

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING

FOR

**GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN
SCHOOLS AND EOTAS CENTRES IN NORTHERN
IRELAND
GUIDANCE**

- Please note that this document should always be referred to as an [Equality Screening](#) not an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (which is a more detailed document requiring a consultation period of at least three months).
- Please use easy to understand language and short sentences. Try to aim for a comprehension level for a P7 pupil.
- Hyperlinks may be added (as can annexes) but avoid tables.
- The screening must explain which Section 75 categories are likely to benefit from (or be impacted by) the policy and how/why this is likely.
- The [screening](#) should show data/statistics specific to the "policy" being screened.
- Monitoring (follow-up action) is an important part of the screening.

Further advice can be found in [ECNI - Screening for Public Authorities, Effective Section 75 Equality Assessments: Screening and Equality Assessments \(ECNI. 2017\)](#) and [Section 75: Using Evidence in Policy Making - a signposting guide](#)

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PART ONE

BACKGROUND

1.1 Title of policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project

Guidance On The Use Of Mobile Phones In Schools and EOTAS Centres In Northern Ireland

1.2 Type of policy review/revised policy/pilot/project.
(Please delete as appropriate)

Revised policy

- 1.3 Click here to enter description of the policy including:
- Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?
 - What is the policy trying to achieve? (aim/outcomes)
 - How will this be achieved?

The Department's position, informed by a growing body of national and international evidence, engagement with schools and stakeholders, and findings from the Department's mobile phone-free schools pilot and associated evaluation activity, is that all schools and EOTAS centres should be mobile phone-free environments by default. Pupils should not have access to personal mobile phones or other similar devices during the school day. This includes smartphones, smartwatches and any personal device with communication, recording or internet-enabled functionality. Any departure from this position should be exceptional, supported by a clear educational, safeguarding or medical rationale, formally documented, and subject to regular review.

The updated guidance has been informed by findings from the Department's mobile phone-free schools pilot, associated evaluation activity, surveys of schools and the increasing body of wider research literature relating to the impact of mobile phone use on children and young people's wellbeing, learning and behaviour. Much of this evidence indicates that reducing access to personal mobile devices during the school day can contribute to improved concentration, greater engagement in learning, enhanced social interaction, reduced distraction and a more positive school environment.

The guidance aims to support schools and EOTAS centres in developing and implementing clear, consistent and enforceable approaches to personal mobile phone use that promote learning, wellbeing and safeguarding. It is not intended to restrict the appropriate use of educational technology to support teaching and learning.

The Department recognises that there are risks associated with children and young people bringing personal mobile devices into educational settings. These include

distraction from learning, disruption to teaching, cyberbullying, harassment, inappropriate online activity, unauthorised recording and the potential adverse impact of excessive online engagement on wellbeing. Such issues can have significant implications for pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community.

The Department's position also reflects evidence that the effectiveness of mobile phone-free approaches depends not simply on the existence of a policy but on clear expectations, consistent implementation and regular review. The guidance therefore provides a framework to assist schools and EOTAS centres in establishing and maintaining mobile phone-free environments while ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to meet individual educational, medical, safeguarding or disability-related needs where required.

The policy is intended to support the wellbeing, safeguarding and educational outcomes of all children and young people in schools and EOTAS settings. The Department does not anticipate that the guidance will have a differential impact on, or provide particular benefit to, any individual Section 75 category. Rather, the guidance is intended to apply consistently across educational settings and support positive outcomes for all pupils. Appropriate exceptions and reasonable adjustments will continue to be made where required to meet individual educational, medical, safeguarding or disability-related needs.

- 1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project? (Please delete as appropriate)

Other

The degree to which individual schools' implement the guidance through revised policies and associated enforcement will impact the degree to which the intended aim/outcome of guidance is realised.

- 1.5 Main stakeholders affected (Please delete as appropriate)

Pupils (Actual or Potential)

Parents

Teaching Staff

Trade Unions or Professional Organisations

The framework policy will directly affect pupils and teaching staff as well as those involved in the wider schools community (e.g., parents, carers, etc).

- 1.6 Who is responsible for?

(a) Devising the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project

(b) Implementing it

(c) Explain the relationship?

(a) The Department of Education

(b) Schools / Educational Settings

(c) The Board of Governors has a legal duty, under Article 17 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, to safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils at the school when the pupils are on school premises or in the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff. Policies and procedures on pupils' use of personal mobile devices within schools falls within the wider legal responsibilities of Boards of Governors and principals in relation to pupil behaviour and discipline (Articles 3-6 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998). This duty requires Boards of Governors to make, and keep under review (consulting with the principal, the registered pupils and the parents of those pupils and to consider any guidance given by the Department) a written statement of 'general principles' about positive pupil behaviour, which the principal will have regard to in their duty in determining school rules and behaviour policies, which they must also consult with pupils and parents on.

1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project

- What are they? (E.g. Programme for Government, Public Service Agreement targets etc.)
- Who owns them?
- Are there any links to other NI departments/NDPBs?

