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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 November 2009</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Acting Director of Education</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUC/93/09/AH</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Iain Mills</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712824</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Overarching statement on equalities</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask committee to note the contents of the attached paper on a single, overarching equalities statement for Inverclyde Education Services and educational establishments.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 A single overarching equalities statement will bring all the equality strands together and make our service more familiar with and sensitive to the specific needs of the children and community we serve, while ensuring that we meet our requirements under present and future legislation. A copy of the attached document will be distributed to all Education Headquarters staff and all school staff, and poster size copies of the summary diagram will be issued for display in schools.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the attached paper and its appendix.

**Albert Henderson**  
**Acting Director of Education**

#### 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 By April 2007, public sector duties in relation to race, gender and disability equality had been introduced. Further public sector duties on age, religion and belief and sexual orientation will follow.

#### 5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 A single overarching equalities statement will be introduced to bring all the equality strands together. This offers a more long-term and sustainable approach to equalities legislation and equal opportunities for all if all equalities can be addressed as a whole.

#### 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

##### 6.1 Finance

Costs of posters for establishments (quoted at £135) plus duplication costs of paper copy for all staff.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Costs	Virement from	Other comments
00426	Curriculum for Excellence	2009-10	£250	N/A	Cost of resources will be contained within existing budget

##### 6.2 Legal

There are no known legal issues

##### 6.3 Personnel

Taken forward by Iain Mills

##### 6.4 Equalities

This Education Equality Statement complies with the overarching Inverclyde Council Equality Statement published in June 2007. The main purpose of it is to more effectively promote equalities within Education.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the attached paper and its appendix.

#### 8.0 EQUALITIES ISSUES

8.1 See 6.4. Promoting equalities is at the heart of what this is about.

#### 9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 **Appendix 1 – ‘Equalities in Inverclyde Schools: a single overarching equalities statement’.**

## **Appendix 1 – ‘Equalities in Inverclyde Schools: a single overarching equalities statement.**

### **Equalities in Inverclyde Schools: a single overarching equalities statement**

“Our vision for the children and young people is that they should be ambitious for themselves and be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. To achieve this vision, our children must be safe, healthy, achieving, active, respected and responsible, included and nurtured. All children should have access to high quality services when required and should be assisted to overcome the social, educational, physical environmental and economic barriers that create inequality” (*Adapted from Inverclyde Education Services Plan 2007-2008*)

#### **Introduction**

This Education Equality Statement complies with the overarching Inverclyde Council Equality Statement published in June 2007, and works in tandem with Inverclyde Education Service’s current Race Equality, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and Action Plans.

#### **Background to Equalities Legislation**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act first introduced the concept of a positive race equality duty to public bodies in 2001. A new public sector duty on Disability Equality came into effect in December 2006, followed by the duty on Gender Equality which came into effect in April 2007.

#### **The Statutory Duties**

“The three Duties have a common aim of ensuring that the public sector works to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in all its activities. However, each piece of legislation is focused on delivering equality in the most appropriate way for disabled people, for different ethnic groups, or for women and men in our society. Each Duty places distinct legal obligations on the public sector.

It is likely that, in the future, equalities legislation will be brought together and will create duties on the public sector to promote equality and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.” *Bringing Equality to Scotland: The Three Public Sector Duties*

#### **Rationale for a Single Equality Statement**

It is in the light of recent - and forthcoming – legislation, that moving towards a single Equality Statement for Education could be considered a worthwhile exercise, bringing together the equality policies and action plans in the areas of race, disability, and gender, as well as age, religion and belief and sexual orientation, while recognising the similar and differing legal requirements of each area. Taking a more overarching approach to Equality by considering all six equality strands will make our service more sensitive to the specific needs of the children and community we serve, while ensuring that we meet our requirements under present and future legislation. In addition, it offers a more long-term and more sustainable approach to equalities legislation and equal opportunities for all if all equalities can be addressed as a whole.

In recent years we have seen many changes to equalities legislation, reflecting how we are aiming towards a society free from discrimination, where everyone can reach their full potential. We are taking a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality.

## The Equality Statement for Inverclyde Schools

'Inverclyde Education Service is committed to ensuring that no pupils or members of staff or service users receive less favourable treatment on any ground including gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We have a moral, social and legal obligation to mainstream and put equality at the heart of everything we do. We aim to promote a culture in which equality of opportunity exists for all. We are opposed to all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, and aim to eliminate all discriminatory practices. We will ensure that in our schools and other educational establishments equality permeates the curriculum and underpins all our policies and practices in terms of access to education. We must ensure that all our children achieve their full potential to develop physically, emotionally and academically. Finally, we believe that equality and inclusion should be a given right, where everyone is valued and treated with respect.'

The legislation imposes duties on us. These public sector duties give us the following responsibilities in relation to the six areas of equality:

<b>Our responsibilities</b>	
<b>The Six Strands of Equality</b> Race Equality Gender Equality Disability Equality Age Equality Religion and Belief Equality Sexual Equality	Inverclyde Education Service, in carrying out its functions, must have due regard to the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation</li><li>• <b>promote</b> equality of opportunity for everyone no matter their race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief, or sexual orientation</li><li>• <b>promote</b> good relations between people of different groups whatever their race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief, or sexual orientation</li></ul>
Specific to the Disability Equality Duty	Inverclyde Education Service must, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people</li><li>• <b>promote</b> positive attitudes towards disabled people</li><li>• encourage participation by disabled people in public life</li></ul>

We must also take account of the Specific Duties as included in Inverclyde Education's Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Policies.