



**Coppice School**

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*At Coppice School we all...*

**C**ommunicate to help us to shape our future

**O**pen doors to exciting opportunities

**P**ractise the skills important for life

**P**romote friendships and care for each other

**I**nclude everybody

**C**elebrate our individuality and independence

Enjoy and excel

## Disability Equality Policy

Date created:	14 November 2008
Date approved:	27 March 2009
Signed: (Chair of Governors)	
(Headteacher)	
Date for review:	March 2010
Date for review:	March 2012
Next Review	March 2014
Next Review	March 2016

\* This policy will now be reviewed annually due to the changing population of the school

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## **Vision and values**

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At Coppice 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 Coppice School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## **Definition of Disability**

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The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 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'.

According to the Disability Discrimination Act, an impairment is to be treated as affecting the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, only if 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 and perception of the risk of physical danger.

## **Gathering and using information**

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We will gather information on disability equality as part of our collection of evidence for the School Development Plan and during the self-evaluation process. This information will be used to set and review our disability equality objectives.

## **Involvement and consultation**

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

Coppice School has consulted with disabled pupils, staff and service users in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme.

Examples of involvement...

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

- Annual review Meetings
- Questionnaires
- Feedback slips
- Drop-in sessions

## Employment

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As an employer we will ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote disability equality within our workforce. We will ensure equality of opportunity throughout all our employment practices, including, recruitment, retention and training.

Bullying and harassment of staff will be monitored and appropriate action taken to address and eliminate it.

NOTE: The Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice lists key employment issues that are usually the most common ones to be considered, these include:

- flexible working arrangements
- appraisal and performance-related pay systems
- sickness absence
- redundancy selection criteria
- emergency evacuation procedures
- procurement of equipment, IT systems, software and websites
- information provision
- employee training and development
- employee assistance schemes offering financial or emotional support.

The Local Authority is a Disability Symbol user, which means we have made five commitments as an employer:

- 1 a guaranteed job interview for those who meet the essential requirements for a job
- 2 to consult disabled employees regularly
- 3 to keep employees if they become disabled
- 4 to improve the knowledge of employees about disability and
- 5 to check progress each year, plan ahead and let employees know about progress and future plans

The school will, taking medical or specialist advice where appropriate, ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made to allow new and existing staff with disabilities to work effectively within the school.

## **Making things happen**

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### **Disability Equality Action Plan**

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, Coppice 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. This may include some of the good practice examples below:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
  - Inclusion sessions with local Pre-School/Primary/Secondary Schools
  - Increase awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can help to support their learning, for example through workshops; Open afternoons and regular parent/teacher meetings.
- 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. 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.

### **Accessibility Action Plan**

Also our accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to improve:

- curriculum access
- provision of information to disabled pupils
- physical access

### **Assessing the Impact of our policies**

We recognise that all our school's policies may have an impact on the participation and outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers, staff and members of the local community. We will review existing and proposed policies. The programme to review the impact of policies is contained in our action plan.

## Guidance

### Check list for school staff and governors

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- ❑ 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 are 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 duty to promote disability equality in schools.**

### **Summary of Main Points.**

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The Disability Discrimination Amendment Act (2005) introduces a new positive duty on the public sector to promote disability equality. This new legal duty means that, alongside their existing duties, schools will have to take proactive steps to promote disability equality for pupils, employees, and service users. The duty is central to improving the experiences and outcomes of disabled people in the education system. The prime responsibility for making sure the duty is met lies with schools governing bodies.

### **Time Scales**

The Disability Equality Scheme must be in place for:

**Secondary Schools**                      **4<sup>th</sup> December 2006**

**Primary, Special and PRUs**    **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007**

### **Further Information**

- **The Code of Practice** is available from [www.dotheduty.org](http://www.dotheduty.org)
- **The Disability Rights Commission (DRC)** has produced guidance for schools which are available on the above website.
- **The Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** has produced a free pack for schools called 'Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years'. This provides useful information, training materials and DVDs on making existing duties work. Written guidance contained in the pack can be downloaded or full copies obtained online at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications)
- **Disability Equality in Education Course Book - Making it Happen** by Richard Rieser [www.diseed.org.uk](http://www.diseed.org.uk)



## The General Duty

Schools must have due regard to the following six areas in the operation of their organisation:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their impairments;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take steps to take account of a disabled person's impairments, even where that involves treating the disabled person **more favourably** than other people.

The duties apply to disabled pupils, staff, parents and members of the public who may use the school's facilities. Schools will need to identify pupils, parents and staff likely to be considered disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act.

## The Specific Duty

Schools are required to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties. It should include the following:

- the school's approach to promoting, equal opportunities for disabled children and a positive image of disabled people;
- a statement of how disabled pupils, staff, parents and disabled members of the community who may use school facilities have been involved in developing the scheme;

a three year action plan, which identifies targets and areas where improvements are needed to meet the Duty;

- arrangements for gathering information about the performance of the school on disability equality e.g. pupil achievement or employment and retention of disabled staff;
- arrangements for assessing the impact of policies, procedures and practices of the school on disability equality and improving these when necessary;
- details of how the school is going to use the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and preparing subsequent schemes; and
- the scheme must be reviewed and publicly commented upon each year and revised every three years.

**Areas to be covered in a School Scheme are:**

- achievement of pupils;
- disability in the curriculum;
- teaching and learning;
- developing a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents;
- removing barriers - curriculum, physical and communication;
- lettings and use by the community;
- eliminating harassment and bullying;
- employing, promoting and training disabled staff;
- monitoring;
- assessment;
- governance and relations with parents;
- breaks, lunchtime, after school activities and trips;
- how the school involved disabled people;

Implementing this Duty to Promote Disability Equality can draw on existing good practice in making reasonable adjustments and school accessibility plans.

## Disability Equality Schemes and Accessibility Plans

"Schools are already required to plan to improve the accessibility of their schools for their disabled pupils under the planning duties contained in Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act. A Disability Equality Scheme will build on this work. However, there are a number of significant differences between the planning duties and the specific duties that schools will need to take into account. For example, the specific duties cover disabled employees and other disabled users of school premises and services (such as parents and carers) as well as pupils. There is also a statutory requirement to involve disabled people in the production of a disability equality scheme.

Schools may wish to publish a single document that contains both their accessibility plan and disability equality scheme, or a separate plan and scheme according to what will work best for them on an individual basis. However a school chooses to present this information, the disability equality scheme and the main elements of the disability equality duty need to be distinct, easily identifiable and in one place." (DRC guidance for schools 2006 - page 16 onwards).

## Measuring Outcomes

Schools must demonstrate that they have taken the actions they have committed themselves to, and achieved appropriate outcomes. As a minimum the Disability Equality Scheme must monitor:

- admissions, exclusions and educational attainment of disabled pupils in the school;
- accessibility and suitability of education and associated services; and recruitment, retention and career development of disabled staff;

## Enforcement

- **General Duty:** any person, including the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) could apply to the High Court for a judicial review of a public body that they felt was failing to comply
- **Specific Duty:** the DRC issues a compliance notice; if not satisfied apply to County/Sheriff Court for compliance order

**The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)** will have a significant role in measuring disability equality as part of the inspection process and in its own organisation.

## 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.