



MURRAY PARK SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY

Title of Policy	ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY
Date of adoption	Autumn 2015
Originator	Roz Burrows
Date of review	Autumn 2018
Additional information	This policy is written with due regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 2001, the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and the SEN Code of Practice (2014)

Vision and Values

Murray Park School has high ambitions for all disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life. Our commitment to equal opportunities is driven by our inclusion statement. We will:

- Set suitable learning challenges;
- Respond to students' diverse needs;
- Overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

Murray Park School aims to identify and remove barriers to disabled students in every area of school life. We work hard to make all children feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment.

Disability Discrimination Act

Murray Park School is fully committed to the SEN and Disability Act 2001, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the SEN Code of Practice 2014. The Governing Body is committed to the three key duties towards disabled students;

- Not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability:
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, so they are not at a substantial disadvantage:
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled students

This plan sets out the commitment of the Governing Body to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

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

The Governing Body will seek to ensure that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Accessibility at Murray Park School

Murray Park School has regard to the "Code of Practice for Schools" issued by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) concerning the DDA. The school will

also follow the guidance issued by the DfES in 2006 entitled “Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years’ settings.”

Murray Park School will ensure that all staff and governors are aware of the implications of the DDA and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life.

During the period of the Accessibility Plan in 2015 - 2018, Murray Park School will attempt to achieve its vision through a number of key outcomes.

Area of access	What needs to be done
Access to site	Improved lighting in practical areas Additional carpeting to all classrooms Wheelchair ramps at fire exits of terrapins Automatic/easy open/close doors at main entry/exit points of all buildings. Good quality low-emission lighting in all areas of the school, including offices. Improved ventilation in some areas.
Access to curriculum	Differentiation training for all staff Programme of CPD for school staff in maximising the use of teaching assistants Programme of CPD for teaching assistants focused on Bloom’s/learning v doing/skills development Map out skills development across curriculum and establish age-related expectations based on KS2 skills curriculum. Create curriculum which permits lowest attaining students to access relevant skills training in preparation for post-16 education.
Access to information	Training for staff on provision of appropriate literacy resources. Make provision available for translation of classroom materials for V.I. student

At Murray Park School we try to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve. We aim to make “reasonable adjustments” to our practices and policies to meet the requirements of the DDA. We do recognise that there is always room to improve and the action plan shows our wish to continue to develop our practice.

Appendices

Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, including schools, 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 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 duty does not create new individual rights for disabled people. The duty provides a framework for schools to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a positive way. The duty thus reinforces the pre-existing duties under the Act. There are both general and specific duties. These duties are described in more detail in the next section.

The most important specific requirement is for schools, to have a Disability Equality Scheme. This requirement came into force in December 2006. This plan covers the requirements of the scheme.

Definitions and Duties

Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has:

“A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The definition can include a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

An impairment does not itself mean that a student is disabled. It is the effect on the student's ability to carry out normal day to day activities that has to be considered. The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects 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 or the perception of risk of physical danger

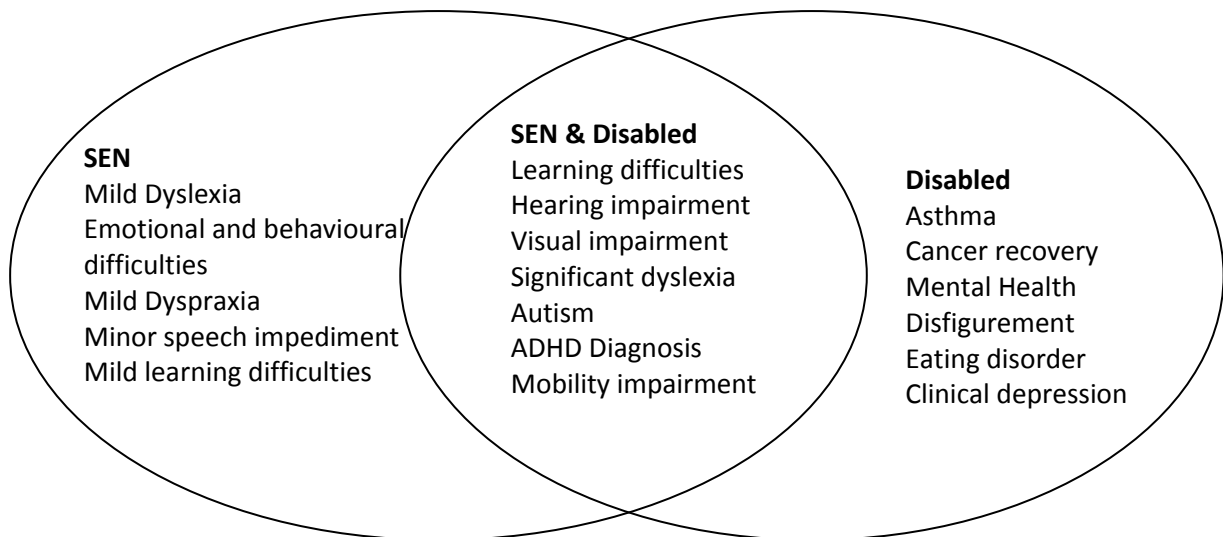
A child's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak, move is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child's ability to do these things may therefore amount to a disability.

