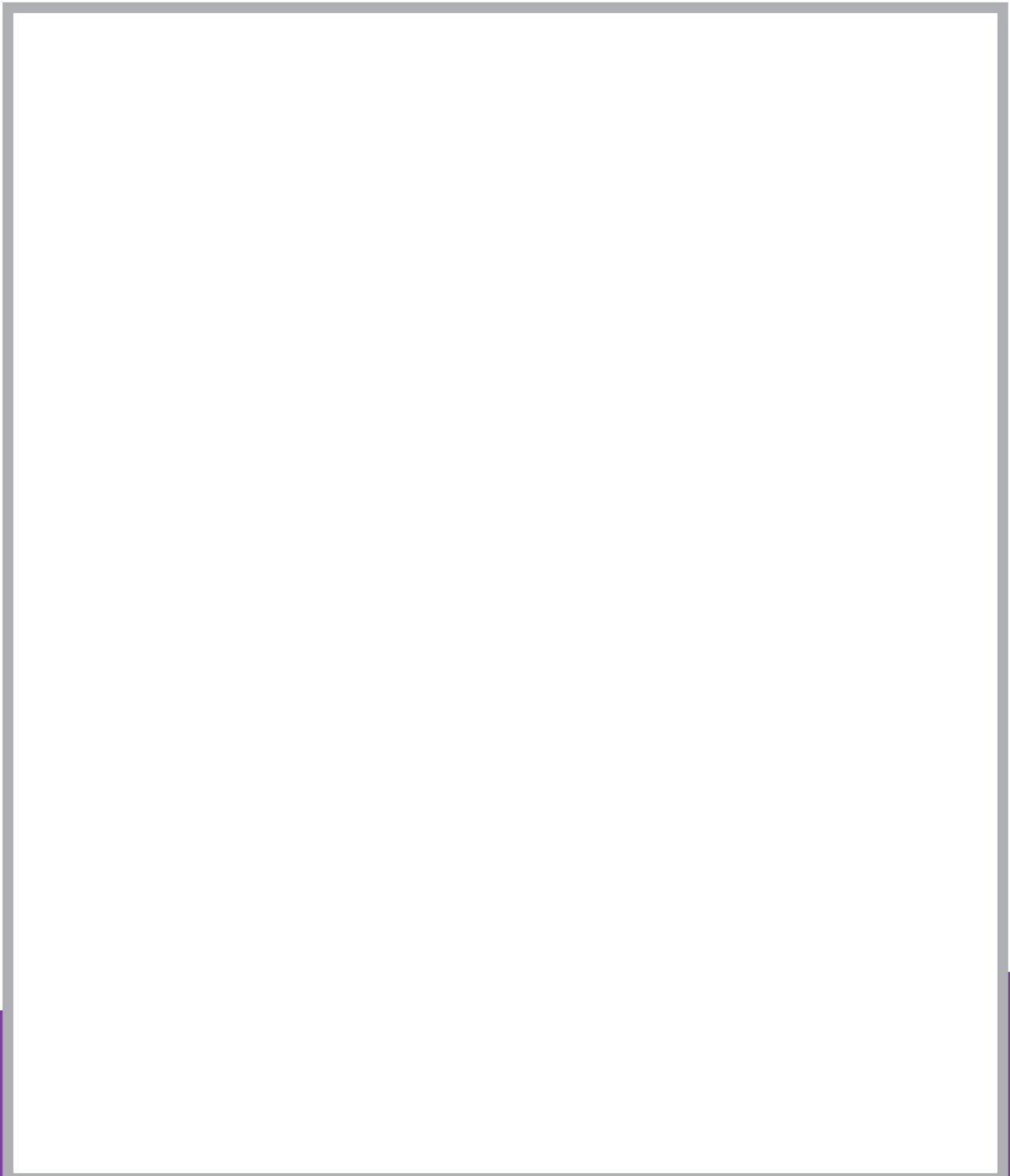
Take some time to think about what you understand by the terms human rights and equality (some understandings of equality are given in *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*, page 27, in the context of an activity introducing the concept of equality. The activity includes a number of 'equality means...' statements. You can also substitute 'equality means...' with 'human rights means...' and consider how this might affect your opinion).

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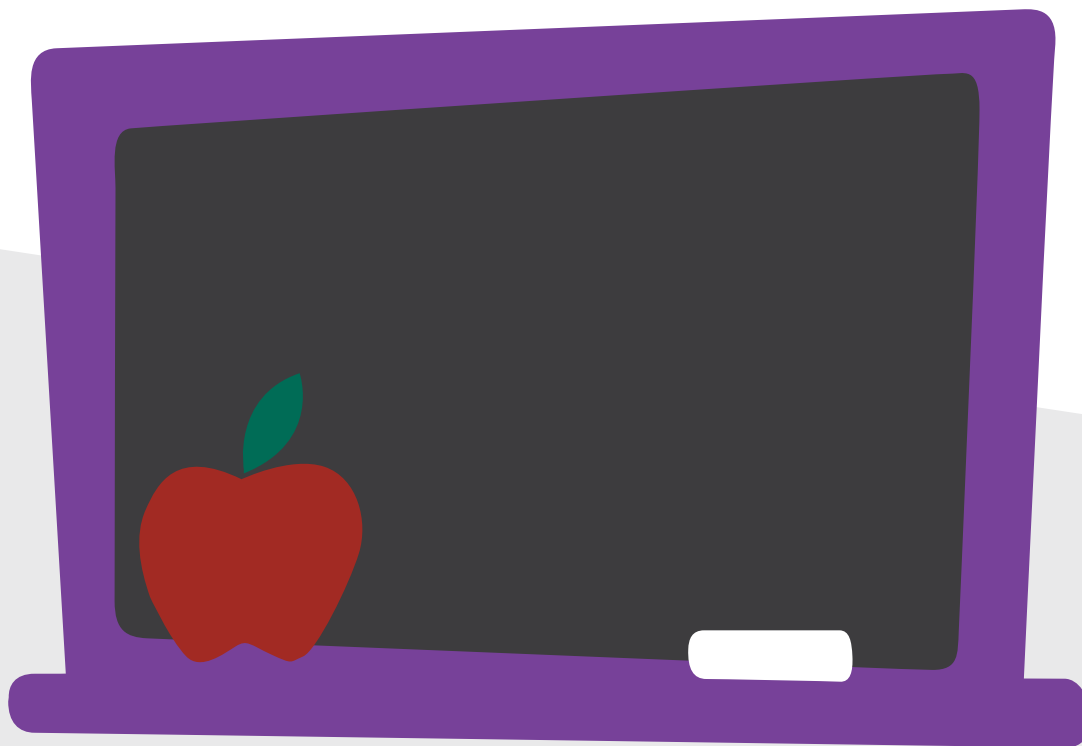


