



Disability Policy

SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION

Amendments introduced by the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 extended disability legislation into education (effective September 2002) and more recently the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) has extended the legislation. Most of the DDA was implemented from 1995 and adjustments requiring the provision of “auxiliary aids and services” were required from September 2003. Adjustments requiring alterations to physical features are required by September 2005.

For the purposes of this policy, disability includes people with:

- Physical or mobility impairments
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Dyslexia
- Medical conditions
- Mental health problems

The School is committed to equal, independent access to all teachers, support staff and pupils. It seeks to achieve practical solutions to support all those on site, to ensure they have equal opportunities to benefit from, and contribute to, the learning process. When disabled people, teachers, support staff and pupils participate in the School environment, everyone benefits.

The legal responsibilities placed on the institution require a strategic and “whole school” approach and its implementation aims to promote best practice in this area.

AIMS:

The disability provision policy aims to:

1. Show how the School has evaluated current policies and their implementation for teaching and learning, accessibility and care.
2. Contribute towards the development of an inclusive culture where every individual is nurtured and respected and where discrimination against disabled persons does not occur.
3. Establish good support systems for staff and pupils.
4. Develop a coherent and specific professional development programme for all teaching and non-teaching staff.

5. To respect the rights and privacy of all disabled people.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The Role of the LEA

LEAs have a duty under Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) to progressively increase accessibility of schools to disabled pupils. Improved access for disabled pupils may also improve access for disabled staff, parents and other visitors and users of the School.

LEAs have a responsibility to:

- i) Plan strategically to increase over time the accessibility of all their schools, including pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools.
- ii) Put in place accessibility strategies and accessibility plans by 1 April 2004 covering the three-year period up to 31 March 2007 and produce new plans at three yearly intervals.
- iii) Prepare for inspection details of their responsibilities to the DDA to ensure that schools discharge their responsibilities to prepare, revise, review and implement the strategies and plans.
- iv) Implement their accessibility strategies and have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementation.
- v) Work together with schools to produce accessibility strategies and plans, and share information and expertise such as health and social services, voluntary organisations, school staff, parents and disabled pupils.
- vi) Ensure appropriate governor, specialist and school staff training; publish information to schools to raise awareness of the support services available, and provide advice from LEA specialist staff such as educational psychologists and specialist teachers.
- vii) Provide information for employees on their Access to Work Policy.

b) The Role of the Governors

- i) To be legally responsible for the actions of the School as a whole and is thus recognised by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) as the “responsible body”.
- ii) To ensure that the actions of individuals, staff and pupils, do not discriminate against disabled pupils without recourse of action.
- iii) To ensure that all contracted to the School, as speakers, employees of agents on site, either permanently or temporarily, do not discriminate against a disabled pupil or adult.
- iv) To ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to prevent staff or agents discriminating.
- v) To ensure that all parties are aware that it is a criminal offence to knowingly discriminate against a disabled pupil or member of staff.
- vi) To publish what discrimination means, highlighting the treatment of individuals ‘less favourably’ than others, and failing to make a ‘reasonable adjustment’, placing disabled people at ‘substantial disadvantage’ is discrimination.
- vii) Co-operate with the Headteacher in:
 - determining the School’s SEN policy and provision;
 - establishing the appropriate staffing and funding arrangements;
 - maintaining a general oversight of the School’s work.
- viii) To appoint an SEN governor (or committee) with special responsibility to take particular interest in and closely monitor the School’s work on behalf of pupils with SEN and facilitate training for the Governing Body

- ix) To report to parents annually on the School's SEN policy.
- x) To ensure that all aspects of teaching and learning, resources, physical environment, pupil and staff welfare, catering facilities and careers services comply with the Act and all policies are reviewed, amended and monitored regularly in the light of provision and nature of disability.
- xi) To ensure that procedures are in place to take reasonable steps to find out if a person is disabled and safeguards put in place to store sensitive information.
- xii) Through Governors Sub Committees, to have direct responsibility for incorporating disability regulations into Health and Safety procedures, ensuring that accessibility is steadily improved through any existing and intended building developments, and that staff and pupil welfare policies are updated and amended regularly, and ensure that disability issues are progressed consistently.
- xiii) To be conversant with the Disabilities Discrimination Act, The SEN Code of Practice and their responsibilities and how funding, equipment and resources are deployed.
- xiv) To ensure that Senior Managers take their responsibilities seriously and comply with the Act.
- xv) To ensure an audit and risk assessment of the current situation is carried out and compared to the potential responsibilities under the Disabilities Discrimination Act.
- xvi) To put aside appropriate funds in the budget to make reasonable adjustments.
- xvii) To deal with any discriminatory treatment quickly and fairly through an internal complaints procedure.

c) The Role of the Headteacher

The Disability Act 2001 gives parents much greater rights to access to mainstream provision. The Headteacher, through the nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team, should work with the LEA to improve disability access for staff, pupils, and parents.

