



Disability Equality Plan

Ashwood Spencer Academy Mission Statement

We value and respect ourselves and everyone in our wider school community.
We are totally committed to equality of opportunity and actively oppose all forms of discrimination.
We strive to nurture a love for, and life-long enjoyment of, learning.

Our Aims:

As a school we believe:

- everyone has the right to succeed and become a lifelong learner
- everyone has the right to contribute through listening and sharing ideas

We aim to:

- be a happy, healthy and caring school where everyone feels safe
- provide an inspirational and relevant curriculum taught to a high standard
- promote good behaviour, attendance and punctuality through praise, encouragement and respect
- encourage parents and the community to work in partnership

In partnership with parents, governors and the wider community, staff and pupils strive to maintain a welcoming, caring, safe and secure environment and to ensure a learning culture of continuous challenge and high expectations.

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities”

Stephen R. Covey

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act, and provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. The Ashwood Spencer Disability Equality Policy sets out our approach to promoting equality and diversity in-line with legislative requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and the advice given in The Equality Act 2010 and schools (May 2014). It also sets out some of the ways in which, as a school, we will address inequality and promote equality, to raise standards and narrow gaps.

School Context

At Ashwood Spencer Academy we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We recognise that we have to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper including:

- Boys and girls, men and women
- Pupils and others with special educational needs
- Pupils and others with a range of disabilities



- Pupils with English as an additional language

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment where there is respect for all. As a school we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

We are aware that the following issues may hinder some children with SEND from achieving their very best:

- Low self-esteem and low expectations
- Experiencing bullying, harassment or social exclusion
- Frequent moves and lack of stability in life leading to time out of school or low attendance (possibly due to medical appointments etc)
- Lack of help with emotional, mental and physical well-being, and poor behaviour
- Language difficulties
- Special Educational Needs
- Having a physical disability
- Lack of physical access to school facilities or services
- Having an inappropriate curriculum

At Ashwood Spencer Academy, we recognise that

- We have a legal obligation under the act to meet the needs of people with disabilities even if it requires giving them more favourable treatment
- New provisions in the Equality Act 2010 allow us to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics

Equality and the Law

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It makes clear that schools cannot discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

New Positive Action provisions allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, children with particular protected characteristics.

The Equality Duty (September 2011) has extended the 'reasonable adjustment' duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 states, 'The overriding principle of equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what you offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can.'



New Provisions Relating to Disability

The disability provisions in the Equality Act have some minor differences:

- Unlike the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a person with a disability must demonstrate that they cannot carry out, making the definition of disability less restrictive for disabled people to meet
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be acceptable. The fact that it must be reasonable ensures that any adjustment must be within the limits of the building, space available etc
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be described as justified – bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally
- Schools and local authorities have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through Special Educational Needs (SEN) Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Unlawful Behaviour with Regard to Disabled Pupils

Direct Discrimination: Schools must not treat disabled children less favourably simply because of a disability– for example by not admitting disabled applicants.

A change for schools in The Equality Act 2010 is that there can no longer be justification for direct discrimination in any circumstances. What the change means is that if a school discriminates against a person purely because of his or her disability (even if they are trying to achieve a legitimate aim) then it would be unlawful discrimination as there can be no justification for their actions.

Indirect Discrimination: A school must not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils.

Discrimination arising from disability: A school must not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability – for example by not allowing a disabled pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for her to get out and back. Like indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability can potentially be justified.

Harassment: A school must not harass a pupil because of his disability – for example, a teacher being cross with a child because the child's disability means that s/he is constantly struggling with class-work or unable to concentrate.



Reasonable Adjustments and when they should be made

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies only to disabled people. For schools the duty is:

- Where something a school does places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils

Schools are not subject to the other reasonable adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties.

Schools' Duties of Accessibility for Disabled Pupils

The Equality Act states that, 'Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

Equality and Policy in Practice

At Ashwood Spencer Academy we promote equality of opportunity in the following ways:

- The school is committed to celebrating diversity and equality in many ways, in particular by recognising the uniqueness of every individual
- Good personal and community relations are actively promoted by fostering a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among all members of our community
- Diversity is recognised as having a positive role to play within the school
- Information on ethnicity, gender and disability is collected through the admissions process
- We promote positive attitudes towards disabled people by having an open admissions policy and including all children in all activities
- We promote positive attitudes towards people of different ethnic groups/religions etc
- We involve pupils, parents and staff in the life and work of the school, for example through our parent questionnaires
- We promote high expectations through celebrating achievement
- We communicate behaviour expectations through modelling good behaviour, and having a clear and explicit Behaviour Policy which is shared with pupils and parents
- We provide more favourable treatment for disabled students if necessary

Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we:



- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we track pupil progress and provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any needs or gaps in progress and attainment
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of disability, without stereotyping
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- Try to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- Ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs and interests of all pupils
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our children

Supporting Learners with Particular Needs

Recognising that some of the groups covered in this policy are more likely to have particular needs, the school:

- Provides in-class TA support and intervention groups for all children identified through pupil progress monitoring
- Supports vulnerable pupils through individual provision maps, pupil profiles and support from Study Buddies
- Provides appropriate training to enable staff to meet particular learning needs
- Will draw on the expertise of outside professional services to meet the individual needs of pupils

Listen to Children, Staff, Parents and Others

To do this:

- Children are encouraged to express their views during PSHE lessons and Circle Time
- The school hears the 'pupil voice' through the Children's Council
- The school actively seeks staff views and listens to staff concerns, for example through Phase Group and Staff Meetings.
- The school seeks the views of parents through parent/teacher consultations and regular surveys including an Annual Parent Questionnaire
- The school seeks the views of pupils through an Annual Pupil Questionnaire
- Pupils with SEND are invited to SEN review meetings and their views are actively sought through a short questionnaire.



Employer Duties

As an employer we try to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Governors

The Governing Body is committed to the equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs.

Further:

1. The Governing Body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
2. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
3. The governors welcome all admissions to join the school, whatever a child's socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability.
4. The Governing Body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their disability.

The Role of the Head Teacher

It is the Head teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Policy and the Disability Equality Plan and she is supported by the Governing Body in doing so.

It is the Head teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Disability Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The Head teacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities. The Head teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

The Head teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination with due seriousness.

The Role of Staff: Teaching and Non-teaching

All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.

All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on disability, and challenges stereotypical images.



All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the head teacher.

Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

Tackling Discrimination

Bullying and harassment on account of race, gender or disability are unacceptable and are not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/Head teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Head teacher. Incidents are monitored to ensure that they are dealt with effectively.

This Equality Policy is for the benefit of all children and adults (staff, volunteers, parents and other adults) connected with Ashwood Spencer Academy.

Please see also:

- Ashwood Spencer Local Offer (school website)
- SEND Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Administration of medicines

And also:

- The Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>
- The Equality Act 2010 and Schools DFE May 2014
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (detailed technical guidance for schools)
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-providersschools-guidance>



Checklist for Staff and Governors

- ☒ Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- ☒ Is pupil achievement analysed by race, disability and gender?
- ☒ Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- ☒ Are all pupils encouraged to participate in school life? Are pupils who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / school council?
- ☒ Is bullying and harassment of pupils and staff monitored by race, disability and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other pupils?
- ☒ Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your school community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- ☒ Does the school take part in annual events such as Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness of issues around race and 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, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- ☒ Are the accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of race, disability and gender?
- ☒ Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?