Long-term and substantial.

The expression "long-term" and "substantial" are defined as follows; "long-term" is defined in the DDA as 12 months or more and "substantial" means "more than minor or trivial" but it might helpfully be thought of as meaning "having some substance." The combined effect of these two terms is to include more people in the definition of disability than is commonly anticipated. The definition in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is broad. It includes more students than many people think.

There is a significant overlap with students with special educational needs, though the definition of special educational needs does not cover all disabled children, for example; students with medical conditions, disfigurements and other impairments may count as disabled but may not have special educational needs.

Suggested Overlap of SEN and DDA disability definition for young



The existence of an impairment or condition does not depend on an official diagnosis. If the impairment is long-term and has a substantial adverse effect, it falls within the terms of the act whether there has been an official diagnosis or not.

It is unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled students. A school discriminates if;

- It treats a disabled student or prospective student less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification
- It fails, without justification, to take responsible steps to avoid placing disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.

The reasonable adjustment's duty requires schools to think ahead, anticipate the barriers that disabled students may face and remove or minimise them before a disabled student is placed at a substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made in admissions, exclusions and "educational and associated services," a term that covers every aspect of the life of the school. A code of practice, published by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) provides guidance on the way that the duty operates.

In general it is the governing body of the school that is the "responsible body" for the DDA duties and needs to ensure, through the Headteacher, that all staff are aware of the duty owed to disabled students. To avoid discrimination against any disabled student, all staff need to implement the duty in relation to their area of responsibility.

Disability Equality Duty

The changes to the DDA 1995 brought about by the DDA 2005 have brought about a change in focus from a reactive to a proactive attitude to disability. The Disability Equality Duty includes both general and specific duties. The DRC again provides Codes of Practice for public authorities and schools must have "due regard" to the codes.

Due Regard

"Due regard" comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. In all their decisions and functions schools should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance. This requires more than simply giving consideration to disability equality.

Disability equality will be more relevant to some functions than others. Schools will need to take care when assessing relevance, as many areas of their functioning are likely to be of relevance to disabled people.

Proportionality requires greater consideration to be given to disability equality in relation to functions or policies that have the most effect on disabled people. Where changing a function or proposed policy would lead to significant benefits to disabled people, the need for such a change will carry added weight when balanced against other considerations.

It will not always be possible for authorities to adopt the course of action which will best promote disability equality but schools must ensure that they have due regard to the requirement to promote disability equality alongside competing requirements.

The General Duty

The General Duty requires schools to consider the six issues listed in the Introduction in all actions which they take. The key task is to consider the promotion of disability equality and making sure it is, over time, mainstreamed

into all school functions. This includes activities inside and out of the classroom as well as all other aspects of school life e.g. extended schools, school lettings, employment etc.

The general duty requires schools not only to have due regard to disability equality when making decisions about the future. They will also need to take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to disability equality. This is best approached by working towards closing the gaps in the outcomes.

The general duty will build on existing responsibilities under disability legislation in relation to schools, including the duties to make reasonable adjustments and to plan strategically to increase access to schools over time. Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers with a view to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff; and greater participation of disabled students, disabled parents and disabled people in all aspects of school life, in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

Schools will use the framework of the specific duties to structure their information gathering and action planning in relation to the duty. Involving disabled people and where appropriate both disabled parents and parents of disabled children in setting the school development plans and conducting the daily running of the school is likely to be necessary for the general duty to be effectively met.

The Specific Duty

The specific duty regulations require authorities, including schools, to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, to implement certain aspects of the scheme and to report on it.

Accessibility

We have made our curriculum more accessible by incorporating inclusive developments from national strategies, through local initiative and in-school developments. Lesson observations include aspects of inclusion in teaching and learning. Scheme of work revisions include measures to ensure that all students including those with disabilities can access the curriculum.

The “physical environment” continues to improve within the resources available. The last audit identified a range of issues with differing levels of importance. We have a desire to improve the environment in a way which promotes inclusion for all students and will continue to do so subject to resources being available.

On “information,” we are aware of the need to develop a range of range of formats to meet differing needs. Digital signage will be used in appropriate places for all students, and particularly those who need visual cues to help them. We are aware of services to produce alternative formats if necessary.

We will use our information systems to monitor our progress as a school and the progress of disabled children within the school to ensure that we are helping all children achieve.

Involvement

A key starting point for the school's DES will be assessments of:

- The nature of the school population
- The nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities.

In addition to the provision for students with disabilities, Murray Park School will take into consideration:

1. The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees.
2. The needs of parents and carers with disabilities

Management, coordination and implementation

The management co-ordination and implementation of the DES is the responsibility of the SENCo. The Site Manager and Director of Finance will provide support and guidance.

The Finance and General Purposes committee of the governing body will monitor and evaluate progress of the DES Action plan on an annual.