- i) To be responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of the School's work, including provision for pupils with SEN and disabled staff.
- ii) To keep the Governing Body informed of changes to legislation and provision.
- iii) To ensure that staff with a disability, and those applying for employment, are treated with due regard according to the Access to Work policy.
- iv) To ensure that all building work improves the quality of provision and access for the community with a range of disabilities.

d) The Role of the Senior Leadership Team/Access Working Group

Schools have a joint responsibility with the LEA to prepare an accessibility strategy and accessibility plan to cover a three year period from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2007 and every three year period following. There is a distinct difference between aids provided through the SEN framework and those provided through the planning duty. The SEN duties relate to an individual pupil but the planning duties relate to the population and future population of the School. The school has therefore set up the Access Working Group (AWG) which is a strategic planning group that has a member of the SLT, several Lead Learners/ and the Premises Officer as key members. The AWG will invite certain members of staff to join the group when certain relevant issues are being discussed. The AWG has overall responsibility for improving the accessibility of the building and grounds. Its duties include:

- i) Preparing an accessibility strategy and accessibility plan in liaison with the LEA.
- ii) Ensuring that the Access to Work Policy for staff is implemented fully.
- iii) Liaising with feeder schools and outside agencies to identify all pupils, and prospective pupils who face barriers to their learning and full participation.

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- iv) Planning to increase access to the curriculum by undertaking regular curriculum audits and monitoring the progress of disabled pupils for patterns of achievement and participation.
 - v) Taking responsibility for planning to improve the physical environment of the School. The physical environment covers all areas of the building and grounds.
 - vi) Ensuring that building development or changes to improve physical access comply with building regulations – very important with new build.
 - vii) Considering accessibility in all purchasing decisions.
 - viii) Informing the Governing Body of any required improvements to the accessibility of the physical environment of the School.
 - ix) Having responsibility for relevant policies and procedures that are consistent with current legislation and avoid disability discrimination.
 - x) Having responsibility and oversight of the production of materials and resources in alternative formats, e.g. large print, Braille, etc.
 - xi) Preparing and implementing staff training programmes on disability awareness.
 - xii) Taking reasonable steps, leasing with the LEA, parents and SENCO, to find out about a pupil's disability.
 - xiii) Putting in place procedures that ensure staff and pupil confidentiality - publish a confidentiality policy for the School.
 - xiv) Discussing timetable and rooming allocation with the appropriate SLT member to ensure staff and pupils with disabilities have the provision designated in the access plan.
- e) The Role of the Lead Learner**
- i) Work with the Senior Manager responsible for disability awareness and provision to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School Curriculum and gain access to learning opportunities.
 - ii) Undertake curriculum audits that review patterns of achievement and participation in the curricular area.
 - iii) Review programme specifications to ensure they do not create barriers to access by disabled staff and pupils.
 - iv) Plan to increase access to the curricular area for disabled pupils by varying approaches to delivery, through classroom management strategies, group and peer support and resource banks.
 - v) Ensure staff maximise participation of all with a disability and monitor and evaluate practice.
 - vi) Carry out audits e.g. Health and Safety and Accessibility to support improving the physical working environment.
 - vii) Attend appropriate staff training and work with outside agencies on the educational implications of different disabilities and on the management of particular health needs in the classroom, and share good practice.
 - viii) Become familiar with physical aids to access education including ICT equipment.
 - ix) Consider accessibility in all purchasing decisions.
 - x) Ensure appropriate resources are prepared for disabled staff and pupils in alternative formats taking account of disabilities and parents preferred means of communication.
 - xi) Provide information within a reasonable time, i.e. at the start of each academic year for timetables and the beginning of lessons for pupil worksheets.
 - xii) Monitor and evaluate provision regularly with support staff for both school employees and pupils to further improve efficiency and effectiveness.