DE Circular 2011/22 Internet Safety

[2011/22 - Internet safety](#)

DE Circular 2013/25 eSafety Guidance

[2013/25 - eSafety guidance](#)

DE Circular 2016/26 Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices (currently under review)

[2016/26 Effective Educational Uses of Mobile Digital Devices](#)

DE Circular 2016/27 Online Safety (currently under review)

[2016/27 Online Safety](#)

DE Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance

[Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools](#)

EVIDENCE

1.8 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project in respect of each of the categories?

Religious Belief

In 2024/25, the religious belief of pupils was recorded as 49.7% Catholic, 34% Protestant or Other Christian and 16.2% Other / No Religion / not stated.

Data Source: [Equality Matters](#) (primary, post primary and special schools)

Political Opinion

The Department does not hold data on the political opinion of children and young people.

Racial Group

In 2024/25, the ethnic group of pupils was recorded as 92.3% White and 7.7% Other.

Data Source: [Equality Matters](#) (primary, post-primary and special schools)

Age

The 2024/25 school population (primary, post-primary and special school), split by age group, is: 53% age 2-10, 37.9% age 11-15 and 9.2% age 16+.

Data Source: [Equality Matters](#) (primary, post primary and special schools)

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants. The age profile of individuals are school-age as the policy is for school (educational) settings.

Marital Status

The Department does not hold data on the marital status of those young people who are of a legal age to marry.

Sexual Orientation

There is no population data for children and young people, based on Census 2021, the total population split by sexual orientation was 90% straight or heterosexual, 2.1% gay, lesbian, bisexual or other and 7.9% prefer not to say/not stated.

Data Source: [Equality Matters](#)

The Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey evidence suggests that 12% of males and 21% of females were at least at once sexually attracted to someone of the same sex. The YLT records the views of 16 year olds in Northern Ireland on a range of issues.

Data Source: [Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey: 2025](#)

Men And Women Generally

The school enrolment of female / male pupils is fairly even with 49.2% and 50.8% respectively.

Data Source: [Equality Matters](#) (primary, post-primary and special schools total enrolment 2024/25)

Disability

It is reported from the DE Annual School Census 2025/26 that 20% of pupils have special educational needs, with 9% having a Statement of SEN.

Data Source: [Special Educational Needs 202526.pdf](#).

Dependants

Recent data on the number of young carers, defined as “Children and young people aged up to 18 years who have a substantive caring role for a member of their family...” ([Supporting Young Carers in School.pdf](#)), is not available.

Barnardo’s report that up to 1 in 5 children and young people are young carers in the UK.

Data Source: [Young carers | Barnardo's](#)

The 2015 YLT Survey reported that 9% of respondents had caring responsibilities.

Data Source: [NI Young Life and Times Survey - 2015: CARERESP](#)

NEEDS, EXPERIENCES AND PRIORITIES

- 1.9 Taking into account the evidence gathered at 1.8 what are the needs, experiences and priorities of each category in relation to this particular policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project/decision?

Specify details of the needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 categories below:

Religious Belief

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Political Opinion

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Racial Group

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Age

The policy focuses on children and young people attending school and EOTAS and attempts to secure calmer, safer and more focused learning environments, improved face-to-face interaction, and a reduction in phone-related disruption. It is this broader educational, safeguarding and wellbeing imperative, together with the need to maximise pupils' engagement in learning and school life, that underpins the Department's policy position.

The evidence supports a clear strategic direction: schools are more likely to secure calm, safe and focused learning environments where pupils do not have routine access to personal mobile phones during the school day. The strongest case relates to smartphones and similar internet-enabled devices because of their capacity to distract pupils, enable online harms, intensify peer conflict and disrupt learning during school time. UNESCO has concluded that technology should be used in education only where it demonstrably supports learning and has highlighted concerns that smartphones can distract pupils even when they are not actively being used.

The conclusion from the evidence is not that every school must use the same operational model. Rather, it is that every school should work towards the same outcome: pupils should not be able to access personal mobile phones during the school day unless a clearly justified exception based on individual circumstances has been agreed, documented and reviewed. This reflects the developing international approach, where many jurisdictions are strengthening restrictions while allowing schools to determine the most appropriate model for their context.

Internationally, there has been a significant move towards stronger restrictions on mobile phones in schools. UNESCO reported that by the end of 2024, 79 education systems, representing around 40%, had laws or policies banning smartphone use in schools, and later reported that by March 2026 this had increased to 114 education systems, representing 58% of countries worldwide. This international trend reflects growing concern about distraction, cyberbullying, behaviour, wellbeing and the wider impact of digital environments on children and young people. However, international evidence also suggests that restrictions are most effective when they are clear, consistently implemented and supported by practical arrangements for communication, exceptions, enforcement and access to appropriate educational technology.

Marital Status

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Sexual Orientation

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Men And Women Generally

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Disability

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

Dependants

The policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.

PART TWO – SCREENING QUESTIONS

LIKELY IMPACT

- 2.1 What is the likely impact of this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Please provide details of the likely policy impacts and determine the level of impact for each S75 categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 66-68 of this Guide.

