



Be the best I can  
in the love of Christ

# Disability Equality Duty

**At St. Mary's School we aim to:**

- Create a caring Christian community in which everyone is valued and able to learn and grow together;
- Inspire all our children to develop enquiring minds and a lifelong love of learning;
- Release potential through a broad and creative curriculum;
- Sustain an environment in which independence, respect and resilience will flourish;
- Nurture strong relationships between home, school, church and the wider community;
- Empower the children to become responsible local, national and global citizens.

**"Be the best I can in the love of Christ"**

## **1. School Ethos. Vision & Values**

We serve the local and wider community by offering children a caring, safe and educationally rich learning environment in which to flourish as individuals and become increasingly valuable members of society.

The school is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, pupils and any others involved in the school community, with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.

This school will not tolerate harassment of any person whether a disabled person with any form of impairment or a pupil who is a carer of disabled parents.

### **1.1 What do we understand by "disability"?**

"Disability: is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities"  
(Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 Part 1 para. 1.1.)

This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 under the 2005 Disability Amendment Act:-

- People with cancer or surviving cancer are now included, as are people with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- For a mental impairment the need for it to be clinically well recognized has been removed.
- The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long-term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities. The definition extends to those who have had a disability. ( DDA 1995 Part 1 para **2.** - (1) The provisions of this Part and Parts II and III apply in relation to a person who has had a disability as they apply in relation to a person who has that disability.)

We understand that the definition of disability under the Act is different from the eligibility criteria for special educational needs provision. This means that disabled pupils may or may not have special educational needs and that SEN pupils may or may not have disabilities. The school recognizes that social, educational and behavioural difficulties are part of this definition.

### **1.2 Schools Strategic Priorities**

**Learning** – all pupils are taught according to need.

**Environment** – The school has one toilet specifically designed to be more accessible for disabled pupils. Many external exit points from the school are accessible to all including the main entrance. The school has a platform lift to enable access to the

entire building. The DDA and Accessibility Plan are considered when refurbishment is undertaken.

The obligations under the DDA are entirely congruent with the school's obligations to deliver high quality learning opportunities and provision of care for every member of the school community.

### **1.3 Strengths & Weaknesses**

The school has made great strides in promoting equality in recent years through:-

- The provision of a platform lift.
- The provision of a disabled toilet.
- The partnership arrangements with Horsham Leisure Link.
- Specific focus on the 'Every Child Matters' agenda to ensure the school meets and enriches the needs and abilities of all pupils
- Provision of an extra footpath to enable access to the Infant playground
- Enabling 'Springboard' group for disabled and children with specific needs to use the school facilities for their holiday club
- Half Termly visits by a Christian man with severe palsy- to talk to all KS2 classes

The school's Premises Development Plan will reflect a proactive approach to improving facilities in advance of needs.

The School Improvement Plan will include:-

- a direct reference under community involvement to demand that user groups openly promote and deliver activities that are fully inclusive
- under accountability a reference to seeking internal (pupils, parents & staff) and external validation (suitably qualified person) of changes made/proposed to improve inclusion
- Training opportunities for staff/Governors in areas such as DDA

## **2. The General Duty**

We will actively seek to:-

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons - 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 disabled persons in public life - it is also important to respect the wishes of disabled children in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take part in. However, a balance in this case needs to be kept between meeting a physical need and meeting an emotional need.

- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. (DDA 2005 S.49A)

### **3. How we will meet the General Duty & Specific Duty**

The production of this disability equality scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty i.e. to produce a Disability Equality Scheme for our school.

The main actions to be taken in the next three years to promote disability equality are described in the school's Accessibility Plan. This is a reactive plan which runs in conjunction with the School Improvement Plan and Premises Development Plan and will be subject to revision and amendment at the end of the three year period. This time-scale is flexible in terms of changes/review taking place earlier.

The school has always endeavoured to meet disabled people's needs even when it requires more favourable treatment. However needs tend to be met reactively and the emphasis will now be on more proactive strategies in developing school capacity.