- xiii) Address concerns raised by pupils, staff and parents and raise issues with the Senior Leadership Team when they cannot be alleviated.
- xiv) Ensure equality of opportunity throughout the School – ensuring that all who work or learn within it are free from discriminatory practices.

f) The Role of Members of Staff

- i) Attend training appropriate to disabilities for knowledge of what is expected of them as teachers/support staff and be resourced to respond.
- ii) Keep up-to-date with school policies relating to disability.
- iii) Plan teaching activities to ensure they are accessible to support staff and pupils, making adjustments in response to the particular needs of the disability.
- iv) Ensure physical access, lighting and acoustics when delivering a lesson that includes a person with a disability. (Physical access to include assisting those who lip read).
- v) Ensure practical sessions are accessible to allow free movement, benches and work surfaces at appropriate heights and assistance for pupils to enable them to carry out tasks safely.
- vi) Address health and safety issues and procedures with pupils and support staff and review where appropriate.
- vii) Carry out ‘risk assessment’ and induction for particular pupils and staff.
- viii) Provide resources at the beginning of a lesson and pace delivery to enable support assistants/interpreters to keep up.
- ix) Provide learning resources that are accessible by design, especially within virtual learning environments.
- x) Make appropriate adjustments to assignments and assessments to enable a disabled pupil to demonstrate their learning. This may mean altering the mode of assessment, provision of study skills support, flexible deadlines and checks for unnecessary barriers to examinations.
- xi) Review provision regularly with the pupil and support person.
- xii) Ensure all pupils participate regardless of disability.
- xiii) Ensure the pupil is addressed personally and not the support person.

SECTION 3: ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE AWG

1. Buildings and Premises

- 1a) The Act covers all aspects of the physical environment of the School. Access to buildings is available through level, dropped kerb or ramped entry and emergency evacuation arrangements include alternative escape routes for people with mobility, hearing and visual impairments. Flashing fire alarms and vibrating pagers are available and fire refuges have been made known to all disabled staff, pupils and key personnel.
- 1b) Pathways through and around the building have effective lighting and signage and tone contrast to mark the edge of footpaths, corridors and steps. Doors are similarly marked to assist orientation. Flooring is easy for wheelchair users.
- 1c) Classrooms, and the reception area have been fitted with working loop systems to assist hearing aid users.
- 1d) Classrooms, have desks at varying and/or flexible heights and special adjustable seating is provided.
- 1e) Disabled pupils and staff have access to all facilities offered to able-bodied pupils and staff, e.g. dining facilities, staff room and cloakroom facilities.
- 1f) There is a designated disabled toilet area in the main building.

- 1g) Several car parking spaces are conveniently located and marked as reserved for disabled drivers. The car parking area is well lit for evening events.
- 1h) All new building projects are reviewed by the Access Working Group (AWG) in order to ensure that the opportunity is taken to build in accessibility from an educational perspective.
- 1i) Timetabling and rooming needs are very carefully planned and staff are trained to make adaptations and respond to individual needs.
- 1j) Premises staff strive to keep routes around school, doorways and toilets open and accessible and replace any malfunctioning equipment promptly.
- 1k) Services, equipment and procedures are reviewed regularly to take account of changes to technology and good practice.

2. Admissions and Marketing

- 2a) The school prospectus and job application details are available in alternative formats, e.g. on disc and in a reasonable size font. Access arrangements are included in the prospectus and school information sent to staff applying for posts, with a named member of staff provided for applicants to contact if they need further information. The published information makes it clear that additional arrangements can be made for individual cases. The school website complies with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) guidelines. Staff meeting visitors to the School have received disability equality training and all staff participating in school recruitment events are aware of procedures and facilities available to disabled applicants.
- 2b) Admissions to the School are on academic grounds alone, except in exceptional circumstances. The admissions policy states how applications are processed and opportunity is given to pupils to visit the building to see what, if any, additional alterations will be necessary. Disabled pupils have an additional individual induction that will include a full tour of the School, the disabled facilities available in each area, and a meeting with key personnel who may be assisting them.
- 2c) All disabled pupils and staff have access to regular reviews, either through a SEN statement or an access to work assessment. Admissions procedures are altered if necessary, to adjust to outcomes from such reviews.

3. Teaching and Learning

- 3a) All pupils and staff have full access to teaching and learning opportunities. To prevent academic standards being compromised, teachers will define precisely what is the core element of the teaching programme and assess what alterations may need to be made to enable disabled pupils to participate fully. This may mean that some alterations need to be made for individuals. For disabled teaching staff, particular classroom aids and resources may assist with lesson delivery and an in-class (Access to Work) assistant may help with the delivery of part of the lesson particularly where specialised equipment is required.
- 3b) Teachers need to know what disabilities have to be taken into account when delivering a lesson, e.g. the direction of delivery of the lesson (to enable lip readers to follow); advance preparation of resources, handed out at the beginning of the lesson or available on-line prior to the lesson (for pupils with visual impairment and Dyslexia); creating breaks in the speech parts of a lesson (to enable sign language interpreters to keep up); direct questions and comments at the pupil or adult (rather than a support assistant); provide teacher, peer, or assistant support in making presentations (for pupils with physical and/or communication difficulties; allowing only one person at a time to talk in discussion (to prevent background noise masking

the discussion/delivery of a lesson (to assist those with a hearing impairment); and to ensure that, regardless of any communication problem, all pupils have the opportunity to participate in the lesson.

- 3c) For group activities in class, some changes have been necessary to procedures to enable the individual(s) in the group(s) to participate fully in the outcome of the group work. Sometimes support is needed to carry out the task and to ensure that all pupils contribute. Adjustments are sometimes needed if the group work is to be assessed.
- 3d) Access to ICT equipment, materials and the use of ICT resources is essential for many disabled adults and pupils. Where necessary, videos and other audio materials are provided with subtitles, interpretation or scripts and all electronic materials are fully accessible. The School selects software that allows a pupil to work at their own speed and to take rest breaks.
- 3e) For practical sessions we have installed some adjustable worktops and benches with access for wheelchairs. Teacher assistants may help pupils and staff to use equipment. All users of practical areas are well trained of Health and Safety procedures and responsibilities. A risk assessment is always undertaken for all practical activities and these give due consideration to the needs of disabled pupils.
- 3f) Work placements are always audited for accessibility. Teachers involved in placing pupils are made aware of the outcome. N.B. Most workplace environments will have made reasonable adjustments to facilitate disabled access.
- 3g) Pupils with a disability are encouraged to participate in out-of-school activities such as visits and field trips. Rules and regulations governing visits are rigorous and it is necessary to carry out a risk assessment with a particular disability in mind prior to the visit being organised. Access for disabled pupils, staff and helpers should be ascertained at an early stage before proceeding with the arrangements. Support staff for disabled persons will usually also attend the visit to ensure the maximum educational benefit.

4. Staff Development

- 4a) The School takes specific steps to raise awareness of disability among staff and pupils. Staff disability equality training programmes are implemented on a regular basis to ensure the Governing Body is seen to take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination occurring, and that staff and pupils are more confident to challenge negative and inappropriate behaviour in colleagues and pupils and to promote inclusion.
- 4b) A training programme is available for all staff, teaching and non-teaching colleagues with priority given for those responsible for, or working alongside disabled staff and/or pupils. Training includes informing staff on how they can make anticipatory and appropriate adjustments to their working environment/practices and we hope to actively involve disabled persons.
- 4c) Disability issues are included in Induction training for all staff and in conjunction with the SEN training programme. All training is assessed annually with the views of disabled staff and pupils being sought to enable change and modification for inclusion in updating policies for governor review.
- 4d) Staff have had training on disability issues and they have been asked to suggest what training they require to facilitate support for their disabled colleagues.
- 4e) All staff are trained in producing resources in other ways, or know how to access these. Good practice guides are produced to cover staff and pupil disabilities.
- 4f) Staff are involved in auditing their rooms and resources particularly when new pupils/staff present a disability previously not catered for in the School.

