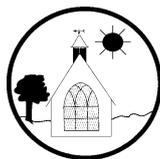


St. Michael's Woolmer Green School



Disability Equality Scheme

School Ethos, Vision & Values

St Michael's is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, children and any others involved in the school community with any form of disability. We will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.

We will not tolerate harassment of disabled people and this includes children who are carers of disabled parents.

Introduction

Duties under Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act require Governing bodies to:

- promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: children, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to
- Prepare and publish a disability equality scheme to show how they will meet these duties.

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.

What do we understand by "disability"?

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition of a disabled person is someone who has 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.

Disability is said to have an adverse effect if it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech
- Hearing
- Eyesight (unless brought to functionally useful level by spectacles or lenses)
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger.

In considering what might constitute a substantial disadvantage, the school has taken account of a number of factors, e.g.

- The time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled child
- The inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer
- The loss of opportunity or the diminished progress that a disabled child may make in comparison with his or her peers who are not disabled.

Involvement of disabled people in developing the scheme

Involving disabled people is a requirement of a scheme and brings real benefits.

Questionnaires were sent out to all Staff and Parents/Carers so that the following were involved in drawing up the scheme:

- Disabled and non-disabled employees
- Disabled and non-disabled parents/carers
- Disabled and non-disabled children (through the School Council and as reflected in the Family questionnaires)

Our school has taken steps to reduce concerns about disclosing information by;

- providing simple information on the definition of disability in the DDA
- being positive about the protection of disabled people
- explaining why information is needed
- reassuring families and staff about confidentiality
- providing simple information on the definition of disability in the DDA
- ensuring that the ethos of the school is conducive to disclosure.

Disabled people have been involved in:

- Identifying barriers
- Identifying priorities
- Participating in a working group to draw up this scheme

In addition to setting priorities identified by disabled pupils, staff and parents, we will aim to improve the involvement of disabled children, staff, parents and particularly the community to better inform the next scheme.

The Governing Body

- Membership of the Governing body is open to all eligible persons irrespective of disability
- Their clear links between parents and the Governing Body through the Parent Governors.
- The Governing Body, via the headteacher, consults with parents/carers through an annual questionnaire
- We need to be more proactive in encouraging disabled parents/carers/community members to become governors and ensuring people are aware of how the governing body contributes to the life of the school

Eliminating harassment and bullying

The School policies for Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and Racial Equality are clear in how discrimination, bullying, harassment of all people will be dealt with.

Reasonable Adjustments

The DDA requires schools to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils and users of the school are not put at a substantial disadvantage and are able to access the same opportunities as non - disabled peers. We aim for all disabled children and users to have the same access to the curriculum, to information and access to the school environment and facilities as non – disabled children and users. In planning developments to deliver this intention the school considers the needs of current and future admissions and users of the school. The main strategies to bring about reasonable adjustments in the next three years are described in the Accessibility Plan; however reasonable adjustments are made on an individual basis according to need, by working collaboratively with disabled persons and/or their parents/carers.

Reasonable adjustments are successful when disabled people can, wherever possible, participate fully:

- in the classroom
- in the school curriculum
- at all times and in all parts of the building

And when:

- disabled people feel part of the life of the school
- disabled people are included by their peers in all parts of school life
- parents/carers of disabled children feel their child is part of the life of the school
- staff feel confident in working with disabled children.

School Facility Lettings

There is a reasonable degree of accessibility of the school to disabled users. It is important that community users have full access to all areas of school and hirers/users are asked to discuss their requirements with school staff when booking premises.

We have a provision of disabled parking.

Impact assessment

We will collect data to help monitor the impact of our policies. Disabled people will be involved in deciding priorities for assessment. This will include data on:

Pupil Achievement

We need to be aware that information collected on children based on special educational needs categories will not necessarily capture all those who are disabled.

Learning Opportunities

This will include participation in curricular activities, take up of our clubs and activities and external visits etc.

Admissions, Transitions, Exclusions (including Behaviour cases)

This will include disability needs of families on admission to school, transitions between year groups and transfer to other schools and exclusions.

Social Relationships

Positive social relationships between disabled children and also non-disabled children are developed through Personal, Social and Emotional Development. This can be monitored through observations and feedback from everyone involved.

Recruitment, Development and Retention of disabled staff

There is no legal requirement for staff to disclose a disability, however we aim to enable all staff to feel comfortable about doing so e.g. by:

- Promoting awareness of the DDA and the legal protection it offers
- Explaining that disclosure can enable the school to make appropriate reasonable adjustments
- Reassuring staff of the confidentiality of their disclosure
- Raising awareness of the Local Authority policy on harassment and bullying
- Promoting awareness of the support available to disabled members of staff
- Looking at how the school can encourage disabled applicants for posts.

We need to:

- consider how we can encourage disabled applicants for posts
- consider how we collect information on disability when recruiting new staff
- look at how disabled employees are represented amongst different groups of staff

The school is aware of Local Authority policies which may be relevant for disabled staff.

This Disability Equality Scheme is a working document and therefore one which will be subject to review and alteration in response to the school's impact assessments, and views expressed by its disabled members, and will be used to drive forward the promotion of disability equality. It will therefore be key to the review and development of all school policies and practices in order to achieve the school's vision of a welcoming and diverse community.

Implementation

This scheme is supported by a detailed Action Plan which outlines the action the school will be taking during the next 3 years to meet the general duty and make practical improvements for disabled children and adults connected with our school.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

There will be internal evaluation of this scheme as outlined in the 'Impact Assessment' section, and also with the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) and OFSTED. Evaluation of this scheme will therefore be incorporated into the OFSTED SEF, as will the data giving information on the number of disabled pupils in the school, and their achievements.

This Scheme should be read in conjunction with the School Accessibility Plan. Together, they are intrinsic to:

1. The School Improvement Plan
2. The Diversity and Equality (Equal Opportunities) Policy
3. Anti-Bullying Policy

There will be an annual report on this scheme demonstrating:

- Progress made
- Outcomes achieved
- Work in progress
- Amendments to the scheme.

This report will be published as follows:

- In the Headteacher's Report to Governors
- In the school brochure
- On the school's website
- Be available to all school members in hard copy, and in the form of alternative communication where necessary.

There will be a revision of the scheme at least every three years.