

THE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

Disability Equality Scheme

This Policy was agreed by the Full Governing Body of
The Valley Partnership

Date: July 2019

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maire Sealey".

Review Date: July 2022

Disability Equality Scheme

This Disability Equality Policy and Scheme has 'Every Child Matters', and 'Excellence and Enjoyment', embedded with school's Mission Statement and Aims at its heart.

The Valley Partnership Mission Statement

"Climb to your highest.....do your best for yourself, for others and for God"

In the Valley Partnership we are proud to provide a high quality, creative and challenging education. This is delivered in an inclusive, caring and positive environment, where every child experiences a sense of enjoyment and achieves their potential.

The Aims of the Policy

This policy's aim is to provide a structure 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;
- to take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This policy explains how the school meets these responsibilities and includes an Action Plan to make further improvements in future. This policy replaces the school's Accessibility Plan as they have become amalgamated.

According to Government legislation;

"The scheme must include:

- *a statement of how disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme*
- *an action plan that includes practical ways in which improvements will be made*
- *information about the arrangements in place for gathering information about how the public sector organization has done in meeting its targets on disability equality*
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A year after the publication of the scheme, an annual report needs to be produced. It should contain a summary of the steps the organization has taken to fulfill the duty, the results of the information-gathering exercise, and how the information has been used."
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DisabilityRights/DG_10038105

What's a disability?

A disabled person (child or adult) is 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.

Definition taken from the Disability Rights Commission

A disability can be:

- Physical (for example difficulties moving, using a wheelchair)
- Sensory (for example a visual impairment, Blind, hearing impairment or Deaf)
- Mental (for example depression or a brain injury)
- Learning disability
- Long term illness or health condition (for example MS, cancer, HIV, epilepsy, diabetes)
- It also includes dyslexia, speech problems and disfigurements

In the Valley Partnership we want to make sure that **everyone** who has an interest in the school feels part of the school community – **parents, carers, pupils, governors, staff, visitors** – and has equality of opportunity and equality of access.

Equality is when we treat people fairly and according to their needs so that they experience a fair or equal outcome or level of satisfaction. It's not about treating everyone the same.

Providing 'equality' is not just about having 'ramps and handrails'. It can mean, for example, making sure that all children can take part in school trips or sports day, or making sure that reading books include positive images of people with disabilities.

If you have a disability you may have difficulties accessing information, events or facilities the school provides. Some people with disabilities experience prejudice and poor attitudes because of their disability (for example, people do not talk to them, or people don't take the extra time needed to help or explain something). We hope this doesn't happen at in our schools...

We want to know if we want do more to help and make sure that you have equal access and opportunities when you come into contact with our schools and that we are doing our best to promote disability equality and awareness.

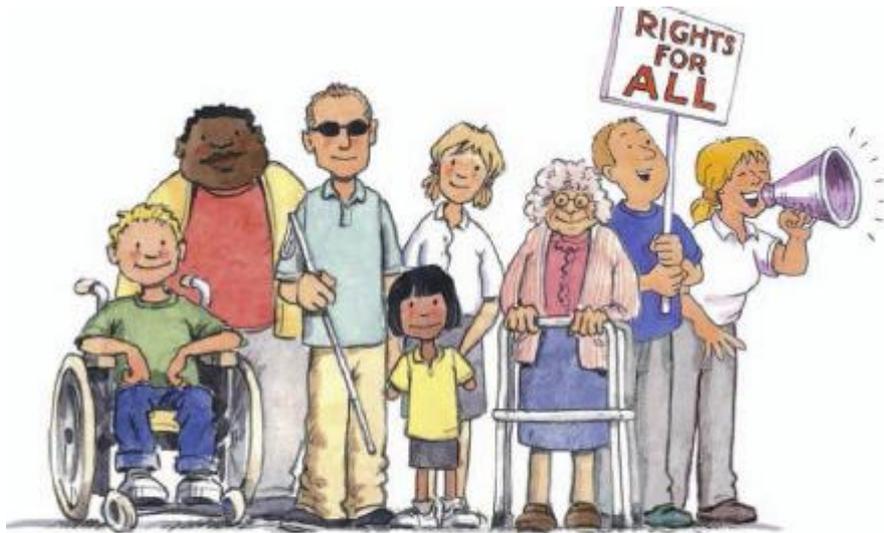


Image taken from Disability Rights Commission website.