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- 4g) Staff/pupil confidentiality is an issue that all staff need training in. This training includes: how to manage disclosure of a disability, the School's confidentiality policy and who should or should not, have access to the information.
- 4h) Different staff groups need training in aspects of good practice. Senior managers have a thorough understanding of their legal responsibilities and one manager has been appointed within the school to have responsibility for offering advice and information. All staff need to be aware of their responsibilities towards disabled people and specific training sessions will be necessary for supporting individual, identified disabilities.
- 4i) Trainers can be found at: www.drc-gb.org

5. Assessment

- 5a) To ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement, assessment practices may be modified with an aim to change the delivery or mode of assessment rather than the way it is marked. Reasonable adjustments to the method of assessment take priority over differential marking. However, staff are well aware that the adjustments should not compromise academic standards.
- 5b) Adjustments to assessment are made on an individual basis and pupils may have alternative coursework set, additional time, use of ICT or amanuensis, readers, large print or Braille, or adjustment to examination timetables. Any presentations required for examination may need additional time for pupils with communication difficulties, or the presentation may be given in a different format. Support staff working with examination candidates have appropriate training and higher level skills (HLTA), so that they do not disadvantage the pupil.
- 5c) For practical work and performances, pupils may need extra support or time to demonstrate their abilities.
- 5d) Computer assisted assessment can help disabled pupils but it can also create new barriers to achievement. (Good practice guidelines are available from the World Wide Web Consortium – W3C- and also from TechDis.).
- 5e) The School has a clear policy about adjustments to Teacher Assessment for disabled pupils. Staff, pupils and parents are all made aware of the policy well in advance of any public examination and the policy also applies to class assessments.
- 5f) Teacher guidelines on marking work of disabled pupils are available as an appendix to a school disability policy. This covers all work handed in for assessment and for a range of disabilities. It is standardised across the School to enable maximum support for individuals.

6. Libraries and Resource Centres

- 6a) All pupils and staff with disabilities have equal opportunity to use the facilities in these centres, and at the appropriate level of need.
- 6b) Information about the library and resources centre is available to disabled pupils and staff and in alternative formats. Information about adjustments already made and what is possible for individual disabilities is also available.
- 6c) Pupils and staff have access to these buildings and toilet facilities are accessible. All resources buildings, in line with school policy, have good lighting and colour contrasts to assist orientation and appropriate fire and emergency procedures.
- 6d) Staff are trained in assisting disabled people who are informed that this is part of the support network. Individual support workers are able to access resources on behalf of disabled people, including signing out books and equipment.
- 6e) Disabled pupils and staff have a clear priority in the use of the IT equipment with assistive technology, e.g. scanners, customised screens. When not required by a disabled person the equipment is available for use by others.
- 6f) Libraries and resource centres are ready to make adjustments according to individual need. This includes: individual induction to the facilities; priority access; fetching resources that are out of reach; general assistance; extended loan periods and setting aside resources in advance for those disabled persons who find difficulty accessing information.
- 6g) Library and resources staff participate in disability training programmes where appropriate, and understand the procedures on confidentiality.

- 6h) Library and resources staff review their services annually and take into account any changes in good practice and advances in technology as well as disabled clients satisfaction surveys and complaints when publishing details of services available.

7. Residential Services

- 7a) The school ensures that any potential applicant for either a teaching post (that requires living on-site) or a pupil is not put at 'substantial disadvantage' by sending or offering accessible and accurate information. Prospectus information is available in different formats and makes it clear what adjustments we have put in place already. Physical adaptations are required under Part 4 of the Act, but residential accommodation is covered in Part 3 of the Act, so physical adaptations were completed by October 2004. The anticipatory duty is an evolving one and adjustments are planned into refurbishment and new build, so the School will improve its provision in due course.
- 7b) Rooms for disabled persons, staff and pupils, are integral to the main accommodation and have standard alterations expected for disabled persons. Reasonable adjustments will be made for individual staff and/or pupils. A staff training programme is in place for all personnel on site.
- 7c) For any residential fieldwork/courses/holiday activities, the Group Leader will advise the centre of the needs of their party, and will only select a centre that is accessible to all. Most activities, with careful planning by teachers, support staff and centre staff, are made accessible to most disabled pupils.

8. Confidentiality

- 8a) Disabled pupils and staff are encouraged to disclose a disability and in doing so have a right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act, and separately under the Disability Discrimination Act. If a pupil or a member of staff discloses a disability, members of staff will, with the pupil's or member of staff's consent, pass this information to the designated member of staff.
- 8b) The staff handbook has information on how to manage disclosure of a disability and a copy of the School's confidentiality policy – which details who should, or should not, have access to the information.
- 8c) Confidential information about a disabled pupil or member of staff is recorded and kept securely. Care is taken in deciding what information is kept confidential to particular staff and what information is divulged to all.

Signed:

Date: