



## DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY

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Executive Head Teacher / Governing  
Body

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# Disability Equality Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

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### The Duty to Promote Disability Equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was a landmark in equality legislation, making it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of his or her disability. It also required organisations to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a disabled person could take a job, continue to work for an organisation or access services.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the 1995 legislation. It introduced the duty to promote disability equality, which partly parallels the duty to promote race equality introduced under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The duty to promote disability equality contains two elements – a general duty for all public bodies and a specific duty, which applies to a more limited number of specified public authorities, including maintained schools. The Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) states that the “overarching goal of the duty is to promote equality of opportunity”. In many cases the disadvantage and discrimination that disabled people experience arise from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The duty to promote disability equality aims to overcome these barriers.

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 in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

This Scheme builds on our accessibility plan and develops our work further to include:

- A definition of both disability and inclusion that is wider than special educational needs<sup>21</sup> and applies to all vulnerable groups
- Taking a proactive approach in making reasonable adjustments
- Work with pupils, staff and parents/carers
- Involving the views of disabled pupils, their carers and staff where appropriate in identifying priority actions within the school improvement plan.

### The General Duty

The general duty to promote disability equality places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The Gorse Ride Schools are committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties, as detailed below:

#### **Disability general duty – *Disability Discrimination Act 2005***

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<sup>21</sup> the legislation includes in the definition of SEN any pupil who has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of peers or a disability preventing or hindering access to educational facilities

We have a statutory duty to carry out our functions with due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate disability – related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage disabled people's participation in public life
- Take steps to take into account people's disabilities

**Gender general duty – *Sex Discrimination Act as amended by the Equality Act 2006***

We have a statutory duty to promote gender equality with due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between women and men, girls and boys

**Race general duty – *Race Relations Amendment Act 2000***

We have a statutory duty to promote race equality with due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this policy, on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups including, in particular, the impact on attainment levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the operation of our policies through the impact they have on such pupils, staff and parents, with particular reference to their impact on the attainment levels of such pupils.

**Community cohesion duty – *Education and Inspections Act 2006***

In addition to addressing the duties outlined above, our school is committed to taking action on other equality strands (e.g. religion and belief, 'vulnerable' children) and we will also work hard to meet the duty to promote community cohesion. We will increase our focus on helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action. We are committed to following Department of Education guidance in providing:

- Teaching and curriculum provision that support high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them
- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- A programme of curriculum-based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through fieldwork, visits and meetings with members of different communities
- Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English

## The Specific Duty

The specific duty requires a designated public authority (which includes schools) to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), setting out how it will fulfil its general and specific duties to promote disability equality. Disabled people must be involved in the development of the Scheme.

## THE GORSE RIDE SCHOOL'S VISION AND VALUES

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### Our Vision and Values

Our Schools recognise that its community users may have a disability and is committed to ensure that there is equality of education and opportunity for all pupils. We will endeavour to develop a culture of equality and inclusion where children with disabilities and their families are not treated differently and are able to participate fully in school life.

Our vision is that all pupils with disabilities are valued as full and equal members of our school and enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities with the rest of the school community.

Discrimination is:

Any barrier (physical or otherwise) to an individual or group of individuals which would inhibit the school meeting its key aims:

- To ensure that all children and adults feel valued, respected and fairly treated
- To lay firm foundations for learning on which to build in later life, through a creative curriculum
- To equip children to make good relationships, choices and decisions
- To foster confidence and self-worth
- To encourage responsibility and independence.

### Who do we mean by "disabled people"?

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition of a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes 'hidden' impairments, such as mental illness, dyslexia, autism, speech & language, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, or epilepsy. Substantial means "more than minor or trivial" and long-term means lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.

Disability is said to have an adverse effect if it affects one or more of the following

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech
- Hearing
- Eyesight (unless brought to functionally useful level by spectacles or lenses)
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger.

In considering what might constitute a substantial disadvantage, the school has taken account of a number of factors, eg.

