

Oakfield Lodge School



Accessibility Plan

Written by: AMK
Reviewed by: SN
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Accessibility Plan

(incorporating the previous Disability Equality Policy and Scheme)

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

Schools and Local Authorities have to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils.

Our school's accessibility plans 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, and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them.

Our school's previous access plans were incorporated into a Disability Equality Scheme/Single Equality Scheme (dates) and build on those foundations. This access plan includes data and consultation from those schemes where they continue to be relevant.

This accessibility plan and the accompanying action plans set out how the Link Trust Board will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

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

This scheme incorporates the schools plans to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

Oakfield Lodge Values:

In each of our schools we are committed to ensuring that every individual, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion or disability has access to and participates in the full curriculum and the learning experiences on offer. Barlow Hall promotes a positive approach to celebrating difference. This policy will support and enhance the Equal Opportunities plan and Additional Needs Policy. This policy will also outline how we will involve disabled users of the school in order to identify and remove potential barriers and improve equality of opportunity. We will:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate Discrimination
- Eliminate Harassment
- Promote positive attitudes
- Encourage participation
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs.

Our shared definition of disability is: 'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' Substantial is

defined as something which is more than minor or trivial and long-term is defined as being one year or more. This is a broad definition which includes people with a wide range of impairments, including those which may be 'hidden disabilities' such as medical conditions

The aims of this policy

- To promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people in our school community.
- To eliminate negative discrimination or harassment of disabled people in school.
- To encourage the full involvement of disabled people in school life.
- To become aware of reasonable adjustments which need to be made for the wider school community, including pupils, family members, staff and trustees.
- To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even where this requires more favourable treatment.
- To develop the PSCHE scheme of work around disability to promote children's understanding of disability.

Information Gathering:

Information must be consistently gathered and reviewed so we are aware of all the disabled users of the school. Information will be collected on pupils, staff, trustees and families. This will be the priority for our action plan. At admission, all families are asked to disclose any disabilities which their child may have so that school is clear on who its disabled pupils are and what reasonable adjustments, if any, are needed for these children. At admission meetings we will also ask about any disabilities a family member may have in order that school can make reasonable adjustments where these are needed, for example, providing information in a different way. In admissions meetings parents will be consulted as to how their child's needs' can best be met. This information will then be passed on to the class teacher and any other relevant staff with the permission of the parents.

In the case of children transferring from other schools information will be sought from the previous school. Detailed transition procedures are already in place for nursery and reception children; these can be adapted where needed for children with disabilities through discussion with the head teacher. Transition programmes are being developed as a priority for children who will be accessing any specialist provision.

When applicable Information and advice from outside agencies will also be gained on the child's admission to the school where this information will help provide a smooth transition. Staff members who are working directly with children with disabilities will be given access to any support and training needed. The SENCo keeps records of all children with additional needs and shares the information with relevant staff.

Involving disabled people

The plan should be informed by:

- The views and aspirations of disabled pupils themselves
- The views and aspirations of the families of disabled pupils

- The views and aspirations of other disabled people or voluntary organisations
- The priorities of the local authority

An audit of our school's strengths and areas for development will be the starting point for action planning and will include:

- The level of staff awareness of Equalities legislation
- The presence of disabled pupils and their participation in the life of the school, for example, patterns of attendance and exclusions, areas of the curriculum to which disabled pupils have limited or no access, the participation of disabled pupils in after school clubs and school visits, parts of the school to which disabled pupils have no or limited access.
- The impact on disabled pupils of the way the school is organised, for example, school policies and practices around the administration of medicines, time-tabling, anti-bullying policy, school trips and teaching and learning.

The physical environment of our schools

There are increasing numbers of disabled pupils in mainstream settings needing adult support for personal care. We have accessible toilet facilities in each school that are large enough to accommodate a toilet and washbasin.

Allocated parking spaces for the parents of disabled pupils are available, as is ensuring that the space is not used inappropriately, or blocked by other vehicles. Access into schools from the parking space is barrier free with no obstacles.

Level access is not the only consideration for wheelchair users. Heavy doors, sharp narrow turns and cluttered corridors will all be barriers to access. Where classroom space is tight, adjustments may have to be made to classroom layout in order to facilitate access.