## **REFLECTION 5: PRACTICE THAT PROMOTES EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Take some time to reflect on your own practice from an equality and human rights perspective. Consider, for example, if the teaching materials you use reflect and value diversity? Do any of the materials you use contribute to stereotyping or promote bias in any way? Are students encouraged to question stereotypes? Are your students given the opportunity to evaluate the teaching and learning process? Note down some examples of how your practice promotes equality and human rights.

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**SECTION 2:  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND EQUALITY –  
AN INTRODUCTORY  
COURSE**

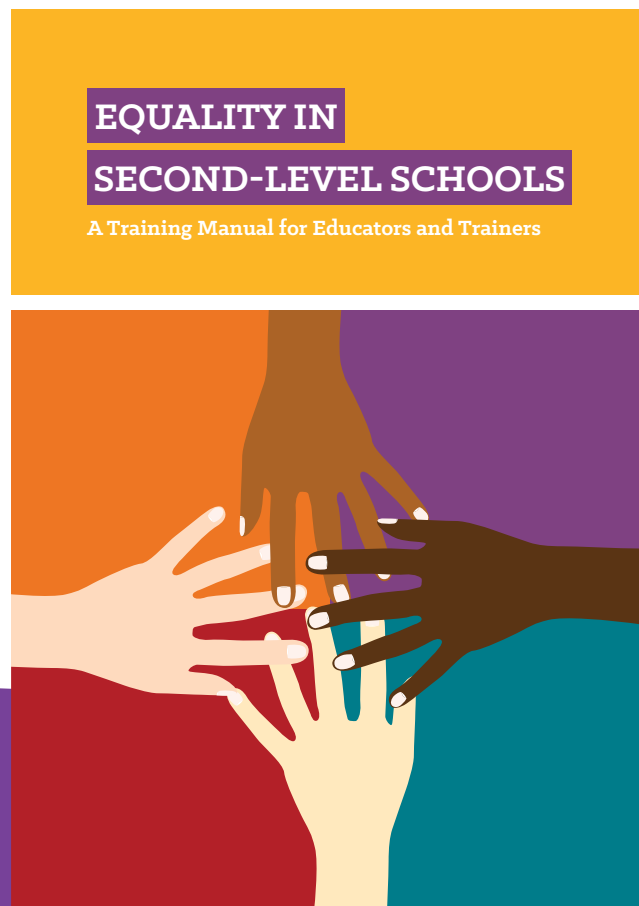
Creating the space for student teachers to actively engage in an exploration of human rights and equality is a critical component to the support of their professional development.

As outlined in Section 1, both the Teaching Council and many Universities and Colleges of Education recognise the importance of supporting student teachers to promote inclusion, equality and human dignity.

This section provides a programme outline for an introductory course designed to ensure that student teachers:

- Have increased awareness and understanding of equality and human rights
- Become familiar with the concepts of equality and human rights and their place in their personal and professional lives
- Become familiar with a range of methodologies that support the teaching of equality and human rights
- Become aware of the potential to introduce and maintain a regard for equality and human rights in their practice

The introductory course is based on the activities in *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers* and can be adapted by lecturers and tutors accordingly.



## INTRODUCTORY COURSE

The introductory course includes six sessions. Outlines for each of the six sessions are provided below. It should be noted that each session takes approximately 1 hour, but can be adapted to suit the time available.

Teacher educators should also note that activities referenced from the training manual *Equality in Second-level School: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers* need to be examined prior to use to ensure familiarity with the:

- Rationale
- Key Learning Points
- Materials Required
- Process

In addition to activities referenced from the training manual in *Equality in Second-level Schools* guidelines are provided for an activity on the Impact of Stereotyping, including rationale, key learning points, materials required and process.

## PROGRAMME OUTLINE

### Session 1: Introduction and Identity

THEME	PROCESS
Creating a Conducive Climate	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 6-8) Activity 2: Creating a Conducive Learning Environment
Personal Identity	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 9-11) Activity 3: Personal Identity
How We See Other People's Identity	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp.12-14) Activity 4: How We See Other People's Identity



## Session 2: Impact of Stereotyping and Assumptions

THEME	PROCESS
Impact of Stereotyping	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 15-18) Activity 5: More Than a Single Story
Impact of Assumptions	<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Assumptions and stereotypes can have long-term as well as immediate impacts on people’s confidence and life chances. This activity helps students reflect on the consequences of stereotyping on daily life and on people’s job opportunities and life experiences.</p> <p><b>Materials Required</b></p> <p>A copy of the Worksheet: Impact of Assumptions on Students (page 23 of this supplement)</p> <p><b>Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce the headings for exploring the impact of stereotyping and assumptions. Using an example, explore the impact the assumption that all students come from heterosexual backgrounds and/or are heterosexual.</li><li>• Form small groups of 3-4 students. Ask each group to discuss and identify the potential impact of assumptions and stereotypes on the development of students who are: Members of the Traveller community, Minority Ethnic Students, Students with a Disability, Humanists, other.</li><li>• Take some feedback from each group and then consider what the activity highlights in terms of impact.</li></ul> <p>Before ending ask your students to take some time to think or write a response to the following:</p> <p><i>Bearing in mind that we all have assumptions, reflect on your current group of students and how any assumptions or stereotypes you hold may limit their potential development.</i></p>

