

MILLWOOD SCHOOL, BURY

POLICY: DISABILITY EQUALITY AND ACCESS

DATE: updated January 2018

DATE ADOPTED BY GOVERNING BODY: 2010

Millwood is a caring organisation, providing excellent experiences for those who use, or are employed, by it. The aim of this document is to improve further the involvement of individuals with disabilities and continue this involvement into the future. The policy uses the Millwood School Community Cohesion Policy (2008) as a starting point.

Definitions

This policy applies to pupils, parents, governors, staff from all the agencies working in school, and visitors.

A disabled person is someone whose daily activities are restricted on a long term basis by substantial:

- autism
- epilepsy
- cognitive impairment
- physical condition
- physical illness
- mental health difficulties: including disorders of behaviour, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression

Legal duties

1. We welcome our duties under The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (Public Duty), The Equality Act 2006, The Disability Equality Duty and The Disability Discrimination Act 2009 (which has particular relevance to time limits for challenges and complaints).
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspectorate Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties are essential for achieving the outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework and that they reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN convention on the Human Rights of the Child, the UN convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.
4. Summaries of our legal obligations are provided in appendix A - tbc

Guiding Principles

5. In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to above and summarised in appendix A, we are guided by seven principles.

PRINCIPLE 1-ALL LEARNERS ARE OF EQUAL VALUE

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value: whether or not they are disabled.

PRINCIPLE 2-WE RECOGNISE, RESPECT AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Treating people equally does not necessarily mean treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but takes account of differences of life experiences, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face in relation to disability. At Millwood School, as far as possible 'each individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society' (East Riding College, 2008).

PRINCIPLE 3-WE FOSTER POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND RELATIONSHIPS, AND A SHARED SENSE OF COHESION AND BELONGING TO THE SCHOOL, LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote positive attitudes to disabled people, good relations between disabled people and non- disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people. For example:

- pupils are given roles and responsibilities within school
- achievements of Millwood pupils are recorded in the local press
- we make links with mainstream schools
- we seek to provide disabled role models to interact directly with our pupils
- we ensure that successful people with disabilities are represented in lesson materials

PRINCIPLE 4-STAFF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees for example, in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development (assuming risk assessments indicate that it is safe to do so) whether or not they are disabled.

Millwood maintains records of the training and promotion accorded to disabled staff.

PRINCIPLE 5-WE AIM TO REDUCE AND REMOVE INEQUALITIES AND BARRIERS THAT ALREADY EXIST

We make every effort to enable all parents and carers to be involved in the life of the school for example:

- being flexible when arranging the times of meetings
- providing child care when possible
- correspondence is conducted in plain English.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between disabled and non- disabled people. We make reasonable adjustments to facilitate equality, even if this means treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people.

PRINCIPLE 6-WE CONSULT WIDELY

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. Information is collected on the individual's entry to the school and on leaving it. Collecting and responding to comments about access and inclusion is a continuous process at Millwood.

Groups consulted will include those with different impairments, ages and levels of responsibility:

- disabled pupils
- parents of disabled children
- parents who are disabled
- disabled staff
- groups of disabled people in the wider community
- Visual Impairment Service
- Hearing Impairment Service
- Speech Therapy Service
- Occupational Health Service

We involve disabled as well as non- disabled people by means appropriate to their level of maturity, cognitive development and preferred means of communication (including email, voice recorders, signing, video and symbols). When it is in the disabled individual's interest to do so, we use advocates who know the individual well.

We also organise regular events in order to consult the school community; for example satisfaction surveys were used on the Pupil Consultation Day. Annual Reviews provide opportunities for 1-1 interviews, and the School Council organises focus groups.

Parents can comment annually via 'All About Me Books' but also have the opportunity to comment daily in the home/school diaries. Some parents can comment via the Parent Liaison Officer, or Parent Support Groups.

Confidentiality is respected.

PRINCIPLE 7-SOCIETY AS A WHOLE SHOULD BENEFIT

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life of disabled as well as non- disabled people. Further, approaches to assist disabled individuals often benefit the non-disabled.

Action Plans

6. We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make the difference.
7. Each year we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan, setting out the specific actions and projects we shall undertake to implement the principals in paragraph 5 above . We make reasonable plans to facilitate equality, if necessary treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people.
8. Our current action plan is set out under the School Improvement Plan.

The Curriculum

- 9. We keep each curriculum subject area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principals in paragraph 5 above. Millwood staff ensure that, in all these aspects of school life I(including: educational visits and residential courses, after school activities and vacation play schemes) all pupils:
 - receive support for sensory impairments
 - enjoy an environment in which they can pay attention to what is being taught
 - have the opportunity and are encouraged to communicate, spontaneously if possible
 - are given choices
 - have the opportunity and are encouraged to make their mark
 - can take an active role in public events
 - express their identity and have their identity recognised by diverse groups in the school and (when appropriate) the wider community. This is by means meaningful to that individual and their peers, as well as adults
 - are encouraged to interact with friends
 - can be physically active
 - experience outside areas when the weather is suitable
 - have the opportunity to be spiritual
 - have their dignity and confidentiality respected

Ethos and Organisation

10. We ensure that the principals listed in paragraph 5 above apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those concerned with:

- Learners' progress, attainment and assessment
- Learners' personal development, welfare and wellbeing
- Teaching styles and strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice Related Bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2: ie prejudices around disability and special educational needs.

