



Disability Equality Policy *(including Accessibility Planning)*

2011-12

This policy applies to Early Years Foundation Stage, Junior School and Senior School.

Background and Definitions

Hollygirt School will take positive action to prohibit all forms of illegal discrimination, towards prospective pupils, staff and others associated with the school (e.g. parents; users of the premises; visitors). It aims not to treat disabled people using the school's services less favourably than able people as far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy reflects current legislation, national guidance and good practice.

Definition of Disability

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 his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

- 'physical impairment' includes sensory impairments;
- 'mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness;
- 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial';
- 'long-term' is defined as 12 months or more.

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term as defined above.

The Equality Act 2010 also covers those with:

- severe disfigurements;
- impairments controlled or corrected by the use of
 - medication;
 - prostheses;
 - an aid or otherwise;
- progressive symptomatic conditions;
- a history of impairment; and
- children under the age of 6 with impairments which, in an older person, would result in that person being covered.

Since December 2005 persons with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are also covered at the point of diagnosis.

But excluded are those with:

- an addiction to or dependency on:
 - nicotine;
 - tobacco; or
 - other non-prescribed drugs or substances;
- seasonal allergic rhinitis (hay fever); and
- certain mental illnesses with anti-social consequences.

The Duty of the School

Hollygirt School will discharge its responsibilities towards pupils and prospective pupils, staff and those using the school's services by ensuring that disabled people are not treated less favourably by making all reasonable adjustments in the following areas:

- accessibility to the premises and facilities;
- accessibility to the curriculum;
- accessibility of associated educational services;
- training of staff and pupils;

The school's policy is to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate disability-related harassment;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage disabled people's participation in public life;

The Accessibility Plan aims to:

- ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable the needs of disabled visitors to the site are taken into account;
- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- where practicable improve the physical environment of the school in order to enable disabled pupils to take advantage of education and associated services;

Unlawful Discrimination

The school will ensure that discrimination is prohibited in:

- the arrangements for determining pupil admission;
- the terms on which admission is offered;
- provision of education or associated services (including educational visits and extra-curricular activities);
- victimisation and harassment;
- failing to take steps to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled pupils in the arrangements for determining admission to school and in relation to the provision of education and associated services. **However, alterations to buildings and the provision of auxiliary aids and services are not required under this law.**

The Policy

Pupils

The school aims, within the constraints of resources available, to enable each pupil to fulfil her potential, both within the curriculum and in the full life of the school so that there is every chance that the pupil will have a complete, happy and successful school career and emerge a confident, well-educated and well-rounded young person with a good prospect of a satisfying life.

The school aims to fulfil the requirements of the legislation to make 'reasonable adjustments' for pupils with disabilities, to enable them to have access as far as is reasonably practicable to the school premises, facilities, curriculum and associated services.

The school will examine each disability case to determine the best adjustments that can be made to accommodate a disabled pupil's needs.

Staff

The school aims, within the constraints of resources available, to ensure that no member of staff with disabilities is treated less favourably in the school's procedures and practices in respect of:

- recruitment
- performance management
- promotion
- staff development
- teaching
- environment
- access to premises

Identification, Recording and Reviewing of those with Disabilities

Parents are requested to provide details of any disability in relation to a prospective pupil at the time of application, on the registration form. If any specific needs relating to a disability are identified, either at this stage or on assessment, or should any disability be evident at a later stage, the Headmistress will discuss with the parents the adjustments the school is able to make to meet these needs. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil the school may take such advice and require such professional assessments as it regards as appropriate. The school will be sensitive to any requests for confidentiality.

On entry to the school, in the case of a pre-diagnosed disability, the school will make reasonable adjustments to entrance examination procedures which might include the provision of extra time or rest breaks or the use of additional aids. However, consideration will be given to the impact such adjustments may have on the well-being of other candidates and on the provision of staffing for the examination, when determining if such proposed adjustments are reasonable.

Pupils diagnosed with a disability will be placed on the school's SEN/LDD register and an IEP will be written by the SENCO in conjunction with the pupil, parents and teachers. IEPs together with reports from any relevant external agencies will be kept on the pupil's academic file. The IEP will be monitored by all subject staff, and reviewed at least annually.

Risk Assessment

Where relevant, for both disabled pupils and staff, a risk assessment will be produced by the SENCO (pupils) or Headmistress (staff).

Accessibility Plan (2009-2012)

Premises - Improving the Physical Environment

Currently Hollygirt School has four non-adjacent Victorian buildings, each on several floors. In common with the majority of senior schools, subjects are based in a room or suite of specialist rooms, which makes it necessary for pupils to travel some distance between lessons, including climbing internal and external steps without lifts. There is little in the way of reasonable adjustment that could ensure equality of access to pupils or staff with seriously impaired mobility.

The school recognises that through the provisions of SENDDA it is not required to provide 'auxiliary aids' (i.e. special equipment or additional personal support), nor make 'physical alterations' to the buildings, (such as provide lifts). However, to meet its obligations, the school will ensure that the needs of disabled pupils are fully considered in any strategic planning for future development. (Development Plan available on request.)