- The time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled child
- The inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer
- The loss of opportunity or the diminished progress that a disabled child may make in comparison with his or her peers who are not disabled.

Another way of considering whether particular special educational needs are disabling is illustrated in the table below:

	Physical, hearing, vision	Speech, comprehension	Learning	Perception of risk or danger
Autistic spectrum	Some	✓	Some	✓
Behaviour		Some	Some	✓
Dyslexic-type needs		Some	✓	
Other learning needs		Some	✓	Some
Physical sensory		Some	Some	Some

The school governing body and senior managers collect information regarding staff and pupil headcount by gender, disability, age and ethnicity, including data and other information on staff recruitment and progression. The school seeks to collect this information sensitively and confidentially, while encouraging disclosure.

### Discrimination Disabled People Face

Disabled people are discriminated against in a number of different ways. These include

- Discriminatory attitudes
- A lack of accessible information
- Inaccessible environments
- Services that have not been designed to take account of the needs of disabled people.
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### Action to Date

The Scheme builds on what we have done already to promote equality for disabled people such as ramp access at the main entrance and a disabled parking space at the front of each school. Our Disability Equality Scheme will take a fundamental step in removing any further discriminatory barriers for disabled people in the Gorse Ride Schools.

For example we have adopted:

- An Accessibility Plan which aims to
  - Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
  - Improve the physical environment in our School to increase opportunities for disabled pupils
  - Ensure that disabled children are provided with information in formats that are accessible for them

- An Equal Opportunities Policy which aims to support the school being a place where everyone:
  - is respected and respects others
  - takes part in the life of the school
  - achieves to their potential
  - develops skills essential to life
  - exercises choice

We share the Council's belief that no-one should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

*race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, income, religion, colour, ethnic or national, origin, marital status, nationality.*

In our schools, we recognise that it includes:

- girls and boys, women and men
- people from minority ethnic backgrounds, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees
- people from different faith backgrounds
- pupils who need support to learn English as an additional language (EAL)
- pupils with special educational needs
- pupils with disabilities
- children in public care
- other children, such as sick children, young carers, those children from families under stress.
- any pupils and young people who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.

## **INVOLVEMENT**

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### **Involvement of Disabled People in Developing the Scheme**

The school staffs are in regular dialogue with pupils and parents to ensure that adequate provision is made for their need. To date, this action has been through one to one interactions. In addition to this, the school will also use the results from "Every Child Matters" surveys (on an annual basis) to determine whether further action is required. The Premises Committee will actively monitor the action plan and any other actions resulting from this activity.

### **Developing a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers**

The school will seek to ensure that there is a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents through:

- Pupils: Ensuring that disabled pupils are represented on the School Council.
- Parents/Carers: Actively seeking the views of parents/carers on how the school can improve provision and support disabled parents/carers through surveys and meetings with the head teacher. The school will seek to implement practical changes.
- Staff: The head teacher will use staff review sessions to actively seek input from disabled members of staff to ensure that they can maximise their effectiveness in their roles. This input will be referred to the Finance and Personal Committees to ensure that any necessary property or facilities changes are incorporated in the facilities plans. Other input will be incorporated in the school development plan.

## The Governing Body

Governing Body proceedings can be made available in Braille on request. Governors are also willing to specifically discuss minutes or documents with parents who are unable to access this content through other means.

All members of the community are welcome to apply for election as governors and the school will actively seek to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that accessibility does not limit the ability of disabled governors to fulfil their role.

The governing board (through its Finance, Personnel and Curriculum Committees) will review the results of surveys and consider accessibility to the school's facilities in its meetings. Key points will be highlighted to the Full Governing Board. Specific monitoring points will include:

- access to educational opportunities and services
- attainment
- exclusions
- punishment and reward
- membership of the governing body
- parental involvement
- staff recruitment and career development

## Eliminating harassment and bullying

The school's Anti-bullying policy demonstrates the school's intent that harassment or bullying is not tolerated and is clear on how discrimination, bullying, harassment of disabled children and adults will be dealt with.

