



DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY

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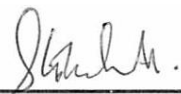
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07/04/2017	0.a	Initial Draft
30/06/2017	0.b	Updated following review by Trustees
19/07/2017	1.0	Updated following approval at Board Meeting 18/07/2017
November 2019	1.a	Policy Update
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Autumn 2022	2.a	Reviewed and updated
Autumn 2022	3.0	Approved at Board Meeting on 07/12/2022

Next Review	Autumn 2025
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AUTHORISATION

Approved at Board Meeting on 7th December 2022

Signed



7-12-22

Chair of the Board

Date

Disability Equality Policy

Introduction

Whilst this policy pertains to all employees and, as appropriate, Governors, Trustees, Members, contractors, visitors and volunteers connected with Insight Multi-Academy Trust (IMAT), Local Governing Bodies of individual academies have been delegated responsibility to specify local arrangements for the operation of this policy within their academy. These are detailed within Appendix 1 of this policy.

The Equality Act of 2010 set provisions that schools should follow, the Department of Education published non-statutory advice on how they could fulfil their duties in the Equality Act. The Equality Act of 2010 replaces the SEN and Disability Act (2001) and the Disability, Discrimination Act (1995). The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has:

a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect".

Since the Equality Act of 2010, Governing Bodies have had three key duties towards disabled pupils under Part 4 of the DDA:

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

This document together with the Disability Equality Accessibility Plan and Additional Needs Register identifies the actions the Trust intends to take over the next 3 year period to increase access for those with a disability in three key areas:

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

In the Equality Act 2010 the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what you offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can.

The Disability Equality Accessibility Plan and Additional Needs Register is published and evaluated annually by the Local Governing Body of each Academy.

Aim

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we aim to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act.
- Eliminate harassment of those with a disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled individuals.
- Take steps to take account of disabilities even if this involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

Under the Equality Act, schools have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for people with disabilities. In paragraph 4.13 of the departmental advice document about the Act, the DfE summarises the duty as follows:

- Where something a school does places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils, then the school must take reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils

Each school will ensure that this accessibility plan is implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary. The associated action plan shows how the school intends to address the identified issues in this DES.

Key Elements

The purpose and direction of the Trust's plan: vision and values

This Scheme and Associated Plan should be read in conjunction with the Trust's other policies on Equal Opportunities and Special Education Needs.

The IMAT is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for staff and students with disabilities and aims to create an environment which enables them to participate fully in school life. For the purposes of this policy, disability is understood in the broadest sense and, in addition to mobility and sensory impairments, includes mental health problems, specific learning difficulties and medical conditions which may have an impact on day-to-day activities. This policy also extends to members of the public using any school premises.

Equality of opportunity in the IMAT is about providing equal access and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement.

Equality of opportunity applies to all members of a school community - students, staff, governors, parents and community members.

It is based on the following core values and ethos:

- to develop all students as responsible citizens, each in their own right;
- to give each student an equal opportunity to fulfil their own potential, personally, socially and academically, within a rewarding and stimulating environment;
- to provide all students with a broad, balanced and relevant education, which will enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for lifelong learning and to adapt to a fast-changing world;
- to develop an enterprising culture for our learning community.

By our mission statement we endeavour to ensure that ***'learning, working and succeeding together'*** underpins our whole philosophy. By learning together, we want our community:

- to realise the highest standards of achievement ;
- to be an inclusive Trust;
- to meet the challenges of the future.
- to make reasonable adjustments to cater for all disabilities.

In addition, the statutory inclusion statement in the *National Curriculum for England* describes schools' responsibility to provide a curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of students. It sets out three principles that are essential for teachers and schools to follow when developing an inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to students' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of students.

In order to achieve these aims, all members of our community must be able to access provision when they attend school. The values of respect and responsibility underpin our aims. All members of our community have a duty to respect the rights of others and to take responsibility for removing barriers to learning for disabled students.

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a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect".

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including barriers to learning such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). As such there is a significant overlap between those considered to have a disability and those who have special educational needs.

Students are identified by using information from internal testing in primary school, together with any further internal testing when in secondary school.

In each academy of the IMAT we keep an Additional Needs register (AN Register) which is updated regularly as appropriate. The specific needs of students on the Additional Needs Register are documented, reviewed and shared with staff also as appropriate.