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

Responsibility for developing this scheme lies with the head teacher, InCO, School Governor/s, parent/s of disabled child, disabled child/ren and a member/s of the School Council.

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

Disabled pupils and their parents and other disabled members of the school community will be involved in devising, monitoring and evaluating this scheme. Participation will be encouraged but the school will make it clear it is voluntary, no child, member of staff or parent will be coerced into taking part if they do not wish to.

Pupils and their parents will have a direct voice into this scheme through review with the head teacher, through Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and/or by other contact.

Over time this scheme will evolve in the light of implementation, monitoring and experience.

Other schools and members of the local community may also be invited to contribute to provide an external perspective on this scheme.

#### **3.2 The Governing Body**

Membership of the Governing Body is open to all eligible persons irrespective of disability. Members of the Governing Body are encouraged to visit school to aid

monitoring of measures taken to ensure that the 'Every Child Matters' agenda is actively pursued.

### **3.3 Removing physical barriers**

See the School's Accessibility Plan.

### **3.4 Disability in the Curriculum, including teaching and learning**

See the School's Accessibility Plan.

### **3.5 Eliminating harassment and bullying**

The school has adopted policies on harassment at work. The school's Anti Bullying Policy is monitored and reviewed by staff and Governors The latest policy dated 2009 is available from the school's web site or directly from the Office.

### **3.6 Reasonable Adjustments**

The DDA requires schools to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils and users of the school are not put at a substantial disadvantage and are able to access the same opportunities as non-disabled peers. Specifically, the school intends that disabled pupils and users will have the same access to the curriculum, to information and access to the school environment and facilities as non-disabled pupils and users. In planning developments to deliver this intention the school considers the needs of current and future pupils and users of the school. The main strategies to bring about reasonable adjustments in the next three years are described in the Accessibility Plan, however reasonable adjustments are made on an individual basis according to need, by working collaboratively with disabled persons and/or their parents.

The school will be successful in making reasonable adjustments when disabled persons can, wherever possible, participate fully:-

- in the classroom
- in the school curriculum
- at all times and in main parts of the building

And when:-

- disabled persons feel part of the life of the school
- disabled persons are included by their peers in all aspects of school life
- parents of disabled pupils feel their child is part of the life of the school
- staff feel confident in working with disabled pupils

### **3.7 School Facility Lettings/Use by the community**

Developments to improve accessibility of the school to disabled users has already been implemented. Now the school needs to secure appropriate changing/toileting

facilities to meet the increased number of users. It is important that community users have optimum access to all areas of school and hirers/users are asked to discuss their requirements with school office when booking premises.

The planned refurbishment of the children's toilets is due to begin at the end of July 2010.

### **3.8 Link with relevant external agencies**

West Sussex LA has launched an ISDA (integrated service delivery agency) programme which should support, enrich and extend provision available at/through the school, at a distance from or directly to the home of pupils on roll. The ISDA should anticipate and contribute directly to the plan for the needs of current and future disabled users of this school and other schools in the local community. We also work very closely with the extended schools service

### **3.9 Information, Performance and Evidence**

The school will collect data annually to help monitor the impact of its policies. Data collected will include information on:-

- a. Pupil Achievement
- b. Learning Opportunities - i.e. take up of courses/external visits
- c. Exclusions
- d. Social Relationships – i.e. incidents of bullying, racial harassment, etc
- e. Employing, promoting, retaining and training disabled staff

### **3.10 Reviewing/Monitoring**

The scheme will be monitored through an annual review by staff and Governors. The views of those pupils (and their parents) affected by the policy will be sought during IEP reviews and via other means if the pupil is not Statemented. The annual review will be informed by the data gathered in 3.6 above and will form part of the Inclusion Governor's report to the Governing Body in the Summer Term.

There will be more formal evaluation at the end of the three year cycle. The school will use the information gathered to update and amend the policy, setting new targets in the accessibility strategy to further the aims of the school in this area.

**Review Date:** June 2010

Day-to-day responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy will be the INCO.

### **References:**

Disability Equality Duty (DED)  
Disability Rights Commission (DRC)