

# Disability and Accessibility



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Author: Emily Baksh

# **Disability & Accessibility Policy**

## **Legislation**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires all public authorities, including schools, to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme.

The purpose of the Disability Equality Duty is to improve equality of opportunity for all disabled people using the school. Senacre Wood Primary School's Disability Scheme will demonstrate how we as a school will ensure that the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 are met.

## **Mission Statement**

At Senacre Wood Primary School, 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. This school will promote positive attitudes to disability and will not tolerate harassment of people with any form of physical or mental impairment. The achievement of disabled pupils and students 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. At Senacre Wood Primary School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The duty to promote disability equality**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was a landmark in equality legislation, making it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of his or her disability. It also required organisations to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a disabled person could take a job, continue to work for an organisation or access services.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the 1995 legislation. It introduced the duty to promote disability equality, which partly parallels the duty to promote race equality introduced under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The duty to promote disability equality contains two elements – a general duty for all public bodies and a specific duty, which applies to a more limited number of specified public authorities, including maintained schools. The Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) states that the “overarching goal of the duty is to promote equality of opportunity”. In many cases the disadvantage and discrimination that disabled people experience arise from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The duty to promote disability equality aims to overcome these barriers.

This Scheme sets out the steps the governing body will take that will result in improved outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff in all aspects of school life in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

This Scheme builds on our accessibility plan and develops our work further to include:

- A definition of both disability and inclusion that is wider than special educational needs (the legislation includes in the definition of SEN any pupil who has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of peers or a disability preventing or hindering access to educational facilities) and applies to all vulnerable groups.
- Taking a proactive approach in making reasonable adjustments
- Work with pupils, staff and parents/carers
- Involving the views of disabled pupils, their carers and staff where appropriate in identifying priority actions within the school improvement plan.

## **1.2 The general duty**

The general duty to promote disability equality places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- Take into account the needs of disabled persons', even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

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## **1.3 The Specific Duty**

The specific duty requires a designated public authority (which includes schools) to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), setting out how it will fulfil its general and specific duties to promote disability equality. Disabled people must be involved in the development of the Scheme. The first Disability Equality Schemes was published in December 2007 and lasted for three years with an annual review of progress.

## **2. What do we understand by 'disability'?**

'Disability is 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. This includes

'hidden' impairments, such as mental illness, dyslexia, autism, speech & language, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, or epilepsy. Substantial means "more than minor or trivial" and long-term means lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.' (DDA 1995)

Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with special educational needs be included as disabled for the purposes of the Act. Behavioural difficulties arising from physical or mental impairments or from mental illness are also included.

If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, people who have recovered from cancer and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life.

This Disability Equality Scheme sets out the ways in which Senacre Wood Primary School will meet its general and specific duties.

- **We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and to have high aspirations for their future.**

Senacre Wood Primary School endorses the Inclusion definition that says:

- **Inclusion is the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life.**

### **How we will meet the General Duty and Specific Duty**

The production of this 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 i.e. to produce a Disability Equality Scheme for our school.

#### **The General Duty**

By challenging any negative attitudes to disability we will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- 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
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

## **Involvement of Disabled People in Developing the Scheme**

Through the formation of a DES Working Group, pupils, staff, parents, carers and disabled members of the community who may use school facilities will be involved in developing the scheme and identifying actions.

The DES Working Group will be invited to comment on the draft action plan and contribute to an annual evaluation of outcomes.

The DES Working Group will comprise; staff, parents, outside bodies and school governors.

## **Gathering information from disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and people from the wider community using the school.**

The school will seek to improve how we gather information from people with a disability by consulting with parents and pupils to encourage disability disclosure and reduce the number of 'unknown' disability status.

To comply with the DDA requirements will consider in particular:

- The educational opportunities and achievements of pupils
- The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees

Gathering information will be an ongoing process. We will collect data about disability over time and analyse our policies and procedures in the light of our findings.

## **Using the information to prepare the Action Plan and assess the impact**

The DES Working Group will use the information gathered to prepare the Disability Action Plan and to review annually the effectiveness of the actions taken. Where necessary new action points will be included.

Information will be analysed to show how much progress has been made in relation to disability equality. Educational achievements and wider opportunities for pupils with disabilities will be monitored. Further opportunities to promote equality will be included in subsequent Action Plans.

## **Links between school policies, the Accessibility Plan and the Disability Equality Scheme**

This scheme relates to Disability equality issues which are explicitly addressed in all policies through the normal review process, with priority given to the school's SEN policy, Gender Equality Scheme, School Improvement Plan, Teaching and Learning Policy, ICT and Health and Safety policy  
Arrangements for publication

- All staff and governors will receive a copy of the Disability Equality Scheme

- The scheme and its implications will be explained to staff via Inset and staff meetings
- Communication of this scheme to pupils will be via assembly, PSHE programme, the School Council and the curriculum
- Parents/carers will be informed of the scheme through the school newsletters. The full version of the scheme will be available to all parents via the school Website or upon request a paper copy from the school.
- Arrangements will be made to modify, enlarge and/or communicate this policy in other formats upon request

**Senior Member of Staff Responsible:** Mrs E Sweeney, Headteacher

**Designated Member of Staff:** Mrs E Baksh, SENCO

**Governor Responsible:** Mr A Adams, Chair of Governors