### Session 3: Introducing Equality and Human Rights Education

THEME	PROCESS
Equality and Human Rights - Concepts	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 19-34) Activity 6: Introducing the Concept of Equality and Considering Issues Using an Equality and Human Rights Lens

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### Session 4: Methodologies to Support Equality and Human Rights

A range of methodologies and activities are given in *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers*. Teacher educators will need to prioritise the kind of methodologies or activities they wish to undertake with their students within the time frame they have.

THEME	PROCESS
Active Learning Methodologies that Support Human Rights and Equality	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 35-39) Activity 7: Methodologies for Teaching About Equality  <i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 55-57) Activity 14: Equality - Respect and Recognition  <i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 60-63) Activity 16: Teacher's Stance

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## Session 5: Introduction to Resources and Planning

THEME	PROCESS
Introduction to Resources	It can be useful to have as many hard copies of resources as possible for students to review. A full list of available resources and electronic links to them is given in the Resources section of <i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> pp. 86-108. While these are mostly aimed at students in second levels schools, links to additional resources for primary schools are listed in this supplement at Appendix 1.
Planning	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 40-41) Activity 8: Planning for Equality and Human Rights

## Session 6: Sharing and Reflecting on Practice

THEME	PROCESS
Sharing Practice	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 51-53) Activity 12: Sharing Practice
Reflecting on Practice and Going Forward	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 64-67) Activity 17: Classroom Practice that Promotes Equality and Human Rights
Evaluation	<i>Equality in Second-level Schools</i> (pp. 42) Activity 9: Closing and Evaluation

## Impact of Assumptions and Stereotyping on Students

Choose one of the following groups of students and consider how assumptions and stereotypes that are commonly held about them may impact on them now and in the future, in relation to equality and human rights: students from the Traveller Community or other minority ethnic groups, students with a disability (visible or invisible), Humanist or secular students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, others...

ASPECT OF SCHOOL LIFE/WORK	EQUALITY/HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ON ...
Person's Confidence	
Feeling of Belonging	
Likelihood of Being Harassed/ Bullied	
Job Opportunities	
Other Life	
Opportunities	



**SECTION 3:**  
**TOOLS FOR PROMOTING  
EQUALITY AND HUMAN  
RIGHTS IN TEACHER  
EDUCATION**

This section provides a number of tools which teacher educators could use as part of their work in supervising and tutoring student teachers. They may be used in conjunction with *Equality in Second-level Schools* and two accompanying teaching resources designed for the transition year curriculum, i.e *Equality & Diversity: Building a Culture of Equality in our Society* and *Grounds for Action: Building a Culture of Equality in our Society*.

#### **THE TOOLS PROVIDED ARE:**

**A. USING THE 4 DIMENSIONS TO EMBED EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS INTO TEACHING**

**B. CRITICAL INCIDENTS TOOL - RESPONDING TO EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES OR INCIDENTS**

**C. A CHECKLIST FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

**D. QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT TEACHER REFLECTIVE JOURNALS OR SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**E. CHECKLIST FOR INCORPORATING AN EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LENS INTO SCHOOL PLACEMENT SUPERVISION**

## A. USING THE 4 DIMENSIONS TO EMBED EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS INTO TEACHING

This tool can be used at different times during the course to encourage student teachers to develop awareness that equality and human rights are not simply abstract concepts, but directly impact on everyday practice in the classroom. It can also help them develop a sense of how they can teach and work in a way which promotes equality and human rights.

### Table 1 looks at classroom practice.

Students can also be encouraged to consider what aspects of the whole school environment, including policies, support them in embedding human rights and equality in their teaching.

### Table 2 includes examples of whole school policy and practice.

Before using this tool, students need to have been introduced to the concept of equality and the 4 Dimensions. (See *Equality in Second-level Schools* pages 19-34 and Appendix 2 below)

#### TABLE 1: TEACHER PRACTICE

##### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES

- Inclusive teaching strategies
- Differentiation/learning support/ESL
- Culturally appropriate teaching methods
- High expectations of all children

##### EQUALITY OF RESPECT AND RECOGNITION

- Learning names and pronunciation
- Images/visuals that reflect diversity
- Teaching examples relevant to diverse backgrounds
- Teaching resources that recognise diversity – English, History, RE, PE...

##### EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

- Class agreements
- Teacher led or student led learning – where does the teacher stand?
- Groupwork
- Helping students develop the ability to make decisions/take responsibility

##### EQUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS – CARE AND SOLIDARITY

- A sense of belonging for all students
- Responding to racist incidents
- Building respectful and positive relationships between all students in the classroom
- Helping students develop attitudes of solidarity
- Supporting students to work with others from diverse backgrounds

**TABLE 2: WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY AND PRACTICE**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES**

- Admissions policy
- Accessible buildings
- Choice of subjects
- Streaming
- Provision of learning and language supports

**EQUALITY OF RESPECT AND RECOGNITION**

- Visibly valuing all identities -
- Through the curriculum
  - Inclusive school events e.g. graduation ceremonies
  - Celebrating religious festivals...

**EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION**

- Student council
- Parents' participation
- School rules/code of behaviour
- Meaningful consultation of students and parents on school policies and practice

**EQUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS – CARE AND SOLIDARITY**

- Anti-bullying policy – naming the 9 Grounds, so all feel protected
- School culture of solidarity
- Welcoming environment



## B. CRITICAL INCIDENTS TOOL – RESPONDING TO EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES OR INCIDENTS

Analysis of critical incidents can provide an effective way to explore equality and human rights issues and to prepare and support student teachers in how to best respond to situations that they encounter on school placements. These situations may relate to students in the classroom or to the student teachers' personal situation. Many student teachers are personally affected during school placements in relation to revealing some aspect of their identity. For example, they may not wish to be open about their sexual orientation, a disability, or their religious/secular beliefs because of fear that this will impact on how they are perceived by schools, and possibly on their future job prospects. Student teachers may also feel uncomfortable in school environments where the majority of either staff or students come from different socio-economic backgrounds to them.

### Critical Incidents Scenarios

The following scenarios, or others based on experiences your students have had, can be used to support student teachers in analysing and preparing for similar situations which may arise during school placements.

Supervisors can also use these scenarios to reflect on their own practice in relation to incidents which arise with their students.

Note that all of these incidents involve aspects which are related to both personal and professional development as well as to human rights and equality aspects. The tool focuses on equality and human rights aspects.

### Reflections on Critical Incident Scenarios

The purpose of reflecting on the scenarios is to support student teachers to become more aware of how and when equality and human rights impact on their daily work in the classroom and their experience in schools. General questions to focus reflection on each scenario could include:

- What is the equality and human rights issue in this scenario?
- How could the student teacher respond?
- How would you advise the student teacher in this situation?
- How could the supervisor or school better support the student teacher in this situation?
- How could awareness of equality and human rights help student teachers in similar situations?

Some more specific considerations for discussion are provided after the description of each scenario.

### Extension Student Assignment

Students could be asked to complete an assignment, possibly in pairs or groups, in which they are given or choose a critical incident, do some research on the issues involved, and write up a response to it. The written work could include an exploration of the issue itself, the rationale for how they would propose dealing with the issue and any resources which would be helpful in furthering equality and human rights in this situation.

## A SELECTION OF SCENARIOS

### SCENARIO 1 PRIMARY (CLASSROOM PRACTICE)

A student is teaching a 2nd class group in a Catholic primary school. She is teaching religion to the class, which includes three children who are not Catholic, one being Muslim, one Methodist, and the other from a secular background. She has asked the children to go to the book corner and read while she teaches religion, but feels bad about the children not being included in the class. When she is teaching the others a religious song which is very lively and tuneful, she invites the three children to join in.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- The ethos of schools
- The rights of minority religious groups in education
- The need to prepare and plan for inclusion within specific school contexts.

**Equality Dimensions:** Respect and Recognition

**Human Rights:** The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, Articles 29 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### SCENARIO 2 PRIMARY OR POST-PRIMARY (SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT)

A student is on placement in a Catholic school. He is gay, but has not disclosed his sexual orientation to the experienced teacher he is working with, or to other staff in the school. He is finding his placement difficult because of some of the attitudes of staff. One teacher has made several anti-LGBT remarks in the staff room and these have not been challenged by other staff. While most people are very friendly to him, he is afraid of revealing his sexual identity to anyone in casual conversation about his social life and this has put him under a lot of stress. (The situation where teachers have been subject to homophobic bullying by other staff and by students could also be discussed.)

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- The ethos of schools
- Section 37 of the Equality Employment Acts
- School policy on equality and inclusion
- The duty of care by the school to staff

**Equality Dimensions:** Respect and Recognition, and Relationships dimension of equality

**Human Rights:** The right not to be discriminated against because of sexual orientation based on the principle of non-discrimination, Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SCENARIO 3 POST-PRIMARY (CLASSROOM PRACTICE)

A young student teacher is on placement in a school and has been given a mixed ability class to teach. The students come from a mixture of socio-economic groups. As you watch her interact with the students, it becomes clear that she has higher expectations of some students than others and that this is very clear to the students. The students of whom she expects more participate well while the others appear to be lacking in interest and motivation, and often have to be corrected for misbehaviour. On discussing this observation with her afterwards, she reveals that she doesn't have very high expectations of the uninterested students, but that she was told by other staff that this was to be expected, as they come from families with social and economic problems.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- The right to education and the importance of everyone being entitled to be educated in a way that supports the development of their full potential
- Social class and academic achievement
- School culture and attitudes towards socio-economic diversity
- Respect for people from diverse backgrounds.

**Equality Dimensions:** It relates to all the dimensions of equality, but in particular to Equal Opportunities and Outcomes.

**Human Rights:** The right to education and to be educated in a way that supports people's development of their full potential, Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of social origin, Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SCENARIO 4 POST-PRIMARY (CLASSROOM PRACTICE)

An argument develops in the classroom over a request by the school for a small financial contribution towards educational resources. The student teacher is sure that the students who are the most vocal are the ones whose families can easily afford to contribute. They are challenged by other students in this regard. The class become polarised over this issue as bad feeling grows.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- The promotion of respectful relationships within a class, and of students learning how to handle conflict
- The practice of developing class agreements with students so that there is agreement about how they relate to each other, especially in situations of conflict of opinion
- The role of the teacher in facilitating safe discussion of controversial issues and how best to do this

- Students' right to have and express their opinions, but in a respectful way
- Supporting the development of critical thinking by students
- Relationships of solidarity between students - supporting someone's viewpoint against others
- The issue of free education and equal access to educational benefits
- The way in which schools organise additional payments, voluntary contributions etc.

