



Disability Equality Scheme 2014 – 2015

Reviewed by the Resources Committee 21st October 2014

At Bushfield 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 comfortable in disclosing the nature of their disability and to participate fully in school life. The achievement of disabled pupils will be monitored and we will use this data to ensure our teaching is sufficiently inclusive. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We believe that diversity is a factor which should be respected and celebrated by all stakeholders.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools, which need to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA;
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and applies to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Election of parent governors

The election of parent governors will now be covered by the DDA 2005, and governors will ensure that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible to disabled people. However, the result of the election is not covered and disabled candidates will not be able to claim that they were not elected simply because they were disabled. Once a disabled parent governor is elected, the school governing body functions in relation to that parent are covered and the school must ensure that they can participate fully in school life.

Additional Responsibilities of schools

The role of a school as a service provider: schools have additional implications as a service provider to make their buildings accessible when they hire out rooms or parts of the building.

Contact with parents and carers: when providing newsletters and information for parents and carers, schools should make this information available in an accessible format so that parents or carers who may be, for example, visually impaired, can access the information. Additionally, events for parents and carers such as open evenings, meetings with teachers, should be held in accessible parts of the building.

Hiring transport: school staff will need to be aware of Section 6 of the Act when hiring transport as it puts new duties on transport providers, including the bus and coach companies, and the taxi and private hire car trade. The requirement to provide accessible vehicles is extended to include these transport providers. Bus companies will not be able to refuse a job because, for example, it may take longer to pick up disabled students.

Involvement and consultation

It is a requirement that disabled pupils, staff and those using school services should be involved in the production of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Bushfield School consulted with parents, Governors and staff as well as pupils and service users in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme by questionnaires and feedback to determine our priorities with regards to disability equality over the next three years.

Action Planning

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, we have drawn up an action plan to make things happen, which outlines how we aim to cater for the identified needs of our stakeholders. We recognise, however, that the needs of our pupils, staff and service users change over time and, as such, fully appreciate the importance of catering for current needs as well as anticipating future needs.

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.

DDA focus areas

1. **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;**
2. **Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;**
3. **Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.**

Responsibilities

The Governing Body recognises its duty to:

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

The Governing Body plans to increase access to education for disabled people by:

- increasing the extent that disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the environment to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery of information for disabled pupils.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- making sure the Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- making sure all members of the school community know about the Equality schemes
- producing an annual update about any changes to the scheme
- giving the staff opportunities for training regarding equality issues
- taking action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including all forms of bullying

All staff are responsible for:

- dealing with all racist, homophobic and other hate incidents
- recognising and tackling bias and stereotyping avoiding all forms of discrimination

- promoting equal opportunities and good race relations
- keeping up to date with training and the law on discrimination.

Monitoring and reporting

It is important to monitor the impact of the action taken to ensure that progress is being made towards meeting the Disability Equality Duty, and to ensure that no adverse impact is occurring as a result of the actions.

The Disability and Equality Scheme is a working document and therefore one that will be subject to review and alteration in response to these evaluations and views expressed by its disabled members.

The monitoring of the actions outlined in the action plan will be monitored in accordance with the specified timescales. If any adverse impacts are identified during the monitoring process, the action plan will need to be revised.

The Headteacher will report to Governors annually outlining the progress of the Disability Equality Scheme action points and assesses the implementation of the action plan for effectiveness. Its findings will be used to improve the Disability Equality Scheme and feed into future practice.

For further information in relation to equality of opportunity, please refer to the following school policies and/or Local Authority documents:

- ❖ Special Educational Needs policy
- ❖ Bushfield Equality Policy
- ❖ Race Equality Policy
- ❖ Accessibility Plan
- ❖ Accessible Schools
- ❖ MK Parent Partnership