## Reasonable Adjustments

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, tailored to meet their individual learning requirements. Access to the curriculum as far as is possible for the disabled pupil includes extra-curriculum activities and events. Disabled pupils are supplied with resources to support their needs such as writing slopes, enlarged print and seating arrangements.

## School Facility Lettings

Weight Watchers and Rainbow Brownies are the only organisations that currently make use of school premises. At present there is no specific need to provide any additional facilities other than those already provided.

## Information, Performance and Evidence

- Pupil Achievement  
The school undertakes to assess its curriculum provision to pupils on a regular basis, and to use this information to better tailor the curriculum to pupil requirements. The Schools create a challenging curriculum where suitable challenges are set and progress of individual's achievement can be assessed. They make use of learning aids and advice from support services and other schools. The progress and attainment of all groups is monitored and individual children's needs assessed.
- Learning Opportunities  
Children from all groups are fully included in all learning opportunities and teachers' planning shows differentiation.
- Admissions, Transitions, Exclusions (including Behaviour cases)  
The schools work closely with Early Years settings and local secondary schools and when necessary the pupil will make several visits to their new school to ease the transition. At the time of writing there are no exclusions.
- Social Relationships  
Gorse Ride Schools aim to be schools where everyone is respected and everyone respects others as in our vision statement. We have a very inclusive school ethos and promote positive relationships between disabled and non disabled pupils through inclusivity, assemblies, PSHE, Circle Time, 'Buddying' systems and Playground Friends.
- Employing, promoting and training disabled staff  
All staff are treated equally.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Gorse Ride Schools recognise the importance of assessing the impact of its current policies and practices on disability equality, in order to ensure that they do not have an adverse impact on its disabled stakeholders and to inform future planning.

Questions the school needs to think about are:

- What are the training needs of the school regarding the Disability Equality Scheme?
- Who will be involved in assessing impact and how will the school involve disabled people?
- How will the school determine priorities?
- Will the school need external expertise?
- Who will the school report the results to?
- Has contact been made with trade unions at the school?

Gorse Ride Schools regularly monitor the impact of its policies. This is captured by means of the school's equalities monitoring process which involves

- Consultation with disabled stakeholders, in order that areas for change can be identified
- Analysis of information from data collection relating to stakeholders views.

This Disability Equality Scheme is a working document and therefore one which will be subject to review and alteration in response to the school's impact assessments, and views expressed by its disabled members, and will be used to drive forward the promotion of disability equality. It will therefore be key to the review and development of all school policies and practices in order to achieve the school's vision of a welcoming and diverse community.

## **OUR PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE ACTION PLAN**

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### ***Access to the Curriculum***

***Behaviour and exclusions*** – We have a school behaviour policy which states that in the case of children identified as having unacceptable behaviour the school will try to identify strengths and encourage positive contributions, assist the child in improving the behaviour and if necessary draw up a Behaviour Support Plan with specific targets and rewards.

***Teaching and Learning*** - Children's needs are catered for on an individual basis and teaching staff are aware of the Special Needs Code of Practice. Time is available for teachers and teaching assistants during the school day to plan and liaise together in order to meet the needs of individual pupils. Non-contact time is provided termly for the Special Needs Co-ordinator to meet with class teachers to review provision for SEN pupils and SEN surgeries are held once a term with the SENCo, Educational Psychologist and Behaviour Support teacher to discuss individual or class issues.

***Curriculum*** – We develop positive attitudes in all learning and aim to ensure that disability equality issues are raised through parts of the curriculum and school assemblies. The school Sex and Relationships policy takes account of the needs of disabled people and recognises that there may be occasions where children with special educational needs may require expert support from SEN staff.