**Equality Dimensions:** Opportunities and Outcomes, Participation, Relationships  
**Human Rights:** The right to education, Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SCENARIO 5 POST-PRIMARY (CLASSROOM PRACTICE)

In a culturally diverse classroom, a student teacher has asked students to work together in pairs. The students have been allowed to self-select their partner and this leaves two students, both of whom refuse to work together. None of the other students wish to change partners.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- Cultural norms and how they can impact on inclusion and participation
- The balance between individual choice, student voice and classroom management
- Relationships and solidarity between students of diverse backgrounds
- Tolerance and acceptance of difference within the class group
- The teacher's role in ensuring that students learn to work with each other regardless of background

**Equality Dimensions:** Relationships, Participation, Respect and Recognition  
**Human Rights:** The right to education, Articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SCENARIO 6 POST- PRIMARY (SCHOOL POLICY)

At prize giving, a student teacher is informed that from a group of four students who are to be given an award for work completed in the teacher's subject, one student has been denied the award as a result of a misdemeanour in another teacher's class. This teacher has been told that the student has a history of bad behaviour, although the student teacher has not had any evidence of this.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- Fairness and balance
- Labelling
- Appropriate discipline
- Effects on the student's motivation and therefore achievement levels

participation in school

- The lack of power of student teachers to influence school culture and practice

**Equality Dimensions:** Opportunities and Outcomes, Respect and Recognition, and Participation

**Human Rights:** The Right of a child to express their views and be given the opportunity to be heard, Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## SCENARIO 7 POST-PRIMARY (SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT)

A young student teacher is on placement in a boys' secondary school, where all but two of the staff are male. She feels that she is being patronised by the older staff members in particular. She has discipline problems with one group of boys, two of whom are being disrespectful to her. She has asked for help and advice from the class tutor and year head who are both male, but they've just brushed it off as boys being boys. She is now becoming very anxious about going to this class.

**Reflect on the scenario using general questions outlined on page 28. Specific considerations in relation to this scenario include:**

- Gender equality in school culture
- A culture of acceptance of sexism within society
- School ethos in relation to respect for others
- The duty of care by the school for staff.

**Equality Dimensions:** Respect and Recognition and Relationships

**Human Rights:** The right not to be discriminated against on the basis of gender, which is included in several human rights instruments, notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

## C. A CHECKLIST FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The following checklist may be useful for student teachers in reflecting on their own classroom practice and for supervisors in their observation of student teachers' practice. It is a shortened version of the 3 reflection sheets in *Equality in Second-level Schools* pp. 65-66. It can be adapted for either primary or post-primary levels, or for specific subject areas.

TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS	YES	I NEED TO WORK ON THIS
My teaching materials reflect and value diversity – stories and poetry from different cultures, varying family structures, history taught from perspectives of all participants...		
I use inclusive teaching and learning methodologies - they meet the needs of students with different learning styles, or language and literacy difficulties, enabling students with disabilities to participate...		
I include examples, references and content which are relevant to students' cultural, religious and/or family backgrounds...		
I am aware of stereotypes, bias, and assumptions in the language, textbooks, materials and images I choose – cultural, religious, gender-based, heterosexual, ableist... Where they occur I support the students to critically challenge them...		
I choose images to reflect diversity, inclusion, and positive recognition – a migrant contributing to the local community, people in disaster areas working to improve their situation, people with disabilities at work...		
I encourage mutual respect and positive relationships - through a negotiated Class Agreement which encourages respect for all...		

**TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR  
EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**YES**

**I NEED TO  
WORK ON  
THIS**

I design group work to help children/students learn to work co-operatively within diverse groups...

I make sure I know how to correctly pronounce students' names and am aware of their cultural and religious background...

I actively encourage students to respect ethnic, religious and social diversity...

I support students in decision-making and in taking responsibility for their actions...

I have high expectations of all the students in my class...

I support inclusion and avoid marginalising any student through the physical layout and seating plan I use in my classroom...

## D. QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT TEACHER REFLECTIVE JOURNALS OR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Student teachers are often required to keep a reflective journal and to self-assess their teaching. The inclusion of a simple question(s) on human rights and equality can help them consider these in their practice.

Did I consider equality and human rights in planning for my teaching, either in relation to content and/or classroom practice?

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What, if any, human rights or equality issues emerged in my classes? If they did, how did I respond to them?

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What aspects of the school environment supported or hindered me in embedding a human rights and equality perspective in my school placement?