The school will budget annually for reasonable minor adjustments to the environment to enable a pupil with a disability to have access to the full teaching and learning of the school.

The school will bear in mind health and safety requirements and the interests of other pupils in all the above considerations.

Curriculum

In line with the provision of this policy, the school would not accept a pupil were it to be prejudicial to the educational interests of the pupil herself, in so far as her disability prevented her from accessing the curriculum sufficiently fully for her to be able to fulfil her educational potential, even where such adjustments as were considered reasonable were to be made.

- Because of the lack of spare classroom capacity, and the practice of subjects in the senior school normally having fixed classroom bases, it would not be possible to make timetable adjustments such that a pupil with mobility problems could have all her lessons on the ground floor, without restricting her access to aspects of the education provided for her non-disabled peers. In the Junior School the girls increasingly move around the school site as they get older, which would bring these same problems into increasing severity as the girl with a disability grew older.
- Before a pupil with a disability could be accepted, it is proposed that a risk assessment should be carried out to review the potential safety hazards to herself, and to other members of the school community, of her presence. For example, during science practical work, and in design technology.
- An audit has been carried out of the curriculum in the school, by department, to identify examples of areas where reasonable adjustments might be necessary. These are examples only, and do not constitute a full survey of all the possible adjustments that might be necessary in order to accommodate a wide range of different conditions, and varying degrees of severities of these conditions.
- In any future curriculum planning, consideration will be given to the effect of the proposed changes on provision for disabled pupils.

In all teaching and learning activities a full range of teaching and learning styles will be employed to ensure that no pupil is excluded from learning. All disabled pupils will appear on the SEN/LDD register and will have an IEP with clear written dated targets. This will be subject to regular review. Teaching staff will be given, as relevant, advice and training from the SENCO and as appropriate external agencies regarding the learning needs of disabled pupils.

Delivery of Information

All information to be given to/concerning disabled pupils will take account of the pupils' disabilities and the pupils' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. The school will consider providing information in an alternative format such as large print, CD/audio format, or electronic communication.

Staff

The development needs of disabled staff will be discussed with the member of staff and the Headmistress on a regular basis. Adjustments may include the allocation of support staff time or timetable adjustments wherever these are viable and within the constraints of the financial resources of the school.

Off-site Activities

The school will ensure as far as reasonably practicable that pupils and staff with disabilities are given full access to off-site activities organised by the school (subject to a risk assessment).

Harassment

Pupils

The Headmistress will take very seriously any allegations of harassment or bullying towards a pupil because of their disability. The school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies outline the expectations of the school and the procedures for reporting and dealing with such cases

Staff

The school values each member of staff for their contribution to the school and will seek to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable no member of staff is disadvantaged by reason of his/her disability. The Trustees will take positive action against any employee's harassment of another employee. All employees have a duty not to harass other

employees on the grounds of their disability (or any other grounds recognised by law) and to report instances of harassment to the Headmistress (or in the case of harassment by the Headmistress, to the Chair of the Trustees).

Liaison with Parents

The school will continue to ensure close liaison with families of all students with a disability through the provision of designated staff members (SENCO/Deputy Head) who have allocated time for this purpose. Whenever appropriate, information to home will be provided in different formats to take account of disability.

Under the supervision of the Headmistress, Deputy Head or Head of Juniors, staff with pastoral responsibility will liaise closely with the homes of students who exhibit behavioural difficulties to determine whether they arise from disability or from domestic or social circumstances. They will report to the senior member of staff who will determine, after consultation, appropriate action.

Staff Training

Training will be given to senior staff to ensure understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and SENDDA and how actions at school level may be undertaken to ensure inclusion of disabled members of staff and pupils. This will be cascaded to all staff (teaching and support staff) with regular updating sessions when deemed necessary by the Headmistress. All teaching staff will have regular training regarding improved practice in differentiation for all pupils including those with disability. Regular staff training will be undertaken regarding the needs for learning of particular disabled pupils. Support staff working with disabled members of staff and pupils will be given relevant training.

Responsibilities

The Trustees

- Oversee the implementation of all the school's policies and practices, including disability equality and accessibility and undertake an annual review of these.
- Consider the school's systems for making staff, parents and pupils aware of the policies.

The Headmistress

- Oversees the day-to-day implementation of the policy and reports annually on the training provided for the staff.
- Ensures regular liaison with parents of disabled pupils takes place.
- Reports termly in the Headmistresses' Report to Trustees on correspondence with parents of disabled pupils or staff and on their progress, outlining adjustments that have been identified and implemented and any training on the Equality Act/SENDDA provided for the staff.

Awareness and Observation of the Policy

This policy will be included in *Whole School Policies* available for staff on the computer system within the T drive and for parents on the school website. A hard copy is available to all on request.

Any parent or member of staff who has a complaint about the way the school has dealt with any issue relating to disability/equality will be referred to the Complaints Policy and dealt with under its procedures.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

*Updated August 2008
Unchanged July 2010
Amended January 2011*