



The Weald School Disability Equality Scheme

2011 Update

The Weald Disability Equality Scheme

To be read in conjunction with the Equalities and Diversity Policy, which as of November 2011 is being updated by WSCC.

Introduction

Since the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995, and the Equality Act 2010, there have been a number of initiatives connected to the Act which require organisations to become much more disability-aware than ever before. The Disability Equality Duty was introduced in 2005 and became an integral part of the act. The duty does not bring in new rights for people with disabilities, rather it requires schools to take a more proactive approach to promoting disability equality and eliminating discrimination.

The duty requires schools to prepare and publish a Disability Equality Scheme showing how it is meeting its duty to the act.

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Disability Rights Commission have published a detailed document for all schools which sets out the requirements of the scheme.

Duties under Part 5A of the Disability Discrimination Act requires governing bodies to:

- ❑ Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: i.e. pupils, staff parents carers and other people who use the school or who may wish to and
- ❑ Prepare and publish a disability equality scheme to show how they will meet these duties.

Duties in part 4 of the DDA require the governing body to plan to increase access to **education for disabled pupils in three ways:**

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

This scheme and the accompanying action plan sets out how the governing body will promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in the Weald School

1.0 Definition of Disability

The definition of a disability covers a much larger group of people than might be imagined. Currently it is thought that 7% of all children and 24% of all adults in the UK are disabled.

The DDA defines a disabled person as one someone who has:
“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” *

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

*The effect on normal day-to day activities is on one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis HIV infection or a severe disfigurement.

1.1 The General and Specific Duties for Schools

The disability equality duty applies across schools' duties under parts 2, 3 and 4 of the DDA. It includes two main elements:

- a general duty and
- a specific duty

1.2 The General Duty

The duty requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; take steps to meet disabled peoples' needs, even if this requires favourable treatment.

1.3 The Specific Duty

The main requirements of the specific duty are:

- prepare and publish a Disability Equality Scheme
- involve disabled people in the development of the scheme
- implement the scheme
- report on it
 - the arrangements for using information to support the review of the action plan and to inform subsequent schemes;
- implement the actions in their scheme within three years
- report on their scheme annually
- review and revise their scheme every three years

The school is not required to do anything under its scheme that is unreasonable or impracticable.

2.0 Writing the Weald Scheme - The Process

The duty makes clear reference to the importance of the *process* involved in the writing of the schools' schemes. The involvement of people on the working party who have disabilities is seen as essential. Any inspection of a school's scheme would expect a detailed analysis of the process by which the school has gathered information before writing their scheme.

2.1 The Working Party

In setting up the working party so that it included people with a disability, it was soon evident that there was no set procedure in place whereby the school could establish which parents or carers had disabilities. Information was usually passed on by the child's previous school, but only if deemed necessary and only if parents wished the school to know. This provided us with the first challenge, which was to set up a process by which such information could be collected and noted..(see appendix 1)

2.2 The working party comprised:

Mrs Caroline Geddes (parent) (chair)
Mrs Sharon Attfield (parent)
Mrs Karen Banner (parent)
Miss Ceri Burke (student)
Mrs A Burroughs (SENCO)
Mrs Helen Clarke (Teaching Assistant)
(four members of the group had a disability)

2.3 Other interested parties:

- The school's pupil dyslexia support group..
- Group of Y7 pupils with a statement for significant autistic conditions and or significant ADHD issues.

The views of each group have informed this equality scheme.

3.0 The Weald policy on Recruitment, Development and Retention of Disabled Employees

3.1 Where are we now?

In conjunction with the local authority, the school is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment and personnel practices. The Weald adheres to the West Sussex Diversity and Equality Policy in the recruitment of staff.

- candidates are required to disclose any disability on the application form.
- applications from people with disabilities are welcomed.

- short listed candidates are asked about any arrangement requirements for the interview.
- The interview gives opportunities to discuss any adjustments that may be required to enable the job to be carried out.

3.2 Opportunities for development for disabled employees are equal to those who do not have a disability. The employment of people with disabilities is considered a good role model for our pupils.

The local authority and the school have agreed policies on the retention of employees who have a disability. Phased returns to work following illness, sick leave policies and subsequent monitoring are all in accordance with the school's policies for all employees.

3.3 **Where do we need to get to?**

- The school needs to devise means by which staff at the Weald can be given the opportunity to disclose any disability
- Staff with a disability to be encouraged to become role models for pupils

4.0 The Weald Policy - the Educational Opportunities available to and the achievements of Disabled Pupils

Where are We Now?

