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# ST STEPHEN'S INFANT SCHOOL



## Disability Equality Scheme

<b>REQUIRED REVIEW FREQUENCY</b>		<b>ANNUALLY</b>
<b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>		<b>REVIEW WHEN REQUIRED</b>
<b>VERSION</b>	<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>DATE OF APPROVAL</b>
3	Resources	15 October 2019

**KEY CHANGES:** No Changes

Signed .....  
Chairman of the Resources Committee

Date .....



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as; the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003[5] and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

As far as St Stephens Infant School (SSIS) is concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils or staff on the basis of the protected characteristics of: sex, race, age, disability, religion / belief, pregnancy / maternity, gender reassignment / sexual orientation or marriage / civil partnership.

The new legislation required the school to produce an Equality Information and Equality Objectives document to define of the two specific duties which schools have to undertake in relation to the Act viz.

- a) to publish information which shows they have due regard for equalities, as defined by the Act
- b) to publish at least one equality objective.

The production of the Equality Information and Equality Objectives Document has, in general, removed the need for individual policy documents relating to equality provisions for each of the protected characteristics.

However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that a person with a disability must be treated more favourably than a person who is not disabled and the school may have to make changes to practices to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, a pupil with a disability can benefit from the education provided to the same extent that a pupil without that disability can. Discrimination is also defined rather differently in relation to disability.

For this reason the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) document has been retained:

- to supplement the equality information provided in the Equality Information section of the Equality Information and Equality Objectives document
- to document the new requirements of the Equality Act 2010 that relate to disability

In addition a discrete Accessibility Plan document has been produced to record the equality objectives and actions related to removing barriers which are a consequence of disability.



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## **1.2. 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 also considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

In addition, some of the provisions to be made for pupils with disability will also apply to those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), especially those with long term medical needs.

SSIS also uses the "social model" of disability recognising that some individuals have physical, social, or behavioural difficulties which can affect their ability to function in society and that disability is not caused by the individuals, but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers which exist in the education system and in society as a whole.

The school applies both the social model and legal definition of disability in all relevant related policies and practices.

## **1.3. SSIS Ethos**

SSIS is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, pupils and any others involved in the school community (e.g. governors, helpers, parents and carers) , with any form of disability and will ensure that people with disabilities are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.

The school will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between persons who have a disability those that do not
- eliminate discrimination between persons who have a disability those that do not
- eliminate harassment related to disability
- promote positive attitudes towards persons with disability –This means not representing people in a demeaning way, and it also means not pretending they don't exist and not representing them anywhere at all
- encourage participation by persons with a disability in all aspects of school and public life but respect the wishes of children with disability in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take part in
- take steps to take account of a person's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than other persons
- strive to increase all stakeholders' awareness of disability and related issues

The school will work towards removing or altering as many barriers as possible to staff and pupils who have a disability. Examples of barriers include; prejudice and discrimination, inflexible organisational procedures and practices, inaccessible information and inaccessible buildings. It is the intention of the school that those barriers are removed through the ongoing development of this scheme and the associated Accessibility Plan

SSIS has high ambitions for its pupils who have disabilities and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.



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SSIS is also committed to involving any staff or parents/carers who have a disability in all aspects of school and public life. SSIS will continue to endeavour to make any “reasonable adjustments” needed to achieve this.

## **2. Strategy**

### **2.1. Identification of Disabilities**

In order to implement the required actions to meet the school's equality objectives it is important to have information on the disabilities that need to be addressed and the number of people at or associated with the school who have a specific disability.

Disability information related to the following is collected and recorded:

- pupils
- staff, helpers and governors
- parents / carers and other users of the school

The information is collected largely on a voluntary basis and is managed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

### **2.2. Developing and Involving a Disability Stakeholder Community**

In order to ensure the proposals made in the DES and Accessibility Plan address all the issues, a disability stakeholder community is identified from:

- pupils who have a disability
- any staff, helpers or governors who have a disability
- any parents / carers or other users of the school who have a disability
- parents / carers or other family members of pupils who have a disability
- people in the wider community who have a disability
- people in the wider community with expertise in dealing with a disability

The disability stakeholder community brings benefits by providing:

- insights into barriers faced by persons with a disability
- diversity and expertise in identifying ways to overcome these barriers
- improved working relationships and communication between the school and the persons with disability

Representatives of the disability stakeholder community are involved in:

- reviewing the DES and monitoring its impact / effectiveness
- reviewing the content of the Accessibility Plan
- reviewing progress of the objectives in the Accessibility Plan and the impact of objectives that have been met
- identifying barriers
- identifying new priorities for the Plan related to:
  - meeting the general requirements (duties) under the Equality Act
  - improved access to curriculum
  - improved access to and within the school environment
  - improved access to information



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SSIS will continue to demonstrate its real commitment to the involvement of the disability stakeholder community through canvassing their views on a regular basis and being seen to respond to any concerns raised.