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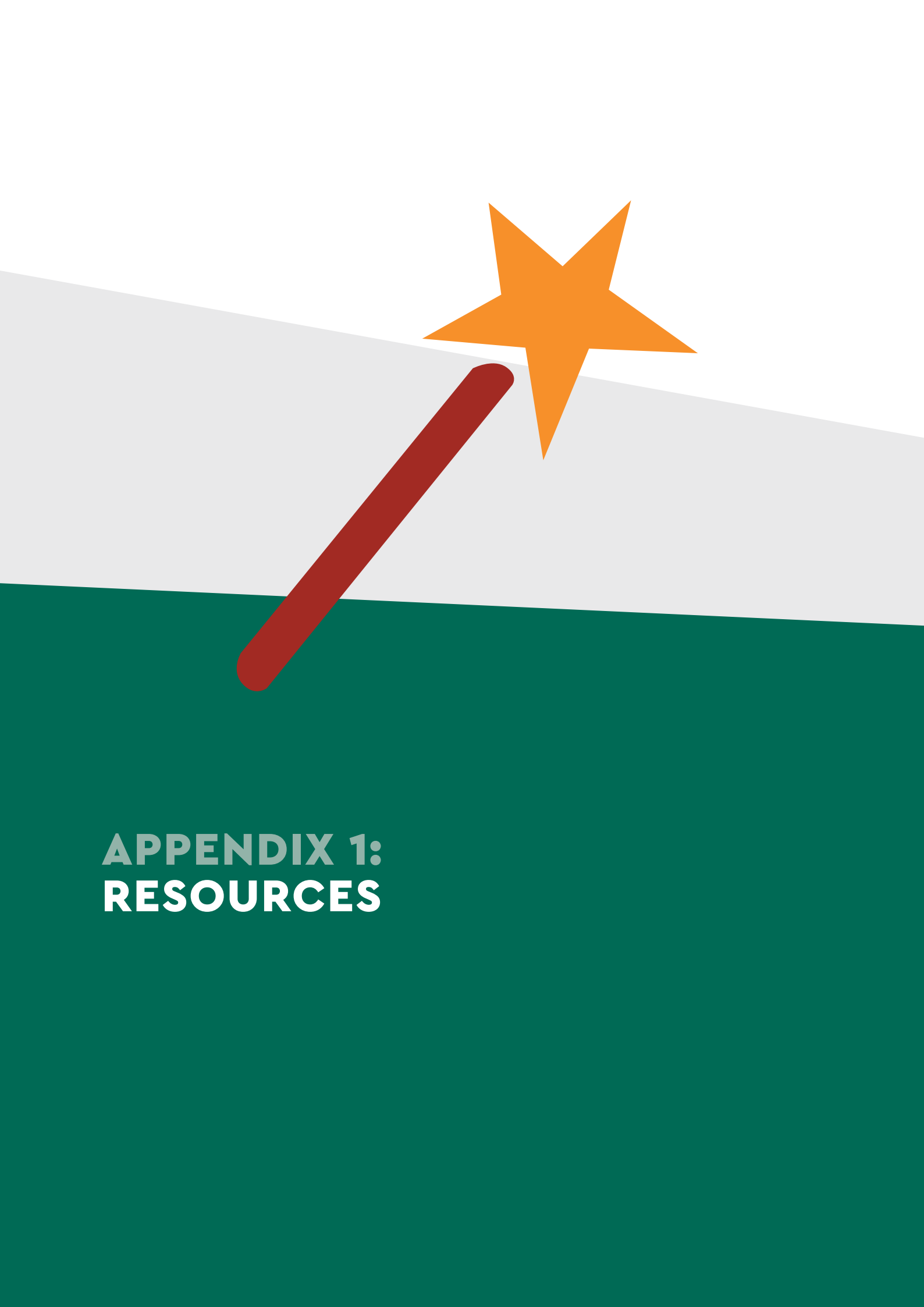
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## E. CHECKLIST FOR INCORPORATING AN EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LENS INTO SCHOOL PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

A simple checklist of areas which supervisors could use to consider whether or not students are promoting equality and human rights practice is given below. Alternatively, supervisors could highlight areas where human rights and equality are particularly relevant in the existing appraisal tools used in their college and include this consideration in their reports.

AREA OF ASSESSMENT	YES	NO	SOME WHAT
Planning for inclusion			
Differentiation, catering for multiple intelligences and backgrounds			
High expectations of all students in the class			
Choice of materials and resources			
Challenging assumptions and stereotyping			
Supporting relationships or respect and trust within the classroom			
Engagement of all students in activities			
Supporting student voice in the classroom			
Encouraging self-directed student learning			
Methods of assessment			
Grading methods			



**APPENDIX 1:  
RESOURCES**

## SECOND LEVEL RESOURCES

A comprehensive list of resources related to equality and human rights is provided in *Equality in Second-level Schools: A Training Manual for Educators and Trainers* pages 86-108. This includes links to the on-line version of the resources.

A list of non-governmental organisations and groups who promote equality and human rights is provided in *Grounds for Action: Building a Culture of Equality in our Society* pages 116-119. This includes links to the on-line version of the resources.

## PRIMARY RESOURCES

**The DICE Project** lists many resources on the themes of development, human rights and interculturalism and can be accessed at <http://www.diceproject.ie/>

The new Walk Tall materials for SPHE at all levels in Primary Schools are accessible on line at [www.pdst.ie](http://www.pdst.ie) and include many activities which relate to equality and human rights.

**Equality and Human Rights Commission UK:** Free downloadable lesson plans and multi media materials to help teachers provide careers advice that challenges stereotypes.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/education-providers/primary-education-resources/resource-toolkit>



**APPENDIX 2:  
UNDERSTANDING  
EQUALITY – THE FOUR  
DIMENSIONS**

This appendix provides a short exploration of concepts of equality that are used throughout the resource.

## **Different Understandings of Equality**

There are very many theories and understandings of what equality means. Theories of equality can broadly, be categorised under three headings:

- Basic Equality
- Liberal Egalitarianism
- Equality of Condition

**Basic Equality** is the idea that at some level ‘all human beings have equal worth and importance and are therefore equally worthy of concern and respect’<sup>4</sup>. An example of this is that everyone, no matter how much they earn or possess, has equal worth and importance as a human being.

**Liberal Egalitarianism** includes a wide range of views, but involves the ideas of equality of opportunity as a way of minimising disadvantage between people, the premise that we should relate to each other as equal citizens, and the need to be tolerant of the private religious and moral values of others. It assumes that there will always be major inequalities between people because of their status, the level of resources available to them, their employment and the level of power they have. These inequalities can be managed by strengthening the minimum to which everyone is entitled and promoting equality of opportunity so that people have the same chance to compete for advantage. This understanding is reflected in the structures of the welfare state. Positive action or reasonable accommodation may be required to support some individuals in having the same opportunity to realise the same outcomes as others.

