Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Policy

Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and Local Authorities to discriminate against pupils or members of the school community with disabilities in admissions and exclusions, in education, and in associated services. From 1st October 2004, it became unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by preventing them from having access to premises. Along with all other public buildings, our school is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable access.

The Local governing committee has three key duties towards members of the school community who may have a disability:

· Not to treat less favourably because of their disability;
· To make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage;
· To plan to increase access to education.

In addition, the Disability Equality Duty (2006) requires all schools to:

· Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA;
· Eliminate harassment of those in regards to a disability;
· Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
· Encourage participation by disabled individuals;
· Take steps to take into account disabilities.

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all our children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that St George's Catholic Primary School promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Our Accessibility Plan details any changes required to our buildings and to other aspects of our school, so that we fulfil all our legal requirements, and remove barriers to inclusion for all pupils and staff with disabilities.

What is disability?

The Disability and Discrimination Act states that,

'A person suffers from a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities'.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

Disability is not the same as special educational needs; not all children who are defined as having a disability have special educational needs, and vice versa.

Dyslexia and dyscalculia are also forms of disability which can give rise to learning difficulties.

Aims and objectives

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and

participation that can hinder or exclude individual or groups of pupils, or staff. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for all, and this of course includes any with disabilities.
We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have the same opportunities as non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides. We will not treat a pupil or member of staff with a disability less favourably than others because of the nature of his/her disability.
We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage. We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before s/he joins the school.

Removing Barriers
The school must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils and members of the school community are not disadvantaged. Disabilities can limit the extent to which children are able to participate in the curriculum, and can impede the delivery of information. So, for example, if a child suffers from hearing loss, the teacher will always try and face the child when addressing the class, or, in severe cases, school may have to invest in a transmitter and microphone to ensure participation in class.

The Physical Environment
We will endeavour to improve provision for any disabled pupils or staff members by developing the physical environment of the school, within the limits of the resources available. Where necessary, we will try to improve the following:
· Accommodation within the building to aid movement;
· Information and communication technology, by selecting appropriate hardware and software;
· Signage, by putting it in clear print;
· Ensure that children with dyslexic tendencies are accommodated, overlays, glasses etc, and that worksheets/texts are user friendly.

The Curriculum
We use teaching strategies to enhance learning and participation of all pupils within a broad and balanced curriculum. We find ways in which all pupils can take part in sport, music and drama.
We plan our out-of-school activities and school trips in such a way that pupils with disabilities can where ever possible, participate. We use language that does not offend, and we make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language. In our library, we will ensure that reading books and other resources contain positive images of people with disabilities. Displays are used to promote learning in all areas, and will contain positive images. The school regularly reviews the way in which resources are matched to the needs of all the children. If necessary, to improve our provision, adjustments will be made to classroom organisation, the deployment of support staff, timetabling and staff training.
Many of the adjustments we make are dependent upon individual needs, and as a school we personalise the learning of individuals, for example, use of Individual Support Plans, EHC plans, targeted support, 1-2-1 provision. We seek and respond to guidance from the parents and the children. We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil or member of staff with disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage. We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil or staff member with disabilities before s/he joins the school.

Information
Information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) will be made available in alternative formats that are clear and user-friendly.
We always take account of disabilities, either of the pupils' or their parents' or carers. For example, communication with a parent/carer who is visually impaired may need to be by telephone rather than by letter.

Staffing
When advertising a post, interviewing applicants or deciding on appointments, the governors and staff will follow the necessary procedures, and will not discriminate against people with disabilities.

Should a member of staff become disabled, the local governing committee will make reasonable adjustments in their working conditions or to the premises, in order to enable them to continue in post.

Health and Safety
Members of staff must follow the school procedures both for the storage and for the administration of medicines to pupils. We also have procedures for when blood or other bodily substances have to be cleared away. The school has members of staff qualified in giving first-aid treatment, and the emergency services will be called, should they be required.

Policy into Practice
The local governing committee is responsible for the school's duty not to discriminate. The safeguarding governor and a designated member of staff, jointly discharge the responsibility of ensuring that we meet our obligation not to discriminate. The Headteacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities to all pupils without exception. This school will liaise with specialists to support individual pupils using the Common Assessment Framework. Among these specialists are the following: physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech therapists, doctors, the school nurse, social workers, and the staff of the voluntary and statutory agencies. We benefit from the LA's advice, and its provision through the Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired services. All members of staff are fully committed to the policy of not discriminating against pupils, parents or staff with disabilities. Parents and carers are asked to keep us informed about any relevant issues, so that we can work towards resolving them.

Monitoring
We have high expectations of all our pupils. We monitor a range of data to make sure that all pupils are making the best progress possible, and that no groups of pupils are underachieving.
We monitor:

- Attainment
- Progress
- Work from across the curriculum
- Engagement when learning
- Rewards and sanctions
- Parental and pupil views

Evaluations based on these data are then reported to the local governing committee, and an action plan will be drawn up where necessary.

Monitoring and Review
The local governing committee has a named governor with responsibility for matters of disability discrimination. It is this governor's responsibility to keep the local governing committee informed of any new regulations, and to ensure that the school regularly reviews its processes and procedures. The governor in question also liaises with the LA and other external agencies, to ensure that the school's procedures are in line with those of the LA.
Named Governor with responsibility is: Olwen Shallis
The local governing committee delegate the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of this policy to the Headteacher who will ensure that staff are fully aware of the content of the policy. The policy will be made available to all the school community through the web site.
Hard copies will be available on request.
The Headteacher will report any infringements to Governors.
The policy will be reviewed at any time on a request from any stakeholder, or at least once every year.

Next Review: September 2025