### **2.3. Communications**

SSIS has established and developed communication framework with pupils with disability and their parents/carers. This communication allows the school to plan access and inclusion for these children in all aspects of school and public life.

The style of communication (e.g. informational materials or face to face) is decided on the basis of the nature of the material and the preference of those involved.

Opportunities to exchange information and opinions on disability are provided by:

- class and School Council meetings
- parent / carer feedback letters
- Individual Education Plan meetings
- 'Open door' policy- staff accessible to parents/carers
- new parent meetings
- links with feeder pre-school settings
- children discussing and reflecting on their learning in school
- children responding to assembly themes (interactive displays)

## **3. Responsibilities within SSIS**

A full list of the responsibilities of governors, head teacher and staff covering all aspects of equality provision can be found in the document 'Equality Information and Equality Objectives'. Some are repeated here with an emphasis on managing equality issues relating to disability

### **3.1. The Governing Body**

- A member of the governing body will be appointed with special responsibility for equality matters including those related to disability
- The governing body will encourage parents / carers or other community members who have a disability to become governors
- The governing body will ensure its members receive sufficient training the requirements of the Equality Act relating to disability
- The governing body will review the effectiveness of its disability equality policy by ensuring the following take place:
  - monitoring the progress of pupils of having a disability and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school and ensuring intervention plans are in place if required
  - monitoring the progress being made against the objectives documented in the Accessibility Plan
  - ensuring the DES and Accessibility Plan are reviewed and updated each year



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### **3.2. The Headteacher**

- With support from the governing body, the headteacher will implement the school's disability equality policies
- The headteacher will appoint a member (s) to have special responsibility for equality including disability equalities matters
- The headteacher will ensure that all teaching staff are aware of the disability equality policies and procedures including how to communicate any issues they become aware of to the relevant stakeholders
- The headteacher will ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to disability equality policies so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities
- The headteacher will ensure necessary adjustments are made for persons having a disability and suitable personalised plans are put in place including medical needs
- The headteacher will promote the principle of disability equality when developing the curriculum, and promote disability equality in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where disability equality is a theme, and in displays shown around the school.

### **3.3. The Class Teacher**

- The class teacher will ensure that all pupils with a disability are treated fairly, equally and with respect
- Teachers will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination involving pupils with a disability, record them and draw them to the attention of the headteacher

### **3.4. Disability Equality Review Group (DERG)**

The Disability Equality Review Group is established by the governing body. It consists of:

- the governor having responsibility for disability equality (who will chair the meetings)
- the member (s) of teaching staff with responsibility for disability equality
- selected members of the disability stakeholders community (at least one member has disability)

The DERG is responsible for:

- maintaining the register of members of the disability stakeholder community
- communication with disability stakeholder community
- reviewing the DES and monitoring its impact / effectiveness
- reviewing the content of the Accessibility Plan
- reviewing progress of the actions in the Accessibility Plan and the impact of objectives that have been met
- identifying barriers
- making recommendations to the Full Governing Body (FGB) regarding the effectiveness of provision and foreseeable needs in terms of disability issues
- identifying new priorities for the Accessibility Plan related to:
  - meeting the general requirements (duties) under the Equality Act
  - improved access to curriculum
  - improved access to and within the school environment
  - improved access to information



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## **4. Recording and Monitoring**

### **4.1. Recording**

As part of its strategy to meet its obligations under the Disability Equality legislation SSIS will maintain the following records:

Actions Taken - The school maintains a record of all pupils with disability, any actions taken to involve pupils and the outcomes that have been achieved e.g. results of questionnaires, feedback from individual pupils and parents/carers etc. In addition a record is maintained of the 'reasonable adjustments' made to provide for pupils with disabilities and the impact of changes made.

Pupil Progress - The school tracks the progress of all pupils using the SIMs software package. This allows the school to track and compare the academic attainment and achievement of those with disabilities with those who do not.

Access to Learning Opportunities - The school records the access to learning opportunities including trips etc provided to pupils with disabilities

Admissions, Transitions and Exclusions - The school records these figures to establish whether pupils with disabilities are over-represented in the exclusion figures

Social Relationships - The school records any actions taken to improve social relationships between pupils with a disability and other pupils

### **4.2. Monitoring**

The following are also items that are subject to monitoring for instances of inequalities of opportunity, prejudice or discrimination related to disability:

- employing, promoting and training disabled staff
- effectiveness of reasonable adjustments
- provision for use of the school provision by outside groups - lettings
- accommodation of external contractors

## **5. Equality Act Updates to Disability Discrimination Act**

The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:

- Unlike the DDA the Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must demonstrate that they cannot carry out, thus making the definition of disability less restrictive for disabled people to meet.
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified. The fact that it must be reasonable provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be defended as justified – bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally.
- From September 2012 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) statements or from other sources.