**Equality of Condition** builds on basic equality and liberal equality. It is based on the premise that inequality is not inevitable and that major inequalities can be greatly diminished, even if not eliminated. Whereas liberal egalitarianism focuses mainly on the rights of individuals, equality of condition focuses on rights and inequalities in relation to groups of people. It emphasises that inequality is rooted in the social structures of society and that these structures can be changed. How these structures may need to change requires reflection and debate within societies. It is concerned with what is often called equality of outcome as opposed to merely equality of opportunity. Equality of outcome does not mean that everyone achieves the same outcome, but that everyone is in a position to exercise real choices in how they achieve their potential. This understanding of equality is sometimes referred to as ‘substantive equality’.

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4 Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. and Walsh, J. (2004) Equality from theory to action. Basing-stoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

## THE 4 DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY

The 4 Dimensions of Equality<sup>5</sup> is a helpful framework for analysing inequalities and implementing substantive equality which is based on the seminal work of Baker, Lynch, Cantillon and Walsh (2004, 2009)<sup>6</sup>. The four dimensions, describe equality in terms of:

- Opportunities and Outcomes (resources)
- Recognition and Respect
- Participation (representation)
- Relationships of care and solidarity.

### Equality as Opportunities and Outcomes

This dimension is concerned with promoting equality through the provision of equal opportunities and with ensuring, as far as possible, that individuals and groups have differentiated access to what they need in order to achieve their potential in life. It is reflected in IHREC's obligation to ensure that 'a person's ability to achieve his or her potential is not limited by prejudice, discrimination, neglect or prohibited conduct' (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014). Within schools, it is concerned with admission policies, learning supports, choice of subjects, streaming policies, level of facilities provided etc.

### Equality of Recognition and Respect

This dimension is concerned with the equal recognition of diverse identities and with respect for others. It involves the valuing, celebration and accommodation of diversity within society, although it does not mean that this valuing should be uncritical. It avoids stereotyping or making assumptions about people because of their identity. Within schools, it is concerned with the valuing, celebrating and accommodation in policy and practice of diverse genders, cultures, religions, abilities, family structures and sexual orientation.

### Equality as Participation

This dimension is concerned with the extent to which all people can participate in society, and be part of the decision making process in relation to decisions that affect them. This dimension is particularly relevant to groups at risk of experiencing inequality or who typically do not have power within social structures, for example, children, older people, and people with disabilities. It is reflected in the IHREC's obligation to ensure that 'each person has a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the economic, political, social or cultural life of the State' (10.3.d). Within schools, participation is concerned with student voice, through student councils and within individual classrooms.

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5 Baker et al (2004) include a fifth dimension, equality in relation to working and learning. For the purposes of this supplement, working and learning are incorporated into the other four dimensions. An alternate 4 dimensions framework can be found in Fredman, Sandra Substantive Equality Revisited. OXFORD LEGAL RESEARCH PAPER SERIES PAPER NO 70/2014

6 Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. and Walsh, J. (2004) Equality from theory to action. Basing-stoke: Palgrave Macmillan

## Equality in Relationships of Care and Solidarity

This dimension is concerned with access to relationships of care and solidarity which ‘helps to establish a basic sense of importance, value and belonging, a sense of being appreciated, wanted and cared about’ (Baker et al, 2004: 37), without which we cannot live fulfilled lives. Within schools, it is related to students’ sense of belonging, to their freedom from bullying, and to the development of relationships of solidarity between diverse groups.

The 4 Dimensions provide both a theoretical and practical framework for understanding and promoting substantive equality. They are encapsulated in description of the Inclusive School from *Schools and the Equal Status Acts* given below. This provides a vision of what a school which takes equality seriously would look like

*The inclusive school prevents and combats discrimination. It is one that respects, values and accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation – gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. It seeks positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access, participation, personal development and achieving education credentials.*

**The Equality Authority (2005:1)<sup>7</sup>**

Embedding Equality in Whole School Development Planning (2010)<sup>8</sup> provides an outline of the 4 Dimensions in relation to schools and identifies some of the main issues which relate to equality in Irish post-primary schools. Grounds for Action: Building a Culture of Equality in Society (2012)<sup>9</sup> offers a series of questions on each dimension which can support analysis of equality issues within the framework of the 4 Dimensions.

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7 The Equality Authority (2005) *Schools and the Equal Status Act*. 2nd edition. Dublin: The Equality Authority

8 Gannon, G, and Kenny (2010) *Embedding Equality in Whole School Development Planning*. Dublin: SDPO and the Equality Authority

9 O’Shea, K., (2012) *Grounds for Action: Building a Culture of Equality in Society*. Dublin: A Citizen Resource for Transition Year and Key Stage 4. Dublin: The Equality Authority



**APPENDIX 3:  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
EQUALITY – THE LEGAL  
CONTEXT**



This appendix provides a brief overview of the legal context in which human rights and equality are situated.

## **Human Rights and Equality: The Legal Context**

Although human rights and equality are very closely related they both have their own specific focus, particularly in a legal context. In legal terms human rights and equality are found in international (primarily United Nations) and regional (European) treaties, and in national constitutions and legislation.

### **The Irish Constitution**

The Irish Constitution sets out a number of fundamental rights in Articles 38-44 with which all legislation passed by the Oireachtas must be compatible. These include, for example, the right to education (Art. 42.2). In addition the Court has interpreted the Constitution as including certain unenumerated rights which are not explicitly set out in the Constitution but are given meaning by the Courts such as, for example, the right to privacy. Rights are not always absolute and many of the rights within the Constitution can be limited by the Oireachtas on the grounds of the common good or public order.

