



Mere School Disability Equality Scheme

2008 - 2011



January 2008

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Mission Statement

At Mere School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for disabled pupils, staff and all those receiving services from the school. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. The achievement of disabled pupils and students will be monitored and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible. At Mere School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Check list for school staff and governors

- ✓ Is information collected on disability with regards to both pupils and staff? Is this information used to improve the provision of services?
- ✓ Is pupil achievement monitored by disability? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action?
- ✓ Are disabled pupils encouraged to participate in school life? How is this shown through representation in school events such as class assemblies and the school council?
- ✓ Is bullying and harassment of disabled pupils and staff monitored and is this information used to make a difference?
- ✓ Is disability portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- ✓ Does the school take part in annual events such as Deaf Awareness week to raise awareness of disability?
- ✓ Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents or carers attend held in an accessible part of the school?
- ✓ Is information available to parents, visitors, pupils and staff in formats which are accessible if required? Is everyone aware of this?
- ✓ Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a general duty on schools, who need to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA;
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and applies to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Monitoring

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. The following should be monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by disability
- Disabled staff (including numbers, type of disability and satisfaction rates in staff surveys etc.)

Additional implications for schools

The role of a school as a service provider

Schools have additional implications as a service provider to make their buildings accessible when they hire out rooms or parts of the building.

Contact with parents and carers

When providing newsletters and information for parents and carers, schools should make this information available in an accessible format so that parents or carers who may be, for example, visually impaired, can access the information.

Additionally, events for parents and carers such as open evenings, meetings with teachers, should be held in accessible parts of the building.

Hiring transport

School staff will need to be aware of Section 6 of the Act when hiring transport as it puts new duties on transport providers, including the bus and coach companies, and the taxi and private hire car trade. The requirement to provide accessible vehicles is extended to include these transport providers. Bus companies will not be able to refuse a job because, for example, it may take longer to pick up disabled students.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Election of parent governors

The election of parent governors will now be covered by the DDA 2005, and governors will need to ensure that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible to disabled people. However, the result of the election is not covered and disabled candidates will not be able to claim that they were not elected simply because they were disabled. Once a disabled parent governor is elected, the school governing body functions in relation to that parent are covered and the school must ensure that they can participate fully in school life.

Involvement and consultation

It is a requirement that disabled pupils, staff and those using school services should be involved in the production of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Mere School has consulted with disabled pupils, staff and service users in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme by:

Consultation with disabled pupils / staff / parents to determine their priorities for the school with regards to disability equality over the next three years via:

- Focus groups
- Questionnaires
- Feedback slips
- Drop-in sessions

Making things happen

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, Mere School has drawn up an action plan to make things happen, which outlines how the requirements of the DDA 2005 will be met. This action plan has been shaped in consultation with disabled people as outlined in the previous section, and may include some of the good practice examples below.

Good practice examples

The following examples provide good practice suggestions on how disability equality can be promoted in a school environment.

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
 - Increase awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can help to support their learning, for example through workshops;
 - Ensuring that the talents of disabled pupils are represented accordingly through the Gifted and Talented Registers.
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
 - Monitor incidents of harassment and bullying of disabled pupils. Encourage pupils to report and take action against offenders.
 - If a number of incidents have been prevalent within a particular year group, use circle time, story time or assembly to investigate and address the issue with all pupils.
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
 - Use the school environment to promote positive attitudes to disability. Ensure that disability is represented in posters, collages, displays and learning materials.

Making things happen

- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people (continued)
 - Celebrate and highlight key events such as the Paralympics, Deaf Awareness Week and Learning Disability Week.
 - At schools with specialist units, staff have successfully raised awareness about disability by going to talk to pupils from the mainstream school.
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people.
 - Ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events and on the school council.

Creating an action plan

The following action plan outlines what will be achieved in the next year with regards to meeting the Disability Equality Duty.

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
2008-09							
EXAMPLE Increasing equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people	The parents of disabled children and young people (CYP) may not be aware of how to best support the learning of their child	Two workshops to be conducted on an annual basis for the parents of disabled CYP to provide them with basic advice on how to support the learning of their child in core curriculum subjects.	Satisfaction surveys to be conducted with parents after each workshop to ascertain whether sessions were useful and feedback	Monitoring will take place after every session. Analysis report to be produced two weeks after all satisfaction surveys received.	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)	Dec 2006	July 2007

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
To draw attention to increasing equality between disabled and other people	All parents to be aware of how best the school can support their child(ren)s learning	Two meetings on an annual basis where advice and support is offered to parents and carers	Questionnaires to be carried out after meetings	After each meeting	Yvonne Bundy	Summer 2008	July 2009
To provide a blue rigid sign identifying disabled parking bay	Disabled parking facility	Request Handyman to provide sign	Visual sign in Parking Bay	Annually	Catriona Williamson	Summer 2008	Summer 2008
To provide questionnaires for staff, parents and pupils	To monitor disability and equality across Mere School	SENCO to research and provide questionnaires	Whether action points from questionnaires have been addressed	Twice a year	Yvonne Bundy	Summer 2008	Summer 2008
	Is there a trend	Teachers in care	Staff meetings		Catriona	Summer	

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
Leading Teachers Numeracy, Literacy, Science to monitor achievement of disabled pupils through data	that this group under achieves?	areas to monitor Key stage 1 / 2 Data	and Governors meetings	Annually	Williamson	2008	Ongoing
RE head teacher to make staff aware of inclusion and portray in positive manner	Positive attitude to all disabilities	Yvonne Bundy to discuss with head teacher of RE	School Assemblies	When subject area (assembly) is monitored			

Aspect of the duty	Issue being addressed	Action to be taken	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	How often will monitoring take place?	Who will be responsible for implementing the action?	Start date	Completion date
2009-10							
2010-11							
To provide access to first floor classrooms	Access to key stage 2 classrooms	Lift on stairs to be fitted	Visual impact access to key stage	Termly	LEA, RHI	Summer 2011	Summer 2011

Monitoring and reporting

It is important to monitor the impact of the action taken to ensure that progress is being made towards meeting the Disability Equality Duty, and to ensure that no adverse impact is occurring as a result of the actions.

The monitoring of the actions outlined in the action plan will be monitored in accordance with the specified timescales. If any adverse impacts are identified during the monitoring process, the action plan will need to be revised.

An annual report will be produced which outlines the progress of the Disability Equality Scheme and assesses the implementation of the action plan for effectiveness. This report will be circulated to the Head-teacher and Governors, and the findings will be used to improve the Disability Equality Scheme and feed into future practice.

For further information, please contact:

Mrs Yvonne Bundy (SENCO),
or contact the School Reception