12. There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice- related incidents at our school should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

13. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the number, types and seriousness of prejudice- related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with (including nil returns).

Access

The following extract is taken from 'The Law Society, Member Services, Practise Notes, Disability Discrimination Act –in force from August 2009'

'4.4.3 Physical features

Where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use its service then a service provider must remove, alter or avoid the physical feature or provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available to disabled people.

4.5 What is a physical feature?

The Disability Discrimination (Service Providers and Public Authorities Carrying Out Functions) Regulations 2005 describe physical features as any temporary or permanent:

- feature arising from the design or construction of a building structure/erection on the premises occupied by the service provider;
- feature on those premises or any approach to, exit from, or access to such a building;
- fixtures, fittings, furnishings, furniture, equipment or materials in or on such premises;

- fixtures, fittings, furnishings, furniture, equipment or materials brought onto premises (other than those occupied by the service provider) by or on behalf of the service provider in the course of (and for the purpose of) providing services to the public;
- other physical element or quality of the land contained in the premises occupied by the service provider.

The Code of Practice gives a non-exhaustive list of physical features in paragraph 7.45. See section 8.3 Statutory guidance.

The reasonable adjustments duty is owed to all disabled people. It is an anticipatory duty and therefore it is important for service providers to take the initiative when planning their services.

They should not wait until they are contacted by a disabled person who is having difficulties accessing their service before considering what reasonable adjustments they should make.

A service provider must make reasonable adjustments even if they do not know that a particular service user is disabled or if they do not currently have any disabled service users'.

(Google 11.07.10, 12.18 PM, <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsand services/practicenotes/disabilitydiscrimination/3460>)

Millwood School managers, governors and site manager will work closely with the local authority, fire, Occupational Health and VI Service to fulfill these obligations. On the approach to the premises, within the grounds and inside the building;

- Signage is clearly visible
- The school is decorated in a manner that allows visually and cognitively impaired pupils to know where they are and find their way around
- Surfaces are level, well maintained and free from trip hazards
- There are no confusing surface markings
- All areas are accessible without using stairs
- Barriers are at a height where they can be readily perceived
- Most doorways are double or wide. All are wide enough for wheelchairs
- Regular Health and Safety inspections are carried out by the school's Health and Safety Officers and access problems remediated

The school provides facilities for adult and child wheelchair users:

- Two disabled parking bays will be available
- Two adult disabled lavatories are provided

Millwood is an inclusive School:

- Millwood provides a wide range of trained staff and aids in order to facilitate disabled pupils' physical access to the curriculum, recreation and personal care

Access requirements are balanced against the need to keep our vulnerable pupils safe.

Impact Assessments

- Monitoring of outcomes will take place to discover the experiences of disabled people at Millwood and progress made in disability equality. This process will also identify opportunities for improvement.
- Existing policies will be reviewed by the key governor, in order to assess their effectiveness (high, medium, low) for diverse disabled groups. This initial screening will be ratified by the governing body.
- A timetable of review will be drawn up for those areas where concerns have been identified
- Consultation with disabled groups and individuals will take place, using a range of strategies
- In the light of comments received, the policy will be amended by a person appointed by the headteacher
- All policies will be endorsed with a grade relating to their impact on specific groups, with improvements highlighted
- New policies will be assessed and endorsed with an indication of how they will promote equality

Monitoring and Evaluation

24. The management team collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs. See Assessment data in Self-evaluation form.

- The school governors will monitor the outcomes of the Disability Equality Policy , identifying action to be incorporated into the Disability Equality Implementation Plan
- The Disability Equality Policy will be reviewed and revised at least every three years, with an annual report on progress made
- The annual report will be shared with stakeholders and available on the school website
- Details of findings, including inequalities and proposed interventions will be published
- A summary of consultation with disabled people and its impact on policies and procedures will be included

Roles and Responsibilities

14. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy, its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

15. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

16. The head teacher is responsible for promoting the Disability Equality Policy inside and outside the organisation and ensuring that disabled people are involved and consulted. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given

appropriate training and support. The headteacher is responsible for taking appropriate action in any unlawful cases of discrimination.

17. The head teacher has day to day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

18. All staff are expected to: deal with any prejudice- related incidents that may occur; identify and challenge bias and stereo typing in the curriculum; keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work;

All staff are expected to: promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom and other school activities. (Other activities include: break times, physical education, clubs, dining, visits and meetings).

Information and Resources

19. The content of this policy will be made known to all staff and governors and as appropriate, to all pupils and parents, by the Headteacher.

20. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Breaches of Policy

23. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

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Reviewed 18-11-15