### **Human Rights Law in Ireland**

In 1948 the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which sets out the basic rights and freedoms shared by all human beings. These include:

- Civil and political rights, for example, the right to life, the right to a fair trial, freedom of thought and expression, and the right not to be subjected to torture;
- Economic, social and cultural rights, for example, the right to work, the right to join a trade union, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights<sup>10</sup> states that human rights are based on the equal dignity of all humans (Art.1) and everyone is entitled to enjoy these rights 'without discrimination on any ground' (Art.2). We have our human rights, not because we have earned them, but simply by virtue of being human, and because every human being is equal in worth and dignity. 'We are equal; therefore we have a right to equality of respect; therefore we each deserve a chance to do the best we can with our lives, according to our own lights' (Gearty, 2004).<sup>11</sup>

The rights set out in the Universal Declaration have since been included in many treaties, declarations and resolutions. Ireland has ratified six of the nine core

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10 See <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html> for information on the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

11 Conor Gearty, 'Understanding equality: the need for discrimination', speech at the Discrimination Law Association, 13 December 2004 quoted in Francesca Klug and Helen Wildbore Equality, Dignity and Discrimination under Human Rights Law; selected cases(2005)Centre for the Study of Human Rights, LSE.

international human rights treaties.<sup>12</sup> These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and specific treaties on the elimination of racial discrimination, discrimination against women, the rights of children and protection against torture. It is expected that Ireland will ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by end-2016. To date Ireland has not ratified the treaties on protection against forced disappearance and on the rights of migrants.

Ireland has also ratified the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>13</sup> and the European Social Charter<sup>14</sup>. These are regional treaties under the remit of the Council of Europe. The European Convention on Human Rights Act (2003) gives effect to the standards set out in the Convention in Irish law, allowing them to be considered before the Irish Courts.

When Ireland ratifies a human rights treaty, it takes on obligations under international law. It is required to put in place laws and policies that ensure the rights covered in that treaty are respected in the state. This means that the human rights guaranteed under international law have to be made real at the national level.

### **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

The EU took a major step forward in the area of promoting and protecting human rights with the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Proclaimed in 2000, the Charter became legally binding on the EU with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009. The provision of the Charter are addressed to: the institutions and the bodies of the EU; and to the national authorities when they are implementing EU law.

The Charter contains 54 Articles on rights and freedoms under six titles: Dignity, Freedoms, Equality, Solidarity, Citizens Rights and Justice. The Charter embeds:

- All the rights found in the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU;
- The rights and freedoms enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Other rights and principles resulting from the common constitutional traditions of EU countries and other international instruments.

### **Equality Legislation**

Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding values. It goes back to 1957 when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome. The Treaty of Amsterdam which entered into force in 1999 gave the EU new powers to also address discrimination in relation to age, disability, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

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12 See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx> for the core Treaties. Note that some of the treaties are supplemented by optional protocols dealing with specific concerns.

13 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) (written in 1950, came into force in 1953).

14 European Social Charter (revised) (Council of Europe Treaty adopted in 1961, revised in 1996 and adopted in 1999).

The EU has over the years developed robust legislation to protect against discrimination and inequality.

Equality law aims to prevent discrimination against and to promote equality of opportunity for individuals and groups. In other words equality law aims to ensure that individuals or groups of individuals are treated equally and no less favourably than other individuals or groups on different grounds.

At EU level the main framework for equality legislation is set out in four Directives. A Directive is a legal act of the European Union which has to be transposed by member states into national law within a certain timescale. The Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) is concerned with the principle of equal treatment between persons regardless of their racial or ethnic origin in the areas of employment, education, social security, health care and access to goods and services. The Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. The Gender Goods and Services Equality Directive (2004/113/EC) deals with equal treatment of men and women in the areas of goods and services. The Recast Gender Equality Directive (2006/54/EC) covers equal treatment of men and women in employment. In 2008 a proposed Directive was introduced on equality in the areas of goods and services, social protection, and education on the grounds of disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age for some years. This has not been passed to date.

Irish equality legislation enacts and goes beyond the requirements of EU law in many areas including extending the number of protected grounds and combating discrimination in employment, goods, facilities, services, accommodation and education.

There are two Equality Acts, the **Employment Equality Acts** and the **Equal Status Acts**.

- The **Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011** prohibit discrimination on nine grounds in employment, including vocational training and work experience.
- The **Equal Status Acts 2000-2012** prohibit discrimination on nine grounds in relation to buying and selling goods, providing services, accommodation and access to education.

The nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited are gender, race (including ethnicity and nationality), age, disability, civil status, family status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation or religion (including non-religious belief). In some cases, the Acts identify exemptions which allow people to be treated differently on the nine grounds. For example, primary and secondary schools may be for one gender only.

Equality includes having access to the necessary resources or supports so that individuals can have equal opportunities to make the most of their lives and

talents. In this sense equality does not always mean treating everyone the same. This is recognised in the Acts as follows:

### **Disability and Reasonable Accommodation**

- Under the Employment Equality Acts, an employer must take appropriate steps to enable a person who has a disability to have access to employment and to participate in employment and training.
- Under the Equal Status Acts, educational institutions, service providers, and clubs must do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability.
- They do not have to make special accommodation if this would cost them a considerable amount of money.

### **Special Treatment and Positive Action**

Employers and service providers can give special treatment to people in order to promote equality of opportunity or to accommodate people with different needs. This may require preferential treatment or positive measures which allow equality of opportunity for people who may be disadvantaged because of their circumstances, or to cater for their special needs. For example, public sector employers are obliged to reach an employment target of 3 per cent for people with disabilities. This positive action measure recognises the difficulties that people with disabilities have in accessing employment.

### **Schools and Equality**

Both the Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts apply to schools. For example, under the Equal Status Acts schools are not allowed to discriminate in their admissions policy, but denominational schools can favour certain young people on religious grounds.

Education legislation also includes equality obligations for schools. For example, under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, schools must have a code of behaviour which expects people to behave in a way that respects diversity across the nine grounds. It should also describe what steps will be taken if someone is harassed or sexually harassed.

**For more information on the human rights and equality legal framework see [www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)**





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