

WHISTON JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2009

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ETHOS, VISION AND VALUES

The school is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, pupils and others involved in the school community, with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourable in any practices and service delivery. The school will not tolerate harassing of disabled people with any form of impairment and will consider pupils who are carers of disabled parents.

Whiston Junior & Infant School has high aspirations for **all** pupils and expects them to be able to participate in all aspects of school life as well as reach their full personal potential. 'To be the best that we can be' is our school aspiration.

The school is fully committed to equal opportunities in line with the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement, which states –

“When planning, teachers should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve, including boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Teachers need to be aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers should plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively”.

For all pupils, including those with a disability, the school will:

- set appropriate learning challenges;
- respond to pupils' diverse needs;
- overcome all potential barriers to learning;
- provide access to all elements of school life, for individuals and groups of pupils;
- have high expectations for all pupils in all aspects of school life;
- adapt our approaches to enable all pupils to access the curriculum.

What do we understand by disability?

'Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (DDA 1995 Part 1 para.1.1.) This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 Disability amendment Act:-

- People with cancer or surviving cancer are now included, as are people with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis.
- For a mental impairment the need for it to be clinically well recognised has been removed.

The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the act and equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities. The school will continue to identify and remove barriers to all disabled pupils, staff, parents/careers and visitors to school, in every area of school life and make everyone feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or disability. The Governing

Body of Whiston Junior & Infant School will endeavour to fulfil the three key duties towards disabled pupils as outlined in Part Four of the Disability Discrimination Act.

These are –

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

The Governing Body will also ensure that all members of the school community understand and are committed to these three key duties and that in the writing of policies or improving the quality of school life for any disabled pupils, the views of those directly involved will be sought and where possible acted upon.

Background to the Disability Equality Scheme

The National Context

When is a person disabled?

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Impairment

An impairment has a long term effect if it has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person concerned.

Substantial

This is neither minor nor trivial.

Reasonable Adjustment

If to make the adjustment could be deemed unreasonable.

There are an estimated 11 million disabled adults in the United Kingdom (1 in 5 of the total adult population) and 770,000 disabled children. Many of these disabled people often have less obvious or non-visible impairments.

Disabled people do less well than non-disabled people in many areas of life. For example, they are more likely to do less well in terms of employment, income and education. Disabled people are also more likely to face discrimination and negative attitudes ('Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People,' Government Strategy Unit 2005)

Access to support

It is vital that the school works closely with a range of agencies to provide the best possible support for pupils. These include:

- Hearing Impaired Service.
- Visually Impaired Service
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Autism Communication Team
- Behaviour Support Service
- Educational Psychology Service
- Parent Partnership Service
- Learning Support Services

At Whiston Junior & Infant School -

The Governing Body will carry out its duties under disability legislation. This responsibility is delegated to the Head teacher in the day to day management of the school. This duty includes:

- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- The Children Act 2004 (which includes provisions for disabled children)
- Buildings Regulations 2000 - building regulation amendments 2003

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

The production of the Disability Equality Scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty.

The new general duty means that school's Governing Body must, in carrying out functions, have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Act;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in school life;
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where this involves treating disabled people more favourable than other people.

The general duty builds upon the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 including the duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure disabled people can access employment, education, facilities, services, functions and premises. Treating a student 'less favourably' than others for a reason relating directly to their disability and failing to make a 'reasonable adjustment' to ensure they are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' for a reason related to their disability.

The Whiston Junior & Infant School Disability Equality Scheme aims to:

- Involve disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors in any decisions we make.
- Increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment so that pupils with a disability can take advantage of the education provided
- Improve delivery of information to pupils with a disability that would normally be provided in writing to other pupils
- Develop a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers.
- Find out what barriers are faced by disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors and make all reasonable adjustments to remove them.
- Find out what disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors need and which of these needs are the most important to them, and make every attempt reasonably possible to meet those needs
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- Ensure all children and adults in our school community know what our responsibilities are.
- Explain how we make things fairer for disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and visitors
- Show how the Scheme links to other equalities objectives and priorities.
- Provide relevant information about our involvement, assessments and training arrangements.
- Work in partnership with other disability organisations to prevent ignorance and prejudice within the school.
- Show what has changed as a result of the implementation of our equality action plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our actions, adjusting plans when necessary.
- Report to governors and parents on an annual basis.

GATHERING AND USING INFORMATION

Whiston Junior & Infant School will gather information from a variety of sources, including annual staff and parent surveys, meetings with pupils with a disability and termly review meetings with pupils, parents/carers, staff and appropriate agencies.

