



Ridgewell C of E VA Primary School

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Disability Equality Policy / Scheme

Introduction

Ridgewell School welcomes its general responsibilities under the new Disability Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their impairments;
- promote positive attitudes to disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take steps to take account of a disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person more favourably than other people.

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.

School Ethos, Vision and Values

At Ridgewell 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. Our admissions policy does not discriminate against disabled pupils.

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 ensure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. We will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment.

This school uses the 'social model' of disability, as its basis for its work to improve equality for and tackle discrimination against disabled people. This model says it is the world and society that creates barriers that limit or prevent disabled people from enjoying the same opportunities as people who are not disabled.

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

According to the Disability Act, an impairment is to be treated as affecting the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, only if it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech
- hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate;
- learn and understand;
- perception of risk or danger.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 has extended the definition of disability to include people with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer from the point of diagnosis. 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 affect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day to day activities.

How Disabled People have been Involved in the Scheme

Ridgewell School recognises the importance of involving disabled people fully in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme. We have involved disabled people in the following way:

Disabled Pupils:

- We have identified our disabled pupils.
- Throughout the year we hold pupil interviews, which include identified disabled children, to find out how and what they learn, the support given and the feedback they receive (these interviews are not only for children with disabilities).
- Discussion is on-going through class and school councils, enabling all pupils to have a 'voice' and make suggestions about how their school is organised.

Disabled Staff:

- We have asked all staff to identify any barriers that affect them and how we can plan to overcome them.

Disabled parents/carers:

- We have given all of our parents a questionnaire to identify any barriers and how we can improve the way we meet their needs.

Disabled member of the local community:

- We have invited all members of the local community to air their views and inform us of their or others' needs.
- Through the school newsletter, school website contribution to the village newsletter, we have asked the local community to contact the school through e-mail, letter or telephone for their views.

Key issues identified are listed in appendix 1 and will be updated yearly as circumstances change and issues are acted upon.

How we have gathered information on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled people
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We recognise that our policies and practices may impact on disabled people in particular on:

- the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees;
- on the educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled pupils.

We acknowledge that information from a wide range of sources will be required in order to identify the actions which we need to take to promote disability equality. We will ensure that information is gathered in relation to both employment and the delivery of our services. The processes we use for gathering information will include:

Pupil Achievement:

- to provide an assessment, monitoring and support programme for all pupils;
- monitor the achievement/underachievement of all groups with the use of target tracker;
- monitoring of Individual Education Programmes (IEP);
- liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure pupils are appropriately identified and adequately supported.

Learning Opportunities:

- monitor the provision for all groups through lesson observations, pupil interviews, curriculum planning, work scrutiny.
- pupil participation in the range of after school activities.
- assessment for learning opportunities;
- cross curricular long term curriculum plan with 'themed' topics to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum.

Admissions, Transitions, Exclusions:

- reasonable enquiries made on admissions and transition stages to find out if pupils have additional needs;
- liaise with feeder secondary schools;
- monitor the exclusion of pupils with disabilities.

Social Relationships:

- to monitor and maintain inclusion policy;
- enable circle time discussions to include inclusion and social relationships;
- monitor pupils understanding and attitudes through pupil interviews;
- friendship stop available on playground;
- zoning of playground to provide inclusive opportunities.

Employing, Promoting and Training Disabled Staff:

- provide disability awareness training to all staff;
- include images of disabled people in a positive role in internal and external published materials;
- ensure that future recruitment and selection panels are fully aware of their disability duties;
- encourage applications from disabled people for appointment to the governing body.

How we will assess the Impact of our Policies
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We recognise that all our school's policies may have an impact on the participation and outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff and members of the local community. We have agreed a programme to review the impact of policies and this is contained in our action plan.

Our Action Plan

We have produced a disability equality action plan to ensure that we fulfil our general and specific duties under the Disability Equality Duty.

Our existing accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to improve:

- curriculum access
- provision of information to disabled pupils
- physical access

Our Accessibility Plan will be maintained as a separate document and we will ensure that the actions in the plan fit with the actions and arrangements in our Disability Equality Scheme.

Reporting

We will report annually about the progress we make on promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people. Our annual report will include details of:

- information we have gathered during the year
- how we use this information
- action points completed during the year and those that are ongoing

We will ensure that disabled people are involved in this process.

The annual report will be incorporated into other documents published by schools annually including the school prospectus and summary profile.

Revisiting the Scheme

Our scheme will be reviewed and revised after a period of 3 years and disabled people will be involved in the process. A new action plan will be produced, responding to issues identified through our impact assessment and included in our annual reports.

Written by A Richbell – **October 2007**

Senior member of staff responsible - Mrs D Madden

Shared with all staff - **November 2007**

Shared with Governors - **December 2007**

Review date – **Autumn Term**