

Disability Equality Scheme at Blueberry Park Primary School

Introduction

At Blueberry Park Primary school, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled children, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to continue to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. The achievement of disabled children will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. Achieving disability equality lies at the heart of our core objectives and values. We look forward to working with disabled people in delivering our commitment to disability equality.

In this scheme we acknowledge that disability is a consequence of barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society. Our commitment is to remove these barriers. This document outlines our proactive approach to promoting disability equality for children, employees and visitors of the school.

We recognise that promoting equality for all will improve access for everyone. Our aim, therefore, is to make equality a central part of the way we work by putting it at the centre of policy making, practices, procedures and employment practice.

The Disability Equality Scheme

The purpose of a Disability Equality Scheme is to explain in one document how we will make sure that we promote equality for disabled people and challenge discrimination against them. The school recognises its duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA)

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. (DDA 1995, Part 1, Para 1.1)
This covers the following categories:

- Physical co-ordination
- Manual dexterity
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing, eyesight
- Memory or ability to learn, concentrate or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools, who need to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA;
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and applies to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools.

The school’s Board of Governors has three key duties towards disabled children:

- Not to treat disabled children less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled children, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled children.

Vision and Values

This school is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, children and any others involved in the school community with any form of disability, and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices or curriculum delivery. We recognise that that we have a responsibility to meet the needs of all through promoting inclusion and recognising diversity. The school will not tolerate harassment of disabled children with any form of impairment, and will also consider the needs of children who are carers of disabled parents.

The Governors and staff of Dovecot Primary School recognise that they must have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons. This means not representing people in a demeaning way, and it also means not pretending they don’t exist and not representing them anywhere at all.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in school life. It is also important to respect the wishes of disabled children in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take part in.

- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Gathering and Using Information Data

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act we must be able to identify people who are disabled. For this purpose, we will adopt the definition of disability from the Disability Discrimination Act.

The school acknowledges that there will be an overlap between those children with SEN and those with disabilities. However, not all children with disabilities will have Special Educational Needs. Our regular monitoring procedures will ensure that we are able to track the progress of these children as they move through each Key Stage. The school will use a fully inclusive 'Provision Mapping' spreadsheet, which will track the support provided to meet the needs of children with a statement of SEN, requiring School Support, and with additional needs not identified through SEN. This spreadsheet will also indicate which children are considered to be disabled, for the purposes of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Staff will be able to discuss in confidence with the Head Teacher their disability which will rely on self-identification. This information will not be used for any purpose other than supporting the delivery of the Disability Equality Scheme.

The Senior Leadership Team and other staff seek to collect information about and develop an enhanced understanding of the needs of disabled people. We will use this information to develop our policies and practice, and to work to ensure that disabled users are not treated less favourably than anyone else. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure equal opportunities for all.

Monitoring

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, all aspects of school life will be monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and adults with disabilities. The following will be monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by disability
- Disabled staff (including numbers, type of disability and satisfaction rates in staff surveys etc.)

Involvement and Consultation

The school welcomes contributions from parents of disabled children and parents who are disabled.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator has also involved the Board of Governors in the development of the scheme, particularly those Governors involved in SEN and matters pertaining to curriculum and physical access.

The school recognises that the involvement of disabled children, staff, parents and members of the school community who use the school facilities is essential. We will aim to gain their involvement through, e.g.:

- Arranging a meeting with a group of children so that they can share their ideas.
- Using SEN review meetings to highlight any specific requirements.

- Highlighting in the school prospectus and on the school website that the person to talk to regarding the needs of disabled children in the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.
- Conduct effective liaison with pre-schools, playgroups, nurseries, enabling us to understand the needs of individual disabled children as they transfer to our school.
- Reminding parents and carers at Parents Evenings that staff are available to discuss ways in which we can improve the service we provide for disabled children and parents.
- Informing all staff that if they wish to discuss issues relating to disability, then they should talk to the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.
- Informing all staff that a confidential register of disabled staff is to be created for the purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme and that inclusion on this list is voluntary and by self-referral.
- Placing a notice in the reception asking visitors to share ideas that they have which would help us to improve our facilities for disabled people.
- All parents and children are encouraged to communicate to the school their concerns and needs so that we can provide, within reasonable means, the best education possible

Making things happen

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, a Disability Equality and Accessibility action plan has been drawn up to make things happen. It outlines how the requirements of the DDA 2005 will be met. This action plan has been shaped in consultation with disabled people as outlined in the previous section, and aims to meet the requirements of the six duties through

Promoting equality of opportunity

- by awareness raising and staff training;
- by ensuring all policies reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities for the disabled
- by keeping a watchful eye on the impact of policies;
- reviewing and adjusting policies;
- raising expectations;
- Improving communication.
- Increase awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can help to support their learning, for example through workshops;
- Ensuring that the talents of disabled pupils are represented accordingly through the Gifted and Talented Register.

Eliminating discrimination

The school is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all children, employees and users of school services and all school policies and procedures are based on this commitment.

Eliminating bullying and harassment

The school has adopted LA policies on harassment at work.

The school's Anti Bullying Policy is regularly monitored and reviewed by a team of staff, parents, Governors and pupils. The latest policy is available from the school's web site or directly from the main office.

- raising awareness amongst staff and pupils of disability-related harassment;
- recognising and addressing bullying and harassment;
- involving pupils themselves in combating bullying;
- reviewing school anti –bullying policy and procedures

- ensuring that disability-related harassment of disabled staff, parents, carers and other users of the school is identified and addressed;
- If a number of incidents have been prevalent within a particular year group, use circle time, story time or assembly to investigate and address the issue with all pupils.
- Promoting positive attitudes
- by staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled pupils, staff and parents;
- by challenging negativity;
- by ensuring representation of disabled people in senior positions in the school;
- through the curriculum – SEAL/PSCHE/RE;
- through positive images in school books and other materials;
- ensure that disability is represented in posters, collages, displays and learning materials;
- celebrate and highlight key events such as the Paralympics, Deaf Awareness Week and Learning Disability Week;
- Inviting disabled members of the community/organisations to talk to children.

Encouraging participation in public life

- **where possible, disabled pupils, staff and parents are represented in senior, responsible and representative roles;**
- **there are positive images of disabled people participating.**
- **ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events and on the school council.**

Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

- **additional coaching or training for disabled pupils, staff or parents;**
- **special facilities for disabled pupils at breaks and lunchtimes;**
- **a policy of interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum requirements for a job.**

Publication and Reporting

Our Disability Equality Scheme is available on request.

Review and Revision

The scheme will be reviewed and publicly commented upon each year and revised at least every three years. The next revision is due in January 2021.

A review of this document will be led every three years by the SENCO. This review will be based on observation with disabled children, staff, parents and community members who use the school facilities.

The document will also be revised when necessary e.g. when we become aware that a child who is disabled is to be admitted to the school, when a student becomes disabled, when we become aware that we need to take further action to cater for the needs of a disabled parent or regular visitor to the school.

Support from Within and Beyond the School

Blueberry Park Primary School is committed to equal opportunities provision for all disabled users.

We will work towards making sure that all staff are 'disability aware' and that they have the necessary training and advice available to them so they can work with disabled children and service users and meet their needs. By developing a greater understanding of the needs of disabled people we will develop a higher level of support for the Disability Equality Scheme.