This information will be used to help the school to meet the needs of all pupils and adults with a disability to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to overcome any barriers, which may include the following –

- sensory [vision or hearing impaired]
- physical
- social
- the views and attitudes of others

The Governing Body has adopted the Rotherham LA recruitment policy and in recruiting staff will not knowingly discriminate against any disabled person

All school policies will be inclusive and any reviews will take the DDA into account and the views of disabled pupils, parents/carers

Audit of current strengths/areas for development

The school has increasing numbers of children with a disability, particularly ASD. For those already attending, school holds regular review meetings with pupils, parents/carers, staff and outside agencies and aims to meet the needs of the child and support them in accessing the school environment and curriculum.

The **strengths** of the school currently are –

- Foundation Stage 2, Key Stage 1, Y3 and Y4 classrooms are all on one level
- There is a disabled toilet
- There is a designated disabled parking spaces in the car park
- The playground is wheelchair accessible
- There is very good access to and support network from, other professionals and agencies for staff in school who work with children with a specific need or disability
- Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for both in school and off site activities and these always take into account any child with a specific need or disability. Staff will also consult with other professionals when carrying out a risk assessment for a visit where a child with a disability is to attend – for example LA Health and Safety department
- Staff work closely with outside providers of after school clubs to ensure that any information about a specific child is communicated to the relevant party and reasonable adjustment made to allow a child with a disability to attend, for example school sport club

In working with any disabled pupils, now and in the future, the following barriers will need to be addressed:

- Staircases
- External steps
- Doors to classrooms/offices etc are not of the required width for wheelchair access.

As part of our admission procedures we will ask parents/carers if they are disabled and if they have any access needs which would make it easier for them.

For any children joining the school we would seek to begin the evidence gathering as far in advance as possible and liaise with all relevant agencies to facilitate the smooth transition into school for both the child and family.

INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

As a school we will involve and consult with –

- Pupils where they are able to comment on and have views about their needs
- Parents and carers concerning the needs of their child and or the needs of the parent or family member with regard to a disability
- All staff in school
- Visitors to school events or those who use the school building at other times

As a school we will consult –

- Regularly in the case of children with a specific disability
- As appropriate e.g. for parents/ visitors visiting school for an event such as a concert or performance
- Prior to a child with a disability joining our school

As a school we will consult by –

- Inviting all relevant parties to regular review meetings
- Ensuring that all new parents and families are informed of this scheme and access arrangements in school as part of the induction process
- Ensuring that all new members of staff are informed of this scheme and the school's ethos and policy towards any pupil or adult with a disability
- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of any support available to them should they have a disability
- Ensuring that we meet with all appropriate agencies in order to access training and ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made.

Accessibility Plan

Possible identified barriers

1) Steps:

- Ramps to steps
- Provide access for disabled pupils/adults
- Ensure notice boards for parents are accessible to those who may use a wheelchair
- Ensure accessible rooms are used for concerts/parents' evenings

Responsibility

- Head teacher
- Governors
- Local Authority

Timescale -

2) Doors to classrooms not of the required width

- Access to be made by main entrance

Responsibility

- Head teacher
- Governors
- Local Authority

Timescale –

3) Small classrooms, sometimes large classes

- For children with a physical disability (e.g. walking frame/wheelchair) ensure that risk assessments are carried out, also re-arrange furniture as appropriate.

Responsibility – Head teacher

Timescale – as required

4) Provision of resources

- Liaise with appropriate agencies regarding furniture, cutlery etc

Responsibility – Head teacher

Timescale – as required

5) Off site visits

- Conduct risk assessments
- Liaise with other agencies re reasonable adjustments

Responsibility – Head teacher, class teachers

Timescale - as required

6) Lack of 'quiet' areas for children with ASD

- Quiet area to be created

Responsibility – Head teacher

Timescale – as required

7) Emergency evacuation systems

- Upgrade evacuation systems to make provision for disabled children/adults.