***Data collection, monitoring and assessment*** – The achievement of all disabled pupils is monitored carefully to ensure that we are meeting all their needs and that they are accessing the curriculum. Groups of SEN children are broken into their impairment and all are included in the school data base. Disabled pupils' achievements are tracked in addition to their general attainment levels and celebrated in whole school assemblies.

### ***Participation and engagement***

***Engaging disabled pupils, staff, parents and local community developing a voice (parents and governing body)*** – All children are treated equally and the School Council includes disabled representatives. Disabled pupils are given positions of responsibility such as Playground Friends and all governors are aware of their statutory responsibility to promote disability equality.

***Eliminating harassment and bullying*** – The school's Anti – Bullying policy refers specifically to bullying which can be directed at disabled children and adults and any such incidents are recorded.

## **Employment**

### **Employing and promoting, training disabled staff**

The school monitors the number of staff it has who count as disabled people under the DDA 2005. Should the school employ a disabled member of staff then it would provide reasonable adjustments and would allow disabled staff additional time off for treatment for their condition without penalising them.

## **Access to information and services**

**Lunchtime or after school clubs and trips** – All children and adults participate in visits and activities and adaptations are made where necessary. Children are encouraged and enabled, where possible, to attend any clubs they wish to join.

**Medical and personal care needs** - All disabled children and their parents/carers are consulted on how they want the procedure or administration of medication carried out.

**Health and Safety** - Evacuation procedures have been developed and they take full account of the needs of disabled people. Our Health and Safety Policy gives clear guidance on the administration of medication. Individual pupils with particular needs have Care Plans and where necessary staff receive training on how to administer life saving medication.

**Admissions, Transitions** - Induction and support is provided to pupils and parents/carers, and staff. Reasonable enquiries are made at admission or transition stages to find out whether pupils or existing pupils have additional needs.

## **Physical access**

**Lettings and use of building by community** –The school notifies lettings and any visitors that there is a disabled parking space available, wheelchair access and a disabled toilet. The school examines capital projects to maximise access and reasonable adjustments.

## **Information we will collect**

This scheme will monitor –

Disabled pupil attainment  
Effectiveness of reasonable adjustments  
Recruitment, retention and career development of disabled staff  
Admissions of disabled pupils  
Exclusion of disabled pupils

We will use the results of our monitoring and assessment activities to make reasonable adjustments, review the effectiveness of this plan and identify future priorities.

### ***Looking ahead***

***We are aware of the following major challenges for our school that may impact on our work to promote disability equality.***

Access to the Infant schools courtyard areas are not suitable for wheel chair users. Further changes would need to be made to ensure full accessibility.

### ***Action plan***

***Our priority actions are included in our school development plan and the Accessibility Action Plan.***

## **MAKING IT HAPPEN**

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### **Implementation**

This Disability Equality Scheme represents the school's vision backed up by key actions which will be carried out within the next three years.

The school's governing body and School Councils will monitor and review this scheme annually. The school governing body will present findings annually and make them available in alternative forms of communication which are appropriate to the needs of its disabled members.

### **Evaluation**

There will be internal evaluation of this scheme as above, and also with the school improvement partner and OFSTED. Evaluation of this scheme will therefore be incorporated into the schools self-evaluation process, as will the data giving information on the number of disabled pupils in the school, and their achievements.

### **Publication**

This document is published in conjunction with the school's Access Plan and forms part of the school's improvement plan and equal opportunities policy.

## Reporting

There will be an annual report on this scheme demonstrating:

Progress made  
Outcomes achieved  
Work in progress  
Amendments to the scheme.

This report will be published as follows:

In the school prospectus  
On the school's website

Be available to all school members in hard copy, and in the form of alternative communication where necessary.

Links with other school plans and policies:

This Scheme is to be read in conjunction with the School Access Plan. Together, they are intrinsic to:

- The School Development Plan
- The Equal Opportunities Policy
- Special Needs policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Protection of Employees and associated documents (including Bullying and Harassment)

If you need further copies of this document, or would like the document in another format, such as enlarged print, Braille, audio tape or another language, please contact either:

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