The Additional Needs Register is detailed in the Disability Equality Access Plan and Additional Needs Register which is reviewed annually by the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1

Disability Equality Scheme at Sir Graham Balfour School

Students with any additional needs are well catered for at Sir Graham Balfour School. The building was designed and constructed taking into account all the building requirements for staff, students and community disability access use.

All the students identified as having special or additional needs have planned programmes in place to meet their additional needs physically and academically.

We have a purpose built Learning Support Department which is at the hub of the school and consists of small support rooms, a main teaching area with excellent ICT provision and a Student Intervention Unit for students with behavioural difficulties and a SEMH room for students who are experiencing Social, Emotional, Mental Health difficulties, This area is designed to meet the physical, social, emotional and behavioural needs of our students.

In order to make access to the building accessible for physically impaired students we have electronic doors in the entrance and into our learning resource area. The school is equipped with a lift and access toilets for both staff and students and we have an additional fire safety plan in place for any disabled students, staff or visitors with fire safety refuges clearly identified. We have an evacuation chair for disabled students stored in the disabled toilets on the Humanities corridor. Eight members of staff are currently trained to use it.

Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum

The Learning Support department is the primary link between the school and disabled students. Their needs are taken into account and disseminated to all staff via the AN register, Learning Support Handbook and the Faculty Link teachers. In Year 7 any student who achieved a low score in KS2 English and Maths participates in a support programme. Students in Year 7 with a low level of literacy participate in the Literacy Immersion Group. Literacy intervention is available for all students in Key Stage 3 who have a low reading age. All students with an EHCP also have support in the majority of their English and Maths lessons from Teaching Assistants. There is a staffed classroom at break and lunchtime available for any students who wish to use this facility . Additional support is available to students through homework sessions and the Peer Mentoring scheme. All students are able to fully participate in school life; including trips and extra-curricular activities as well as residential visits.

The school adheres to dyslexia friendly policies and provides a comprehensive programme of support for both dyslexic and dyspraxic students with specialist staff delivering small group support to these students. All departments effectively differentiate the curriculum with the help of the Teaching Assistants. Close contact between staff and the Learning Support Department via Teaching Assistants has also facilitated far greater awareness of students' needs. Continued partnership with a variety of outside agencies and organisations has meant that the school plans and adapts the curriculum to suit the requirements of all students.

Improving the physical environment of the School

The physical environment of the school is purpose built and caters for the needs of all our students with colour contrast strips on all stairs (both treads and risers) to aid visually impaired students, staff and visitors. The entrance hall and corridors are wide, well lit and free of obstacles and all electric doors have the required etchings. Lesson changeover is less crowded as there are no bells so staff use the clocks. This means that the end of lessons is slightly staggered which reduces the number of students moving at one time.

Improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled

As part of the school's dyslexia friendly approach small adjustments have been made to ensure better access to written material:

- Work sheets are differentiated by content (simplified).
- Either Ariel or Calibri fonts are generally used as a matter of good practice.
- The School website and network is simple and easy to access.
- Most departments have pictorial clues and key words on display.
- Colour coded and picture timetables for students are available

Progress towards the Action Plan will be reviewed as part of the school's evaluation of its School Improvement Plan on a regular basis by the Learning Support Department's Senior line manager. The results of that evaluation will be reported to the Standards, Curriculum & Students and Community then to the Local Governing Body and the Multi-Academy Trust Board.

Evidence for the evaluation will include: actions taken; resources deployed; scrutiny of school communication systems; lesson observations; and a judgement of the impact on teaching and learning.

The plan will be co-ordinated by the Leadership Group member with responsibility for Learning Support although other lead staff are identified in the plan.

The DES/AP is fully consistent with the schools SEN policy and SEN legislation. It should also be applied consistently with the schools policies/guidance on:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Achievement and Positive Behaviour
- Bullying
- Child Protection
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Teaching and Learning

The school will work closely with the Local Authority Inclusion Team and Special Educational Needs Support Service and where appropriate enlist the support of the Primary Care Trust and Social Services.

The school has set the following priorities for the management, coordination and implementation of the accessibility plan:

- Adapting existing evaluation cycle to include all aspects of DES/AP
- Publishing annual reports through the School Gateway

Publication and dissemination of the school's Plan

The school makes its accessibility plan available in the following ways:

- Publishing it on the school web-site and on the Gateway
- Making it available in alternative formats on request

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Staffing and Standards Sub-committee of the MAT Board will formally review this policy every three years or more frequently if circumstances or legislation suggest it is appropriate.