- 4.1 Data from the Fischer Family Trust report shows that pupils with disabilities are making progress that is above the national average in all key stages.
- 4.2 In the school there are currently over 200 pupils with disabilities. Information about pupils with disabilities is provided by previous schools and by parents.
- 4.3 The information is collated and each year all members of the teaching staff and teaching assistants are issued with the school's Alert Book which is reviewed and updated for the start of each academic year. This gives a summary of the disability and where applicable, intervention strategies to help the pupil to fully access the curriculum.
- 4.4 Impairment groups represented in the school:
 - autism;
 - autistic spectrum conditions;
 - dyslexia;
 - dyspraxia;
 - ADHD;
 - cerebral palsy;
 - speech and language difficulties;
 - social communication difficulties;
 - cancer;
 - visual and hearing impairments;
 - diabetes;
 - severe asthma / eczema /allergic reactions

4.5 Disabilities previously represented in school:

- Downs Syndrome (2 students)

4.6 In line with all maintained secondary schools, The Weald has a very wide data base of information on the progress of all its pupils. The achievements of all pupils, including pupils with disabilities are measured against outcome data such as:

- Exam results
- Accredited learning
- End of Key Stage outcomes

The information is used to inform the end of key stage target setting as required by the DES. and to report progress, effort and achievements to parents.

4.7 The school monitors and reports on the progress of all pupils. In addition, the progress of the following groups is monitored closely:

- Statements of special needs (including those with disabilities)
- Travellers
- Children in care
- Students with English as an alternative language

4.8 Pupils with a disability are included on the school's mentoring scheme where a named adult and /or a peer mentor monitors the welfare and progress of that pupil by having regular meetings.

4.9 The achievements of pupils with disabilities are recognised using the school's tracking system and also the reward systems. In addition the Gold Award for effort scheme offers staff the opportunity to recognise the extra efforts of pupils with disabilities.

Where do we need to get to?

- All departments should include methods of following up and tracking pupils with disabilities who are not making progress.

5.0 Participating in School Life

Where are we now?

5.1 The school campus.

The original 1950s and subsequent 1970s three storey buildings, do not lend themselves to easy access to lessons for pupils with physical disabilities. The more recent building projects have addressed the issue of access for disabled people and the provision of a lift in G block enables people to reach all rooms in blocks C and G.

The sixth form college and the majority of its teaching rooms are accessible for wheelchair users.

5.2 The following subject areas are now accessible for wheelchair users:

- PE
- Science labs
- Technology,(except Food Tech./Textiles)
- History
- Geography
- RE
- Art and Ceramics
- Music

5.3 Other accessible areas:

- Library
- Sports Hall
- Youth Wing
- Cafeteria
- Covered eating Area
- All-weather pitch

5.4 Areas not accessible:

- Curriculum Support Dept (which is on the first floor)
- English
- Modern languages
- Food Tech rooms
- Maths

High visibility strips are in place on stairways and doors for pupils with visual impairment. All buildings are accessible via ramps. NB: timetable adjustments are made in each case to enable students to access these subjects, Food Technology being the exception.

Where do we need to get to?

- Curriculum Support dept to be moved to ground floor accommodation
- Access to school hall needs to be reviewed
- Increase provision of lifts in school
- Provision of medical care facility for severely disabled pupils
- Access to English / Modern Languages/ Food Tech lessons / Maths to be reviewed
- Review current accessibility of doors into buildings

6.0 Curriculum Provision for Pupils with Disabilities

Where are we now?

The Weald school aims to be as inclusive a school as possible. No pupil is denied access to the school on the grounds of their disability. Where a pupil's disability is such that attendance at a mainstream school might impact on their well-being and happiness, full consultation between the local authority, the parents and the school would take place to consider alternative provision for that pupil.

- 6.1 Pupils with disabilities participate as fully as possible in all areas of the curriculum. Where at all possible, Teaching Assistants attend lessons where a child's disability may impact on their safety, confidence, progress and well being
- 6.2 Teaching staff and Teaching Assistants meet to agree intervention strategies for pupils with disabilities. The aim here is to provide sufficient intervention to maintain good safety levels for the pupil, at the same time encouraging maximum independent learning skills.
- 6.3 Pupils who have difficulties recording their work may have help from a TA who will scribe for them where necessary.
- 6.4 Teaching staff and Teaching Assistants are informed of pupils who find copying from the board difficult, via the Alert Book. Where possible, pupils may be offered written notes by the teacher.
- 6.5 Pupils with learning difficulties may be offered the chance to be taught in smaller groups on an ad hoc basis, or as a longer-term arrangement.
- 6.6 Where it is deemed by teachers and parents that parts of the curriculum are too demanding and therefore outside the reach of the child, an alternative is offered in the form of lessons in the Curriculum Support dept.
- 6.7 Where deemed appropriate and in consultation with teachers and parents, pupils in key stage 4 with disabilities / learning difficulties are offered a contracted curriculum and work in the Curriculum Support base.
- 6.8 Disabled students are fully supported in both external and internal exams and assessments (please add how...? See JCQ General Regulations for further info)

Where do we need to go next?

- All departments need to look at schemes of work so that issues of disability become an integral part of them. Pupils might learn about a significant individual in that subject area, who has achieved in spite of their disability.
- The school addresses disability issues as part of the Every Child Matters agenda

7.0 Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

Where are we now?

