



Jigsaw PSHE, the Equality Act and Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 providing a modern, single legal framework with clear, streamlined law to more effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination. It stated that it is against the law (UK) to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called ‘protected characteristics’, and schools have a duty of care to protect all pupils from discrimination or harassment.

Jigsaw PSHE can help schools understand and promote these characteristics more fully and in a child-centred way. The Puzzle ‘Celebrating Difference’ focuses on similarities and differences and teaches about diversity, such as disability, racism, power, friendships, and conflict; children learn to accept everyone’s right to ‘difference’, and most year groups explore the concept of ‘normal’; bullying – what it is and what it isn’t, including cyber and homophobic bullying – is an important aspect of this Puzzle.

The Relationships Puzzle also has a wide focus, looking at diverse topics such as families, friendships, pets and animals, and love and loss – all of which can help to deliver the vital messages behind the Equalities Act. A vital part of this Puzzle is about safeguarding and keeping children safe; this links to cyber safety and social networking, as well as attraction and assertiveness; children learn how to deal with conflict, their own strengths and self-esteem. They have the chance to explore roles and responsibilities in families, and look at stereotypes. All Jigsaw lessons are delivered in an age- and stage-appropriate way so that they meet children’s needs and can help them understand the wider world.

Schools across the UK are aligning their Jigsaw PSHE lessons to the Equality Act. The grid below offers some suggestions of how particular Jigsaw lessons can be of support to schools.

Protected characteristics	What this refers to	Links to Jigsaw
Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).	Celebrating Difference Ages 10-11 Piece 3: Power Struggles
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.	Celebrating Difference Ages 5-6 Piece 6: Celebrating Me. Ages 7-8 Piece 5: Gender diversity Ages 8-9 Piece 1: Judging by appearances Ages 10-11 Piece 2: Understanding difference
Being married or in a civil partnership	Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).	Celebrating Difference Ages 7-8 Piece 1: Families
Being pregnant or on maternity leave	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.	Celebrating Difference Ages 3-4/4-5 Piece 3: Families Ages 7-8 Piece 1: Families
Disability	A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.	Celebrating Difference Ages 10-11 Piece 5: Celebrating difference
Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin	Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.	Celebrating Difference Ages 9-10 Piece 2: Racism

Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (such as Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.	Celebrating Difference Ages 9-10 Piece 1: Different Cultures
Sex	A man or a woman.	Celebrating Difference Ages 6-7 Pieces 1&2: Boys and Girls
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	Changing Me Ages 10-11 Piece 4: Boyfriends and girlfriends