How we have involved disabled people in developing this scheme?

Parents and carers of disabled pupils have been consulted verbally in informal meetings with the special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCo) and historically by anonymous questionnaires to collect their views on the most beneficial ways to provide successful inclusion of their children. Action planning is used to help to address any issues raised. This needs to be repeated annually.

Pupil participation is promoted, for example, through individual conferencing of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children who have statements have had informal discussions.

Parents and carers are asked at pre-transfer interviews with the staff, if there are any reasonable adjustments that the school may need to make to meet the needs of any of their family members.

Through our school ethos, enhanced by our Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum including THRIVE and mental health based work, we foster the recognition that individuals have different strengths and weaknesses. All are equal members of our school community with valuable assets to contribute, who deserve respect and nurture.

Regular awareness raising on the definition of disability takes place with pupils, staff parents/carers and other school users. This is done through the weekly newsletter, termly curriculum letters, Home and School Books, questionnaires and the school website. This Policy is available in paper format for the whole school community, and on the school website.

Our Schools' Ethos

We are happy, secure, friendly and welcoming schools, with a true family atmosphere, in which all staff and pupils are positive, caring and optimistic - and they smile! The staff, governors and pupils alike enjoy what they do and do it well. Our school communities have high expectations, both in terms of achievement and behaviour, and everyone is expected to do their best and to use their special gifts and talents, at their own particular level. In The Valley Partnership, all members of the school family and the contributions they make to the schools are greatly valued. Courtesy and politeness is expected at all times, and people are always acknowledged and thanked for what they do. 'Care', 'tolerance', 'trust' and 'respect' are very important to us. We have our Partnership values of:

Courage

Creativity

Compassion

Trust

Truthfulness

Perseverance

Responsibility and forgiveness as core values that we actively promote and celebrate.

Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees

Following Devon County Council employment systems, at recruitment, staff are asked to disclose details of any disability on the confidential pre-employment form. Screening is then undertaken and a fitness for work grading given.

Staff have received training on the Disability Equality Duty and are aware how and with whom to raise personal issues during the school year. Staff are consulted as to whether there are any new circumstances that they would like to disclose at performance management annual reviews. Staff Meetings provide a forum for further discussion on disability issues.

The school is aware of the 'Access to work' scheme and of LA policies, which may be relevant for disabled staff. For example, present staff have taken advantage of "phased return" arrangements.

Governors will be asked when they take up their posts whether there are any disabilities that they wish to disclose in order that the school may make reasonable adjustments necessary. The Head teacher will hold a confidential register of all school users with disabilities. The numbers of disabled children and adults and trends over time will be analysed at each review and any actions taken. In pre-transfer interviews parents are consulted as to how their child's needs can be best met.

Home visits are made for Foundation stage entry and later entry if appropriate. Pre-School visits and introductory meetings with the class teacher and often Head teacher for all inwardly mobile children, ensure details of children's disabilities are discussed. Detailed transfer programmes are drawn up in consultation with parents, teaching staff from both

schools and outside agencies where applicable (for example for those children with statements of educational need or medical conditions).

Details of disabled children with significant needs are in the SEND Information folder for adults working in school. The school's list of children with special educational needs records the number of children in each category of need, this is also captured on eth school Census at national level. The names of those children not at age related expectations, have a personal profile, or who have an Educational health care plan statement of educational need, but who are/or have been of concern for any reason, are noted.