- 7.1 The Weald School encourages all its pupils to participate in as many extra curricular activities as possible. Pupils with disabilities have equal access to all extra curricular activities and pupils are updated on activities via form room notice boards, assembly notices
- 7.2 The School Trips co-ordinator takes considerable care to include all pupils on residential trips. All trips are staffed by teachers and teaching assistants. Where a pupil has a disability, a planning meeting is held with the co-ordinator, TA and parents to discuss and agree intervention strategies viz medical needs and levels of care and supervision required to ensure the full participation of that pupil'
- 7.3 Risk Assessments will take into consideration :

- The needs and medical care of physically disabled pupils
- The needs of pupils with social communication / autistic spectrum disorders viz a viz understanding instructions and reporting to the right place at the right time.
- The needs of sensorily impaired pupils

7.4 For the small number of pupils with significant autistic problems that experience social problems in un-structured situations, there are break and lunchtime clubs and the use of the school library.

Where do we need to go next?

- A more proactive approach to encouraging pupils with disabilities to join in extra-curricular activities
- An audit to be carried out each year of which pupils with disabilities are attending extra-curricular activities
- Departments to audit attendance at subject extra curricular activities
- Staff participating in school trips and residential, to be trained in possible scenarios that might arise with pupils who are autistic or on the autistic spectrum

8.0 Eliminating Discrimination and Harassment

Where are we now?

In its most recent inspection, Ofsted praised the behaviour of the Weald pupils.

8.1 The school's behaviour policy applies to all pupils at all times. Pupils are expected to behave according to the school's behaviour policies and this includes treating others in a socially acceptable way. Bullying in any form is not tolerated and this includes bullying of a disabled pupil because of their disability. The school's programme of Personal Development (PD) includes work on peer relationships.

Where do we need to go next?

- Provide disabled pupils with a forum in which to air any problems and report incidents of bullying or harassment
- Increase awareness of disability issues in assemblies and in PD
- Ensure that the Every Child Matters agenda is active in school at all times
- Record and monitor any incidents of bullying or harassment that occur because of a pupil's disability

9.0 Impact Assessment

Impact assessment is a systematic approach to the analysis of the effects of a policy, practice or procedure for disabled pupils, staff and parents

Where are we now?

9.1 The involvement of parents and pupils on the working party for the equality scheme has enabled the school to identify issues of which we might not otherwise have been aware.

9.2 The following points were raised by the working party and other interested groups:

A) The meeting for new parents

- Access in to the school hall, ramps to front entrance, but steps after that.
- No set place for wheelchairs. Eventually pushed to the front where felt very vulnerable
- Meeting child's new form tutor at top of building never happened. Suggested that "someone else could go on her behalf".
- Got left behind on tours
- Did not bother to come for second child because of negative experience of first visit

B) Consultation days

- Difficulties accessing form tutor unless on ground floor.
- The lift in G block was not used because nobody knew where the key to the lift was.
- Doors are too heavy to push open on their own.
- The flooring leading up to the front doors are slippery and dangerous on wet days, so that crutches can slip.
- Children who have a disabled parent carry a significant burden of concern and some awkwardness on consultation days because of worries that they will not manage to see all teachers.
- It is impossible to see more than one teacher....accessibility is impossible for disabled parents, to see enough teachers.
- Disliked feeling that they were being a nuisance and needed to rely on people to help.
- It is easier to say you can't come to consultation days rather than worrying your child and feeling a nuisance.

C) Disability from a pupil's perspective:

- Biggest problem is doors. They are too heavy and awkward to open.
- It is impossible to access Modern Languages and English lessons because of where they are.
- Many rooms are too crowded to have wheelchairs. It is important that pupils do not have to apologise and ask people to move to let them through.
- Changing for PE - no consideration is given to the amount of time it takes to change. Fine motor control issues.
- In KS4 PE, there needs to be a greater choice of activities to take into account disability.
- In many lessons, it is expected that pupils will be able to copy notes from the board at the same time as everyone else. This is problematic for physically disabled children and for dyslexic and dyspraxic pupils.
- No help is given for learning to touch type.
- Other pupils can harass or be disparaging if pupils have to ask the teacher to slow down.

- There is a huge gap in peoples' understanding of what it is like to be disabled.
- Teachers need to promote more positive attitudes to disability
- TAs are vital for lessons where there are practicals
- Disabled people must be included and consulted in the planning of support in lessons.
- Children with disabilities worry about coping in school.
- Homeworks are problematic for many pupils with learning difficulties.

Where do we need to go next?

- All staff in school to be made aware of the above issues.
- All departments and areas to take the above points into consideration in planning schemes of work and department development plans.
- Governing body and Senior Leadership team to lead staff development on these issues.

10.0 Conclusion

The Weald Disability Equality Policy will be available to all users of the school. In order to ensure that the scheme is having a positive effect in the school, the policy will be evaluated and the findings discussed with the governing body. Ofsted inspectors will also evaluate the school's judgement of its own effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity.