

## Equality, diversity and inclusion in music education

### Definitions and legislation

**Equality** is recognising the right of all individuals and groups to be treated equally (which does not necessarily mean being treated the same). It is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. Equality recognises that certain groups of people have protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Married or civil partner status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

**Diversity** is recognising and valuing difference and embracing acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences.

**Inclusion** is the approach for teachers to ensure inclusive practice for all students. Under the inclusion model, students with 'Special Educational Needs and Disability' labels are educated in mainstream education settings alongside their peers without disabilities. In these schools there is a commitment to removing all barriers to ensure the full participation of everyone as equally valued and unique individuals. Implementation of inclusion practice varies in different schools.

**Equality Act 2010 aims to strengthen protection and advance equality of opportunity.** It brings together for the first time all the legal requirements for the private, public and voluntary sectors, making existing equality laws simpler, more effective and easier to understand. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits all employers, service providers and providers of education, from discriminating against, harassing or victimising individuals with protected characteristics. It is unlawful to discriminate against someone by treating them less favourably because of their protected characteristics.

#### Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED)

Maintained Schools and Academies, including Free Schools, must have due regard to the PSED. This means that they must take active steps to identify and address issues of discrimination where there is evidence of prejudice, harassment or victimisation, lack of understanding, disadvantage, or lack of participation for individuals with protected characteristics.