



The Firs Lower School

Disability Equality Scheme



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Mission Statement

At The Firs Lower 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. 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 make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. At The Firs, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Check list for school staff and governors

- ✓ Is information collected on disability with regards to both pupils and staff? Is this information used to improve the provision of services?
- ✓ Is pupil achievement monitored by disability? Are there any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action?
- ✓ Are disabled pupils encouraged to participate in school life? How is this shown through representation in school events such as class assemblies and the school council?
- ✓ Is bullying and harassment of disabled pupils and staff monitored and is this information used to make a difference?
- ✓ Is disability portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- ✓ Does the school take part in annual events to raise awareness of disability?
- ✓ Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents or carers attend held in an accessible part of the school?
- ✓ Is information available to parents, visitors, pupils and staff in formats which are accessible if required? Is everyone aware of this?
- ✓ Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?

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, who 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)

Monitoring

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. The following should be monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by disability
- Disabled staff (including numbers, type of disability and satisfaction rates in staff surveys etc.)

Additional implications for 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.

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 need to 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.

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.

The Firs Lower School always consults with disabled pupils, staff and parents in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme by:

Seeking feedback from any parents with a disability and/or who have pupils with a disability regarding the provision offered them by the school.

Making things happen

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, The Firs Lower School has drawn up an action plan to make things happen, which outlines how the requirements of the DDA 2005 will be met. This action plan has been shaped in consultation with disabled people as outlined in the previous section, and may include some of the good practice examples below.

Good practice examples

The following examples demonstrate how disability equality will be promoted in a school environment.

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
 - Ensuring that the talents of disabled pupils are represented accordingly through the Gifted and Talented Registers.

- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
 - Any incidents of harassment and bullying of disabled pupils will be monitored and appropriate action taken.
 - If a number of incidents have been prevalent within a particular year group, circle time, story time or assembly time will be used to investigate and address the issue with all pupils.

- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
 - The school will ensure that where appropriate, disability is represented in posters, displays and learning materials etc.

Making things happen

- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people (continued)
 - The school will strive to celebrate and highlight key events such as the Paralympics, Deaf Awareness Week and Learning Disability Week.
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people.
 - The school will ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events etc.

Accessibility and Equality Action Plan -

The associated Disability Equality Scheme Accessibility Plan will be formally reviewed every two years, in line with this policy review schedule.

Progress with the plan will be coordinated by the School Business Manager and reported to the Governor Environment and Finance committee at least annually.

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 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.

Progress with the Disability Equality Scheme Accessibility plan will be reported regularly to Governors on the F & E Committee.