Some disabled pupils will need specialist furniture in order to access the curriculum. Our schools have a responsibility to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils and this can include specialist equipment. Schools should make themselves aware of any existing support to purchase equipment.

Access to the curriculum

Plans to enable all areas of the curriculum to be accessed are available. These will ensure that pupils regardless of their disability can access the curriculum. Where an activity cannot be made accessible or would be inappropriate then an alternative activity should be made available. Cross country running may be inappropriate for an individual wheelchair user but an alternative physical activity – perhaps table tennis or swimming – should be offered. Handwriting practice might be inappropriate for a disabled pupil but practising keyboard skills would be a suitable and valuable alternative. Planning to improve access to the curriculum will include identifying reasonable adjustments to offer an equality of opportunity.

Depending on the impairments of your disabled pupils, planning specific staff training will improve access to the curriculum. Training is available from a number of sources.

Purchasing specialist equipment will increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. Schools might plan to purchase more books with large print, writing slopes and pencil grips, or adjustable desks and chairs.

Including review of the participation of disabled pupils during lesson observations will inform future developments in inclusion.

Planning to use tools such as the Index for Inclusion can help a school improve access and raise awareness.

Access to school visits can be problematic for some disabled pupils. Reviewing your school's visits policy and investigating more accessible venues and transport providers will be valuable, as will better forward planning and a creative approach to staffing.

All preparation, planning and assessment of teaching and learning takes into account the diverse needs of the children, including those with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments are made to meet requirements, through differentiated resources or learning styles, for example through the use of Picture Exchange Communication or extra support in class. Short term planning indicates children with particular needs and flags up how these needs will be met.

The schools tracking system monitors the attainment and progress of all children, from this, individual targets are set for the children. The SENCo and staff review the progress of children with additional needs on a termly basis and write Individual Education Plans (IEP's). Outside agencies are involved when this is necessary.

Learning mentors are used for children who need extra support or who are having particular difficulties. Buddy systems may also be put into place for children who are socially vulnerable. Children with disabilities will have full access to school trips, social events and residential trips. The member of staff organising the trip will be responsible for considering the needs of all of the pupils before the trip and for organising reasonable adjustments to the arrangements where these are needed. These will be recorded on the risk assessment for the trip.

Schools will monitor the number of pupils with disabilities who attend after school clubs. Children with disabilities will be given encouragement to access these clubs.

Throughout the curriculum and especially through PSICHE lessons we teach that everybody is an equal member of the school community and that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.

We wish to ensure that disability is treated in a positive way and that disabled children are seen by their peers as equals who have just as much to contribute to the life of school as non-disabled children. Sessions promoting awareness of disability, and especially of 'hidden disabilities,' will take place in school when this is appropriate.

The ways in which information is currently provided for disabled pupils

- Plans could be made to investigate symbol software to support learners with reading difficulties.
- Raising awareness of font size and page layouts will support pupils with visual impairments.
- Auditing the school library to ensure the availability of large font and easy read texts will improve access.
- Auditing signage around the school to ensure that is accessible to all is a valuable exercise.

Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees.

All newly recruited staff are asked as part of the application process if they have a disability. Although they do not have to disclose any disability if they do then there will be a discussion about how any needs can be met by school.

Schools will conduct an audit of trust staff to ask them if they have any disability that they would like to disclose. The forms will be collected and any issues arising can be discussed in confidence with the head teacher.

Each member of staff also has bi-annual meetings with the head teacher at which they can raise any personal issues.

How the impact of this policy will be assessed.

This policy and the accompanying action plan will be reviewed annually. The academy council will review progress towards our aims. It is important that our plans

- Allocate lead responsibilities
- Set out clear timescales
- Identify necessary resources
- Have clear outcomes
- Build in review mechanisms and dates

We will ask members of each academy council to look at the impact actions have had within school. This will be done regularly and as appropriate.

We will review the information that we have collected and then look at how people have been affected by any changes made as a result of the information.

Access plans should be reviewed annually and renewed every three years.

Access plans should be easily available to interested parties and will be published on our schools website.