



## **The Shire MAT Disability Equality Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Shire MAT welcomes its general responsibilities under Part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act (Disability Equality Duty) to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people; eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA);
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their impairments;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of a disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person more favorably than other people.

This Scheme and the accompanying action plans set out how the governing body will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

Duties in Part 4 of the DDA require the governing body to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils in 3 ways:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;

- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

The governing body will monitor and re-assess the needs of all pupils as they are admitted to school.

## **School Ethos, Vision & Values**

At The Shire MAT we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against disabled pupils. The achievement of disabled pupils will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment. This school uses the “social model” of disability, as the basis for its work to improve equality for and tackle discrimination against disabled people. This model says that it is the world and society that creates barriers that limit or prevent disabled people from enjoying the same opportunities as people who are not disabled.

### **Our Vision**

We aim to provide a challenging, broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of ALL children.

We aim to provide a learning environment where the quality of learning and teaching enables all children to achieve high standards.

We aim to create an environment that develops our children as caring, well-rounded citizens who believe that everyone is of equal importance.

We aim to foster each child’s social, moral, spiritual, physical and cultural development and promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people.

We aim to develop a successful home, school and community partnership.

### **Definition of Disability**

The Disability Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

A physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments; impairments relating to mental functioning, including learning disabilities; and long term health conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

Substantial means more than minor or trivial.

Long-term means an impairment that has lasted at least 12 months, or is likely to last 12 months or for the rest of the person’s life.

Normal day-to-day activities cover the following categories: mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or

eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

Someone with an impairment may be receiving medical or other treatment which alleviates or removes the effects of that impairment (but not the impairment itself). In such cases the treatment should be disregarded and the impairment is taken to have the effect it would have had without the treatment.

Some people are automatically deemed to have a disability covered by the Act – those with HIV, cancer, MS and severe disfigurements.

The Shire MAT agrees with the recommendations from the Disability Equality in Education (DEE) that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

### **How disabled people have been involved in the Scheme**

The Shire MAT recognises the importance of involving disabled people fully in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme. We have involved disabled people in the following ways:

Through

- Identifying priorities for action
- Identifying barriers

The methods we have used to access views and ascertain priorities include

Organised formal meetings/focus groups

Planned PSHCE lessons

Parental questionnaires

Working in a cluster group with other schools

We will continue to take steps through our Scheme, to build on the involvement of disabled people over time.

### **Disabled pupils:**

We have identified our disabled pupils

We will provide opportunities for disabled children to ensure that we listen to their views in informal settings.

We have consulted with children and the School's Council who believe that:

- All children are treated the same and that there is equality of opportunity

Key issues identified by our pupils were:

- There are currently no identified issues
- That each class's School Council member would act as an aid and friend to any pupil with disabilities and ensure that they are feeling happy and involved.

### **Disabled staff:**

We have asked all staff to identify any barriers that affect them and how we can plan to overcome them.

- There are currently no key issues identified by our staff.

### **Disabled parents/carers:**

We have given all parents/carers a questionnaire to identify any barriers and how we can improve the way we meet their needs.

We will organise opportunities for disabled parents/carers to come into school and share their views in informal settings or on a one to one basis.

Where any priorities are identified we will address these and incorporate them into the action plan

### **Disabled members of the local community:**

Where any priorities are identified we will address these and incorporate them into the action plan  
Disabled members of the community who use school facilities will be involved in developing the scheme as opportunities arise.

We have involved disabled pupils, staff, governors and parents in developing the scheme through a range of consultation processes. Pupil views have been sought through class and school councils, school staff and governors have received training on the DEE, and parents' views have been sought via a questionnaire although we do recognise the need to re-visit and give more information and more involvement.

### **How we have gathered information on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled people**

Gathering information will be an ongoing process.

We recognise that our policies and practices may impact on disabled people and in particular on:

- The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees;
- The educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled pupils.

We acknowledge that information gathered from a wide range of sources will be required in order to identify the actions which we need to take to promote disability equality. We will ensure that information is gathered in relation to both employment and the delivery of our services.

The processes we use for gathering information will include:

- Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
- We will raise awareness of the definition through a statement which will be sent out to all potential new employees
- When recruiting and selecting new staff, information on disability is collected via the application form and a staff disability awareness form
- Information on any disabilities of existing staff is gathered through employees informing the Headteacher
- We do explain our reasons for encouraging disclosure
- Personnel records for staff are kept up to date

## **Educational opportunities available to and the achievements of, disabled pupils**

The Shire Mat will:

- Collect information on the disability of new pupils as part of school admission enquiries
- Ensure that pupils feel comfortable in raising issues or difficulties they have as a result of a health condition/impairment through their School Council friend
- Use all available summative data to analyse pupil progress, keep lists of extra-curricular activities children undertake in school and celebrate and record achievements out of school. The Every Child Matters outcomes are integral to the work of the school.
- We will monitor the participation and well-being of any of our disabled pupils through a variety of ways, for example, via:

Positions of responsibility held

Areas of the curriculum that present particular challenge or to which pupils have restricted access

Areas of the school where pupils have impeded access

Access to school trips

Involvement in school and after-school clubs etc

## **Disabled parents, carers and other users of the school**

- When pupils are admitted, we do ask about any disability/health conditions that parents/carers might have
- The parents are reassured on the form about the confidentiality of disclosure and the form explains why the information is being requested

## **How we will assess the impact of our policies**

We recognise that all our school's policies may have an impact on the participation and outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff and members of the local community. We have agreed a programme to review the impact of policies and this is contained in our action plan.

We have in place clear arrangements for assessing the impact of policies, procedures, functions and practices of the school on disability equality and improving these where necessary. We will periodically survey pupils, parents and carers to assess the impact of new and existing policies on disabled people.

- The review/screening of existing policies and practices to ensure that they promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and do not inadvertently disadvantage them takes place on a planned review cycle.
- Policies and practices likely to have the biggest impact have been reviewed by the Steering group and their impact assessed through taking into consideration the issues identified through the involvement of disabled pupils, staff and parents, and the information the school holds on disabled pupils, staff and parents.

## **Our Action Plan**

We have produced a disability equality action plan (accessibility plan) to ensure that we fulfill our general and specific duties under the Disability Equality Duty.

Our existing accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to improve:

- curriculum access
- provision of information to disabled pupils
- physical access

We have now incorporated this plan into our overall Disability Equality Scheme action plan (accessibility plan).

## **Reporting**

We will report annually about the progress we make on promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and the impact of our actions. Information will be made available on the school website and via newsletter

Our annual report will include details of:

- Information we have gathered during the year and how this information was used
- Action points completed during the year and those that are ongoing
- We will ensure that disabled people are involved in this process.

## **Reviewing and revising the Scheme**

Our scheme will be reviewed and revised after a period of 3 years and disabled people will be involved in the process. A new action plan will be produced annually, responding to issues identified through our impact assessment and included in our annual reports.

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