All preparation, planning and assessment of teaching and learning takes into account the requirements of children's disabilities with reasonable adjustment made in areas such as differentiation of resourcing or learning style. For example, picture enhanced communication methods such as visual time-tables for those with language difficulties, on the autistic spectrum, or have been identified as needing this level of support.

Short-term planning indicates those children with particular needs, and the type of teaching method to be employed.

Reasonable adjustments are made to the timetable when required for instance reduced hours in sessions and additional break activities, rest periods in the day or phased returns after absence, for both staff and pupils

The school's pupil tracking system monitors the attainment of all children and individual targets are set in response.

The SENDCo, the Head teacher, and staff, review the progress of those children with special needs and Individual health care plans-My Plans. Pupil Development Plans or Pastoral Support Plans are drawn up in consultation with pupil, parent or carer and outside agencies as appropriate.

The emotional care of all pupils is high priority in school and developed through classroom circle time, our newly developed PSHEC (personal, social, health and citizenship) curriculum, SEAL/THRIVE type activities and mental health work project linked to national current research WEE (We eat Elephants . Classroom initiatives linked to these and pupil conferencing allow children to communicate any concerns and interventions to foster issues such as self-esteem; anger management and conflict resolution are available. The new rolling programme has added emotional and mental health and well-being elements and mindfulness and learning about learning is enveloped in a cross curricular approach.

Adult mentors are assigned if needed and older children act as 'buddies' to younger age groups. Children who are socially vulnerable are noted for extra care from staff at break times and alternative activities can be arranged. Playground buddies help to include all children at playtimes.

Children with disabilities are able to access special arrangements for SAT tests, should they meet the statutory criteria to qualify for extra time, a reader or a scribe. Children are trained beforehand so that they are able to take full advantage of these arrangements.

The school promotes and monitors access for children with disabilities on all school visits, social events, such as PTFA events, and residential trips. Individual risk assessments are compiled to facilitate positive inclusion. Children with disabilities are represented in positions of responsibility like the School Council and the class positions of responsibility.

Intervention programmes, extra supported visits and informal liaison meetings are arranged to foster successful transfer to secondary school and other establishments.

The school monitors the number of children with disabilities accessing school clubs and actively promotes the inclusion of children in clubs both in and out of school. For example, parents, carers or family members are offered the opportunity to go with their child to clubs or school provides the support of another adult in school or a “buddy” to help their child settle in the club. Reasonable adjustments are made to which year group may attend a certain activity. Parents can request staff support in finding links to other families who may be involved in clubs outside school that would benefit pupils with disabilities.

Pupils with disabilities are offered especially planned opportunities to meet their needs, for example during our residential week and overnight camps. Feedback from parents on the success of the above is sought from pupils, parents and carers both verbally and in the form of questionnaires or similar. Children in Year 6 with disabilities will be asked to identify what they have found to be potential barriers to their learning. These issues will be analysed and relevant changes planned.

Information on other disabled people using our services

This policy will be published on the school website after discussion with staff and Governors. In order to identify disabled users, disclosure is required in order that any reasonable adjustments can be made. Our questionnaires and Disability Equality Scheme form will part of our induction for new parents and staff. All users are reassured of complete confidentiality. Details of disabled users will only be shared on a “need to know” basis.

How the impact of our school policies and practices will be assessed?

The school has a cycle of policy reviews. National policy will inform all our policy and practice reviews. All planning will be examined in the light of the Duty and the possible implications for disabled adults and children. Necessary alterations or actions will be initiated as a result. The school will continue to monitor the success of this policy annually, participating with parents and carers, employees, pupils and other users. Our **disability equality action plan** will indicate actions to be taken and its resultant impact.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- SEND Policy
- Inclusion Policy

- Equal Opportunities Policy

Review

This Policy and associated action plan are reviewed annually in accordance with the programme for policy review in the Partnerships' Development Plans and linked to the **Disability Equality/Accessibility Action Plan-details**