*If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.*

*If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.*

*If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:*

- *measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or*
- *the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.*

In favour of a 'major' impact

- a) *The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;*
- b) *Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;*
- c) *Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;*
- d) *Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;*
- e) *The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;*
- f) *The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.*

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) *The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;*
- b) *The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;*
- c) *Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;*
- d) *By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.*

In favour of none

- a) *The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.*
- b) *The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.*

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age: The policy focuses on children and young people attending school and EOTAS and attempts to secure calmer, safer and more focused learning environments, improved face-to-face interaction, and a reduction in phone-related disruption. It is this broader educational, safeguarding and wellbeing imperative, together with the need to maximise pupils' engagement in learning and**

school life, that underpins the Department's policy position. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people

What is the level of impact? Minor / ~~Major~~ / ~~None~~

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability: The policy ensures that reasonable adjustments are put in place in relation to disability. No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependents: No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could promote equality of opportunity for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Age - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations – while the policy impacts school age children and young people, the policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Marital Status - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Sexual Orientation - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Men and Women generally - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Disability - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

Dependants - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations - policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependants.**

LIKELY IMPACT ON GOOD RELATIONS

- 2.3 To what extent is the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Please provide details of the likely policy impact and determine the level of impact for each of the categories below i.e. either minor, major or none.

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**: **No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**: **No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**: **No impact in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within this category**

What is the level of impact? ~~Minor~~ / ~~Major~~ / None

- 2.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Detail opportunities of how this policy could better promote good relations for people within each of the Section 75 Categories below:

Religious Belief - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations**

Political Opinion - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations**

Racial Group - If Yes, provide details:

If No, provide reasons: **no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations**

MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

2.5 Please provide details of data on the impact of the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

No impact in terms of likely impact on people with multiple identities (S75 categories). No relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations and policy does not exclude or specifically target individuals based on religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or dependents.

PART THREE

SCREENING DECISION

3.1 Please select as appropriate and provide details and reasons:

a) The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

or

~~b) The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment but with mitigation or the introduction of an alternative policy.~~

or

~~c) The decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment.~~

Reasons

The key reason for the decision not to conduct an equality impact assessment is because there is no significant impact likely on equality of opportunity for people within S75 categories or on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

MITIGATION

3.2 If option b was chosen.

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, **give the reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/A

TIMETABLING AND PRIORITISING

3.3 If option c was chosen.

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion

Rating (1-3)

- Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations
- Social need
- Effect on people's daily lives
- Relevance to a public authority's functions

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details.

N/A

PART FOUR

MONITORING

Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project on any of Section 75 equality categories:

The Department of Education will continue to monitor implementation of the new guidance, including any impacts on Section 75 categories, through the use of surveys to schools seeking feedback on how the guidance is being implemented, as well as commissioning ETI to monitor implementation of the new guidance.

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

PART FIVE

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- 5.1 Will the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project in any way discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities?

Yes/No

- 5.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project or introducing additional measures?

Yes/No

- 5.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project with reference to the disability duties.

DE collects a range of data on pupils in Special Schools and pupils with Special Educational Needs in other school types.

PART SIX

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

- 6.1 Does the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project review/revised policy/pilot/project affect anyone's Human Rights?

Particularly consider:

- [The Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)

~~Yes~~/No

- 6.2 If you have identified a negative impact; what Human Right is impacted, what is the nature of the impact and who is affected and how?

N/A

At this stage you should determine whether to seek legal advice and to refer the issue to the Equality Unit to consider:

- whether there is a law which allows you to interfere with or restrict rights;
- whether this interference or restriction is necessary and proportionate; and
- what action would be required to reduce the level of interference restriction).

- 9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project .

None known.

PART SEVEN

RURAL NEEDS

The undertaking of a [Rural Needs Impact Assessment \(RNIA\)](#) is an integral part of the development, adoption, implementation or review of a policy, strategy or plan or the design or delivery of a public service.

Will a separate RNIA be completed? Yes/~~No~~

Reason for non-completion: **N/A**

Completed RNIA's are published on the Department's Internet site and shown under [Rural Needs Impact Assessments](#).

PART EIGHT

APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

FOR COMPLETION BY POLICY TEAM

Screened by: Michael Leonard	Grade 7	Date 12/8/2026
Approved by: Claire McClelland	Grade 5	Date 12/8/2026
Cleared by: Paul Brush	Grade 3	Date 24/8/2026

Notes:

The screening form must be approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

The screening form must also be cleared at Grade 3 level.

The TRIM version of the completed Screening Form must be sent to the Equality Team (DE.Equality@education-ni.gov.uk) for quality assurance

FOR COMPLETION BY EQUALITY TEAM

Screening Decision Agreed

Quality Assured by: G. Smyth	Date 17/08/2026
Team Informed:	Date 17/08/2026

RECORDING AND PUBLISHING BY POLICY TEAM

You must store this completed screening form on Content Manager and finalise it. Use the record naming convention "Completed Screening form of....."

Content Manager Ref No: ED1/26/183893

Placed on Internet by policy team Date: 27 August 2026

As soon as possible, following quality assurance, you must publish a copy of the screening form in Microsoft Word (or other Open Document Format) on the Department's website: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications> with a link on the "Policy Screening" page: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/de-equality-screenings>