Responsibility – Head teacher and Health & Safety Officer

Timescale – as required

8) Sensory Barriers – Sight/hearing impairment

In the case of vision impairment, school would seek to do the following –

- Consult with the person concerned or in the case of a very young child the parent/carer on specific needs
- Consult with and take advice from the appropriate vision impaired support service in Rotherham LA
- Ensure that all communication documents are accessible to parents/carers/members of the school community e.g. Braille or auditory access
- Ensure that all communication documents are accessible to staff
- Ensure that children have appropriate support e.g. seating arrangements, enlarged text, appropriate level of lighting
- When re-decoration of the building takes place [internally and externally] consult with the appropriate body and give regard to the needs of those with a visual impairment in the choice of colours
- Off site visits are regularly used in school. Staff must conduct appropriate risk assessment, take advice from appropriate agencies eg Health and Safety and make all reasonable adjustments for all pupils to access as much of the visit as possible

In the case of hearing impairment, school would seek to do the following –

- Consult with the person concerned or in the case of a very young child the parent/carer on specific needs
- Consult with and take advice from the appropriate hearing impaired support service in Rotherham LA
- In the case of pupils, access support materials for classroom e.g. hearing aid and speaker to be used by teacher/adult working with pupil
- Investigate installation of hearing loop system to aid access for parents/ carers/ visitors at concerts, assemblies etc
- Headteacher and governors to assess budget/funding implications for loop system
- Teachers/adults in school to support children to ensure they are seated in class to maximize the use of acoustics which may vary from room to room in school and be dependent upon which subject is being taught
- Off site visits are regularly used in school and staff must conduct appropriate risk assessments, take advice from appropriate agencies eg Health and Safety and make all reasonable adjustments for all pupils to access as much of the visit as possible

Responsibility – Headteacher, relevant staff in school and Governors

Timescale – as and when appropriate

7) Curriculum

School will regularly review the needs of all children with a disability in the following ways –

- Hold regular review meetings with parents/carers, SENCO, Headteacher, relevant staff and the pupil
- School will review risk assessments for both on site and off site curriculum activities and make all reasonable adjustments to enable access to the activities on offer

- School will consult with leaders of after school activities and make all reasonable adjustment to allow access for any pupils with a disability
- Ensure that parents are fully supported with how to help their child get the most out of their school years

Provide access to the school curriculum for all disabled pupils which allows them to meet their full potential by –

- All staff having high expectations in all aspects of school life
- Seek specialist advice on access to subjects such as PE for children with a physical/visual impairment, music for children with a hearing impairment
- Set targets which are challenging but realistic and which take into account the needs of the child
- Monitor the progress of disabled children and adapt targets, teaching and learning appropriately. (Use 'P' levels when appropriate)
- Ensure that schemes of work and planning gives the disabled child as much access as possible and plan to make adjustments where deemed necessary, including the provision of resources such as laptops, specialist scissors etc
- Ensure that staff training is up to date and that on going support is available from within school and outside agencies
- Provide access to the curriculum for children on the autistic spectrum eg quiet time, TA support to understand some aspects of the curriculum or visual timetables to help them to understand the routine and order of the day
- Ensure it is an inclusive curriculum with suitable learning challenges
- Develop children's knowledge of disability through PSHE and assemblies

Responsibility – Head teacher, SENCO, teachers, support staff, Governors and parents

8) Awareness raising with pupils/staff/parents/carers and visitors

To ensure the full inclusion of all pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors to school we will

- Ensure that staff are trained and prepared for any children with a specific need/disability, as far in advance of them starting at this school as possible
- Raise awareness of all staff in school even if they might not specifically work with the child e.g. through information sharing staff meetings led by an appropriate professional
- Raise awareness of pupils through class discussion, visitors to school e.g. someone who uses a guide dog
- Actively promote the social inclusion of pupils with a disability e.g. use the support staff linked to specific children to facilitate this. Ensure that children with disabilities are protected from bullying.
- Ensure that TAs provide effective support for pupils, but at the same time promote independence
- Ensure that information is included in all relevant documentation e.g. induction pack for new families to the school. Staff handbook and induction materials for new staff

Responsibility – Head teacher, SENCO and Governors

9) Consultation with disabled pupils/staff/parents/carers and visitors to the school

Ensure the inclusion of children with a disability through –

- Regular consultation with pupil and parent/carer
- Making reasonable adjustments e.g. timetable alterations, extra time for lunch
- Being aware of any parents who may need help accessing school for any reason and making reasonable adjustments e.g. special seating arrangements at a concert or performance
- Ensuring that any other visitors to the school are aware of the facilities which are available e.g. ramp, designated parking space, disabled toilet etc

Responsibility – Head teacher, Governors, staff in school and parents

Timescale – as appropriate

Publication and Reporting

The school's DES is available on request from the school office. It can also be provided in different formats (e.g. for people with a visual impairment) on request. Readers' views will be requested.

Information regarding the DES will be provided in the school prospectus.

Review & revision

A working party of parents/governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the DES on an annual basis and adjustment to the scheme will be made as necessary.

Code of practice available www.dotheduty.org